

Traditional Games as Learning Media to Support AUD's Social-Emotional in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) is a strategic government policy aimed at This study explores the utilization of traditional games as learning media to support early childhood social-emotional development in the digital era. The increasing exposure to digital games has reduced direct social interaction among children, potentially affecting their emotional regulation and social competence. This research aims to describe the implementation of traditional games in early childhood learning activities and to examine their contribution to children's social-emotional development. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through systematic observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and documentation. The study was conducted at RA lhya Al-Ulum I Makassar, involving children aged 5-6 years. Data analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that traditional games facilitate cooperation, turn-taking, emotional control, empathy, and self-confidence among children. The study concludes that traditional games remain relevant and effective pedagogical media for fostering social-emotional development in early childhood education within the digital era.

Keywords: Traditional Games; Early Childhood Education; Social-Emotional Development; Digital Era

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan permainan tradisional sebagai media pembelajaran dalam mendukung perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini di era digital. Meningkatnya paparan permainan digital berdampak pada berkurangnya interaksi sosial langsung anak, yang berpotensi memengaruhi kemampuan regulasi emosi dan keterampilan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan permainan tradisional dalam kegiatan pembelajaran serta mengidentifikasi

kontribusinya terhadap perkembangan sosial emosional anak. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi sistematis, wawancara dengan guru, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian dilaksanakan di RA Ihya Al-Ulum I Makassar dengan subjek anak usia 5-6 tahun. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permainan tradisional mampu menstimulasi kerja sama, kemampuan menunggu giliran, pengendalian emosi, empati, dan kepercayaan diri anak. Dengan demikian, permainan tradisional tetap relevan dan efektif sebagai media pembelajaran untuk mendukung perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Permainan Tradisional; Anak Usia Dini; Perkembangan Sosial Emosional; Era Digital

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a fundamental stage in building the foundation of children's personality and intelligence. Early age, from birth to six years old, is known as the golden age because during this period there is rapid development in the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral aspects of children (Maghfiroh & Suryana, 2021). Therefore, education at this stage focuses not only on the introduction of academic abilities, but also on character formation, independence, and social skills. This is in line with Article 28 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which emphasizes that PAUD is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six. In fact, a number of child development experts suggest that the attention of early childhood education be extended to the age of eight to support the readiness of children's development more optimally (Bredenkamp, 2011).

One of the essential elements in early childhood education is play. Play is a basic right of children that is legally guaranteed and has an important role in the growth and development process. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection affirms that every child has the right to play, rest, create, and recreation according to his interests and talents. In the context of education, play is seen as the main learning medium for early childhood because it allows children to learn actively, fun, and meaningfully.

Theoretically, Jean Piaget (1951) explained that play serves as a means for children to assimilate experiences and build cognitive structure through direct interaction with the environment. In the preoperational stage (ages 2-7 years), children begin to use symbols and imagination in play, which play an important role in the development of conceptual thinking. Meanwhile, Lev Vygotsky (1978) views play as a social activity that allows children to learn through interaction with peers and adults within the framework of the Zone of Proximal Development. Through games, children learn to control emotions, negotiate, cooperate, and understand social rules.

According to the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud (1955), play is an important means for children to develop cognitive and emotional functions. Through play, children get the opportunity to express hidden ideas and feelings. Freud emphasized that this activity has a cathartic function, which is to help children release

negative emotions due to traumatic experiences, either by moving these feelings to a substitute object or by repeating unpleasant experiences in the form of games as a process of emotional processing.

However, the reality on the ground in most kindergartens shows a shift in early childhood play patterns. The rapid development of digital technology has caused children to become increasingly familiar with digital devices such as gadgets, tablets, and online games. Factually, children aged 5–6 years tend to spend time playing with digital games that are individual, have minimal physical activity, and are limited to direct social interaction. Several studies show that excessive use of gadgets can lead to a decrease in social skills, a tendency to withdraw, and a decrease in children's motor activity. In addition, the dominance of digital games also has an impact on the abandonment of traditional games, which has the potential to erode children's understanding of local cultural values (Nurbani, 2023).

