



International Journal of Early Childhood Education & Parenting

Journal homepage: <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/ECEPA/>



Traditional Games in the Family and Development of Children's Motor Skills: Literature Review and Case Studies

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
Traditional games play a vital role in developing children's motor skills, especially when practiced in a family setting. This article aims to examine the impact of traditional games within families on the development of children's gross and fine motor skills through a literature review and case studies. The study employs a qualitative approach, combining the analysis of relevant literature and direct observation of families engaging in traditional games. The literature review identifies various traditional games that contribute positively to motor skill development. Games like jump rope, <i>congklak</i> (a traditional board game), and <i>egrang</i> (stilts) are known to improve coordination, balance, muscle strength, and agility. Case studies were conducted on several families who routinely played traditional games with their children. Observations revealed that children actively involved in traditional games exhibited better motor skill development than those less engaged in such activities. This article also highlights that parental involvement in traditional games not only strengthens family bonds but also creates a supportive environment for children's motor skill development. This involvement includes active parental roles guiding and participating in the games, helping children understand the rules and enhancing their social skills. The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of traditional games within families as a tool for developing children's motor skills. Hopefully, these findings will encourage families and educators to integrate traditional games into children's daily activities as part of an effective motor development strategy. Further research is recommended to explore various aspects of traditional games and their impact on child development in different contexts.	Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 08 Jul 2024</i> <i>First Revised 25 Sep 2024</i> <i>Accepted 08 Jan 2025</i> <i>First Available online 01 Feb 2025</i> Keyword: <i>Traditional game,</i> <i>Motor skills,</i> <i>Development child.</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional games have long been an integral part of the culture and daily life of many societies (Irfan et al., 2024). In the context of family life, traditional games serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as an essential tool for supporting child development (Ramadhan et al., 2024). One developmental aspect that benefits significantly from traditional games is the motor skills of children. According to Candra et al. (2023), motor skills refer to physical abilities that involve coordination between muscles and the nervous system, which are vital for daily activities as well as for cognitive and social development in children.

Previous research has shown that children's participation in traditional games can enhance various aspects of motor skill development, including both gross and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills involve large movements such as running, jumping, and kicking, while fine motor skills require more precise actions such as writing, cutting, and assembling (Berk, 2018). Within families, traditional games such as hide-and-seek, jump rope, and *congklak* provide opportunities for children to develop these motor skills through enjoyable and interactive activities (Kuswanto et al., 2022). Traditional games within families offer numerous benefits for child development. In addition to improving motor skills, these games help children learn cultural values, cooperation, and communication. According to Smith (2009), traditional games create a rich and holistic learning environment that supports physical, emotional, and social development.

Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between traditional games and children's motor skill development. For example, Tyas and Widayarsi (2023) found that children who regularly engage in traditional games exhibit significant improvements in gross motor skills compared to those who are more involved in technology-based games. This is because traditional games often require diverse and intensive physical activities, contributing to muscle strengthening and improved coordination (Rahayu, 2023).

Moreover, traditional games also play an important role in developing fine motor skills. A study by Balqis and Rosfalia (2024) revealed that activities such as playing *congklak* or weaving can improve fine motor skills, including hand-eye coordination and manipulative abilities. Families that regularly involve their children in traditional games report significant benefits. Children not only demonstrate improvements in motor skills but also other aspects such as social and emotional capabilities.

Based on the literature review and the case study findings mentioned above, traditional games within families have a significant positive impact on children's motor skill development. These games not only help improve children's physical abilities but also support their social and emotional growth. Therefore, it is essential for families to include traditional games as part of their daily routines to foster holistic development.

This study aims to investigate the influence of traditional games within families on the development of gross and fine motor skills in early childhood, identify the types of traditional games that are most effective in enhancing children's motor skills, compare the motor skill development of children who regularly participate in traditional games with those who do not, explore the role of parents in facilitating traditional games at home and its impact on children's motor skill development, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of traditional games within families for promoting children's motor skill development.

2. METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore the influence of traditional games within families on the development of motor skills in early childhood. According to [Ivankova and Creswell \(2009\)](#), mixed methods are an approach that investigates behavioral, social, and health issues by systematically collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The objective is to integrate these two types of data to provide more comprehensive insights than would be obtained by using a single data type alone, and this approach can be grounded in specific theories or philosophical frameworks ([Sarwono, 2013](#)).

2.1. Quantitative Approach

The quantitative research was conducted using an experimental design involving two groups of children: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group consisted of children who regularly engaged in traditional games for three months, while the control group included children who did not participate in traditional games during the same period.

