

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Children are the future and potential of the nation (Junaidi, 2021:2), and as part of human rights, their rights must be guaranteed and fulfilled by the state, including the right to protection, education, and participation (Law No. 35 of 2014 and Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990). Childhood is a critical period for personality development (Hurlock, 2006), during which physical, cognitive, and emotional development interact with one another. Among these aspects, emotional development plays a crucial role because the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions determines the quality of a child's future social relationships and psychological well-being.

The emotional condition of children in Indonesia indicates an urgent need for intervention. Based on data released by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) through the SIMFONI-PPA system (2025), there were 27,353 cases of violence against children in Indonesia, with 16.8% of the perpetrators being children themselves. This figure indicates that children are not only vulnerable to becoming victims but also have the potential to become perpetrators of violence. Forms of violence committed by children include physical, verbal, and emotional aggression, which generally occur in home and school environments. Extreme cases, such as a high school student in Demak who attacked a teacher with a machete after being barred from taking an exam (DetikNews, 2023), and the explosion at SMAN 72 Jakarta as a traumatic response to bullying (Kompas.com, 2025), demonstrate how unmanaged emotions can lead to dangerous acts of violence.

According to Dr. Indria Laksmi Gamayanti, a psychologist from Gadjah Mada University, perpetrators of child violence often have undetected emotional regulation disorders (ugm.ac.id, 2023). Without the skills to manage emotions such as anger, disappointment, or frustration, children tend to express negative emotions through aggressive behaviors that harm themselves or others. This phenomenon aligns with global trends, as studies by the WHO and UNICEF report an increase in behavioral issues among school-aged children. Data from the WHO Global School-based Student Health Survey (2023) shows a significant rise in smoking behavior (from 12.5% to 17.8%) and an increase in students considering suicide (from 5.4% to 8.5%).

These percentages underscore that the failure of early interventions will lead to problems in adolescence and adulthood; therefore, emotional competence is a crucial prerequisite. Social-emotional skills are an essential component closely linked to mental health and readiness to face life's challenges (Eka et al., 2025:1011).

On the other hand, the situation is far more complex for marginalized children. Children from marginalized families are a group living under inadequate social, economic, and psychological conditions (Ramadhania, n.d., 2023) and have not yet fully realized their rights (Freire, 2002 in Nurfakhira & Lukman, 2024:345-346). Environmental factors play a major role in shaping children's behavior (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022:55). This includes when they learn to adapt their behavior to the standards of their social group (Batubara et al., 2023: 5962). This statement indicates that children's social and emotional development are interrelated and significantly influence the nature of their emotional responses (Istiqomah et al.; Bakken et al. in Batubara et al., 2023:5963)

Marginalized children often exhibit aggressive behavior whether physical or verbal that causes harm as a response to complex emotions such as frustration and anger (Mayers, 2012 in Christy Sembiring & Christanti, 2024:1149). Aggression manifests in four forms: physical, verbal, anger, and hostility (Buss & Perry, 1992) and is strongly influenced by a negative environment (Asnia & Muthohar, 2024:1050-1051). Although aggression can be understood as a natural response, forms of aggression expressed inappropriately can have negative consequences (Christy Sembiring & Christanti, 2024:1150). If aggressive behavior is allowed to continue, it may become habitual and potentially persist into adulthood (Sari & Fitriah, 2021 in Wuri & Nurhidayah, 2023:169).

Marginalized children in the context of this project are marginalized children in the city of Surabaya under the auspices of the WE POSE Community, particularly those living in vulnerable environments such as settlements along railroad tracks. Children growing up near railroad tracks are highly prone to aggression due to the pressures of poverty and exposure to violence (Christy Sembiring & Christanti, 2024:1157), as well as increasingly complex psychological conditions resulting from the hardships of their living environment (Jami & Susanti, 2023 in Ramadhan et al., 2025:610) Their lifestyle, shaped by adaptation to various conditions, further complicates their already unstable psychological state. Additionally, their levels of discipline, honesty, and optimism tend to be low due to the influence of their immediate environment, which pays little attention to fostering good character.

