

Traditional games to improve the implementation of kindergarten character education

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Abstract

The problem in Indonesia is that Indonesia cannot repress the moral deviation happening to the students, which causes the decline of the nation's morale. One of the reasons is the low quality of education. Traditional character education has become essential to the education system and core competencies. Traditional games in Indonesia, especially in Java, are the product of the "easterners," full of nobles. The hope is that the traditional games taught to children will impact the establishment of good moral values. The research aims to tell character education based on traditional games so that the games program based on the traditional games can be implemented as a model of character education in kindergartens. The implementation also aims to change the student's behavior toward noble values. The design method in this study applies qualitative research. The data were analyzed inductively using the domain, taxonomy, component, and these techniques. Through this method, the reality or phenomenon of applying traditional game-based education will result from dynamic and meaningful thinking. The results of this study show that traditional game-based character education is one of the efforts to face the challenges of the nation's moral crisis. Teaching traditional games as a medium of innovation that kindergarten teachers can use to develop students' character values. Traditional games can train students' motor skills, attitudes, and skills and develop noble character. The finding and implications in this study are that students' good personalities can be acquired through using traditional games in kindergarten teaching. It can also be a means of preserving the culture of the nation.

Keywords: Character education, cultural preservation, early childhood program, traditional games, young generation

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1. Introduction

The problem in Indonesia is that Indonesia cannot repress the moral deviation happening to the students, which causes the decline of the nation's morale. Morals are products produced by cultures and religions that regulate the way of interacting (deeds, behaviors, and speech) between fellow human beings. In other words, the term moral refers to the actions and behavior of a person with positive values following the norms that exist in society (Dellantonio & Job, 2012; Elsantil & Bedair, 2022). Moral understanding is related to the ability to determine right or wrong and the good or bad behavior in a person (Wantah, 2005). One of the reasons is the low quality of education. Schools are considered to fail to produce educated people who have good behavior. High-quality education pays attention to the equality of the cognitive, affective, and psychometric domains (Orak et al., 2020). Therefore, it will produce educated people who have the knowledge and understand what to do with their learning.

Recently, Bunga (a pseudonym), a 13-year-old girl from Polresta Surabaya, was raped by eight criminals. One of them was a 9-year-old boy sitting in the third grade of an elementary school. Another news reported that a second-grade student of an elementary school in the Sukabumi district passed away after being persecuted by three of her friends. The victim was Lindawati (8) Cimanggu citizen, Cimangkok, Sukalarang, Sukabumi district. She passed away on April 15, 2015. "The daughter passed away after she was persecuted by three of her friends," said the victim's Habibah mother (38) when she came to the police office in Sukabumi city on Monday, April 20, 2015 (Iman & Ramadhan, 2015).

Education promotes good character growth (Mega Iswari et al., 2019; Sarbini et al., 2021). Education is the first mediator in developing good character (Amri et al., 2020a). Through education, it is expected that there will be a transformation that can create positive characters and change flawed characters into good ones. However, the foundation of the character is weaker because the spirit is not passed on to the students, especially kindergarten students. Hence, the foundation of this nation's character is not good.

There are many traditions in Indonesia, starting from traditional dances, traditional dialects, traditional instruments, and traditional games. Traditional games which used to be played by children in the past have gone. It is influenced by children's movies that come from abroad. Nowadays, finding children who want to pay attention or play traditional games is not easy. It is because children assume that traditional games are old. If traditional games are not played anymore, traditional games will disappear soon. Hence, it becomes the teachers' job, especially kindergartens teachers, to struggle to teach the students traditional games (Jalal et al., 2019). It becomes the urgency of this research.

Lee (2013) conducted research entitled "Re-emphasizing Character Education in Early Childhood Program: Korean Children's Experience. The researcher explored how the early childhood education system in Korea tried to ensure the development of the children's characters. The findings indicated that character education for Korean children happened in the school and the house. This discussion is relevant to the present Indonesian context, dominated by competitive standardized test data. It negatively impacts the development of children's and teenagers' characters. The focus on character education is set as the balance of the materialistic and selfish tendencies that are crucial to "academic success" in the world nowadays (Su et al., 2022). Character education promotes concern, pride in one's cultural heritage, respect for cultural diversity, and cooperation (Roz Faraco et al., 2022; Su & Zhong, 2022).

