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Visual Communication Design

Practice notes

# Interactive Ebook to Help Young Adults Face Quarter Life Crisis in Modern Era

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**Abstract:** This project aims to help Indonesian young adults gain knowledge on how to overcome quarter-life crisis through Filosofi Teras Interactive eBook while also using interactivity as a strength to gain their interest. The method used is In-depth interview (qualitative) with the target market and the experts. The results is proven that the target market has a level of interest towards quarter life crisis and reading however traditional books is not enough to keep their attention. Interactive eBook therefore is suitable to convey the content of the books with its illustration, animation, audio, and interactivity. Interactive eBook can help the target market to focus and enjoy reading by looking at the animation and keep their attention by curiosity what will happen on the next page.

**Keywords:** interactive ebook, quarter life crisis, reading, informative, concise

## INTRODUCTION

Quarter-life crisis has been a topic for research for many psychology major university students all across Indonesia. Students from Muhammadiyah Malang university namely Alfiesyahrianta et al. samples 219 college students from various majors in Indonesia to study how religiosity plays a role in students experiencing quarter-life crisis and finds more than half admits experience the crisis. Other research also includes examining the level of resilience of Bandung students towards the quarter-life crisis as conducted by Elgea et al. from Islam Bandung university. This implies that the quarter-life crisis is experienced by many, therefore creating a need for researchers to analyze how an individual can prepare better during the crisis period.

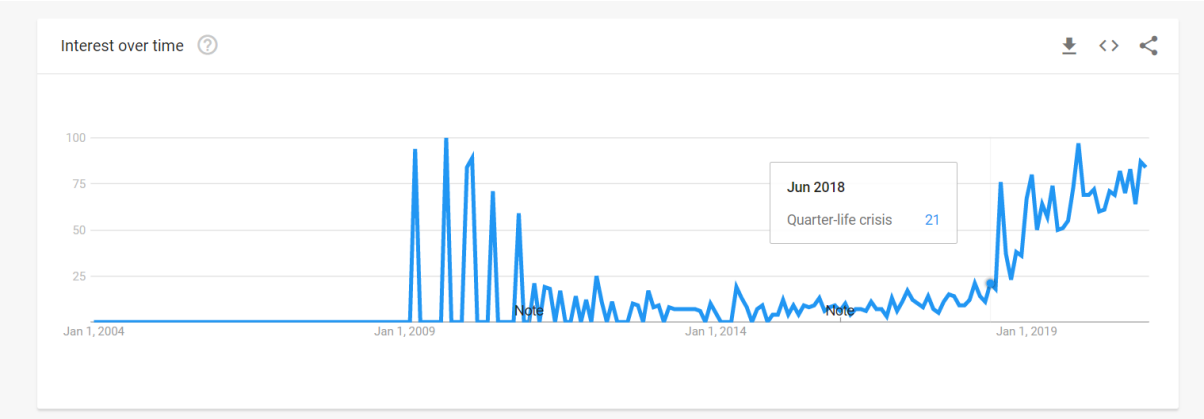



**Figure 1.** Google trends on quarter-life crisis in Indonesia.

This topic is not a mere coincidence as according to Google Trends, the amount of times 'quarter-life crisis' has been searched spiked since January 2009 in Indonesia and continue to steadily grow since June 2018. Another interesting point is the top five sub region where the search demand is high is from Java areas such as Banten, Special Region of Yogyakarta, West Java, Central Java, followed by West Sumatra.

In developmental psychology, psychologists focus on the development of human beings' from multiple angles such as cognitive, emotional, intellectual and analyzing how humans function and change in different stages of development (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Baltes, Lindenberger, and Staudinger (2006) stated there are four development stages namely infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. However, in the year of 2000 Psychologist Jeffrey Jensen Arneett proposed the idea of a new phase of development between adolescence and young adulthood roughly between the age of 18 to 25 called emerging adulthood.

Arnett began to conduct interviews of 300 young people from the age of 18 - 29 across the nation over the span of five years asking what they want in life (Munsey, C., 2006). The research finds the majority of Americans young adults answered ambiguously about whether they feel they have entered adulthood. It was seen that a large number of participants shared the same perception of leaving adolescence but have not felt completely entered young adulthood. They are struggling to place a clear line and "regard themselves as being neither adolescents nor adults" (Arnett J.J, 2000).

The term 'quarter-life crisis' is first coined by Alexander Robbins and Abby Wilner in their book Quarter-life Crisis: The Unique Challenge in Your Twenties (2001). The book talks about both authors' personal experience of being overwhelmed by the decisions they have to make for their future in contrast to the already predetermined decisions during the school years (Hidayah & Kistanto, 2016). Dr Alex Fowke, a clinical psychologist describes the quarter-life crisis as "a period of insecurity, doubt, and disappointment surrounding your career, relationships, and financial situation" (Fitzmaurice, 2017). This crisis is commonly experienced by an individual in their early twenties until mid thirties when being confused and uncertain is most prominent (Hosie, R., 2017).

Dr Alex Fowke further points out how the quarter-life crisis occurs following the major changes happening in one's adolescence causing the individual to begin doubting their own selves while starting to face all kinds of stresses associated with becoming an adult (Fitzmaurice, 2017). Based on LinkedIn survey research on common stress causes for quarter-life crisis, most of the time career and financial issues are the most common causes. Uncertainty of career or life future, frustration of career path, worrying about income, and agonizing about purchasing a property are the top four concerns (LinkedIn Corporate Communications, 2017).

In his study "Emotional Exhaustion in Part-Time Students", Alifandi explained that part-time students face a lot of workload from work and academic studies and other pressures from life, thus ultimately creating an emotional exhaustion. Alifandi (2016) describes emotional exhaustion as a state of mind where an individual constantly feels drained and emotionally worn-out. This feeling of overwhelmedness and having no power or control in life can affect daily activities through signs of lack of motivation or concentration and laziness. If not overcome at an earlier stage, this stressed out state can cause permanent damage to your health (Cafasso, J., 2019).