Emotional regulation is defined as a series of activities that help children assess, manage, and express emotions appropriately (Wuri & Nurhidayah, 2023:169). The WE POSE community plays a crucial role as the driving force behind an intervention program that provides structured emotional regulation training for marginalized children. This training is based on Greenberg's (2004) framework, which encompasses five core skills: recognizing emotions, expressing emotions, managing emotions using the "Stop Think Do" technique, transforming negative emotions through positive affirmations, and calming oneself using *the Emotional Toolbox*.

This design is based on a study by Christy Sembiring (2024) titled "*Emotional Regulation Training to Reduce Aggression Among Marginalized Children Aged 6–11 Years Living Along the Railway Tracks in Subdistrict X, Surabaya.*" The research conducted by the founder of WE POSE has produced an emotional regulation training module that has served as the primary reference for interventions to date. The study's findings confirm the intervention's effectiveness by demonstrating a significant reduction in aggression scores across all dimensions. This is evidenced by a decrease in the average scores for physical aggression (140.00 to 105.70), verbal aggression (246.60 to 188.40), and anger (110.50 to 87.90) (Christy Sembiring & Christanti, 2024:1157). These data serve as crucial evidence of the urgency of the Greenberg (2004)-based method, which has proven effective and is highly needed by the target audience. However, the effectiveness of these statistics risks being lost without other media for sustainable practice. This is further compounded by operational constraints in the field, as outlined in the study's evaluation, which highlights several operational challenges such as time and logistical constraints, complex materials, and limited training duration—resulting in high logistical burdens such as preparing tools, materials, and facilitators. In fact, based on the results of an online interview with Tabitha Naema Christy, S.Psi., a psychologist and founder of the Wepose Child Care Community, conducted on Thursday, October 2, 2025, aggressive behavior requires consistent guidance and training. Additionally, technical challenges in field implementation include maintaining focus and creating a conducive environment during training sessions. The tendency of marginalized children to be hyperactive, easily distracted, and reactive is one factor that can hinder the efficient delivery of material.

A medium is needed to bridge formal WE POSE training with daily emotional regulation practices. Story content will be designed by adapting Greenberg's skills framework and practical concepts from the WE POSE training modules including "Stop Think Do," "*Emotional Toolbox*," and positive affirmation techniques featuring characters and story settings that represent the reality of marginalized children. The first factor making the

Interactive Storybook a viable solution is the limited access to gadgets among marginalized children. *Pop-up* elements serve as an “*anchor of attention*” to redirect children’s energy and focus, aligning with the characteristics of marginalized children. This approach aligns with findings that visual-interactive elements can enhance learning interest and the effectiveness of content delivery (Berliani, 2024:156). This is because an interactive *storybook* is a picture book that responds to user interactions (Devfri Ghaisani, 2020:1061). Through this medium, readers can participate in diverse ways via contextual narratives, illustrations, and physical interactions such as pop-ups, pull tabs, and flaps, as well as included supplementary tools. Furthermore, the development of this medium has proven to be engaging and practical for stimulating early literacy development in children (Fauziah et al., 2023:46).

Interactive and pop-up books have been widely utilized as tools for children’s emotional learning due to their ability to provide engaging and participatory learning experiences. Through a combination of visuals, narratives, and physical interactions, this medium is considered effective in helping children understand abstract emotional concepts. In this context, Novia, Waluyanto, and Zacky (2017) designed a picture book with pop-up features to help young children recognize and manage anger. Furthermore, Dewi et al. (2025) developed a pop-up book as an educational medium for emotional validation for preschoolers in the context of mental health. A similar design by Yusfa (2024) features the interactive book *\*Arka’s Adventure and the 6 Emotion Monsters\**, aimed at introducing basic emotions to children aged 3–6 years. Although these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of pop-up media in supporting emotional learning, the research focus remains dominated by young children and general learning contexts. These studies have not specifically addressed the life experiences of marginalized children aged 8–10 years, nor have they integrated emotion regulation techniques such as “*Stop Think Do*,” “*Emotional Toolbox*,” and positive affirmations. Therefore, this situation creates an opportunity for the current study to develop an interactive pop-up storybook that is more contextual and relevant to the social-emotional needs of marginalized children.

