

The Implementation of Traditional Games for Early Childhood Education

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Abstract—It was very important to provide stimulation for early childhood development that can be done by parents and teachers. Early children were in the golden age which has high sensitivity to receive the given knowledge. The process of providing stimulation for early childhood was through playing games. One of the game activities that can be done was a traditional game. Why traditional games? The existence of traditional games has increasingly eroded, if teachers and parents did not early introduce the traditional games to them, over time the games will be replaced by gadgets, whereas the traditional games are the cultural heritage of Indonesia. Traditional games have many benefits in all aspects of early childhood development that include physical-motor, socio-emotional, moral, cognitive, and language development. This study aimed to find out the application of traditional games in early childhood education (ECE). The research method employed was survey and data were collected by using questionnaires. The research subjects were 40 ECE teachers. The results showed that as many as 55% of subjects often apply traditional games, but as many as 45% of them still rarely apply traditional games. In conclusion, traditional games apparently have many benefits in early childhood development, and this study suggests the use of traditional games in ECE.

Keywords—traditional, games, teacher, early childhood

I. INTRODUCTION

Technological developments today are growing rapidly, thus making children ranging from toddlers are familiar with gadgets, such as handphone, tablets, and laptops. Research findings showed that as many as 80% of the 50 research subjects spent their time to watch TV [1]. In 2013 Daily mail reported that gadgets are used by 29% of the toddlers and remaining 70% by the primary school age. According to the USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on average children spend about 8 hours a day watching electronic screens [2]. The amount of time spent using the gadget makes the motion, touch, and relationships in the child disappear so that there will be developmental barriers to the child and the emergence of problems concerning up to 7-year-olds [3,4]. Children really need to be introduced to technology, but parents should have a stake in the use of technology when children are at home. Parents often take advantage of gadgets so that children do

not play outdoors, because parents have the assumption that they will feel calm when they are at home. Through playing outdoors, aspects of development can grow optimally.

Playing is an activity where children demonstrate their extraordinary abilities in exploring, imagining, and making decisions. Game is described as "children work" which is very fun for them [5]. One type of game that can stimulate child development that includes cognitive, language, social-emotional, religious and moral values, and physical-motor is a traditional game. That traditional lore extends not only in nation-wide but internationally, and that children in very different cultural settings possess their own traditional lore (which may bear many resemblances to that in other, sometimes totally different, cultures) is a fascinating extension of the study of children's lore [6]. Traditional games have humanity and cultural values, beliefs translated by the basis of motor skill development [7]. These games can be played as a key role in relation to the emotional aspects of physical education [8]. In addition, traditional games can be in the context where most of the life-related learning that can happen to children, the game also gives children the means to learn about their own culture [9]. It is a reference that traditional games can have an important role in their lives such as improving motor skills, emotion, and becoming an alternative activity that can be applied in the process of learning about the culture.

Traditional games are the most important part of the childhood of our ancestors in the past era which is now rarely played by children. The generation of parents today is still very familiar with the traditional game, but not in their children. The traditional game has significance and has left its mark in childhood on every human who played it. Traditional games do not require expensive props and everyone can play them, regardless of age or gender [10]. These games were taken over from the earlier generation and passed on to the young generation through oral, sound, or presentations [11]. However, these games were forgotten as a result of industrialization in recent years [7]. Traditional children's songs and games as a form of indigenous knowledge systems are facing possible extinction. It is proved by the involvement of research subjects, from which 50 children, only about

20% of children play traditional games at leisure time [7].

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Games and child's development

Games might be defined as a necessity for children, because through playing they will gain knowledge to develop their ability and important components in early childhood learning activities [12,13]. Skills that can improve through playing such as thinking ability involve language that encourages the use of new vocabulary, involves physical activity, helps children channel their emotions, the improvement children's creative power, and in playing means the child socialize with others [14]. In addition, playing is also a way for children to assimilate and integrate life experiences. Games also help children to begin to understand the world. When playing, the children will feel comfortable and happy. Games also provide benefits, such as [15]:

- Games that offer role-play, the main character that permits self-affirmation and self-acknowledgment.
- Games that are dynamic, whose content has enough action (motor skills) and fast intellectual reaction to solving the task.
- Games that offer a spark of children's healthy humor and create a good mood.

The most useful games are the ones that have the combination of the above-mentioned qualities. Therefore, game activities made in such a way by teachers can improve all aspects of child development.

B. Traditional games

The traditional games are inherited by the ancestor and need to be preserved because they contain local wisdom values, the "good", "positive", "worth" and "desirable" values. Traditional games include activities such as game marbles, jump rope, rubber games, and so on [16, 17]. Traditional games can improve various aspects of child development. Research findings show that teachers chose traditional games as one of the appropriate activities to be applied to ECE for the following reasons [15]:

- Traditional games can be played both in kindergarten these games and at home with adults as they develop skills in playing the games and want to assert themselves through successful performance of playing.
- These games generally involve role-playing. Children are highly motivated by the opportunity to be someone else (other than a child) - butterfly, doctor, and so on.
- Most of the traditional games include physical activities, require cooperation and intellectual engagement (memorization). This stratification also motivates children to choose these games.
- Through these games children are active in all seasons (Games in the meadow, grass, forest, on

fresh air, driving in a sledge, skating, making a snowman.) They bring children joy, a feeling of happiness and satisfaction, a favorable effect of the sun's rays as well as durability and immunity.

