

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

According to Munawaroh et al. (2024), the recent phenomenon of bullying among elementary school-aged children in Indonesia is an important sign. Cases such as bullying (bullying), low ethical awareness, and apathy toward religious values and worship are increasingly prevalent, as reflected in various news reports, and sometimes some bullying results in the death of the victim (Asrirama, 2025). Furthermore, the dominance of gadget use and excessive exposure to social media have a significant impact (Kreuta & Hutapea, 2023). The visible impact is that children tend to have difficulty interacting and lack ethical sensitivity. This indicates a deficiency in character development that should begin early. This gap is highlighted, especially considering that the ages of 8-12, often interpreted as middle age, are a crucial period in the formation of a child's identity, moral values, and ethics.

Between the ages of 8 and 12, children's cognitive abilities develop rapidly, enabling them not only to think logically and abstractly, but also to absorb and apply these thoughts in real life (Nurulita et al., 2023). This suggests that a fragile character foundation can impact children's social and spiritual interactions, creating behavioral patterns that are detrimental to both themselves and others. Therefore, it is important to better understand the factors underlying this phenomenon in order to design more effective and relevant education.

In this context, the family and the church play a crucial role. Parents have the primary and irreplaceable responsibility of serving as role models and facilitators in guiding children (Fallo et al., 2023). As affirmed in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This role is reinforced by the findings of Hutabarat et al. (2024), who stated that strong parental involvement in moral education significantly improves children's social competence and ability to solve ethical problems. The emotional interactions and time children spend with their parents form a foundation of character that cannot be replaced by any other party, including teachers. Furthermore, Syifa Salma (2024) emphasized that parental active participation in spiritual activities at home is crucial for the development of children's spiritual intelligence.

Parents face challenges in educating their children. The demands and busyness of modern life often limit the time parents have for intensive childcare. Some parents have also experienced a shift in perspective, viewing moral education as the sole responsibility of schools or other institutions, or even prioritizing careers over time with their children (Babawat, 2024).

In addition to the role of parents, teachers in both public and Sunday schools play an important supporting role (Laia, 2023). Unlike formal educational institutions that focus on academic values, Sunday schools, in the context of this research, are identified as a forum for spiritual and ethical development under the auspices of the Child and Youth Development Commission (KPAR), which emphasizes its function as an interactive and non-formal "children's worship service." While public school teachers are oriented towards academic achievement, Sunday school teachers play a crucial role in instilling biblical values from an early age to help children internalize Christian character, such as the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, while also serving as a bridge for theological application in daily life. To support the effectiveness of this role, the use of media board games was implemented to change the teaching paradigm from passive to more dynamic through simulated experiences without exam pressure, with class organization divided into toddler, primary, middle, and adolescent levels.

Although Sunday School teachers face challenges such as time constraints and complex Bible story-telling techniques, exacerbated by one-way learning media that quickly bore children amidst the dominance of gadgets (Zega et al., 2022), this problem is validated and strengthened by a psychological perspective. According to Clinical Psychologist Esa Mariya Puspitasari, cases of children who use gadgets excessively almost 100% indicate serious ethical and social problems, because children aged 8–12 are in the Concrete Operational phase, they are not yet fully able to understand ethical concepts abstractly, even though they can think strategically. Therefore, passive learning is highly counterproductive to long-term memory and the development of emotions, speech, and understanding of norms, so interactive, experimental, and repetitive media solutions are needed, such as board intentionally forcing social interaction and integrating visual motivational elements to effectively instill character values such as how to communicate.

According to Asrinia Susanti Riu & Rounaully Marbun (2023), the Bible is the primary foundation of Christian teachings, serving as a moral and spiritual guide through stories in the Old and New Testaments that contain essential values such as love, forgiveness, and justice. More than just historical accounts, biblical narratives are a powerful educational tool for character building. However, conveying these teachings, especially to children, faces significant obstacles, namely the complexity of the language and sentence patterns. Stories written thousands of years ago often use metaphors and similes that are steeped in cultural and historical context, making them difficult to simplify in everyday conversation. Consequently,

parents and Sunday school teachers often struggle to convey stories simply and relevantly. This difficulty is exacerbated by ongoing translation updates, which can potentially lead to confusion.