When people experience a quarter-life crisis and want some form of advice but do not know where to go for answers. Books, then, are recommended to help navigate people their way out of the quarter-life crisis (Lutz J., 2017). A professor of psychology at the University of Scranton John C. Norcross, PhD, also says that the majority of psychologists recommend self-help books or any other resources to their patients as a supplement to psychotherapy ("Self-Help: Popular, but Effective?", 2003).

Self-help genre is a category for readers who seek guidance or personal enlightenment for any part of their life that they want to fix. By the end of the book, the readers will be more confident and have a better grasp on how to handle their relationship or financial problems (Kalpaxis, V., 2020). Self-help books, particularly motivational and inspirational books, have seen an increase in sales from 1.4 million units in 2013 to 4.3 million units in 2019. Most notable is the growing popularity of "Girl, Stop Apologizing" by Rachel Hollis and "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck" by Mark Manson (Graham, L., 2020). "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck" was first published in Indonesian in February 2018 and until 2019, the book has been reprinted for 12 times earning the title of Best Seller Book by New York Times and Globe and Mail (Mustaqim, S., 2019).

Since the mid-2000s the publishing industry has been moving towards digitalization following the development of technology such as the usage of smartphones or touchscreen tablet devices. One of the prominent examples is the increase in digital prints for newspaper, magazines, books and ePublishing for readers to access different kinds of eBook (Ali I.,2012). PT. Mizan Pustaka, a well-known publishing company in Indonesia has started their own strategy into the digital era. In an interview with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) PT. Mizan Pustaka Yadi Saeful Hidayat in 2017, he stated Mizan would continue to create innovation such as the implementation of augmented reality into children's books (Pascal, A., 2017).

The author hopes to help young adults reflect better during their quarter-life crisis with the help of self help books. Examining the low reading culture in Indonesia. This project aims to generate more interest for reading by having more appeal in a book that incorporates appealing visual elements and interactivity inside. Lastly, having seen the trend for quarter-life crisis and the potential to be more acknowledged in the future, the author sees that Filosofi Teras can be of help to the readers and have a lot of potential to be a good interactive ebook.

The scope of this project will be an interactive eBook of "Filosofi Teras" written by Henry Manampiring targeted for young adults (20 to 35 years old) experiencing quarter-life crisis. The language used will follow the book that is Bahasa Indonesia because this book aims to help Indonesian to prepare or help them face the crisis. The project will focus on creating the cover, table of contents, and chapter 8 of the book as a sample of the interactive eBook. Some of the contents such as videos or audios will be outsourced however will still be relevant to the content of the book and intended to add more depth to that certain topic.

## METHODS

In this research, the author collected data from articles, dissertation, and journals in order to research the quarter-life crisis as the background problem this thesis wants to focus on. The data covered the definition of quarterlife crisis and its history then saw the trend in self-help books and how interactive ebooks can help expand self-help book impact. In the theoretical foundation and literature review, data were collected from articles, journals, and websites to cover substantial data from psychology theory behind quarter-life crisis and possible sources in triggering quarter-life crisis. The literature review analyzes quarter life crisis and how Indonesians are going to experience it based on the existing development phase called emerging adulthood. The theoretical foundation also includes interactive book theory, design principles theory, UI/UX design theory to iOS design guidelines. The literature review then covers the effectiveness of interactive ebooks towards their readers based on research papers.

In order to know more about the quarter-life crisis from a psychology perspective, an interview was conducted to the founder of psychology organization Arsanara.id that focuses on self-development for individuals, education purpose, and organization. For the interactive ebook, the author interviewed an interactive design lecturer and an editor-in-chief from Mizan Publishing, one of the well-known

publishing companies. The interactive design lecturer's opinions give insight on how significant interactive ebooks are in Indonesia and what are the important criterias to be paid attention to when creating one. Editor-in-chief talks to the author about what is important in editing a good book, how far digitalization is in the publishing industry as well as the society's interest in reading overall.

Lastly, the author interviewed two types of target market, avid readers and non-avid readers, to understand better reading from personal experience. The interviewee talks about the obstacles of reading and what kind of expectations an interactive ebook has in order to ensure a smoother process in reading. Overall the interview results provide helpful feedback in this project.

## RESULTS

### Communication Strategy

The target market of this interactive ebook will be avid readers as the primary target market and non-avid readers as the secondary target market with both of these targets at the age of 20 - 35 years old that is experiencing quarter-life crisis or show worry about their own future to some degree. To reach out to these people effectively, the author will be using an emotional approach with the usage of friendly and informal language so the product will not be intimidating to the users. Not only that, the visuals used will be illustrated so the readers do not only understand the content of the text better but also find it more interesting hence continues to read the book in the process.

### Creative Strategy

The creative strategy is to create an interactive ebook that is able to give knowledge to young adults on how to handle quarter-life crisis. Out of all the chapters in the book, the author decides to choose chapter 8 on how to use stoicism in the face of hardships and disasters for two reasons. First is because as a sample of the book, the chapter chosen needs to be relatable and generates huge interest in the rest of the book, similar to a trailer of a movie. As young adults whether just entering society or individuals who are lost in their future, hardships and disasters are something everyone faces therefore there is a lot of potential for more readers to be interested as well. Coincidentally, the message of the book also aligns with how individuals should deal with change which is a needed advice for people experiencing quarter-life crisis. Second is because the chapters provide a lot of visual potential by mentioning philosophers such as Marcus Aurelius, Seneca as well as prominent figures such as Walt Disney or Steve Jobs.

The interactive ebook aims to provide more context to the incidents mentioned in the original book such as Surabaya bombing in 2018, teaching of William Irvine in his book "A Guide To Good Life", the 3P concepts, and many others. This information can be linked to an article or give a chance for the author to draw a chart to illustrate the concepts and how it applies in the real world. This will answer a lot of the readers' needs based on the interview in chapter 3 on how readers expect the information would be concise and clear when reading a book without spending too much time in a section without understanding the concept.

