

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Humans are a special species possessing cognitive abilities that distinguish them from other species on Earth. Their behavior and mindset have continuously evolved from early humans who rested at night when predators were active while hunting, to modern humans who spend their days sitting in a single room. Human behavior also tends to be repetitive, carried out routinely every day from waking up until going back to sleep, and sometimes these habits are performed without questioning why they are done every day. According to Clear (2018), a habit is a routine or behavior performed regularly and, in many cases, automatically. This habit mechanism serves to conserve brain energy and is stored in a part of the brain called the basal ganglia.

The basal ganglia are a cluster of nuclei located deep within the brain's neocortex... they have many functions related to reward and cognition, but are primarily involved in motor control (Young et al., 2023). Yin & Knowlton (2006) state more specifically that there are distinct networks involving the basal ganglia as the neural implementation of actions and habits; therefore, understanding these networks can explain findings across various levels of analysis, ranging from mechanisms to the conditions that support habit formation. Habits form when people pursue goals by repeating the same response in a specific context (Wood & Runger, 2016). Therefore, habits are a crucial mechanism in humans, as they enable self-regulation of one's nature and behavior, evident in the daily habits performed. Thus, there is no need to repeatedly think about basic behaviors because the basal ganglia store hundreds of habits—from the simplest habit of checking a phone upon waking up to the most complex habit of riding a motorcycle to the office. And the brain will choose which habit to execute, allowing it to focus on other tasks—such as realizing you forgot to buy your favorite coffee because you stayed up late working overtime last night.

According to ((160) *Bang Upi's College Stories - YouTube*, n.d.), Luthfi Halimawan, a major *gaming streamer* in Indonesia, managed to overcome his old bad habits—from being lazy in college to becoming a successful figure in the *entertainment* industry. However, during his journey

to change his habits, Luthfi faced various obstacles, and his old habits resurfaced. In Luthfi's story, the trigger for his old bad habits resurfacing was when he lost his girlfriend. Relapse can occur when memories of old habits are activated by previous routines and other contextual cues (Wood & R nger, 2016).

Ultimately, Luthfi succeeded in changing his habits by learning to love himself more, and that became the key habit that influenced his other habits. Key habits help other habits develop by creating new structures and help establish a culture where change spreads (Duhigg, 2012). Another factor in Luthfi's success was the power of the group; with the support of his supportive friends, Luthfi successfully changed his bad habits. Duhigg (2012) states that for a habit resulting from change to endure, people must believe that change is possible, and this belief most often arises with the help of a group. Research conducted by Zovko et al. (2021)—aimed at measuring the extent of the correlation between parents and grandparents and children's physical activity and sedentary lifestyle (lazy behavior)—showed that parental involvement in physical activity, particularly by the mother, is crucial for children's physical activity and, consequently, healthy outcomes.

In contrast to Luthfi, the story of Angie Bachmann in (Duhigg, 2012)—a housewife in Iowa, United States—has a different *ending*. Bachmann was unable to stop her gambling habit and ended up spending all her assets, savings, home, and even her inheritance at the gambling table, ultimately going bankrupt. Bachmann had previously tried to stop her gambling habit by moving to an area where gambling was prohibited; however, when she faced stressful situations and saw a casino, she relapsed into gambling. The key difference between Luthfi's story and Bachmann's is that Bachmann lacked the support of a social group or close relatives to help her quit gambling, and she never learned how to address the mechanisms of her habit.

Duhigg (2012) notes that the habit-forming process in the brain is a three-step loop consisting of a cue, *a routine*, and *a reward*. Clear (2018) adds a fourth element to the habit-forming process: cue, craving, response, and reward. A cue triggers the brain to initiate a habit; craving or motivation serves as the driving intent to perform the habit; the response is the actual activity of the habit; and finally, the reward is the ultimate goal of performing the habit. Every habit

always goes through these four stages in sequence. This cycle can repeat automatically if it yields a reward that aligns with what is desired. Judah et al. (2018) state in their research that perceived rewards can reinforce habits; beyond the impact of rewards on repetition, habit formation may be most successful when the target behavior is enjoyable or valued.

The habit loop can help map and recognize a habit in an individual, but Duhigg (2012) reveals that habits are not as simple as they seem; even though they are ingrained in the mind, a person can still choose their habits; once they know how, they must consciously identify all the cues and rewards that drive the habit routine and seek alternatives. Once one understands that habits can be rebuilt, they become easier to achieve, and the only choice left is to start doing so now. Wood & R nger (2016) note that understanding habits is crucial from the perspective of human health and well-being, as it fosters an understanding of their mechanisms. Good habits established early on yield positive effects in the future, especially when cultivated during adolescence.