Character education for children has a strong foundation in Bible study. The Bible is not just a collection of rules or historical texts, but a source of ethical values that are useful for forming a whole person in Christ. Through Bible stories, children can learn to understand abstract concepts such as goodness, justice, and mercy, which they can then apply in their daily lives (Tamera & Kotta, 2023). More deeply, Bible-based character education can be based on the story of the Fruit of the Spirit as written in Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law." The fruit of the Spirit is a tangible manifestation of divine qualities that should grow in every individual, especially in children whose characters are still developing. Each trait in the fruit of the Spirit has a specific role.

The fruit of the spirit written in the Bible, Galatians 5: 22-23, has a role in teaching ethics and shaping children's character (Tamera & Kotta, 2023). Each trait is a real manifestation of spirituality which is the foundation of morality. Love is the main fruit that needs to be taught to children, because children learn to empathize, care, and do good unconditionally, such as the stories of Christ's mercy. Joy and peace, children are taught to maintain emotions, find happiness in Christ not from others, so that children become ethical and steadfast in the midst of a world full of challenges. Patience, generosity, and kindness are very important to introduce to children because they are useful to help children when interacting socially. From patience, children are educated on the best way to control emotions and wait their turn so that children do not cause conflict. Generosity and kindness are two things that go together, children are taught to help and treat others with respect. Loyalty, gentleness, and self-control are very important for children so that they are able to control themselves in every problem they face. From loyalty, children learn how to speak honestly and be reliable. Gentleness and self-control provide children with the ability to respond to situations and make wise choices, such as limiting themselves from things that harm them. Thus, each fruit of the spirit is a provision that will guide children to become individuals who have strong and principled characters (Meissy & Wijayanti, 2024).

The selection of the Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) Waru Congregation as the research location was carried out using a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria that align with the urgency of the design, with a strong relationship between

accessibility and problem relevance through initial observation data that indicates an ethical crisis in the form of apathy and decreased focus of children during worship due to the dominance of gadgets. This is supported by the availability of cooperative stakeholders, namely KPAR and Sunday School Teachers who recognize the urgent need for interactive learning media to fill the void of digital-based media board game within the church environment, while strengthening the position of GKJW Waru as a forum for religious moderation and cultural preservation that reflects the values of National Defense. This church consistently maintains national identity through the use of Javanese in worship, training in traditional instruments such as gamelan and angklung, and active tolerance practices through interfaith collaboration with the Sidoarjo Gusdurian community (Ardiansyah, 2024), so that this uniqueness becomes an important foundation so that the value of "Fruit of the Spirit" raised in the design is not only theoretical, but rooted in the real practice of ethics in society, nation, and state that have been lived out by the local congregation.

The results of an interview with Mrs. Novi, Chair of the GKJW Waru Congregation's KPAR, who stated that children's attitudes today cannot be separated from gadgets and games, resulting in a lack of focus during worship. This behavioral phenomenon is reinforced by the views of Pastor Kristanto, who highlighted the serious impact of exposure to physical, sexual, and verbal violence on social media, which significantly affects children's psychology. This is exacerbated by the lack of interactive learning media, which tends to be one-way, making children passive. External factors such as excessive unsupervised use of gadgets also contribute to the decline in children's social and ethical sensitivity. Therefore, a breakthrough in learning methods is needed that can restore the urgency of Bible-based moral education.

The speakers agreed that character education must be based on the Bible, especially the teachings on the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), because the values contained in these teachings are relevant throughout the ages. Both Mrs. Novi and Pastor Kristanto emphasized that all elements of the Fruit of the Spirit are an important unit to introduce and teach to children from an early age. The speakers agreed that the method of delivery is key. According to Mrs. Novi, children prefer supporting media related to games (game) because it makes it easier for them to understand and feel relaxed, so that board games are more suitable for children. This was confirmed by Reverend Kristanto, who stated that the method approach can be a "gateway" to make children happy and more receptive to the teachings. This empirical evidence collectively demonstrates a gap between children's ethical needs and conventional

teaching methods, while also validating the need to develop interactive and engaging learning media.

The concerns of pastors and Sunday school teachers were reinforced by the results of a questionnaire from parents of the GKJW Waru congregation. Based on the results obtained, the biggest concern was the tendency of children to choose to play with gadgets rather than interact with friends. This was based on the results of respondents, with a percentage of 76.9% of children tending to play with gadgets rather than interact, explicitly expressing concern about the issue. The questionnaire also provided a solution, with 38.5% of respondents stating a preference and need for Bible teaching media in a fun way, namely by board game this percentage indirectly validates that existing Bible-based ethics teaching media do not meet parents' needs for interactive, device-free solutions.