In Korea, traditional character education has become an essential aspect of the educational system and core competence. The parents try to instill in children's minds, represented by the country's motto, "Korea is a place of polite people in the East" The Eastern culture can be seen in the research by Manning et al. (2017) in Korea. It is similar to the research done by Farver & Shin (1997) and AIAfan

(2022) that the culture taught to children will result in the children's polite behavior. The traditional games in Indonesia, especially in Java, are the product of the "east people," who are full of nobility. If traditional games are taught to the children, this will lead the children to have good moral values.

The previous life of the community has led the community to a very cooperative social activity. Traditional games are those played by children. The traditional games contain the body's movements, hands, feet, and other body parts in interacting with their friends. Children will use different media to express their feelings and imagination, and most games are played in groups.

The research aims to absorb character education based on traditional games so that the games program based on the traditional games can be implemented as a model of character education in kindergartens (Tahiri & El Alami, 2020). The implementation also aims to change the student's behavior toward the noble value. Traditional games provide an alternative full of cultural values. Nowadays, they will almost disappear if they are not preserved and developed. Nowadays, traditional games have become scarce things. If we analyze traditional games, some have positive sound effects on the development of children's potential. Such as the development of gross motoric, fine motor, and social and cognitive aspects (Orak et al., 2020). The interaction happening when the children play traditional games allows them to develop their social, language, and emotional abilities (Pazouki et al., 2018).

This research is expected to solve the moral decadence in Indonesia because its citizen's character determines the nation's development. Therefore, education becomes essential in developing children's character because children have been educated since birth. Character education should be provided in early childhood because character can be formed through habituating and experiencing (Anisimova et al., 2020). Childhood experiences influence characters in their family, such as the parenting program. So, the target of this study is that children like to play traditional games, and the sound characteristics will be internalized in children. In playing games, children should be able to find the truth in learning. Later, this will be internalized inside themselves, and they become people with noble characters because of the traditional games with good moral values.

2. Literature review

2.1. Findings relevant studies

According to Siswanto (2011), that are as follows: (1) characters could not develop by themselves without cultivation, and the mentor plays the role of leading the students and giving a model of good characters; (2) characters could not exist by themselves, but through the process, formation and development; (3) Good human beings are those who can use the good values through the effort to achieve the noble value; (4) the character education process involved students actively in all day-to-day activities at school; (5) the implementation of the character education did not mean that it needed many funds and the most important thing was the commitment of the school community members to implement the character education in the school; (6) the implementation of the character education should be structured starting from analyzing the context, determining the prioritized values, and all of these must be included in the school action plan; (7) the application of the character education by integrating it in the school subjects and the local content. Finally, self-development could be cultivated, and a school culture specific to each school could be established. The study's findings indicated that character education developed because of others' influence. Without other people, students would not get character education—the character education for students developed through the environment, the school, playmates, and family members. The implementation and the result of character education would be exemplary if a good environment and the school culture supported the student's character. In this study, students' characters

are expected to develop if the traditional games could influence the students. Of course, this must lead to goodness.

Alcock (2013), in her research entitled searching for play in early childhood care and education policy, that playing is an exciting characteristic of children. Children are fully absorbed when they play games. The student's imagination power improved while they played games. Playing (as an activity) and making fun (as an attitude) could not be separated. Playing had a vast domain. Playing reflected the complex rational activities which involved a shift and conflicts, the paradox process, such as being natural and superficial, being good and evil, and being inside and outside. Playing close relates concepts and positions such as freedom, improvisation, institutions, jobs, love, aesthetics, and creativity. Playing is the same as learning; how playing could motivate and improve the student's cognitive and social-emotional development (Shaeffer, 2019). Elaboration on the potential traditional games from the various indigenous cultures in each country can be carried out to explore the possibility of development to cope with the needs of exceptional learners (Ibnu & Tahar, 2021a).

2.2. Character education

Character education means a conscious effort through guidance activity, habituation, instruction, and exercise, and a model to prepare students to be whole people having good character in their roles in the future (Verawati et al., 2020). Character education is also an effort to form, develop, improve, and maintain the student's behavior so that they are willing and able to carry out their jobs harmoniously in the different aspects of life (Widodo et al., 2020). Character education is a kind of moral education, but it involves the cognitive, affective, and action aspects (Martha et al., 2019). Character education aims to create the students as whole people reflected in their words, behavior, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings (Kamid et al., 2021). It works based on religion and moral values through teaching, learning, and exercising. The aim is to make them have a good heart and behavior and maintain politeness in carrying out their duties towards God and the creatures (Martha et al., 2019; Widodo et al., 2020).

