TRADITIONAL GAMES AS A TOOL TO FULFILL THE RIGHT TO PLAY AND GOOD CHARACTER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract

Playing is a child's need equivalent to the need for work in adults. Therefore learning in early childhood should be done through play. However, to meet the demands of parents and the curriculum, sometimes learning in young children loses the feel of playing. This research was conducted at 10 schools that used traditional games to fulfill children's right to play while increasing children's good character. The research method uses a qualitative approach with observation and interview data collection methods. the results of the study show that children like games and develop good character after playing. The use of traditional games in meeting children's play needs needs to be discussed further. Besides that, traditional game design using digital game models also needs to be studied in the future.

Keywords: *Traditional Games, Right to Play, Good Character, Early Childhood*

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, many children are not familiar with traditional games. This is because children prefer to play digital games through cellphones or other digital game media. Parents also lack the opportunity to play with their children to introduce traditional games, while teachers see traditional games as not in line with the school's curriculum targets. This makes traditional games farther from children's lives. Even though traditional games are games that were created to give pleasure to the players while at the same time increasing creativity, critical attitude, numeracy skills, and art (Sit & Rakhmawati, 2022b). Traditional games can also increase multiple intelligences in children (Sit, 2022a). Learning that is not done through playing is boring learning for children, because through playing children learn to negotiate and talk with their peers, and they use visual aids symbolically which will lead to cognitive and social maturity (Bodrova, E., & Leong, 2005). Playing can also develop good character in early childhood (Veraksa et al., 2022).

Traditional games have the advantage of providing low prices, easy rules of play, and collaborative ways of playing. Traditional games can be played by children and adults with a few modifications to how to play. Traditional games have free play characteristics that match the philosophy of playing in early childhood. For example, the game of balance stones turns out to make children like learning to count (Pasaribu et al., 2023). Traditional games can also improve fitness in early childhood (Sit, 2022b). Seeing the many opportunities to use traditional games in improving children's abilities, the government has promoted the use of traditional games as a form of play that can be integrated into learning. (Gumanti Awaliyah, 2018).

In North Sumatra, the authors found 10 early childhood education schools that had developed traditional games and made them part of the learning menu on certain days. This traditional game has been developed with 3 (three) levels by the teacher with the aim of giving children the right to learn through playing and developing children's creativity in playing. The development of this game has been tested both in terms of feasibility and practicality at the thesis level, because the teachers who developed this game are masters program students in a psychology study program at one of the universities in the city.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative method using observation and interview data collection techniques. Research data were analyzed using narrative analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The themes sought are related to fulfilling the right to play and good character that grows in play. The data that has been collected is tested for validation using extended observations and member checks. Theme analysis is described as follows:

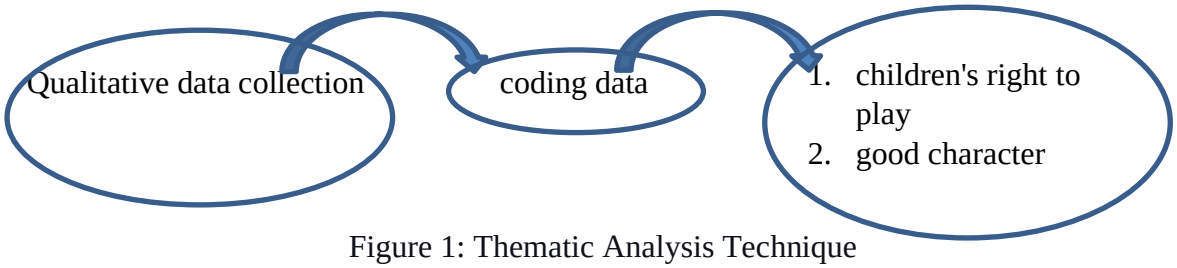


Figure 1: Thematic Analysis Technique

The research was conducted from January to June 2023. The research was conducted in the following 10 schools:

Table 1. Research Locations

No	Nama Sekolah	Nama Permainan
1.	TK Citra Indonesia	Hulahop
2.	TK Negeri Tebing Tinggi	Yeye
3.	TK Hang Tuah	Engklek
4.	TK Chairul Aini	Gobak Sodor
5.	TK Bintang	Bermain Tali
6.	TK Cambridge	Bakiak
7.	RA An-Nida	Tuan Dosep
8.	TK Lanud Angkasa	Lompat Tali
9.	TKIT Bunayya 7	Congklak
10.	TK Aisyiyah 33	Engklek Baju