Field analysis indicates the urgency of ethical issues for children during worship. Initial observations conducted at the GKJW Waru Congregation, for example, revealed various behaviors reflecting a lack of understanding and appreciation of Christian teachings among children, such as a lack of attention during worship and a reluctance to interact. This is in line with the results of a questionnaire aimed at children. The questionnaire showed that 52.9% of children stated they knew about the fruit of the spirit. However, further observation revealed that children's knowledge of the fruit of the spirit was superficial and not applicable in their daily lives, as evidenced by their lack of focus during worship. These questionnaires and observations indicate that current teaching methods are not yet able to bridge the gap between effectively conveying the story of the fruit of the spirit. The need for a game-based solution was the most common choice among children.

Despite the needs validated by the church and the questionnaire, observations were made throughout 2025 at various major retail outlets, including the Gramedia Royal Plaza and Tunjungan Plaza bookstores, as well as at the Big Bad Wolf book fair. The results showed no significant differences between board games discussing ethics or the Bible in detail for children. This gap is reinforced by observations made at Tabletoys Boardgames Library, Cafe, and Store, which showed that many choices board game for children aged 8-12 years, especially those of interest on weekends by children and parents. However, it was not found board games that explicitly address ethical themes or biblical values. This situation highlights a significant gap in game-based learning media specifically for Christian character education.

This finding was strengthened through an interview with Kak Cynta, Game Master, at the cafe. Sister Cynta confirmed that board game has great potential as a medium for teaching

ethics that has not been utilized optimally. Board game The most popular are those with graphic elements with an adventure narrative and effectively trigger positive interactions between parents and children. Technically, Kak Cynta provided crucial input regarding designs that are of interest to children aged 8-12 years, such as for board games to be effective, they must have interesting components, simple working methods, and a game duration longer than the time to explain the game concept, ideally 30 minutes with the aim of maintaining children's focus. Thus, proving that there is a significant market gap for this media. board game based on ethics, while validating that board game is a media approach that can be accepted by the target audience.

Although there have been efforts to develop similar media, such as research conducted by Mulyonugroho, Yosia Zabdi, Aniendya Christianna & Bangsa (2015) who designed board game The theme of Biblical Characters identified gaps that needed to be addressed. Previous research focused on children aged 5-7 years. In terms of topic and content, the research still focused on narratives of Biblical Characters as the basis for moral teaching. Furthermore, methodologically, previous research used only descriptive qualitative methods and did not include the involvement of children. stakeholder which is clear, so that the validity cannot be tested. In addition, based on literature studies, it has been proven that board game has great potential as an effective and interesting learning medium (Setiawan & Wardana, 2017). Several studies have succeeded in designing board games for various educational topics, such as English language learning and introducing endemic Indonesian fauna, further strengthening this medium's capability to deliver diverse and engaging content (Agustinus & Kurnianto, 2018; Putra & Wijaya, 2023). However, there is a clear gap in research related to the development of Christian religious education media. Specifically, no research has focused on the design board game which thematically integrates Bible material based on the story of the Fruit of the Spirit and is aimed at a specific audience, namely children aged 8-12 years in the GKJW Waru environment. Although there are studies discussing technology-based church educational media, non-digital interactive media types such as board game The Fruit of the Spirit material in the context of the congregation has not yet been discussed and implemented (Mulyono, 2023). Therefore, this study will fill this gap by designing, developing, and testing the feasibility of board game The Bible with the theme of the Fruit of the Spirit as an innovative, relevant and contextual solution to support the teaching method of spiritual values at GKJW Waru.

The novelty of the design lies in the development of media that aims to fill the void. The design is based on the ethical foundation of the Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23 as the

topic presented through the design.board game. Board game specifically designed as a form of non-digital gamification. The main purpose board game this is a behavioral change based on the application of the Fruit of the Spirit in the context of everyday ethical dilemmas. Thus, this research not only validates the need to develop interactive media for learning about ethics and religion but also offers interaction in fostering children's ethics (Murtikasari & Kristiani, 2023).