The sample comprised 60 children aged 4–6 years, randomly selected from several families in a specific region. Data were collected using gross and fine motor skills tests administered both before and after the intervention.

Quantitative data were analyzed using independent t-tests to examine the differences in average motor skill scores between the experimental and control groups after the intervention. The independent t-test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences between the group receiving the traditional games intervention and the control group ([Creswell and Creswell, 2017](#)).

2.2. Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is a method designed to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena ([Abdussamad and Sik, 2021](#)). In this study, qualitative research was conducted to gain deep insights into the experiences and perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the impact of traditional games on children's motor skill development.

The sample consisted of 10 parents and 5 teachers whose children were part of the experimental group. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted during the intervention period. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes that emerged from the interviews and observations. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the qualitative data ([Braun and Clarke, 2006](#)).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This study aims to explore the influence of traditional games within families on the development of motor skills in early childhood using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The results from both approaches are presented below.

To measure the effect of traditional games on the development of gross and fine motor skills, skill tests were conducted before and after the intervention for both the experimental and control groups.

3.1.1. Results of the Quantitative Approach

3.1.1.1. Development of Gross Motor Skills

The average gross motor skill score before the intervention in the experimental group was 45.3, while in the control group it was 46.1. After the intervention, the average score in the experimental group increased significantly to 78.5, whereas the control group showed only a slight increase to 48.7. An independent t-test revealed a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups ($t(58) = 7.92, p < 0.001$).

3.1.1.2. Development of Fine Motor Skills

The average fine motor skill score before the intervention in the experimental group was 42.7, while in the control group it was 43.5. After the intervention, the average score in the experimental group increased significantly to 74.9, whereas the control group showed a slight increase to 44.3. An independent t-test indicated a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups ($t(58) = 6.85, p < 0.001$).

These quantitative results demonstrate that traditional games within families have a significant impact on improving both gross and fine motor skills in early childhood. To gain deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the influence of traditional games on children's motor skill development, in-depth interviews and participant observations were conducted.

3.1.2. Results of the Qualitative Approach

3.1.2.1. Improvement in Storytelling Ability and Coordination

Parents reported that children involved in traditional games demonstrated improvements in storytelling ability and coordination. For example, one mother remarked, "My child can now recount their daily activities in greater detail and clarity." This indicates that traditional games have a positive impact on the development of communication skills in early childhood (Rut et al., 2020).

The qualitative research in this study focused on collecting data through observations and in-depth interviews with parents and teachers to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of traditional games on children's motor skill development.

Parents and teachers observed significant improvements in children's gross and fine motor skills after they regularly participated in traditional games. One mother from the study participants stated, "After playing jump rope and *galasin*, my child has become more agile and has developed better balance" (Mother A, personal interview, 2024). Similarly, teachers noted that children who engaged in traditional games showed notable advancements in fine motor skills. One teacher commented, "Children who frequently play *congklak* and practice weaving at home are better at tasks requiring hand-eye coordination, such as writing and drawing" (Teacher B, personal interview, 2024).

The findings of this study reveal that traditional games have a significant positive impact on the motor skill development of young children. This aligns with the findings of Alawiyah (2014) which indicate that children who actively participate in traditional games experience enhanced motor skill development, as the activities inherent in traditional games stimulate both gross and fine motor skills.

3.1.2.2. Improvement in Vocabulary and Fine Motor Skills

Teachers observed that children engaged in games such as *congklak* and weaving demonstrated improvements in vocabulary and fine motor skills. One teacher commented, "Traditional games help children become more skilled in handling writing tools and performing activities that require precision."

3.1.2.3. Strengthening Emotional and Social Bonds

Parents and teachers both reported that traditional games strengthen the emotional bonds between parents and children while also enhancing children's social skills. One father stated, "Playing with my children brings us closer together, and it has helped them become more sociable with their friends." In addition to physical benefits, traditional games also have a positive impact on children's social and emotional interactions. Many parents shared that these games help to strengthen family bonds. One mother noted, "Playing with my children in the afternoon has become a cherished moment that strengthens our relationship as a family" (Mother C, personal interview, 2024).

Teachers also observed that children engaged in traditional games demonstrated greater cooperation and sharing skills with their peers. One teacher remarked, "Children who play traditional games often exhibit behaviors of helping each other and collaborating more frequently during group activities at school" (Teacher D, personal interview, 2024).