Many of the most respected early childhood interventions depend on child-centered programs, with teachers and other service providers working directly with children (Mahoney et al., 1990). Character education will be more efficient if it is given from the beginning at the preschool level. Preschool-level education is the strategy for human resource development (Papanastasiou et al., 2017). It should be seen as the central point of creating the city's character, and the reliability of human resources is determined by how the character is instilled from early childhood. Early childhood educators provide enriched educational experiences for children who are expected to acquire and develop the necessary skills for school success (Kokkalia et al., 2019).

2.3. Playing traditional games

According to Stephen et al. (2012), curriculum development or a learning plan program for children should be based on play activities focused on children's freedom. It is to explore and create their world, while adults must act as facilitators when children need help to solve their problems (Aningsih et al., 2022; Irmansyah et al., 2020). The traditional games for children refer to togetherness, cooperation, relationship, and decreasing the children's selfishness (Ibnu & Tahar, 2021b; Winarni et al., 2021). It could be seen that they will always need partners when they play, even though they might compete with their partners (Kim & Koo, 2018). Moreover, in traditional games, togetherness can be seen (Amri et al., 2020b). It is different from playing games in the form of digital games such as game watches or gadgets. Those are more individual players to solve those problems and need tools to create "relationships" between children

and their partners. The games develop noble deeds and aim to teach children about the good character (Kooiman et al., 2016).

3. Method and materials

3.1. Research Approach

The approach used in this research is qualitative. The background of this research is natural. Humans are used as the instrument using the qualitative research method, using inductive data analysis, and the theories are used based on the grounded theory for describing the phenomenon. The process is more prominent than the result. The data obtained were information, observation phenomena, and other observations about the character education policy in kindergartens (Pembina kindergarten, ABA kindergarten, and Ariwacana kindergarten). There was a research focus, and the reliability of the data was obtained using criteria.

3.2. Research Design

In this case, the naturalistic research did not pay attention to the similarity of the research object, but it revealed different views about life. The essential characteristic which became the attention of this qualitative research was the meaning. Hence, with the qualitative method, the reality and the phenomenon of implementing the character education policy based on traditional games would be considered the result of dynamic and meaningful thoughts.

3.3. Research Focuses

The failure of education in Indonesia has caused a moral crisis in different aspects of the nation's life. The brawl between schools, corruption, vandalism to protect the group interest, and divorces among public figures have often been reported in newspapers and other mass media. The people behind those are people educated. Based on different opinions, it is found that the cause was that the educational process in Indonesia failed to implement excellent character education.

3.4. Data Collection Technique

The researcher has an essential position in collecting the data. The researcher should conduct in-depth observation to get the data. The researcher also interviewed the respondents and observed the teaching-learning process, the atmosphere, events, and students' behavior. The researcher then collected and verified the data and made notes on the documents. Preliminary data were collected directly from the respondents, while secondary data were those indirectly from the respondents. So that the method used was appropriate, the researcher needed to adjust the data, whether they belonged to the primary data or the secondary data. However, they could help complete the required information.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis is an effort to systematically find and manage the data collected from the observations and interviews to improve the researcher's understanding of the case studied. The data analysis was done by arranging and organizing the data according to specific patterns, categories, and explanations. The data were then presented as the study's findings to the audience. To improve the understanding, the analysis needed to be continued with the effort to find the meaning.

4. Results

The implementation of traditional games in supporting children's development includes several steps, i.e., planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning the teaching activity program is the first step that should be done before the teaching is carried out. The planning of the learning using the traditional games

in the kindergarten was done by developing the curriculum based on the guidance of the curriculum development for early childhood education based on traditional games. It is in line with a study that states that authentic childhood games positively impact academic success (Hursen & Salaz, 2016). The planning of the weekly activities and the daily activities should match the themes and indicators developed. The types of games were prepared by determining various kinds of traditional games which would be used in the teaching-learning process. The researcher and the teachers chose some traditional games, such as Dhakon, Cublak-Cublak Suweng, Jamuran, Gobag Sodor, and Engklek in the teaching activity plan (Kamid et al., 2021).

The teaching process using traditional games was done in several steps containing some children learning experiences through playing games provided for the children. The children's condition in implementing the traditional games is different from one another. It is influenced by the concertation level, which is unstable, and the different levels achieved by the students. The assessment techniques used in this research were observations, interviews, and an aptitude test. Teachers, as role models in schools, are very influential in the effectiveness of the implementation of character education. Teachers with strong and intelligent characters are needed in a nation with a multidimensional crisis. Hence, the presence of the teachers as the key actors in the teaching process indicates a country with solid character and good morality.