The content will be edited to make it more concise without losing its point and will be split into many pages with each page containing one section which the readers can scroll down to ensure the flow of reading is not disturbed. This method of grouping the same information in one page will hopefully help the readers memorize the content better. Animations, illustrations will be used moderately as their role is to complement the text and keep the book interesting as what Newsweek does when creating their digital website. If possible, some audio will be included in the book in some sections to help create more engaging experiences for the readers.

## Objective

The goal of this book is to provide knowledge on the quarter-life crisis for young adults at the age of 20-35 years old. The medium is changed due to the change of how products are being consumed in recent years. Ebooks are one of the proofs of how demands are changing however ebooks are not enough because it does not suit well with Indonesians that do not like reading in general therefore more visuals and interactivity in the book hopefully will be able to keep Indonesian young adults' attention span and enjoy the reading experience. This will be an alternative solution, the in-between book and films which Indonesian dislike and like.

## Chapter Summary

The summary of the 12 chapters inside the book then need to be considered as the first step to choose which chapter is suitable to be used as the main chapter in the interactive e-book project.

Chapter 1 titled "Survei Khawatir Nasional" served as context to illustrate to the readers how a large number of people currently are facing many worries and struggles.

Chapter 2 titled "Sebuah Filosofi yang Realistis" is introducing a solution to the worry-filled modern life that is the philosophy of stoicism. The chapter begins to explain the concept and how it can be applied generally in different kind of situations.

Chapter 3 titled "Hidup Selaras dengan Alam" focuses on how humans have to use their intelligence and conscience to navigate their life according to nature. Going against it will bring unhappiness to one's life.

Chapter 4 titled "Dikotomi Kendali" teaches how not all things in life, such as wealth, reputation, and other people's opinion, are not under one's control. Instead, it is better for us to focus on things that we can (the way we think, our opinion, and our perception).

Chapter 5 titled "Mengendalikan Interpretasi dan Presepsi" mentions how negative emotions are often a result of disoriented logical thinking. It is important to develop the ability to shy away from those negative thoughts and learn to objectively assess any situation before doing something.

Chapter 6 titled "Memperkuat Mental" reminds us on the many worst scenarios are mostly exist only inside our mind. It is important to prepare one selves to the worst possibility such as losing all our belongings in order to keep a cool head and be rational when it happened.

Chapter 7 titled "Hidup di antara Orang yang Menyebalkan" acknowledge that humans are social creatures therefore will bound to have uncomfortable situations. Be open minded as there is always a possibility that the other person means no harm or just plain ignorant and we may have been in the wrong or misunderstood the situation.

Chapter 8 titled "Menghadapi Kesusahan dan Musibah" shows how every obstacle we face in life is outside of control and it is better to treat it as a test in order to be better, stronger, and an opportunity to develop more.

Chapter 9 titled "Menjadi Orang Tua" enters a new realm that is parenthood and emphasize on managing the parent's expectation of their child while paying their utmost attention to the process of achieving anything rather than the result only.

Chapter 10 titled "Citizen of The World" focuses on all of the people in this worlds are one race, human so ethnicity, race, nationalities should not matter. We should help each other as we are the same.

Chapter 11 titled "Tentang Kematian" tells how living is not about how long one lived but the quality when one is living. Accepting death as it is a part of nature and live using intelligence and conscience according to nature.

Chapter 12 titled "Penutup" wraps up the entire book and connects the entire concept into one under the name of Stoicism.

## Design Strategy

In designing the overall layout of the interactive ebook, the user-first approach will be used. Prioritizing users capacity to absorb information in a single page enough to not overwhelm them but makes them interested to go to the next page. Illustrations to explain existing concepts should be very clear to the point users understand the main point without having to read one or two paragraphs. These are the methods the author wants to apply during the design process. For technical details, the theory explained in chapter 2 about layout and UI/UX theory will be used.

## Visual Strategy

The visual will be based on the original concept that is applied in the book, the usage of line illustration. However, the lack of colors are most likely due to their effort in saving the cost of printing. In screen design the author would take advantage and use more colors in illustrating so it is more vivid as a whole. The color scheme will follow the original book but with different color code to ensure the best color stands out on screen.

## Work Process

### *Brainstorm*

Before starting to design, a brainstorming was conducted where the author highlighted keywords that can represent the project and envision roughly how it would like. Since the beginning, the original color palette of white, yellow, and teal is kept. The interactive ebook is going to have illustrations as its main visual. It also lists out the main contents of the book which is cover, table of contents, and chapter 8 with a new addition of a guide page later.

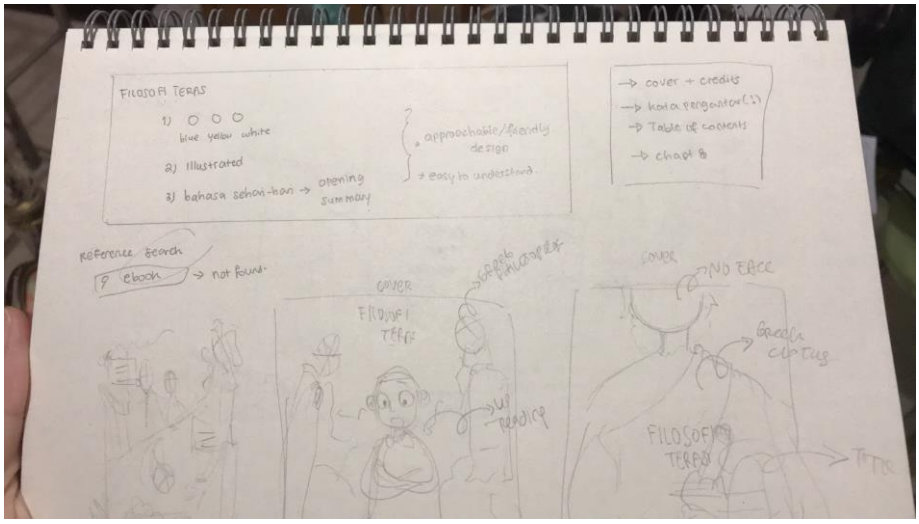



**Figure 2.** Brainstorm.

### *Moodboard*

The moodboard above is dominated by designs that use a lot of white space and the title is usually very big or thick. The book content will be distributed in a way that does not overwhelm the readers and uses a very vibrant color in contrast to the very organized body text. After many research and observing on which style goes best in this project and something the author is able to do, the style that is not too detailed but offers a sense of playfulness and not too serious style which this project aims to be. The author wants the illustrations to have some lines defined but in a bigger picture, is more to the shape rather than being realistic. This will be more aligned with the original art of cartoon-ish style but also lets the author save some time compared to having to detail each and every illustration. In this way, the

author will have more room to focus on animation movements or able to add more illustration if necessary.