In fact, ideally, the world of early childhood play should provide a balanced experience between cognitive, social, emotional, and physical stimulation. Traditional games have characteristics that are interactive, collaborative, and involve physical activity so that they can optimally stimulate children's social-emotional abilities. Games such as engklek, gobak sodor, and congklak have been proven to improve cooperation, empathy, communication, and children's emotional control skills (Handayani and Munastiwi, 2022). In addition, traditional games also play a role as a means of inheriting cultural values and character formation from an early age.

Previous studies have shown that traditional games play an important role in supporting early childhood social-emotional development. Research by Karomah and Diana (2023) found that Dayakan games are able to improve children's ability to recognize and control emotions, interact with peers, understand differences, and show responsibility in group games. Similar findings were reported by Lismayani and Pratama (2023), which showed that giving traditional games to kindergarten children significantly increased adherence to rules, adaptability, attitude of responsibility, and empathy. Meanwhile, Khadijah and Wahyuni (2024) found that traditional game-breaking plates, which are modified into a safe and fun medium, effectively improve children's social-emotional, cognitive, language, moral, and motor aspects. However, most research still separates traditional and digital games, even tending to contradict them.

Therefore, the research gap lies in the limited studies that discuss how traditional games can be optimized as a counterbalance, not a replacement, to digital games in the context of early childhood education. There have not been many studies that have examined in depth integrative strategies that allow children to remain adapted to the development of digital technology, while reaping the social-emotional and cultural benefits of traditional games.

Based on this description, this study was conducted to examine in depth the role of traditional games in supporting early childhood social-emotional development in the midst of the dominance of digital games. This research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution for teachers, parents, and early childhood education institutions in designing a balanced play environment, adaptive to the development of the times, but still rooted in children's social, emotional, and cultural values holistically.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of traditional games in early childhood learning. This approach was chosen because it is able to describe phenomena holistically, contextually, and naturalistically according to real conditions in the field.

The research was carried out at RA Ihya Al-Ulum I Makassar, which was chosen purposively with the consideration that the institution still applies traditional games in the early childhood learning process. The research time is carried out for ± (say time, e.g. 2 months), in order to allow the researcher to conduct intensive and repeated observations.

The subjects of the study were children aged 5–6 years who were directly involved in traditional game-based learning activities. Meanwhile, the research informants consist of classroom teachers who act as learning implementers. The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, with the criteria of teachers who actively implement traditional games in learning activities.

The data in this study was collected through the following techniques:

1. Systematic Observation

Observations were made directly on children's activities during traditional game-based learning. Observation is non-participatory using observation sheets that have been compiled based on early childhood social-emotional development indicators.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted to classroom teachers to obtain in-depth information about the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the use of traditional games in learning. The interview guide is flexible so that it allows for a wider dig into the data.

3. Documentation

Documentation includes photographs, activity notes, and relevant learning documents, such as RPPH (Daily Learning Implementation Plan), to strengthen the data from observations and interviews.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (human instrument) who plays a role in planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. In addition, supporting instruments are used in the form of:

The observation sheet was compiled based on social-emotional development indicators, including: the ability to cooperate, the ability to wait for turns, emotional control, empathy for friends

The instrument used has gone through a content validity test by asking for input from experts (expert judgment) in the field of early childhood education.

Data analysis was performed interactively and continuously using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes:

1. Data Reduction

The data obtained from the field is selected, focused, and simplified according to the research objectives.

2. Data Display

The data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative, table, or matrix to make it easier for researchers to understand the patterns and relationships between data.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusions are drawn gradually and are continuously verified with data in the field to ensure consistency and validity of findings.

4. Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses the following techniques:

1. Source Triangulation: comparing data from teachers, children, and documentation
2. Technical Triangulation: comparing observations, interviews, and documentation
3. Member Check: confirming the results of the interview to the informant
4. Prolonged Engagement: making repeated observations to obtain accurate data
5. Audit Trail: systematically documenting the entire research process



Figure 1. Researcher's Observation



Figure 2. Traditional Game Throw Sandals

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of this study were obtained through observation and interviews during the implementation of play activities using the traditional game of throwing sandals. The research subjects were children aged 5–6 years at RA Ihya Al-Ulum, Islamic University of Makassar, with classroom teachers as research informants.

Form of Implementing Traditional Games in Early Childhood Play Activities at RA Ihya Al-Ulum I

The results of the study show that traditional games are still applied in early childhood play activities at RA Ihya Al-Ulum I. Traditional games are carried out flexibly, both at free play time and in certain learning activities such as sports. Types of games that are often played include engklek, can games, and throwing sandals that use simple tools from the surrounding environment. Teachers act as facilitators by supervising the course of the game, providing direction to the rules, and ensuring the safety of children during the activity.

In addition to games designed by teachers, there are also traditional games that arise from the child's own initiative. The game of throwing sandals is played spontaneously by children without any special planning. This shows that traditional games provide space for children to express creativity, interact with peers, and build social experiences naturally in the school environment.

Early Childhood Social-Emotional Development Through Traditional Sandal Throwing Games

Based on the results of observations, the traditional game of throwing sandals has a positive impact on the social-emotional development of early childhood. Children show the ability to work together, wait for their turn, and follow the agreed rules of the game. During the game, the child seems to be able to control emotions, such as not getting too angry when losing and willing to try again.

The game of throwing sandals also fosters an attitude of empathy and confidence in children. Children are seen giving support to friends who have not succeeded and dare to appear and try games in front of their friends. The social interactions that occur during play help children learn to recognize the emotions of themselves and others, so that traditional games are an effective means of stimulating early childhood social-emotional development.

Table 1. Results of the Observation Sheet

NO	INDICATOR	Aco	Azka	Naufal	As'ad	Decreased
1.	Share toys with friends	BSB	BSH	BSH	BSB	BSB
2.	Waiting for your turn while playing	BSB	BSB	MB	BSB	BSH
3.	Teamwork with friends	BSB	BSH	MB	BSB	BSB
4.	Confidence when playing	BSH	BSH	BSB	BSB	BSB
5.	Able to control emotions when Play	BSB	BSH	BB	BSH	BSB
6.	Empathy for friends	BSB	BSB	MB	BSH	BSH

7.	Conflict-Free Play	BSB	BSH	MB	BSB	BSB
8.	Resolving Conflicts with friends	BSB	MB	BB	BSH	BSB
9.	Initiative to invite play	BSH	BSH	BSH	BSB	BSH
10	Following the Rules while playing	BSH	BSB	BSH	BSB	BSB

Description :

BB = Not yet developed

MB = Start Growing

BSH = Grow Up To Expectations

BSB = Very Well Developed

Based on observations of five children aged 5–6 years at RA Ihya Al-Ulum, the traditional game of throwing sandals has been proven to support children's social-emotional development. The game encourages cooperation, sharing, confidence, and adherence to the rules. Children like Aco, As'ad, and Afnam show optimal sharing and collaboration skills, as well as increased confidence through physical activity of games. Although some children, such as Naufal, still have difficulty controlling emotions and resolving conflicts, overall the play atmosphere is conducive and this game is effective in training children's emotional regulation and social interaction.

Challenges and Strategies for Implementing Traditional Games in the Digital Era

One of the main challenges in implementing traditional gaming today is the strong influence of digital games, especially at home. Teacher RA Ihya Al-Ulum stated that children's activities at home, including the use of gadgets, cannot be completely controlled. This has an impact on children's habits at school, where they tend to be less interested in traditional games that are physical and collective.