- Children develop responsibility and obligation to keep their things and requisites (stick, rope, bow and arrow, sledge, skis ...), and to understand and accept the established or agreed upon rules of the games.

Traditional games in Indonesia are very numerous, because Indonesia has 33 provinces, and each province has its own traditional game type. Traditional games in Java are mostly suitable for early childhood. Among them are (1) *Sobyung*; (2) *Ambah-ambah lemah*; (3) *Obar-abir*; (4) *Jenthungan/Dhelikan*; (5) *Bedhekan*; (6) *Dhakon*; (7) *Sundamanda/Engklek*; (8) *Tumbaran*; (9) *Simbar Suru*, (10) *Cublak-cublak Suweng*; (11) *Jamuran*; (12) *Gundhul-gundhul Pacul*; (13) *Jaranan*; (14) *Uler Keket*; (15) *Kidang Talun*; (16) *Kursi Jebol*; (17) *Lagu Kacang Goreng*; (18) *Sluku-sluku Bathok*; (19) *Siji loro telu*; (20) *Menthog- menthog*; (21) *Butabuta Galak*; (22) *Man Dhoiblang*; (23) *Tuku kluwih*; (24) *Pitik walik jambul*; (25) *Kupu kuwi*; (26) *Iwak emas*; (27) *Yo pra kanca*; (28) *Cah dolan*; (29) *Aku duwe pitik*; (30) *Bang-bang wis rahina*; (31) *Kembang jagung*; (32) *Separan*; and (33) *Lompat tali* [18, 19]. Traditional games as media of physical motor stimulation are *bekel*, *benteng*, *engklek*, *lompat tali* (jump rope), *petak umpet* (hide and seek), *congklak dakon*, *gobag sodor* and *ular naga* [20]. Additionally, the traditional games can improve motor skills of children aged 4-6 years, especially in the balance, such as in the game *egrang tempurung /egrang bathok* [21].

The traditional games for children in each region and society are shaped by the local culture and local environment. Physical space, available materials and seasons can determine where and when they are played, the props used, and the form of the game needed. Social and cultural norms, expressions and attitudes may be reflected in who is playing, how the game is played or what the game goals are. Traditional children's games often incorporate the knowledge, values, and cultural skills that have emerged over time from reciprocity between the particular community and the environment it provides [22]. Traditional games are closely related to people's lives and are an important part of childhood in rural areas as the poverty and simple conditions of people living in the area affect. Children use the natural environment as they play and use imaginative solutions, they can play freely and happily [23]. Therefore this study aims to find out the application of traditional games in early childhood education (ECE).

III. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

A. Data

The instrument used in this study was an adapted questionnaire on the application of traditional games [24]. It contains a list of closed- and open-ended questions. In responding to the open-ended questions, participants were asked to answer the questions according to the condition of each teacher, while in the closed-ended ones, the responses were four scaled with the following criteria.

- 1= Never/Unmotivated
- 2= Sometimes/Less Motivated
- 3= Usually/Motivated
- 4= Always/Very Motivated.

Traditional games which were asked in this questionnaire includes *engklek*, *lompat tali*, *egrang bathok*, *cangklak*, *bekel*, *benteng*, *gobag sodor*, *ular naga*, *jamuran* dan *cublak-cublak suweng*.

B. Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with survey method. The purpose of this research is to describe the application of traditional games in Early Childhood Education.

C. Participant

Participants involved include 40 ECE teachers, consisting of 29 kindergarten teachers and 11 preschool teachers. They were about 21-55 years old and had been teaching for about 1-35 years old. They also have bachelor to master's degree education.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

After collecting data from the respective teachers, the obtained results are presented as follows.

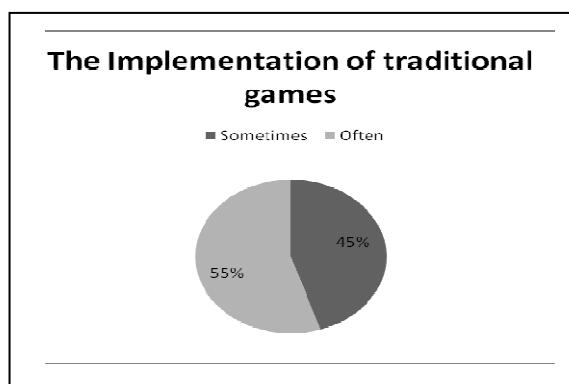


Fig. 1. The Application of the Traditional Games

It is clear from Figure 1 that 18 teachers (45%) still rarely apply traditional games in their teaching-learning activities and the others, 22 teachers (55%) often apply traditional games. Although the percentage of teachers who often apply more traditional games is higher, those who rarely apply have been relatively prevalent. Traditional games, common in the past, are presumably forgotten and disappear because today's children no longer know about them. The problem of communication between people of different generations arises, but also between peers who spend less and less time in joint activities [10]. It is then asked in detail about the intensity of traditional games implemented during the 1 theme learning or for about 3-4 weeks.