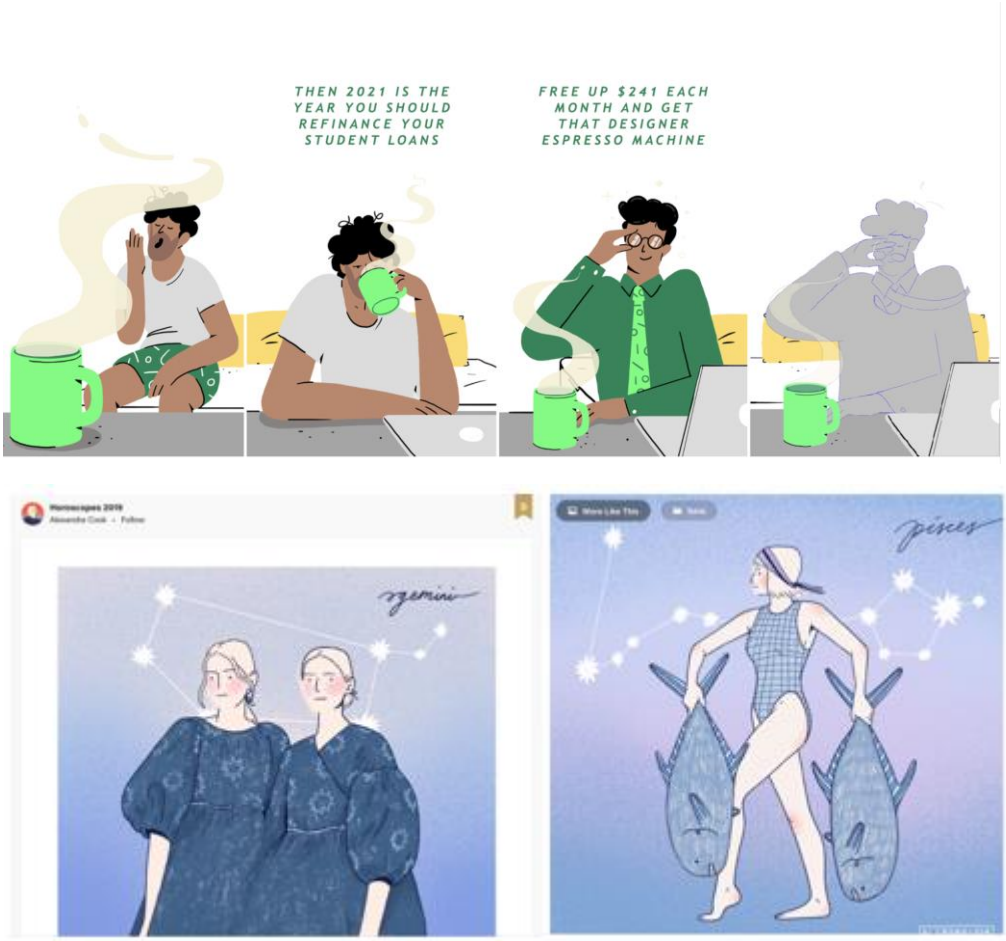



**Figure 3.** Moodboard references.

### *Book Content*

The content for the book will be from the original book with editing applied. The content is shortened, the explanation is rearranged to an easier-to-digest structure, and many examples are deleted out to give room to focus on important ones. During this process, the original meaning from the book is taken seriously into consideration so it does not stray from the book.

## Design Development

### *Illustration (Style)*

The illustration style for this project is inspired by Alexandra Cook in her Horoscope illustration (as seen in the Illustration Reference). The style will emphasize on the lines and the color will be added but not too overwhelming. This will also help the author in the process of animating key scenes.

**Figure 4.** Illustration sketch.

## *Illustration for Concepts*

As the book has many concepts due to the influence of philosophy, instead of through words, there will be visuals such as above to illustrate them in hope the readers are able to understand better and faster.

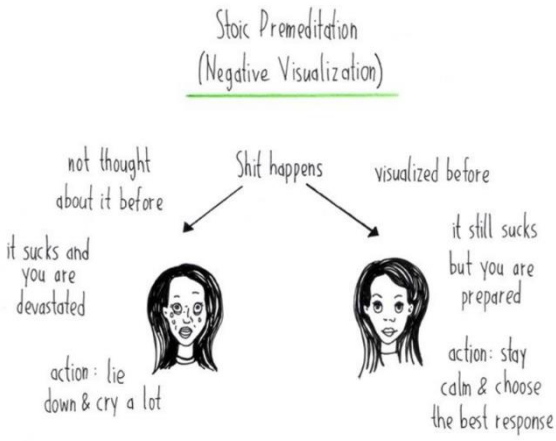



**Figure 5.** Illustration for concepts reference.

## *Layout*

The author reads the book beforehand and tries to pinpoint which part has the most potential to be illustrated and how to make the book interactive. The content of the book will be filled with bite-sized text along with illustration that will help depict the text so it is more relatable. In Adobe XD, the page will be divided into 4 column as per chapter 2 states, it is one of the most flexible layout especially considering the iPad people uses will be different so making it adaptable is very important.