According to Ahyani & Astuti (2018), adolescence is the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, spanning from the onset of puberty to the attainment of maturity, and is generally defined as the period when an individual begins to act independently of their parents. Adolescents are expected to develop positive habits such as studying, time management, maintaining physical and mental health, and managing social relationships. Adolescents were chosen as the target audience because this age serves as a bridge between childhood and adulthood, during which the development of character and behavior shapes how a person will be as an adult. Ahyani & Astuti (2018) add that adolescence is a developmental phase that significantly determines the direction of an individual's life, as all experiences and changes occurring during this period have both immediate and long-term impacts on personality formation. The specific adolescent stage selected is Late Adolescence (18–21 years) because, as noted by Ahyani & Astuti (2018), during this period adolescents begin to establish specific values, engage in deep reflection, and develop newly formed, clear convictions.

Based on the results of a *focus group discussion* (FGD) with 8 students aged 18–21, the participants agreed that habits have a significant influence on daily life; however, they can also be adjusted as needed if there is a willingness and self-awareness to do so. The main obstacle

participants faced in changing habits was a lack of consistency in following through on the plans they had made. From an interview with Alfiah, a psychologist, she added that adolescents often struggle to change habits because they feel comfortable staying within their comfort zone, making them reluctant to make changes. Interestingly, adolescents have a tendency to seek challenges in their lives. Alfiah explained that adolescents enjoy challenges because, through them, they can explore themselves, test their abilities, build self-confidence, and gain recognition from others. Like Luthfi, who was challenged by his friend to dare to change, curiosity, the desire to compete, and the drive to test oneself are strong defining characteristics of adolescent behavior. According to Purwoko & Sukamto (2018), *sensation seeking* in adolescents is an individual's tendency to seek out new, challenging, and intense experiences, as well as the courage to take risks in order to obtain those experiences or sensations. Challenges are often viewed not as obstacles, but as opportunities to demonstrate ability and gain recognition. Challenges are powerful opportunities for growth and learning (Tong et al., 2023). Alfiah adds that the social environment also plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' behavioral development, mindset, and daily habits (), so that what they see, hear, and experience can influence the formation of their character and habits.

One medium that can capitalize on teenagers' penchant for challenges and social interaction is *the card game*. A *card game* is a game with a specific name and set of rules played with a set of small, rigid rectangular pieces of paper, each bearing a number and one of four suits printed on it, or a similar set of cards (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). In *card games*, players communicate and compete, creating motivation to strive to win the game. In the process, various emotions arise, such as joy when winning, disappointment when losing, or laughing together. Research conducted by Muthiyan et al. (2023) on the effectiveness of card games states that students believe playing card games is a positive, enjoyable experience and a highly effective method for understanding and memorizing complex topics. From the observations conducted by the author at *the Happy Hobbies Headquarters* and *Tabletoys Board Game Surabaya*, no educational *card games* were found that address habits, particularly the habit loop. However, to make the content of card games more engaging, easy to understand, and relevant to teenagers, visuals are needed that can convey situations, humor, and messages concisely. Comic strips are the ideal visual choice because their panel format is simple, expressive, and capable of depicting daily habits in a lighthearted manner that resonates with teenagers' experiences. (Faathir De Azzura et al., n.d.) note that comic strips

are part of the history of visual communication to the public, demonstrating that comics are an effective and efficient medium for conveying messages clearly, with the advantages of minimal production costs and time efficiency.

Based on the issues identified above, it can be concluded that the design project titled “Design of a ‘Habit Circle’ *Card Game* with Comic Strip Illustrations in the Daily Lives of Adolescents” is urgently needed. This project aims to raise awareness about the habit-forming process—specifically the habit loop—within individuals, particularly among late adolescents, with the hope of facilitating changes and modifications through a more enjoyable and interactive *card game* medium.

1.2. Problem Identification

Based on the background described above, the problem addressed in this Final Project is:

- a. Based on the results of interviews with psychologists, it was found that adolescents often struggle to change habits because they feel comfortable staying within their comfort zone, making them reluctant to make changes.
- b. A lack of consistency in carrying out plans to change habits and a tendency to revert to old habits among FGD participants.
- c. According to Duhigg (2012), habits are not as simple as they seem; one must consciously identify all the cues and rewards that drive habitual routines and seek alternatives.
- d. Based on observations conducted, no *card game* with an interactive and enjoyable habit loop theme has yet been found
- e. Sudjana and Rivai (2002) note that comic strips can be used as a learning medium due to their ability to convey messages in a simple, engaging, and memorable way

1.3. Problem Statement

Based on the background and problem identification above, the research question that can be identified is: How can one design a *card game* using comic strip illustrations as a medium to address the habit-forming cycle in the daily lives of adolescents?

1.4. Problem Scope

Based on the background described above and the identified problem formulation, the scope of this study is as follows:

- a. The design of this *card game* will focus solely on the habit-forming cycle system in daily activities during adolescence.
- b. The primary target audience for this *card game* design is late adolescents (ages 18–21).
- c. The illustrations on these *cards* will consist only of comic strips and simple symbols.
- d. The stories in the comic strips will depict alternative sequences of habits common among adolescents.

