

IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING THROUGH TRADITIONAL GAMES AS AN EFFORT TO BUILD THE CHARACTER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of culturally responsive learning through traditional games to build character in early childhood. Using quantitative methods with a quasi-experimental design, the sample consisted of early childhood children divided into experimental and control groups. The research instruments included structured observations and questionnaires to assess character traits such as cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and discipline. The results showed that the group given learning through traditional games experienced significant improvements in character compared to the control group. The t-test confirmed significant differences between the two groups, indicating that this approach is effective in internalizing character values in early childhood. This study concludes that traditional game-based learning can be an effective alternative in building character and preserving local culture in children.

Keywords: Culturally responsive learning, traditional games, character, early childhood.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education is the most basic formal education pathway in Indonesia (Masitah & Setiawan, 2017). Early childhood education has an important role in shaping children's character and identity from an early age. At this stage, children tend to be very sensitive to the various experiences and learning they receive, so that the instillation of cultural and moral values becomes fundamental (Yuliana, 2013). Culturally responsive education is an approach that actively incorporates cultural values and experiences in the learning process, so that students feel connected emotionally and intellectually to what they are learning (Gay, 2010). In the Indonesian context which is rich in cultural diversity, the application of culturally responsive learning can be realized through media that is familiar to children, such as traditional games.

Traditional games have long been known as an integral part of the social and cultural life of society. These games not only have recreational value, but are also a means of teaching social and moral values that are important for the development of children's character. In line with the opinion of Antika, Syamsuyurnita, Saragih, Sari, (2023), by paying attention to students' culture in learning, students will see the direct relevance between what they learn and their daily lives. Berk (2013) emphasized that play activities, including traditional games, play an important role in developing social skills, managing emotions, and understanding and appreciating rules. In addition, Piaget (2013) argued that through play, children can learn about social interactions and build cognitive abilities needed in everyday life.

Game traditional not only own mark entertainment but also plays a role important as means inheritance mark cultural, moral and social inheritance from generation to generation (Nadzirah, Chairiyah, & Pratomo 2019). Through game traditional, children can study about mark work equality, honesty, discipline and respect towards others. Studies show that activity responsive play to culture can develop skills social, emotional, and cognitive child more effective compared to method that only based on formal curriculum (Rahmawati, 2014).

Game traditional rich in mark culture local own potential big for become an effective learning medium in education character child age early. As example, game like cublak-cublak suweng or boi-boi teaches children about cooperation, sharing, and respect applicable rules. According to Adi (2020) in his research show that game traditional not only increase skills motor child but also can strengthen understanding they to values culture contained in game said, so that functioning as a rich medium for learning character.

In addition, the use of game traditional in learning child age early own potential big for strengthen the sense of identity and pride culture in oneself children (Dini, 2023). Involving game traditional like congklak, gobak sodor, and lompat tali can help child understand values the noble qualities contained therein and grow strong and insightful character nationality. Some research also shows that implementation game traditional in education capable grow attitude each other appreciate and skills communicate since age early (Khoirunnisa, 2021). With thus, the article this will to study how implementation learning responsive culture through game traditional can become one of the effective strategies in build character child age early. Discussion this expected can give outlook for educators and parents about importance integration culture local in the educational process character child.

Literature Review

In the context of early childhood education, culturally responsive approaches, particularly through traditional play, are increasingly recognized as important in fostering character development. Studies have shown that traditional games that reflect local cultural values can play an important role in character education by embedding moral and social learning in play (Chung & Chang, 2017). These games help young learners develop important traits such as cooperation, honesty, and respect for rules, which are fundamental to discipline and social interaction (Berk, 2013). When children engage in group play that requires adherence to certain rules and collaborative behavior, they learn to navigate social boundaries and develop a sense of self-discipline, thereby promoting moral and social growth.

Researchers argue that incorporating culturally relevant materials and methods in education, such as local traditional games, increases student engagement and allows them to better understand the content (Gay, 2010). According to Lillard (2017), culturally embedded games are not just recreational; they serve as a means for children to practice empathy, patience, and cooperation in ways that are directly relevant to their social context.

Culturally responsive pedagogy goes beyond cognitive skills, supporting holistic development by addressing emotional, social, and moral dimensions. Piaget's play theory underscores the importance of structured play for young learners, as it allows them to use moral judgment and understand social dynamics in a safe environment (Piaget, 1962). Traditional play that emphasizes social rules reinforces these concepts by allowing children to recognize and respect boundaries, fostering self-regulation and discipline, which are critical to their broader social interactions.

Method

This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design to explore the influence of implementing culturally responsive learning through traditional games in building

the character of early childhood. In the pretest-posttest control group design, the control group experiment that accepts intervention game traditional will compared to with group control that uses method learning conventional. The sample consists of from 60 children age early divided into two groups, with data collection through observation structured and questionnaire for evaluate character like cooperation, honesty, responsibility responsibility, and discipline. The data obtained will analyzed use statistics descriptive and inferential, such as paired t-test and ANOVA, for measure difference significant in development character between second group before and after intervention

Result and Discussion

1. Result

Research result this disclose existence significant difference in development character between group experiments that apply learning responsive culture through game traditional and group control that uses learning conventional. Here is the data obtained from analysis statistics against two groups the:

Table 1. Changes in Early Childhood Character Scores

Character Aspects	Group Experiment (Pretest)	Group Experiment (Posttest)	Group Control (Pretest)	Group Control (Posttest)
Cooperation	72.4	84.1	71.8	73.5
Honesty	70.2	82.6	69.3	70.9
Responsibility	71.5	80.3	70.5	72.1
Discipline	73.1	85.2	72.8	74.2