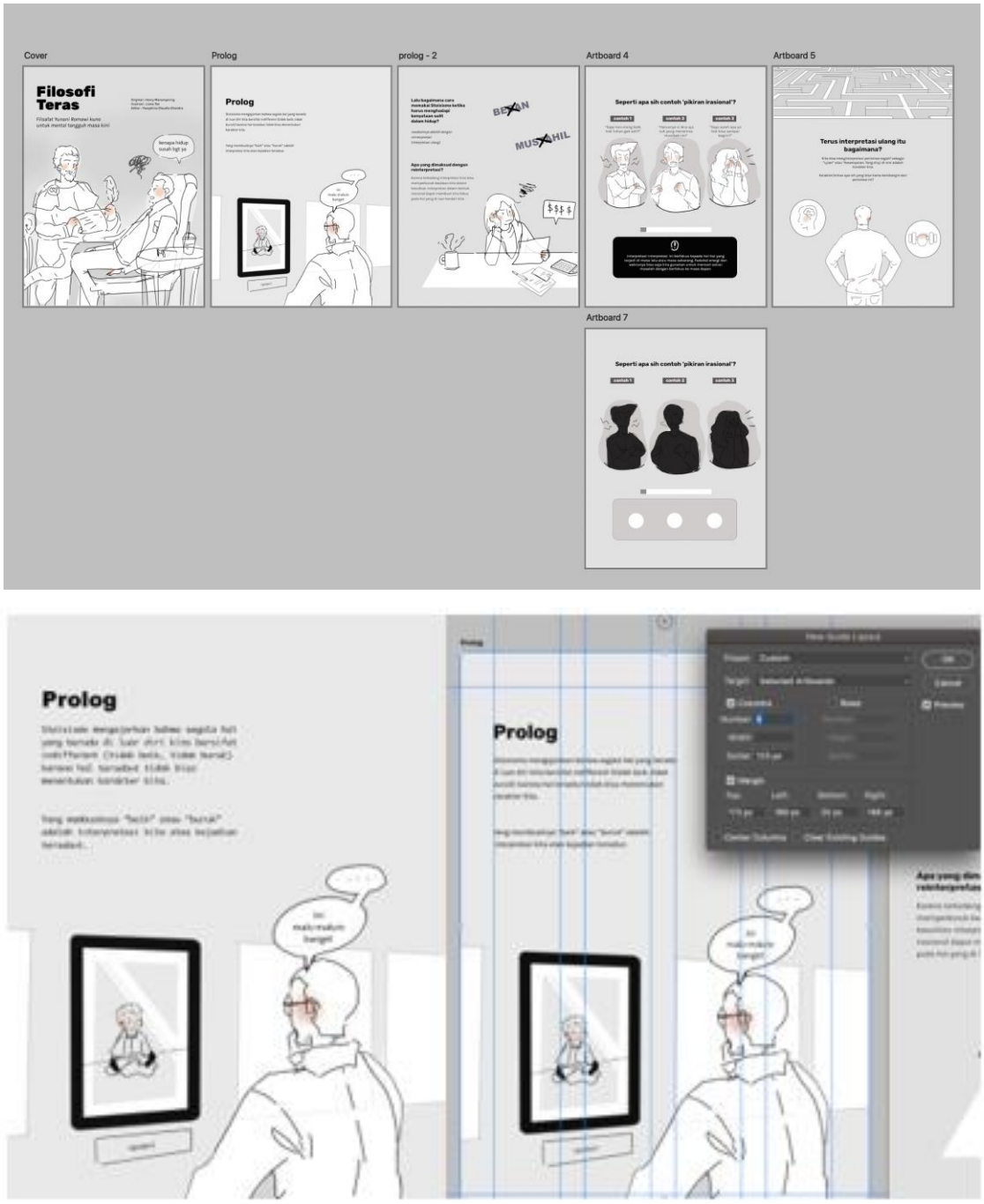



**Figure 6.** Sketch and digital version of layout.

## *Typography*

As this is a screen design, the author goes to fontpair.io that pairs up screen fonts from Google Font together. The title should be thick and stands out while the body text should be easy to read as whole. In the end, these three pairs are the three most potential font for the product. To further filter the fonts, the author tries to edit the title to a quote and imagine how well the font will fill up the page. After trying the font, Rubik and Karla pairing was most suitable because Rubik font is very flexible that can be as thick as Archivo Black and from a distance, Karla font is more readable than Roboto.

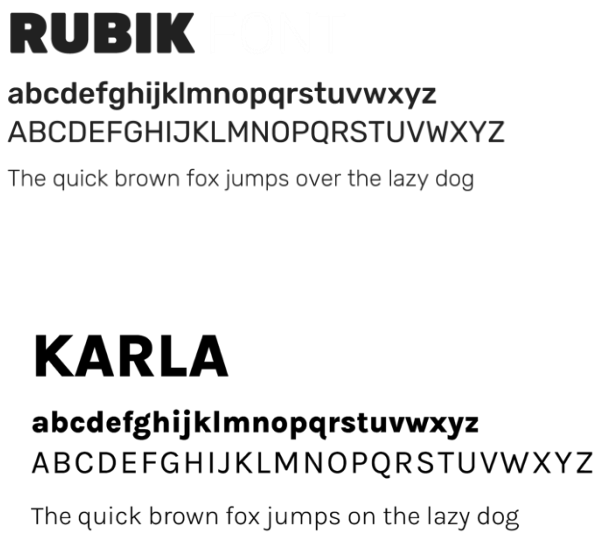



**Figure 7.** Rubik and Karla font.

### *Colors*

The color scheme for the most part will follow the branding of the original book which uses teal, yellow, white, and black. However, the interactive ebook will use a different color code will be used in order to have a more vibrant color in the screen design. This color scheme applies to the overall design of the book and may be dominant in illustrations, however, does not constrict the illustration as a whole i.e. coloring for the skin and scenery.

**Figure 8.** General color pallette.

## Final Design

The interactive eBook is made specifically for iPad 5th Generation (2017) with the size of 2.048 x 1.536 (264 ppi) and 4:3 aspect ratio. It has been tested on the author's iPad and it works easier to swipe in order to go to the next page, pressing the table contents is also easier, and overall experience in interactivity increased in general. There is also less time for it to load to the next page because everything has been downloaded beforehand.