In addition, the use of digital tools in schools, such as laptops, often leads to social conflicts. Children scramble for tools and push each other, so the play atmosphere becomes less conducive. This phenomenon is contrary to the goal of social-emotional development, which requires cooperative and positive interactions.

In response, RA Ihya Al-Ulum implemented several strategies to balance the influence of digital gaming and strengthen traditional games:

1. Restrictions on digital access in schools

Children are not allowed to use cellphones or digital devices in schools, except in certain supervised learning. This step aims to keep the child's focus on physical play and social interaction.

2. Focus on traditional games at school

A play environment free of digital distractions supports physical and social activity, allowing children to interact, share roles, and build social skills in real life.

3. Optimizing traditional games created by children

Many traditional games arise from children's creativity, such as throwing sandals. Teachers support this initiative as a reinforcement of local and social values.

4. Create an equal and inclusive playing environment

Traditional games allow for the participation of all children without scrambling over tools, creating a cooperative, calm, and inclusive atmosphere, in contrast to digital games that often trigger conflicts.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the traditional game of throwing sandals is able to encourage social interaction between early childhood. Based on the results of observations, children were actively involved in group play activities, followed the rules of the game, and showed the ability to wait for turns. These findings indicate that traditional games play as a medium for stimulating children's social development naturally and contextually.

The findings are in line with the theory of social development put forward by Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes that children's cognitive and social development occurs through social interaction in a cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of this study, the game of throwing sandals is a means of interaction that allows children to learn through collaboration and communication with peers. This is also supported by the results of Suryana (2016) research which states that traditional games are effective in improving children's social skills, especially in the aspects of cooperation and compliance with rules.

From the emotional aspect, the results of the study show that the game of throwing sandals helps children in managing emotions, especially in dealing with winning and losing situations. Children seem to be able to accept the results of the game and control their emotional expressions. This shows that there is a development in the regulation of children's emotions obtained through direct experience in play activities.

These findings are in line with the theory of emotional development put forward by Daniel Goleman (1995), which states that the ability to manage emotions develops through repetitive and meaningful social experiences. In addition, research by Hurlock (2011) also confirms that play experiences make an important contribution to the formation of children's emotional control. The results of this study reinforce previous findings by Putri and Handayani (2019) which show that traditional games can significantly improve the ability to regulate early childhood emotions.

Furthermore, the game of throwing sandals provides a concrete and meaningful learning experience for children. Based on the results of observation and documentation, children find it easier to understand the rules, the value of cooperation, and social interaction through direct practice in the game. This is in accordance with the theory of cognitive development put forward by Jean Piaget, who states that early childhood is at the preoperational stage, where learning is most effective through concrete experiences (Piaget, 1964).

This finding is also consistent with the research of Rahmawati (2018) which shows that concrete game-based learning is more effective than lecture methods in improving children's social understanding. Thus, traditional games such as throwing sandals not only serve as a recreational activity, but also as a meaningful learning medium.

In addition, the results of interviews with teachers show that the use of flip-flops throwing games can reduce children's dependence on digital games while in the school

environment. The teacher revealed that children become more active in moving, interacting, and engaging socially than when using digital media.

These findings are in line with Prensky's (2001) research which states that the dominance of digital games can reduce direct social interaction in children if it is not balanced with real social activities. On the contrary, research by Iswinarti (2017) confirms that traditional games have high educational value because they involve physical, social, and emotional aspects simultaneously. The results of this study strengthen the position of traditional games as a relevant learning alternative in the digital era.

The results of this study show that the traditional game of throwing sandals has significant potential as a learning medium in supporting early childhood social-emotional development. This game not only trains the ability to work together and obey the rules, but also helps children in managing emotions through fun and meaningful play experiences.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that traditional games are effectively used as learning media to support early childhood social-emotional development in the digital era. Traditional games are able to stimulate cooperation, the ability to wait for turns, emotional control, empathy, and confidence in children. It is recommended that PAUD teachers integrate traditional games in a sustainable manner in learning activities as an effort to support children's development holistically.

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