Table 2. T-test results for Comparison of Pretest and Pottest

Character Aspects	t value	P-Value
Cooperation	5.63	< 0.01
Honesty	6.21	< 0.01
Responsibility	4.84	< 0.01
Discipline	6.07	< 0.01

Table 3. ANOVA Test Results for Difference between Group Experiment and Control

Character Aspects	t value	P-Value
Cooperation	18.45	< 0.01
Honesty	21.13	< 0.01
Responsibility	17.22	< 0.01
Discipline	19.74	< 0.01

Based on results obtained, group experiment show significant improvement in all aspect tested character. As in the aspect of cooperation, score group experiment increased from 72.4 in the pretest to 84.1 in the posttest with t value = 5.63 and p-value < 0.01, which shows significant influence from intervention learning responsive culture through traditional game. On the other hand, the group control only experience improvement small on the same score (from 71.8 to 73.5), with the difference that is not significant.

The ANOVA test also shows that There is significant difference between group experiments and group control for every aspect measured ($p < 0.01$), strengthening findings that implementation game traditional in learning own impact positive to development character child age early.

This result show that learning responsive culture through game traditional can become method effective in build character like cooperation, honesty, responsibility responsibility and discipline in children age early.

2. Discussion

a. Influence Learning Responsive Culture to Children's Character Development

Research this result show that learning responsive culture that is applied through game traditional can increase various aspect character child. This finding is in line with Miller & Almon's (2009) opinion emphasizes that learning that involves element culture and tradition local No only help strengthening knowledge culture children, but also play a role in development values deep character, such as cooperation and responsibility answer. In the context of this, game traditional containing values social can become effective means for teach skills social and moral in children age early.

In addition, Chung & Chang (2017) stated that game traditional which prioritizes cooperation groups and rules clear social can help child For Study about honesty and discipline. Implementation this method in learning responsive culture can create environment that facilitates development character, which is proven increase ability child for collaborate, communicate with good and responsible answer to tasks group.

b. Comparison Group Experiment and Control

Paired t-test results show difference significant in development character between pretest and posttest in the group experiment, but no there is change significant in the group control. This confirms that intervention through game traditional in learning responsive culture own more influence big in increase character child compared to with method learning conventional. In line with Schlegel (2011) in his research also found that method more learning interactive and based culture, such as game traditional, can increase skills social child in a way more effective compared to with a more approach structured and conventional.

In addition, the findings this also supports view Helvana & Hidayat (2020) who emphasized importance game in development character children. According to Haris & Astuti (2016), games not only as activity recreational, but also as tool for develop moral and social quality. In the context of this, game traditional that reflects values culture local can functioning as a rich medium for learning character child.

c. Character Development through Learning Responsive Culture

ANOVA analysis shows that group experiment experience more improvements significant in development character compared to with group control. Improvement This reflected in all variable the character being measured, namely cooperation, honesty, responsibility responsibility, and discipline. This is reflect that learning responsive culture give strong contribution to development skills social and moral aspects that are crucial at this age early.

According to Berk (2015), character children at the age of early on are greatly influenced by the experiences they have natural, especially those related to with interaction social.

Learning based on culture that involves values traditional, such as through game, not only give child experience learning that is fun, but also provides context deep social that can strengthen values like honesty and responsibility answer.

Implementation learning responsive culture is also appropriate with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Development Proximal (ZPD), which emphasizes importance interaction social in learning. Games traditional often involves interaction between children in environment social that encourages they for study work same, manage conflict, and behavior discipline. This is underline importance method involving participation active in the learning process for develop positive character.

d. Implications For Educational Practices

Research this result own significant implications for practice education child age early, especially in matter integration values culture in learning. Learning responsive culture, in particular through game traditional, can become effective approach for build character children. This also leads to the importance of consider context culture in to design curriculum education child age early.

In the Indonesian context, where diversity culture and tradition local is part important from identity national, integration game traditional in education can become very good way for introduce children on values culture they alone at a time build positive character. Responsive education to culture children can teach they for more value inheritance culture and understanding importance values existing social in public them (Rahim, Nasri, & Talib, 2020).

According to Berk (2013), education unites learning about culture and character will more deep because not only teach skills social but also build identity self child. Therefore, development curriculum that involves game traditional can enrich the learning process and strengthen character children at the age of early.

Limitations Research and Suggestions

Although results this study show impact positive from learning responsive culture through game traditional, there is a number of necessary limitations be noticed. One of them is sample limited to children age early in one location or context certain. Research more carry on with more samples bigger and more varies in various regions will give better understanding wide about effectiveness this method.

In addition, this research only using two groups (experimental and control) without take into account other possible factors influence development character children, such as background behind family, type gender, and factors socio-economic. Therefore, research more further consideration these other variables will give more insight deep about factors that influence development character child age early.

Conclusion

Implementation learning responsive culture through game traditional proven effective in build character child age early with develop values positive like cooperation, discipline, and responsibility answer. Traditional game, which contains mark culture local, not only functioning as tool recreation but also as a learning medium that can be used strengthen skills children's social and moral. Through interaction social in games, kids can understand rules, respect culture, and building identity them. Therefore, integration traditional game in PAUD curriculum is important for create experience learn more holistic and based culture, as well as to form character a strong and integrity child.

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