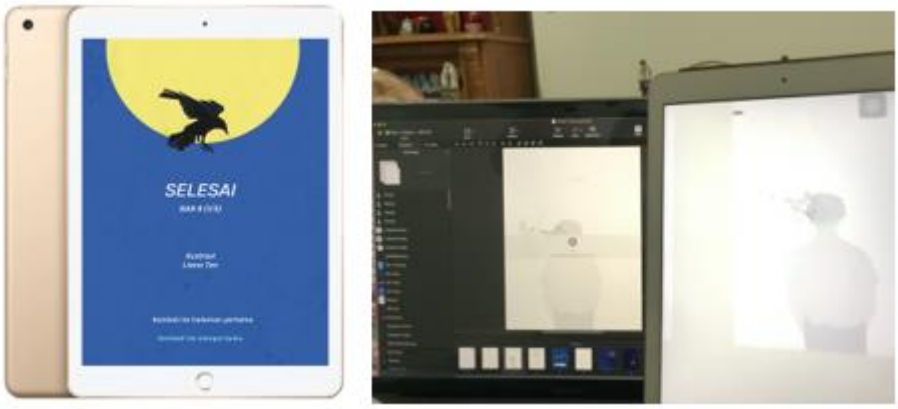
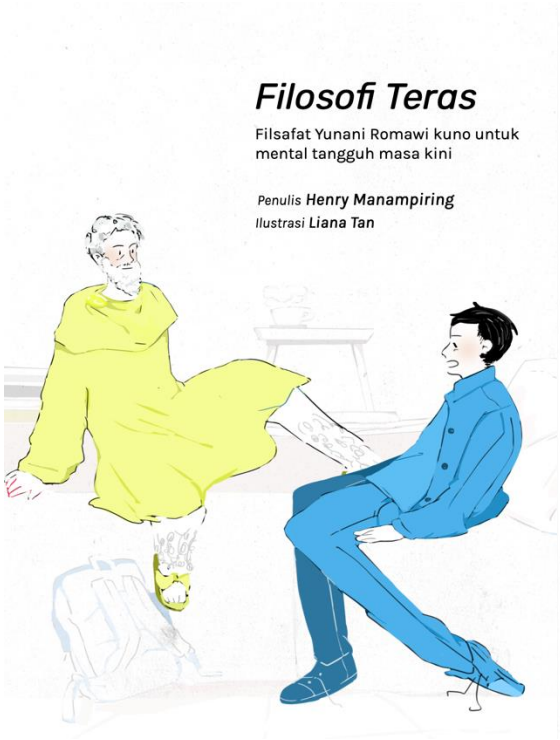



**Figure 9.** Interactive eBook in iPad.

There are a total of 13 pages in interactive eBook including cover, table of contents, content, and ending. The screenshots above include multiple screenshots of some pages to give more explanatory images of what happened if it was clicked. The interactive eBook also used photos such as the mountain and the sky to enhance the immersive experience through better visuals compared to illustrations. Ultimately, when using the edited photos, several users gave positive feedback for its good overall look. There are several key concepts used in these illustrations. The cover takes the concept of going to psychologist with Epictetus as the psychologist and the young man as the patient. It also signals as getting help which hopefully can resonate with readers. The young boy on the next page, first starts with a flashback of bad memories of him only eating scrap food while also being physically abused by his father thus having bad grades on top of that. This is to help readers to imagine themselves in their lowest point which the page talks about.

The page of 'irrational thinking' forces the users to press button until it is gone then revealing a box with a hidden passage. The button symbolized a person's energy. As an individual uses up their energy to think irrational thought, there would be no energy left to think of a solution from the current situation. The scene where a ghost approach Epictetus symbolizes the inner negative thought that Epictetus would have received from outsiders as a respond to his effort. As the users clicked, Epictetus continued to work hard and kept his positive outlook in life which cause the ghost to disappear. This is meant to emphasize that any individual has control, at least, on how they would like to perceive matters. Clicking on three buttons on the next page would change the man into different professions or future. Learning patience from experience is visualized with the man turned into a monk. Although an exaggeration, this page meant to tell readers how each lesson learned from a problem can led them to different paths. Lastly, the crow with the night sky is to visualize the quote Epictetus state under the illustration. Here, the crow is in a gallant pose, brave and strong, almost seemingly beautiful with the sparkling sky at the back. This is the opposite visual of a crow that is thought to bring only bad luck.



