

Fostering Children's Independence and Confidence Through Traditional *Jajangkungan* Games in The Kober Karima Environment

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the role of traditional games, specifically *Jajangkungan*, in fostering independence and self-confidence among early childhood learners amid the decline of traditional play due to modernization and digital dominance.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Employing a qualitative descriptive method with a case study design, this research was conducted at Kober Karima Early Childhood Center. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with children, parents, and educators, supported by participatory observation and documentation. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Findings – The findings reveal that *Jajangkungan* serves as an effective educational medium that integrates physical, psychological, and social development. Physically, it enhances motor coordination, balance, and body control. Psychosocially, the repetitive process of falling, standing, and mastering the game cultivates perseverance, independence, and confidence. Both educators and parents acknowledge its pedagogical value: teachers view it as a character-building tool, while parents regard it as a complementary means of holistic development.

Originality/Value – The originality of this study lies in highlighting *Jajangkungan* as a culturally grounded learning model that harmonizes traditional values with modern educational objectives. By reviving traditional play as an alternative medium for early childhood education, this research offers a sustainable approach to character education that balances physical vitality, emotional resilience, and social awareness in the digital era.

Keywords: Traditional Games, Jajangkungan, Independence, Confidence, Early Childhood.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential process that aims to shape the character and behavior of a person or a group of individuals. Through teaching and training, education helps humans reach maturity. This process begins early, because the first years of a child's life are crucial and determine the quality of their future. Every child is a unique and different person. They have distinctive characteristics according to their age stages. Therefore, the best approach to develop their potential is through the method that best suits the child's world, which is learning while playing. This approach ensures that the educational process runs naturally and pleasantly, so that children can grow and develop optimally (Novan Ardy Wiyani & Barnawi, 2012). because the figure of the teacher in the world of education is always a topic of discussion because the teacher is one of the most important educational factors, therefore the teacher has an important role in the learning process (Hafriani, 2021).

Early childhood is often referred to as the "golden age" because in this period, children have extraordinary potential and learning abilities. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a crucial role in this phase of growth and development, where proper guidance and direction are needed to form a positive character and balance all aspects of children's development according to their age stages. PAUD is the foundation of education provided before elementary school. The program is aimed at children aged 0 to 6 years, and is often known as the most important times in their development. Therefore, investment in education at an early age greatly determines the quality of future generations. (Mursid, 2015) (Latif, 2013) One form of traditional game that has high educational value is the Jajangkungan game. This game requires balance, courage, and self-confidence in carrying out physical activities involving simple tools such as wooden sticks. Through the Jajangkungan game, children are not only trained motorically, but also psychologically to be independent, brave in making decisions, and confident in facing challenges. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the role of the traditional Jajangkungan game in fostering children's independence and self-confidence, as well as its relevance in the context of early childhood learning in the modern era. Some psychologists agree that play has a huge impact on a child's mental development. In line with this opinion, Kurnia Rita stated that playing is a fun and spontaneous activity, which provides a sense of psychological security to children. Play is also an activity that the child chooses for himself because he enjoys it, not for the sake of reward or praise. Andriani added that play is the main medium for children to try and explore themselves, both in fantasy and in reality. Play is also a fundamental right for every child, because childhood is indeed a time to play. By playing, children can get many benefits, including the fulfillment of all aspects of their development. (Kurnia Rita, 2012) (Andriani, 2012) (Fitriyani, 2017)

Indonesia is rich in a diversity of different traditional games in each region, inherited from previous generations. However, along with the rapid development of technology, online games (online games) are becoming more and more popular. This directly reduces children's interest in traditional games. Online games that tend to be passive have a bad impact on physical health. According to the WHO, a less active lifestyle is the main trigger for obesity and obesity. In fact, in Indonesia, 71% of deaths are caused by passive lifestyles that trigger degenerative diseases. Although the debate between online games and traditional games is not very intense, many parties agree that the educational (didactic) values contained in traditional games need to be revived. Online games are considered to keep children away from these values. In contrast, active movement in traditional games has great benefits for the gesture system. For example, Pratiwi states that traditional games can improve body balance, and one good example is the game of stilts or (WHO, 2010) (Daaroin et al., 2017) (Sujono, 2008) (Yhana Pratiwi, 2015) Jajangkungan.

Traditional games such as bamboo stilts or in Sundanese called 'Jajangkungan' are one of the riches of Indonesian culture. However, this type of game is now starting to be abandoned and its development is increasingly concerning. According to Sukirman (2008), many children today are no longer familiar with various forms of traditional games because they are rarely played. In fact, the traditional Jajangkungan game has great benefits, one of which is to improve balance and have a wider impact on children's development. Moeslichatoen (2006) argues that play can meet children's developmental needs in various aspects, including motor, cognitive, creativity, language, emotions, social, values, and attitudes of life. In addition, Khasanah et al. (2011) emphasized that play is an absolute thing to explore children's potential. The more opportunities children have to play and explore, the more all aspects of their development can grow optimally.

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simple tools such as wooden sticks. Through the Jajangkungan game, children are not only trained motorically, but also psychologically to be independent, brave in making decisions, and confident in facing challenges. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the role of the traditional Jajangkungan game in fostering children's independence and self-confidence, as well as its relevance in the context of early childhood learning in the modern era.

II. METHOD

Based on the introduction that has been prepared, this study will examine in depth how the traditional Jajangkungan game can foster independence and confidence in children, especially in the Kober Karima environment. Using a qualitative approach and case studies, the research will focus on children's real-life experiences, as well as views from parents and educators. Through this method, it will be revealed narratively how the play process, such as efforts to maintain balance and overcome challenges, directly affects children's psychological development.