In implementing character education based on the traditional games in kindergartens (ABA, Pembina, and Ariwacana), teachers need an action plan for the implementation of national character education in Kindergartens beginning with the action plan, including (i) the integration of the national character components into the teaching process, (ii) the cultivation of the nation character components into the school culture, and (iii) the cultivation of the community of the policymakers or the stakeholders in the formation of the national character. The first action plan can be seen in the syllabus, lesson plan, and teaching process.

Based on interviews with kindergarten teachers regarding traditional kindergarten games, the supporting factors of character education are student enthusiasm, the provision of tools for traditional games by parents, and facilities in the form of a comprehensive place. Children's happiness in playing traditional games also determines the successful implementation of these traditional games.

In addition to supporting factors based on traditional games in kindergartens, some obstacles to implementing character education include limited teacher experience. Even teachers did not remember the way of playing the traditional games and their rules, so they had to learn them before teaching the children. Another obstacle was that children did not dare to be involved in the traditional games. So the teachers would have to persuade them to be willing to join the groups playing the traditional games. It may include telling the children that in addition to the modern games with technology, there were also traditional games that were fun to play. Another obstacle was the limited facilities. It could be overcome by borrowing the tools for playing traditional games or by making the tools using the materials available in the environment. For example, if the schools did not have the board and seeds for playing Dhakon, teachers could draw the circles using chalk and use shells to replace the sources. Teachers could also use the village hall to play traditional games if no vast place was available.

The traditional games were the characteristics of a nation and the result of civilization. All countries must be proud of the traditional games. Therefore, discovering, conserving, and developing traditional games cannot be avoided. In addition to being a nation's characteristics, traditional games were a part of the more comprehensive framework, that is, culture. Traditional games were perfect for training children physically and mentally. Indirectly, traditional games stimulated students to develop their creativity, skills,

leadership, intelligence, and insight. Unfortunately, with the current development, children do not want to play the traditional games that benefit them. The children were absorbed in televisions and video games which negatively affected them, especially their health, psychology, concentration, and learning spirit.

As a result of the observation in the video, some kindergarten students seemed not interested in joining traditional games. In contrast, others appeared to join the games enthusiastically. Internal and external factors caused it. Children often did not feel well, so they did not want to join the games—especially those involving gross motor skills, such as Gobak Sodor and Sundamanda. In addition, children were also not willing to join the traditional games. They were unfamiliar with traditional games and did not think playing them was fun. Children were not interested in playing traditional games because they were accustomed to modern games or because their parents did not introduce traditional games with positive values to their children. Parents were busy and did not remember the traditional games' rules. The development of technology was then considered the scapegoat. It has made traditional games forgotten by people and children.

The development of technology in this global era is very influential. TV programs, gaming applications on computers and gadgets, and various modern games produced by manufacturers impact the interest of adults and children, including kindergarten students. This external factor has been one of the causes of children not being interested in joining other friends to play traditional games. Another external which makes children not accustomed to playing traditional games is the unavailability of a place or a field, especially in big cities. In Gunung Kidul, where the researcher conducted the observations, there are some fields for playing games. However, children do not have the freedom to play and develop psychosocial aspects with their friends in their free time. The parents have control over providing space for their children to play, at least to play the traditional games on certain occasions.

Traditional games are one of the ways for children to enjoy socializing with other friends in their development process. Modern games could make children experience less communication with their friends, or children would be selfish. So they would have difficulty socializing with other friends. Traditional games are full of values: honesty, togetherness, harmony, cooperation, toughness, and physical management.

5. Discussion

A traditional game could influence the advancement of children's culture in the community. It is in line with research conducted by Yongchun et al. (2019), which states that adaptation is conducive to understanding the evolution of the meaning of locality and the togetherness of games between two different parts of the local culture. It can mean that a traditional game contains educational values which cannot be seen directly. It could be seen from the movements and expressions used in the traditional game. The conservation of traditional games could be seen as an effort to protect the young generation's mentality as they would have more significant roles in the future. Building the nation's character is one of the reasonable solutions to face the moral crisis nowadays. Building character could be implemented in the educational aspect. Education is the principal means to develop the students' good character. Education aims to develop noble values (inner strength and character), intelligence, and children's body.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that traditional game-based character education is one of the efforts to face the challenges of the nation's moral crisis. Teaching traditional games as a medium of innovation that kindergarten teachers can use to develop students' character

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values. Traditional games can train students' motor skills, attitudes, and skills and develop noble character. Students' good character can be developed through the use of traditional games in teaching in kindergarten, and it can also be a means of preserving the nation's culture.

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