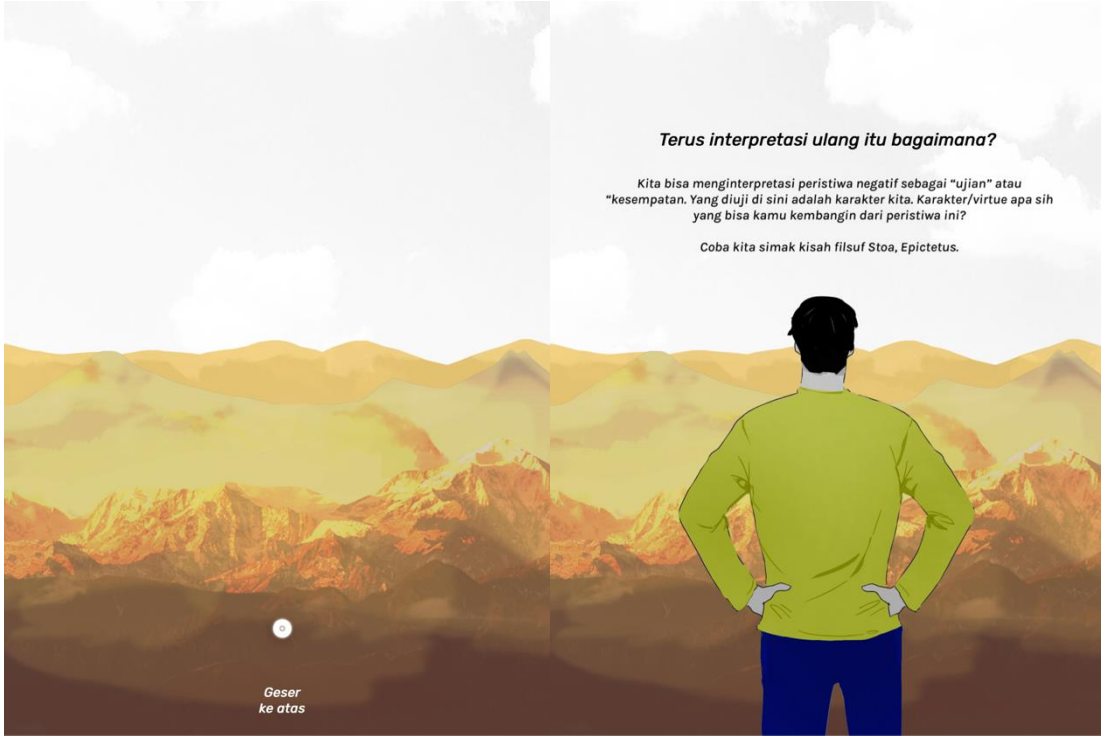
*Prolog*

*Stoisisme mengajarkan bahwa segala hal yang berada di luar diri kita bersifat indifferent (tidak baik, tidak buruk) karena hal tersebut tidak bisa menentukan karakter kita.*

*Yang membuatnya "baik" atau "buruk" adalah interpretasi kita atas kejadian tersebut.*

Lalu bagaimana cara memakai Stoisisme ketika harus menghadapi kenyataan sulit dalam hidup? Jawabannya adalah dengan reinterpretasi (interpretasi ulang).
Karena terkadang interpretasi kita bisa memperburuk keadaan kita dalam kesulitan. Interpretasi dalam bentuk irasional dapat membuat kita fokus pada hal yang di luar kendali kita

Seperti apa sih contoh 'pikiran irasional'?
contoh 1
"Saya kan orang baik, kok Tuhan gak adil?"
contoh 2
"Semua ini salah si anu! Dia penyebabnya!"
contoh 3
"Emang dosa aku apa sih sampai jadi gini?"
Interpretasi-interpretasi ini berfokus kepada hal-hal yang terjadi di masa lalu atau masa sekarang. Padahal energi dan waktunya bisa saja kita gunakan untuk mencari solusi masalah dengan berfokus ke masa depan.


Geser ke atas
Terus interpretasi ulang itu bagaimana?
Kita bisa menginterpretasi peristiwa negatif sebagai "ujian" atau "kesempatan. Yang diuji di sini adalah karakter kita. Karakter/virtue apa sih yang bisa kamu kembangin dari peristiwa ini?
Coba kita simak kisah filsuf Stoa, Epictetus.

Epictetus, seorang tokoh filsuf Stoa, mulanya adalah seorang budak yang jalannya pincang. Walau tidak terlahir dalam keluarga yang kaya,
gulir ke bawah
Dia mengubah ketidakuntungannya menjadi keuntungan dengan terus gigih dalam belajar filsafat. Kepintarannya ini kemudian berhasil meningkatkan status sosialnya.
Dia mengubah ketidakuntungannya menjadi keuntungan dengan terus gigih dalam belajar filsafat. Kepintarannya ini kemudian berhasil meningkatkan status sosialnya.
Suatu hari, dia mendapatkan kebebasan dari perbudakan dan dia berhasil mendirikan sekolah filsafat yang ajarannya mempengaruhi sosok kaisar Marcus Aurelius.

Interpretasi pertama yang kamu bisa bentuk adalah "Kesulitan ini akan memperkuat saya".
Walau kesulitan yang kamu jalani sekarang masih terasa berat dan sulit, tetapi kesulitan ini sebenarnya akan membentuk kamu menjadi pribadi yang lebih kuat kelak.
Klik disini
Kamu hanyalah seorang budak yang bahkan tidak bisa berjalan dengan baik. Membaca buku tidak akan mengubah takdirmu
Klik disini