Based on observations conducted online on several *e-commerce* sites and offline at the Gramedia bookstore on Jl. Basuki Rahmat, Surabaya, on October 6, 2025. Currently, no children’s storybooks with an interactive *pop-up* format have been found that specifically address the contextual issues of marginalized children’s lives and adapt the *Stop Think Do* emotion regulation technique using red, yellow, and green light symbols, along with the *Emotional Toolbox* as a visual and educational approach to introduce self-calming techniques to marginalized children within a single medium. This lack of representation poses a serious

contextual problem for marginalized children, thereby hindering the process of self-identification (modeling) and the transfer of emotional skills. Interview results with Tabitha confirm that a relevant social context is crucial for learning effectiveness. Children find it easier to understand and imitate emotional regulation strategies when the media used presents symbols, narratives, and conflicts that are close to their lives or that they are already familiar with through daily experiences or prior training. Therefore, non-contextual media hinders deep *narrative engagement*, making emotional regulation messages less effective.

The design focuses on the production of an Interactive Emotional Regulation Storybook specifically targeted at the marginalized children of the WE POSE community, based on the age-group guidelines for children aged 8–10 years or equivalent to grades 2–4 of elementary school. Children aged 7–10 years are in a critical phase for understanding and managing emotions. They begin to be able to recognize feelings, express conflicts, and respond to others' emotions in a more adaptive manner (Merianti and Nuine, 2018; Ilham, 2020 in Marsari, 2021:1820), so they need a medium that supports this process concretely and sustainably. Marginalized children participating in the WE POSE program have received emotional regulation training but lack accompanying visual materials to help sustain those skills in daily life. Therefore, an interactive pop-up storybook serves as a relevant solution to visualize the “*Stop Think Do*” steps and the use of *the Emotional Toolbox* in a simple, engaging, and easy-to-practice manner. This medium is expected to help children recognize their emotions, calm themselves before acting, and reinforce the training outcomes they have received.

The primary design objective is to create a resource that helps children recognize, understand, and manage their emotions in a fun, accessible, and socially relevant way. It is hoped that this book will serve as a reinforcement tool for the emotional regulation strategies taught in the WE POSE program, while also providing a learning tool for children to practice outside of training sessions. *Toolbox* as a visual and educational approach to introduce self-calming techniques to marginalized children within a single medium. This lack of representation poses a serious contextual problem for marginalized children, thereby hindering the process of self-identification and the transfer of emotional skills. Interview results with Tabitha confirm that a relevant social context is crucial for learning effectiveness. Children find it easier to understand and imitate emotional regulation strategies when the media used presents symbols, narratives, and conflicts that are close to their lives or that they are already familiar with through daily experiences or prior training. Therefore, non-contextual media hinders deep *narrative engagement*, making emotional regulation messages less effective.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

- 1.2.1 Emotional vulnerability and aggressive behavior still observed among marginalized children under the WE POSE program, based on observations through interactions and targeted monitoring conducted on Saturday, October 18 and December 6, 2025, at the RW Community Hall and the densely populated Lumumba railway settlement area—designated as Point 1 of the WE POSE Community.
- 1.2.2 Failure to regulate emotions early on has long-term effects on risky behavior in the future (Sari & Fitriah, 2021 in Wuri & Nurhidayah, 2023:169), as evidenced by SIMFONI-PPA (2025) data, which indicates 27,353 cases of child abuse, with 16.8% of perpetrators being children, and the occurrence of extreme cases such as those in Demak and SMAN 72 Jakarta. Additionally, an interview with Tabitha Naema Christy, S.Psi., the founder of WE POSE, indicates that ongoing support and supplementary materials are necessary to ensure that emotional regulation skills do not fade away.
- 1.2.3 Currently, the available learning materials tend to be conventional. WE POSE does not yet have interactive visual media to help children practice emotional regulation outside of sessions. Furthermore, there are operational challenges in the field, such as time and logistical constraints, the complexity of the material, and the short duration of the training, which result in a heavy burden on the preparation of tools, materials, and facilitators in the research evaluation titled “Emotional Regulation Training to Reduce Aggression in Marginalized Children Aged 6–11 Years Living Near Railway Tracks in X Subdistrict, Surabaya” and interviews with the community founder.
- 1.2.4 There have been challenges regarding the children’s engagement and focus during intervention sessions to date. Based on an interview with WE POSE facilitator Nurmalita Herdiana on November 16, 2025, the children tend to be very active and easily distracted, often hindering the delivery of the material.
- 1.2.5 Interactive storybooks that highlight the lives of marginalized children while visualizing the *Stop Think Do* technique (red-yellow-green lights), the *Emotional Toolbox*, and positive affirmations have not yet been specifically developed for emotional regulation learning. This finding is based on observations conducted at the WE POSE Community, bookstores (Gramedia), and e-commerce sites.