To collect data, the study will use several techniques without direct observation. In-depth interviews will be a key tool to get a personal view of children about how they feel while playing, as well as parents' and educators' perceptions of the behavioral changes they observe. Additionally, the study of documents such as diaries and photo/video archives will complement the data, providing rich additional context. All the data collected will be systematically analyzed to find patterns and relationships. The data will be reduced to sort out the most relevant information, then presented in descriptive form and direct citations. The results are expected to provide a comprehensive and credible understanding of the significance of the Jajangkungan game, proving that this cultural heritage has an important role in shaping children's characters in the modern era. Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was conducted by selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation into meaningful categories. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive and tabular forms (data display) to identify emerging patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified continuously throughout the research process to ensure consistency and validity of findings.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on interview data that has been collected in the Kober Karima environment, the Jajangkungan game has been proven to have a positive impact on fostering children's independence and confidence. Here is a summary of the findings based on respondents: Respondent Category Summary of Findings Mrs. Herawati, Mrs. Darsih, Mrs. Dewi Yulia, Mrs. Widiastuti, Mr. Aceng Parents

Views vary. Although they acknowledge Jajangkungan trains courage and independence, they argue these benefits are not unique and can also be obtained from other activities. They also see the challenges in maintaining children's interest in traditional games in the digital age, and emphasize that no single game can be a single solution for all aspects of child development. Mr. Dede Ahmad S, Mrs. Mimin Hadmini Kober Teacher and Supervisor Both teachers see Jajangkungan as an effective tool for character education. They highlight its benefits in training perseverance, independence, sportsmanship, and teamwork, which are highly relevant to the needs of children's development in the school environment. Nazmi, Andini, Akmal Protégé Children express feelings of joy, pride, and not afraid to try after successfully mastering the game. These feelings directly indicate an increase in their confidence and intrinsic motivation.

Based on interviews that have been conducted, the data collected provides a rich and diverse picture. From the children's point of view, the experience of playing Jajangkungan directly triggers positive emotions. Responses such as "happy," "great," and "no longer afraid" from Nazmi, Andini, and Akmal are strong indicators of increased confidence and intrinsic motivation. This feeling arises from their personal achievements, namely when they managed to balance themselves after falling many times. The views of the teachers (Mrs. Mimin and Mr. Dede Ahmad) corroborate this finding. They see Jajangkungan as an effective character education tool, not just a physical game. Teachers observed how these activities naturally trained a child's perseverance, sportsmanship, and ability to solve problems independently, an important skill that is often not taught in the formal curriculum.

However, interviews with parents provide a more complex and critical perspective. Although they acknowledged the physical benefits and courage cultivated by Jajangkungan, some respondents, such as Mr. Aceng, argued that these benefits could also be obtained from other activities. This shows that Jajangkungan is not the only factor, but part of a series of experiences that shape the child's character. This view is also complemented by concerns about the survival of traditional games in the

digital age (Ibu Widyastuti) and the need for a balance of game types (Ibu Dewi), which highlights the real challenges of preserving culture in the midst of technological dominance.

According to the results of the interviews conducted, Jajangkungan games have an important role in building children's independence and confidence, as well as filling research gaps regarding the benefits of traditional games that have not been addressed. The findings show a strong correlation between physical activity in Jajangkungan and children's psychological development. This is in line with the theory that learning and play are one of the interrelated aspects in the early childhood growth stage. More specifically, these findings support the theory of motor and sensorimotor development. When children try to balance themselves on bamboo, they try to actively engage their kinesthetic and vestibular senses. It stimulates the brain to process the necessary sensory information and generate appropriate motor responses. Repetitive exercises, although often accompanied by falls, teach children perseverance and independence (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1994). It is an invaluable experience in character building, the ability to get up and stand without assistance. A sense of pride after successfully mastering the game also supports that (Desmita, 2013) Jajangkungan is an effective means to build confidence (Fatimah, 2010)

However, the study revealed a more balanced take from the respondents. While the majority acknowledge its positive benefits, some parents argue that Jajangkungan is not the only determinant of a child's independence and confidence. This is consistent with holistic development theory which argues that these two aspects are built from a certain amount of experience, of which modern gaming is just one of them. This shows that Jajangkungan is an auxiliary tool, not a primary resolution instrument. In addition, these findings also highlight the challenge of traditional games in the digital age, namely the reduced interest of children. This means that the findings of this study not only empirically prove the benefits of Jajangkungan in cultivating independence and confidence, but also emphasize the need to protect the game. Jajangkungan is more than just a cultural heritage; it is an educational tool that gives children in a passive modern lifestyle a much-needed physical and mental boost. To address the challenges of the digital era, which is shifting children's interest in traditional games, early childhood education institutions can integrate Jajangkungan games into thematic or extracurricular learning activities. For example, teachers can utilize Jajangkungan games in gross motor and social-emotional learning themes to foster independence, cooperation, and self-confidence. This approach also supports the strengthening of the independent curriculum, which is based on local wisdom and emphasizes contextual and enjoyable learning experiences for young children. (Hilmi & Maryana, 2025)

IV. CONCLUSION

As a researcher, I concluded that the traditional *Jajangkungan game* plays a significant role in children's development. *Jajangkungan* functions as a physical activity that stimulates coordination, balance, and motor skills. This game also plays a role in fostering independence and confidence. Through the concrete experience of falling, getting back up and achieving success in the game, children absorb the value of perseverance and develop a sense of pride, which is an important foundation for building confidence. In addition, the findings of this study show that parents and educators view *Jajangkungan* as an effective means to develop the physical and psychosocial aspects of children, although it is not the only means. Therefore, I emphasize that *Jajangkungan* can be positioned as a relevant and contextual educational media as well as a means of preserving national culture in the midst of modernization and dominance of digital games. This dual role makes *Jajangkungan* historically valuable and strategically functional for children's education today and in the future.

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