Researchers formulated the hypothesis that the designboard gameEducational methods that specifically implement games with character challenges based on the Fruit of the Spirit will be more effective in increasing understanding and encouraging the application of Christian values in children aged 8–12 years compared to conventional Sunday School teaching methods. Furthermore, the use of mediaboard gameWith its bright visuals and engaging interactive elements, it will successfully maintain audience focus and overcome the problem of boredom with spiritual material. Ultimately, this product is believed to be an efficient and relevant socialization and teaching media solution for church communities and parents in cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit.

## **1.2 Identification of problems**

### **a. Ethical Issues and Child Behavioral Dysfunction**

The phenomenon of bullying, low ethical awareness, and apathy toward religious values and worship are increasingly prevalent, indicating a crisis in character development in children (Munawaroh et al., 2024). This problem is reflected in the religious context. Observations at the Waru GKJW revealed apathetic behavior in children, characterized by a lack of focus during worship.

### **b. The Challenge of Gadget Dominance and the Negative Influence of Media**

The dominance of gadget use and excessive exposure to social media have a significant impact. The visible impact is that children tend to have difficulty interacting and lack ethical sensitivity (Kreuta & Hutapea, 2023). This issue was reinforced by interviews with pastors and KPAR (Religious Education Group) leaders who expressed concern about children preferring gadgets over interaction and Bible reading. This situation impacts communication and poses a serious barrier for parents and teachers who want to teach children biblical values.

### **c. Obstacles to Bible-Based Teaching**

Conveying these teachings, especially to children, faces significant challenges, including the complexity of the language and sentence patterns. Stories written thousands of years ago often use metaphors and similes steeped in cultural and

historical context, making them difficult to simplify in everyday conversation (Iskandar et al., 2023). Consequently, teaching methods such as sermons or lectures become less engaging, less interactive, and fail to motivate children.

d. **The Void of Interactive Media as a Solution**

Limited availability of adequate interactive media. The development of interactive media in religious and ethical education is an urgent need, and the majority of solutions offered rely on digital applications (Simbolon & Ordekorja, 2025). Even more crucial are the results of observations conducted at Gramedia, Big Bad Wolf, and Café Board game, consistently showing the absence of board game media that specifically tells stories about the Bible or ethics. Emptiness for board game non-screen based has become a serious problem, because it is necessary to return children's focus to direct interaction and in-depth character learning.

**1.3 Problem Formulation**

Based on the background and problem identification, the problem formulation is obtained, namely "How to design a board game based on the Bible story 'Fruit of the Spirit' as a medium for religious and moral education for children aged 8-12 years?"

**1.4 Problem Limitations**

- a. The game's main focus is on children aged 8-12 who actively participate in Sunday School activities at GKJW Waru, which uses Indonesian for children's services. The game is divided into primary and secondary age groups. The primary age group is children aged 10-12, while the secondary age group is children aged 8-9. Therefore, the material, design, and mechanics are tailored to the needs and understanding levels of children of these ages.
- b. The main material is focused on ethical values that originate from the story of the Fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5:22-23, so that the material is limited to topics that are relevant to ethics and the Fruit of the Spirit, such as examples of the application of the Fruit of the Spirit and not.
- c. The methodology used in planning board games is Design Thinking.

**1.5 Planning Purpose**

Purpose of planning board game based on the Bible story are as follows:

- a. Planning board game which is an educational media and can introduce ethical and biblical values to children aged 8-12 years.

- b. Improve children's understanding of ethical values based on the Fruits of the Spirit through gaming media.
- c. Cultivating a love of religion and the Bible from an early age.
- d. Encourage children's involvement in play.
- e. Helping parents and Sunday school teachers to build relationships and interactions and teach ethical values based on the Fruit of the Spirit to children.

## **1.6 Benefits of Planning**

Benefits of Planning Board Game As a Media for Ethical Education Based on the Fruit of the Spirit for Children Aged 8 – 12 Years (Case Study: Gkju Waru) is as follows:

- a. Benefits for Authors
  1. As a forum for service and deepening of faith to children in church.
  2. Develop visual skills according to the needs of the audience.
  3. Increase your insight into the Bible so that the message you want to convey is understood according to the teachings of the Bible.
- b. Benefits for the wider community
  1. As a useful educational media to help parents and Sunday school teachers in guiding children's faith.
  2. Increase children's insight into faith and ethics in a way that is pleasant.
  3. Creating a future generation that is empathetic and has integrity through instilling ethics in the golden age to address social issues such as bullying, while reviving the culture of group play as an effort to preserve traditional values that are crucial for the mental health of the community.
- c. Benefits for agencies:
  1. Support creative and spiritual education programs, especially for young people who are interested in board games and the Bible.
  2. Improve the image of the institution as a party that supports empowerment of creative young people.