### 1.3. Problem Statement

How can we design an interactive storybook about emotional regulation for marginalized children aged 8–10?

### 1.4 Problem Scope

To clarify the scope of the design and avoid excessive expansion of the theme, the following limitations are established:

- 1.4.1 The primary medium designed is a physical interactive storybook with pop-up elements. The design does not include digital media, interactive applications, animated videos, or other forms of media beyond printed books.
- 1.4.2 Content Limitations The storybook’s content will focus on emotional regulation skills based on Greenberg’s (2004) concept and adapt practical approaches from the WE POSE Community training module, including the *Stop-Think-Do* emotional regulation technique, *the Emotional Toolbox*, and positive affirmations. The material will not delve deeply into psychological theory or clinical approaches and other emotional regulation techniques.
- 1.4.3 The story content drawn from the *Emotional Toolbox* concept is limited to only three of the ten main tools introduced in the WE POSE module. The selection of these three tools is based on the preferences of the target audience—children aged 8–10—as well as input from the founder (Kak Tabitha), who emphasized the importance of focusing on the most relevant and easily practicable emotional regulation skills for children. Nevertheless, all ten tools in *the Emotional Toolbox* will still be briefly introduced in the media, ensuring that children retain a comprehensive understanding of the variety of emotional regulation strategies.
- 1.4.4 Target Segment Limitations This media design is specifically intended for marginalized children aged 8–10 who are participants in the WE POSE Community intervention program in the Surabaya area. Children outside this age range or from non-marginalized backgrounds are not the primary focus of the design.
- 1.4.5 Story Context and Visualization Limitations The stories and illustrations in the book will be adapted to the social environment of marginalized children in Surabaya, such as life in densely populated areas, simple interactions, and common emotional conflicts. However,

the context does not explicitly refer to a specific geographic location to maintain the flexibility of the media's use.

- 1.4.6 **Limitations of Function and Purpose** This book is designed as a supplementary learning tool to reinforce children's emotional regulation practices outside of WE POSE training, as well as a facilitator's guide and self-learning resource for children—not as an assessment tool or professional clinical therapy medium.
- 1.4.7 **Contextual Limitations** The story and its visual settings are inspired by the lives of marginalized children and railway settlements, but are presented only in general terms and *do not include sensitive specific details* such as addresses, area names, or extreme conditions that could stigmatize certain groups. Environmental elements are presented only as *general representations* of the lives of marginalized children, not as documentation of a specific area.

## **1.5 Design Objectives**

- 1.5.1 To design an interactive visual medium in the form of a pop-up storybook that helps marginalized children aged 8–10 years recognize and respond to emotions more adaptively through visual experiences, narratives, and concrete physical activities.
- 1.5.2 To simplify and visualize the concept of emotion regulation derived from the WE POSE training materials into the form of stories and visual illustrations, so that emotion regulation skills can be learned and practiced by children continuously outside of mentoring sessions.
- 1.5.3 Developing a self-directed learning tool that children can use without relying entirely on training sessions, which are limited by time, logistics, and duration in the field.
- 1.5.4 Enhancing children's engagement, focus, and learning environment during the learning process by utilizing interactive elements and story settings that are close to the daily lives of marginalized children.
- 1.5.5 Providing specific and relevant emotional regulation learning materials by integrating the Stop Think Do technique, the Emotional Toolbox, and positive affirmations—which were learned during training sessions—into an interactive storybook that is currently unavailable specifically for marginalized children aged 8–10 years.