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Traditional Games and Fulfillment of Children's Right to Play

Based on observation and coding of the 10 games used in the 10 schools above, it was found that the fulfillment of children's right to play was the freedom to choose playmates, play time, place to play, and length of play. The freedom to choose where to play is shown by games that can be carried out inside and outside the classroom depending on the child's choice. Bu Dahlia (pseudonym) stated:

Before playing I always ask the children where they will play hula-hop. Usually if playing in the morning children like to play in the school yard. During the day when it's time to rest they choose to play in the hall. Playing time is also determined by children in the morning or afternoon. Boys always play before going to class, but girls prefer it during recess.

In all games, the determination of players is carried out by drawing lots. Some are done with hompimpa, lots with stones, breaking tiles, or drawing cards. The teacher gives the children the freedom to draw lots. Children are also given the freedom to choose a playgroup. However, the teacher always encourages children to change playmates, but the final decision is still made by the child. Bu Yuli (pseudonym) stated:

When playing Yeye, I let the children choose a playmate. But I also noticed that if the child played many times with the same child, I offered him to change friends. But if the child is reluctant to change friends, I don't force it. If offered to change friends, most children do it.

Even though all games have been developed by the teacher into 3 (three) levels, children do not have to complete all game levels in one play. Children can choose to finish the game at once or continue playing the game the next day. Children who can't reach the next level usually repeat the same level several times so they are proficient and can go to the next level. Bu Teti (pseudonym) explained:

It takes a few days of practice to get to the next level in the game for some kids. But there are also children who are able to complete up to level 3 in the jump rope game in one play. Children who always play at home and in their environment are more adept at playing than children who tend to play mobile phones or play video games at home.

All the traditional games used have been developed by the teacher into 3 (levels) through research and development methods. One example of the game used is the game Yeye:



Level 1: Jumping Rope Ankle-High in a Sitting Child



Level 2: Chin-High Jumping Rope of Sitting Child



Level 3: Jumping Rope to Head Height of a Sitting Child

If the game is carried out from level 1 to level 3, the time needed for children to play on average is 25-45 minutes. Therefore, the length of play is adjusted according to the agreement between the child and the group. They usually determine the level of play according to their playing needs. Based on the observations of researchers, the average duration of children's play is between 15-25 minutes in one play. The average child plays in one week between 3-4 times.

Based on the results of the observations and interviews above, the traditional games used fulfill children's rights to play. Because the characteristics of playing that pay attention to the freedom of children in playing have been fulfilled, namely the freedom to play, choose a place to play and play without interference or adult rules (One, 2017). Playing is hypothesized to be beneficial for the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children as long as the characteristics of play are that the child's freedom to choose the role shown in the game (Barnett, 1990). However, currently the regulations for the implementation of early childhood education for children's safety and security are far more important, so outdoor games, which sometimes take risks for children, need to be considered. As a result, children's freedom to choose where to play is limited (Little & Wyver, 2008). On the other hand, conditions have replaced active play into imaginary passive play with the help of technology compared to interactions between children in games (Guirguis, 2018). The traditional games used in the schools in the study locations have provided alternative outdoor games that are relatively safe for children and guarantee freedom and interaction between children.

2. Traditional Games and Children's Good Characters

The traditional games used in the 10 early childhood education schools studied were structured to develop good character in early childhood. The good characters developed are independence, perseverance, self-confidence, dexterity, courage, patience, cooperation, collaboration, respect, and thoroughness. The ten good characters are observed by the teacher in learning and after learning is complete. According to the explanation of one teacher, good character can develop more when playing. At the time of playing the child's character appears spontaneously, for example if the child is selfish then he automatically fights with his friends when playing. But in such conditions the child always negotiates with his friends to continue the game. Children who are more patient will try to reconcile their friends so that the game can be completed. For example, when playing gobak sodor, a child steps on the dividing line so he can catch his opponent. But one of the children warned that this action was wrong. Uniquely, the child who was reprimanded by his friend stepped back from the line without commenting. In the Hulahop game, children can also be seen encouraging their friends who always drop hulahops so that their group cannot continue the game to the next level.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with teachers about good character developed through each of the traditional games used in ten early childhood education schools described in the following table:

Table 3. Traditional Games and Good Characters

No	Name of play	Developed Good Character
1	2	3
1.	Hulahop	Independence with Indicators: a. Ability to make choices b. Dare to decide something of his own choice c. Dare to take risks Perseverance with indicators: a. Persevere in facing the task b. Finish the game c. tenacious d. Does not require encouragement from teachers or friends e. Enjoy doing new things

2.	Yeye	Be confident with Indicators: a. Dare to be yourself b. Dare to ask and answer questions c. Cooperate Agility with Indicators: a. Move according to instructions b. Run fast c. Able to move zigzag d. jump properly
3.	Engklek	Independence with Indicators: a. Play by your own decision b. Autonomous feeling c. Do not depend on friends or teachers Courage with Indicators: a. Have the courage to do something b. Have the courage to make decisions c. Not easily give up.
4.	Gobak Sodor	Cooperation with indicators: a. Can interact in groups b. Responsibility in completing their duties c. The involvement of children helps each other in groups
5.	Bermain Tali	Respect with indicators: a. Respect others b. Accept others c. Don't force friends d. love others e. Polite f. Full attention to others
6.	Bakiak	Collaboration with indicators: a. Likes to play together b. Sharing roles in play c. Together win the game

1	2	3
7.	Tuan Dosep	Patience with indicators: a. Take turns talking b. Listen carefully c. Answer politely d. Spontaneous in answering
8.	Lompat Tali	Cooperation with indicators: a. Help each other b. Mutual help c. Mutual cooperation d. Participate e. Dividing tasks f. Shared roles
9.	Congklak	Accuracy with indicators: a. Careful in playing b. able to predict victory c. Good at math

10.	Engklek Baju	Patience with indicators: a. Can control yourself b. be steadfast c. Persistent d. Accept the fact e. Calm

Various studies have also explained that traditional games can develop good character in early childhood. Long Dragon Snake traditional games can develop prosocial attitudes such as cooperation, generosity, sympathy, and empathy (Junaedah et al., 2020). Susilowati and colleagues also found that traditional Javanese games such as Dolanan can increase self-confidence and responsible attitudes in early childhood (Susilowati et al., 2021), love of homeland and love of peace (Asrial et al., 2022). Bugis traditional games can also develop other good character values such as creativity, cooperation, patience, persistence, and honesty (Suhra et al., 2020). However, in the digital era, it is not only children who are not familiar with traditional games, but also many young teachers who are not skilled at playing them. Therefore Edward and colleagues reported that traditional games that have been converged with games with digital games are worthy of choice for novice teachers (Edwards et al., 2020).

Currently, many traditional games have been converted into digital games. Generally this game can be done in pairs with other players or with the computer. Furio and colleagues found that 96 percent of the 150 young children studied preferred digital games using mobile phones over traditional games, even though the increase in children's knowledge of games was equivalent (Furió et al., 2013). However, traditional games or natural games can improve children's physical health and cognitive abilities simultaneously (Dankiw et al., 2020). Traditional games that are carried out naturally, for example starting from making game tools, playing together, to reflecting can actually improve 21st century skills in early childhood, namely, creativity, critical thinking, good character, love of the motherland, collaboration, and polite communication (Sit & Rakhmawati, 2022a).

The use of traditional games in learning will be maximized if the game has been developed according to the child's interest in the game. Currently the game is presented via mobile phones and other game modes designed with tiered levels of difficulty. Therefore the teachers in the schools studied have developed the game into several levels which become challenges for children when playing. Because games that are associated with problem-solving skills further support children's interest in playing (Kalmpourtzis, 2019). However, the teachers at the school where the research was conducted had not measured the value of problem solving in games and had not made problem solving abilities an important part of the game. This can be an interesting study in the use of integrated traditional games in learning.

CONCLUSION

Traditional games can be an option in meeting children's play needs with the characteristics of freedom in choosing where to play, playmates, play time, and play time duration. However, traditional games require modification, for example using playing levels so that children's exploration needs are met. Traditional games can also develop a variety of good characters in children as long as the freedom to play is maintained. The use of traditional games related to problem solving skills and their influence on good character needs to be discussed further. Besides that, traditional game design using digital game models also needs to be studied in the future.

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