1.5. Objectives of the Design

The objectives to be achieved are as follows:

- a. To design *a card game* with comic strip illustrations that raise awareness about the habit-forming process—specifically the habit loop within an individual, particularly teenagers—thereby making it easier to change and modify these habits.
- b. To provide implicit education regarding the habit loop using an interactive medium, namely *a card game*.
- c. To build awareness among all audiences regarding the importance of managing habits in daily activities.
- d. Providing entertainment for teenagers that also serves as a basis for group discussion.

1.6. Benefits of the Design

The expected benefits are as follows:

- a. For adolescents aged 18–21
To serve as an educational and entertainment tool that fosters an understanding of the importance of managing and changing habits through a more interactive approach and relevant narratives.
- b. For the author
To broaden knowledge regarding habits that can be directly applied in daily life.

1.7. Design Framework

The following is the design framework for the title above:

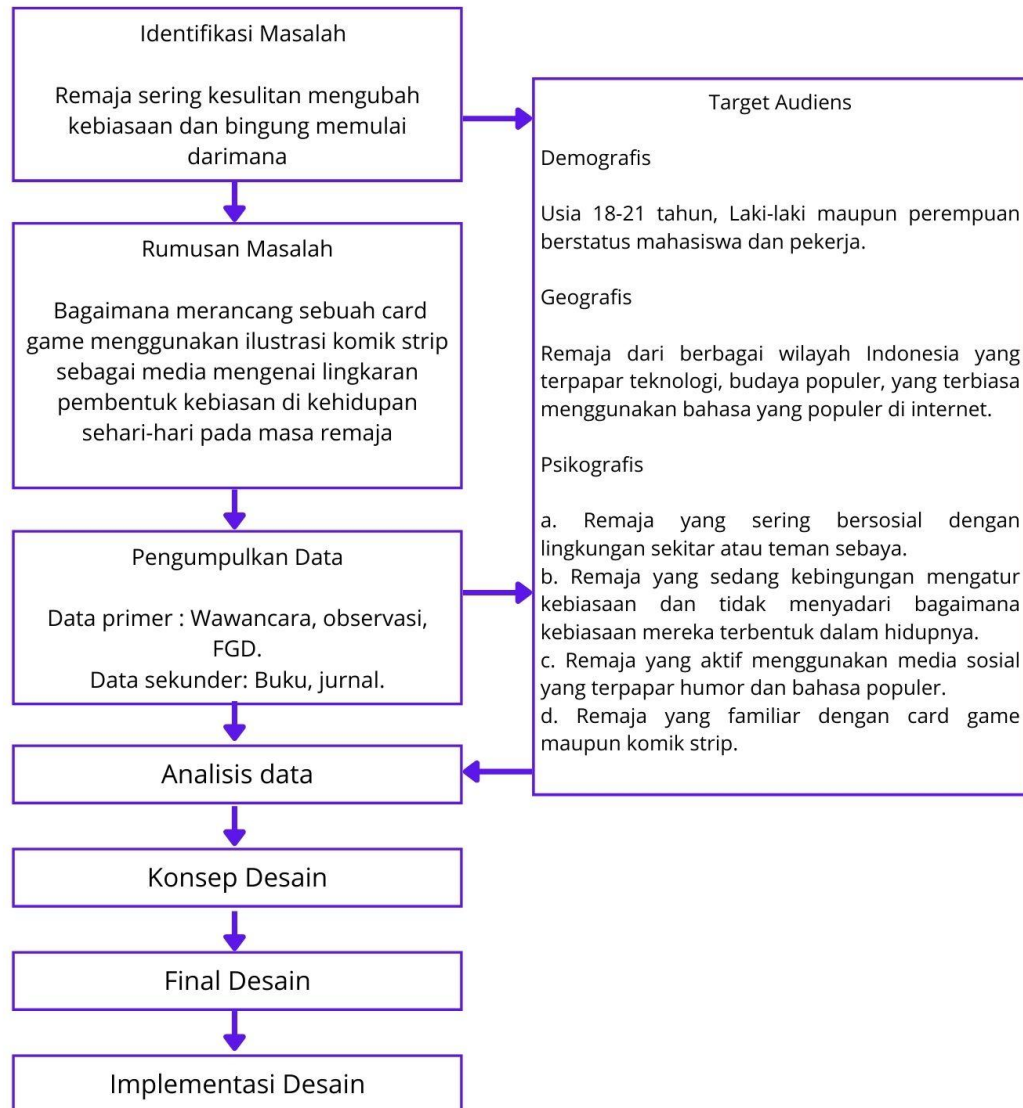


Figure 1.1 Design Framework, 2025

(Source: Personal Document)