## 1.7 Planning Framework

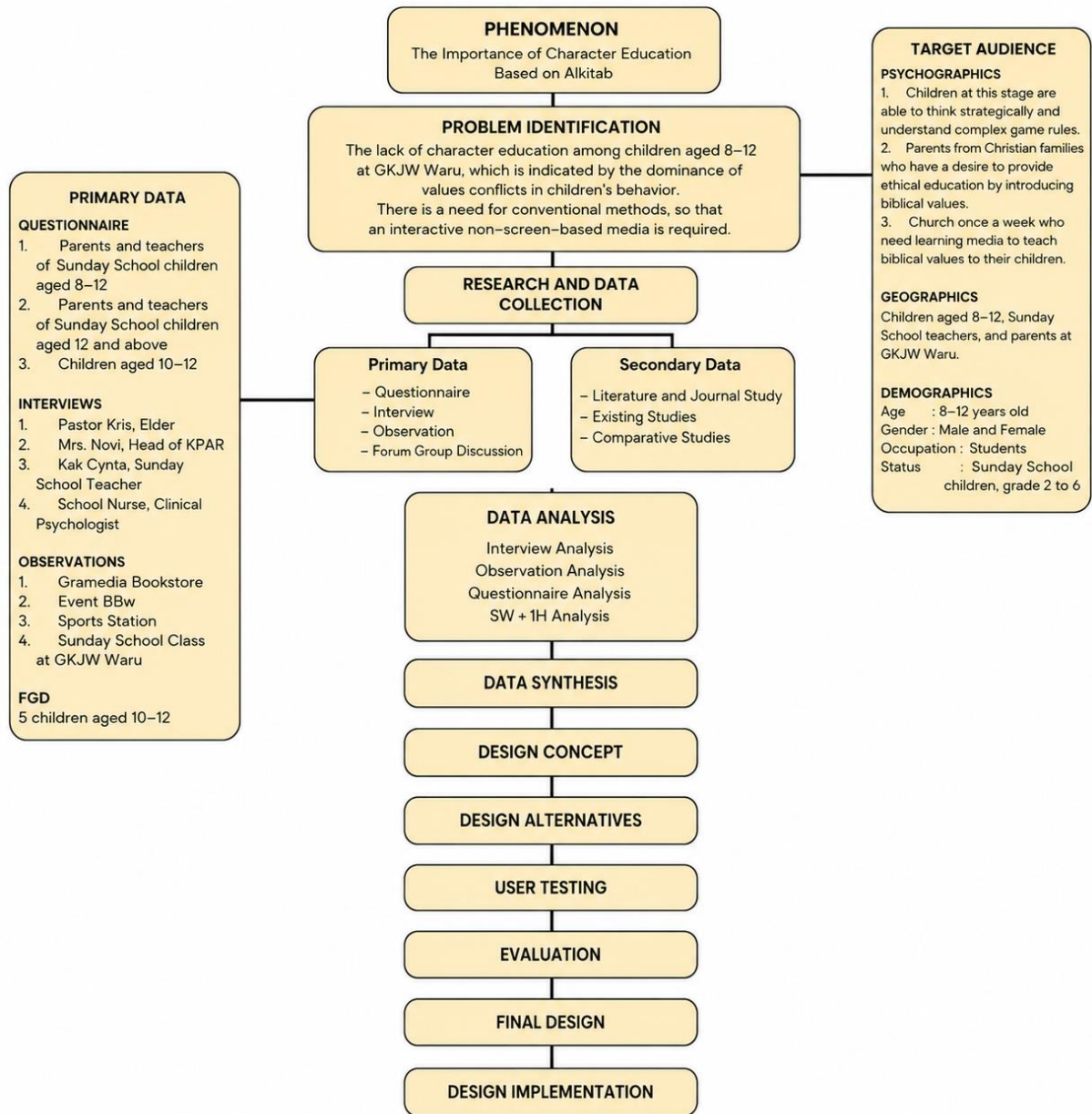


Figure 1. 1 Planning Framework  
(Source: Personal document)