## **1.6 Design Outcomes**

- 1.6.1 Providing an interactive storybook medium based on interactive illustrations designed to help marginalized children aged 8–10 understand emotional experiences through a reading process that is enjoyable, contextual, and closely aligned with their daily lives.
- 1.6.2 Serving as a practical tool for children to develop sustainable emotional regulation skills outside of formal intervention sessions.
- 1.6.3 Providing an interactive visual medium that supports the sustainability of emotional regulation practices within the WE POSE program, as it can be used independently, repeatedly, and flexibly by children outside of mentoring sessions.
- 1.6.4 This design contributes to the development of emotional education media based on inclusive design, particularly for marginalized groups of children who remain underrepresented in interactive children’s literature.

## 1.7 Design Framework

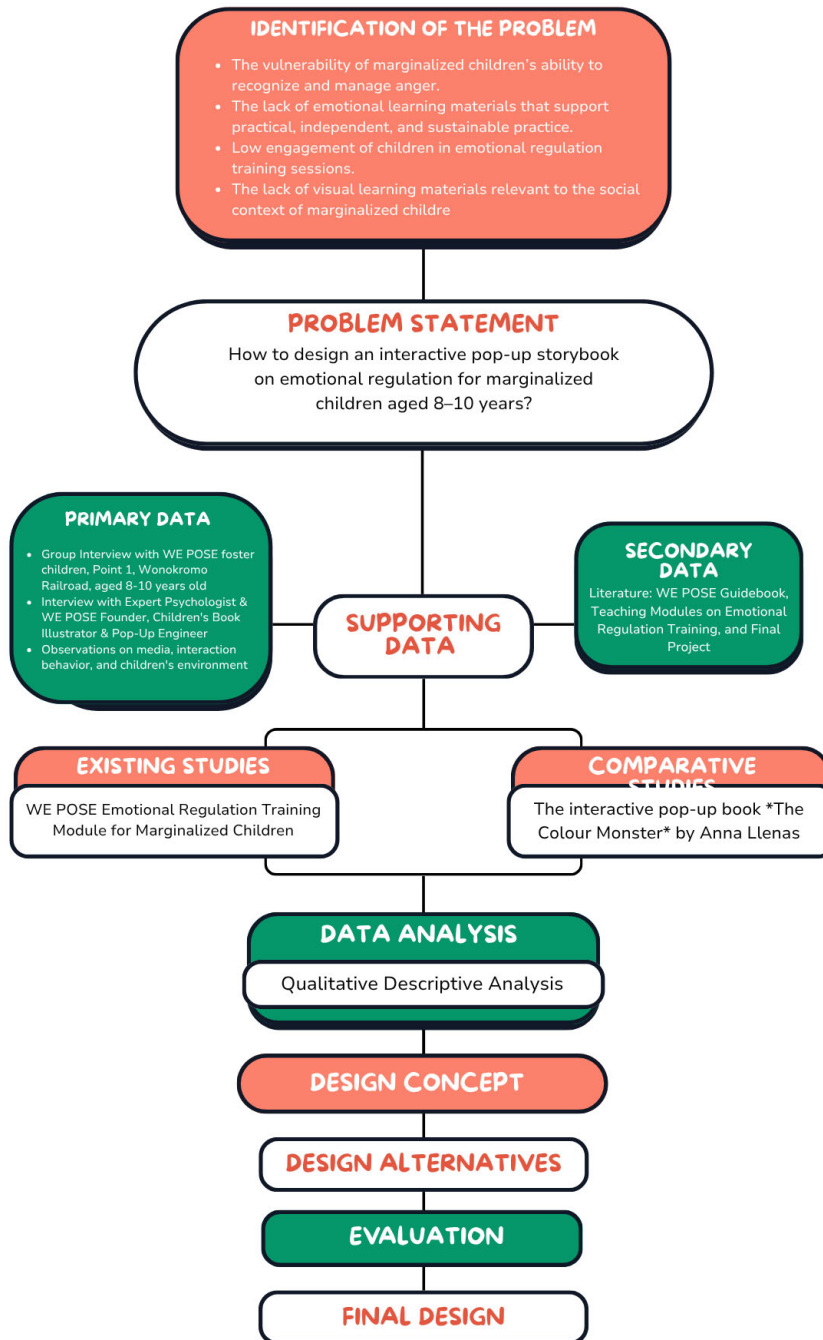


Figure 1. 1 Design Framework

Source: Personal Document