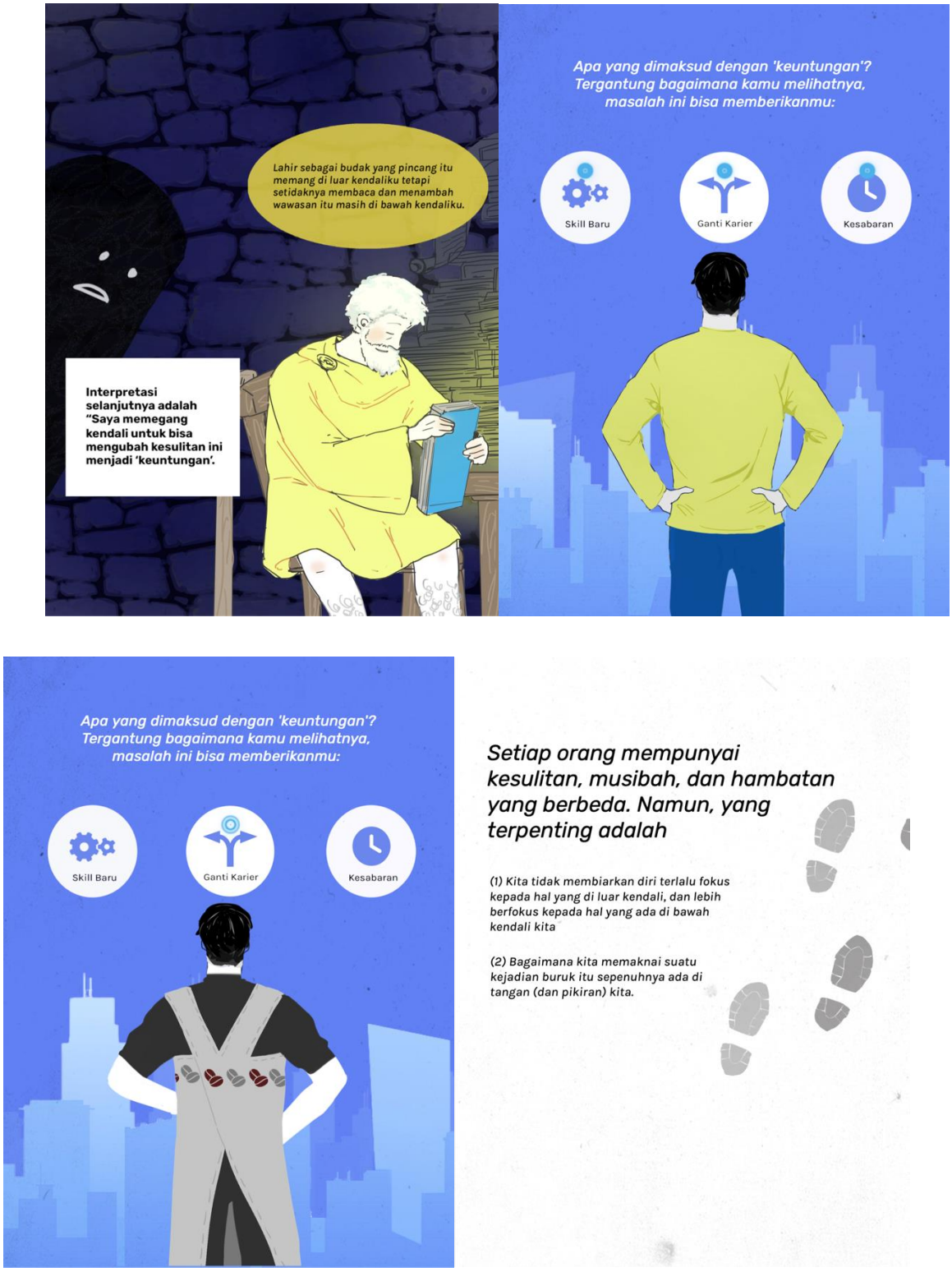
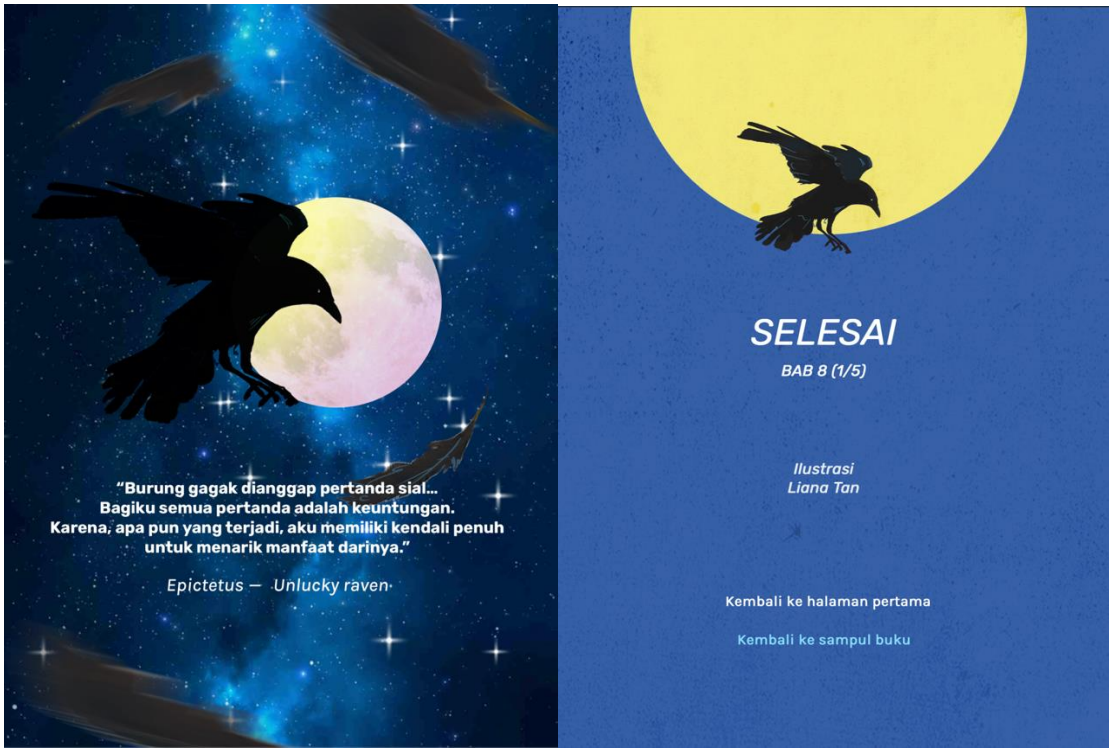



**Figure 10.** Final design.




## CONCLUSION

Based on the author's observation from the usability testing, users shows great attention to read per sentence even when not instructed to do so. The users felt the sentence that has been shortened and easier to understand greatly helps them in understanding the message. Moreover, with illustration adding in symbolisms and another perspective of the message, the users felt the message is conveyed more effectively compared to only reading a page full of texts.

The example of this is page 9 where Epictetus ward off the ghost who continuously spout demeaning things to the philosopher by being positive. Users not only believe that page is the most interactive and enjoyable so far, it also helped them understand how Epictetus, due to his positive outlook on life, is able to not take into his heart all the discouragement that is said by others. This is what the eBook also tries to convey.

Another user also favours page 10 where the user liked the idea on how every lesson that is taken from an obstacle one's faced will inherently affect the person itself to change into many different ways. For those who earned great patience is visualized to be a monk. For those who earned a new skill is visualized into a barista, which is a popular job in this day of age. Lastly, a hairdresser for those who had the opportunity to change their career. This page reminds them how an individual can change depending on their outlook and message they reaped in face of adversity.

In conclusion, an interactive eBook may require great effort in order to be created from visualizing, illustrating, animating, choosing audios, however in each steps if incorporated with another layer of meaning or symbolism may instead add the depth of the message wanted to be conveyed.

For future interactive eBooks, it is recommended to have more appeal in the visual by adding subtle movements such as squiggles for the elements inside of the design so users will not be too bored or feel

the interactive eBook is too static. Some pages can be improved by adding more colours or add more details of their surroundings, ideally similar to page 8 and 9 with the dark purple walls and desk.

Choosing a main theme song is important however does not mean that specific song should be used all over again. Instead, it should only be played in certain key scenes to make it more special. It is greatly advised to show great consideration the audio that will be put into the interactive eBook. Better choice of music that has more intended meaning and has its own build up towards the end will be a huge boost for the project.

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