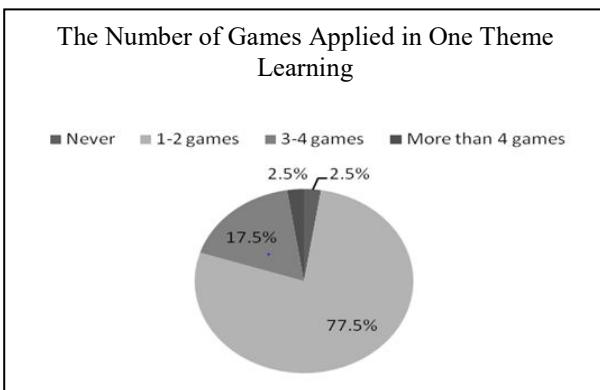


Fig. 2. The Number of Games Applied

The results reveal that 1 teacher (2.5%) never apply traditional games, 31 teachers (77.5%) apply 1-2 traditional games in the mentioned duration, 7 of them (17.5%) apply 3-4 games, and 1 teacher (2.5%) apply more than 4 traditional games. Most teachers have applied traditional games for learning except one. This is in line with the notion that traditional games can play a key role in relation to the emotional facets of physical education and have humanity and cultural values [1, 15]. However, traditional children's games at present seem to be a missed opportunity in terms of value education. Thus, games that encourage children to acquire more positive values should be designed [13].

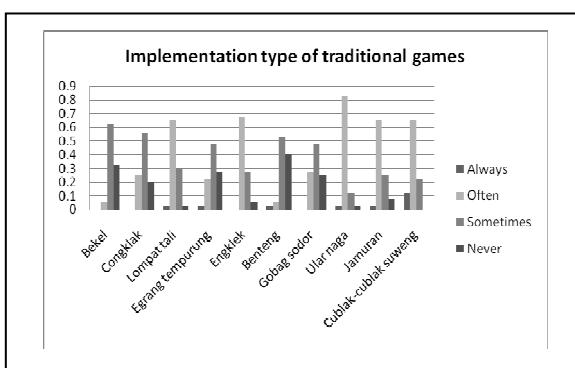


Fig. 3. The Application of Various Traditional Games

Figure 3 shows that the game having the highest percentage is *cublak-cublak suweng*, in the second place is *ular tangga*, in the third position is *bekel*, the least used one is *benteng*. The most often used games are *bekel*, *congklak*, *engklek* and *gobag sodor*. *Bekel* and *benteng* are on the "often" criteria. Besides, *ular naga* is "sometimes" applied, but *cublak-cublak suweng* is "never" played.

TABLE I. INHIBITING FACTORS OF TRADITIONAL GAME IMPLEMENTATION

| What are the constraints that often occur in applying traditional games? | Total |
|--|-------|
| Limited teacher | 8 |
| Lack of reading resources | 14 |
| Lack of teacher understanding | 13 |
| Inadequate facilities | 23 |
| Limited time | 14 |

Traditional games applied in the learning process will be easier if supported by various factors from inside and outside. Based on the survey results (Figure 1) there are still teachers who rarely perform traditional games. This is revealed by the teachers who face various obstacles in practicing the games. Table 1 shows that factors that hinder the implementation of traditional games, including limited teachers, lack of reading resources, lack of teacher understanding, inadequate facilities and limited time. From several inhibiting factors, the greatest number is in the lack of facilities in schools. While the previous study, about 80% of teachers say that they do not have time to apply traditional games [7].

TABLE II. TEACHER MOTIVATION TO APPLY TRADITIONAL GAMES

| Are you motivated to teach traditional games? | Total |
|---|-------|
| Highly motivated | 12 |
| Motivated | 28 |

However, the constraining factors that teachers perceive in traditional game implementation do not decrease teachers' motivation to apply the games in the learning process. This can be seen in Table 2 which shows that 30% of teachers are highly motivated and 70% of teachers are motivated to apply traditional games. Based on the results above, it can be said that all teachers are motivated to apply traditional games. The teacher's awareness of the many benefits gained when applying traditional games can contribute as the teachers' motivation factor, as mentioned in the previous study [8] that traditional game is very important to develop children's curiosity, the spirit of competing, and strategies. The traditional games prepare children for their future social life by being more responsible, being able to communicate well with others and learning the traditions of the previous generation [23].

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research, it can be concluded that as many as 45% of teachers still rarely apply traditional games. This is due to various inhibiting factors such as limited teacher lack of reading resources, lack of teacher understanding, inadequate facilities and limited time. However, the inhibiting factors are likely not the obstacles for applying the games if supported by various education stakeholders. It is proven by all the teachers who participated in the study were motivated to apply traditional games.

Unfortunately, this study did not divide the participating teachers according to the class being taught, such as kindergarten teacher, playgroup teacher, and daycare teacher. For further research, this research findings can be one of the considerations in analyzing the application of traditional games which can influence early child development (cognitive, language, social-emotional, religion and moral value, and physic-motor).

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