Parents and teachers play a critical role in introducing and facilitating traditional games. Their active support and participation can enhance the positive impact of these games on children's development. As Creswell and Creswell (2017) state, "A supportive environment provided by parents and teachers is essential for maximizing the benefits of traditional games for children" (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

3.1.2.4. Interest in Literacy and Physical Activities

Observations revealed that children who frequently participated in traditional games demonstrated a greater interest in books and other physical activities. This was highlighted by a teacher who stated, "Children have become more inclined to read storybooks after playing traditional games."

3.1.2.5. Interest in Local Culture

Traditional games also enhance children's interest in local culture and their cultural heritage. One parent shared, "My child is now more interested in learning about traditional games and their history. This has helped them develop a greater appreciation for our culture" (Father E, personal interview, 2024). Both parents and teachers agreed that traditional games are an effective way to introduce children to local culture, which is important for fostering their identity and sense of pride.

These qualitative findings support the quantitative results by showing that traditional games not only improve children's motor skills but also offer additional benefits, such as enhancing social and emotional skills and increasing interest in literacy.

3.2. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that traditional games within families have a significant impact on the development of motor skills in early childhood. Statistical analysis using an independent t-test examined the differences in average post-test scores between the experimental and control groups, yielding significant results ($t(58) = 7.92, p < 0.001$).

3.2.1. Development of Gross Motor Skills

The findings indicate that children who regularly participated in traditional games demonstrated significant improvements in gross motor skills. The average score in the experimental group increased from 45.3 in the pre-test to 78.5 in the post-test, while the control group showed only a slight increase from 46.1 to 48.7. Traditional games such as jump rope, *galasin*, and hide-and-seek, which involve intensive physical activity, likely explain this improvement. These activities help to develop children's muscle strength, coordination, and balance (Wibisona et al., 2019). As Smith (2009) notes, games that involve intensive physical activity are highly effective in fostering the development of gross motor skills in children.

These findings underscore the importance of preserving and promoting traditional games within families and communities. As Hasanah (2016) explains, traditional games are not merely a form of recreation but also serve as essential tools for the physical, social, and emotional development of children.

3.2.2. Development of Fine Motor Skills

In terms of fine motor skills, children in the experimental group showed a significant increase, with their average score rising from 42.7 in the pre-test to 74.9 in the post-test. The control group, however, exhibited only a minimal increase, from 43.5 to 44.3. Traditional games such as *congklak*, weaving, and other activities that involve precise hand movements and hand-eye coordination contributed to this improvement (Muliadi and Asyari, 2024). These activities help children develop fine motor control, which is essential for tasks like writing and drawing. Tanto and Sufyana (2020) emphasized that traditional games involving precise hand movements play a crucial role in developing fine motor skills in children.

3.2.3. Implications of the Research

The findings of this study support the importance of preserving and promoting traditional games within families as an effective tool for developing children's motor skills. Traditional games are not merely recreational activities but also serve as an essential educational medium for children's physical development. Maesaroh et al. (2022) stated that traditional games play a significant role in the development of both gross and fine motor skills in children.

These findings highlight the critical role of parents in facilitating traditional games at home. By providing time and space for children to engage in traditional games, parents can help accelerate their children's motor skill development. Creswell and Creswell (2017) noted that "A supportive and interactive family environment is essential for the development of children's motor skills" (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). A supportive and interactive family environment also plays a key role in enhancing the positive outcomes of traditional games on children's motor skill development.

These findings can be used to inform educational policies and intervention programs aimed at enhancing children's motor skill development. The integration of traditional games into early childhood education curricula could serve as an effective strategy to achieve this goal. Smith (2009) suggested that the integration of traditional games into early childhood education can accelerate the development of children's motor and social skills. The results of this study can inform educational policies that better support the inclusion of traditional games in early childhood education curricula. Smith (2009) further argued that "Integrating traditional games into formal education can enhance children's overall motor, social, and emotional development.

3.2.4. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study is limited to a single geographic area and a relatively small sample size, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the three-month intervention period may not have been sufficient to observe the long-term effects of traditional games on children's motor skill development.

Future research is recommended to include larger sample sizes and multiple geographic regions to enhance the generalizability of the results. Moreover, long-term studies are necessary to explore the sustained effects of traditional games on children's motor skill development. Further research could also investigate the impact of traditional games on other aspects of development, such as cognitive and socio-emotional growth in children.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explores the impact of traditional games within families on the development of motor skills in early childhood. The results indicate that traditional games significantly improve children's gross and fine motor skills, with a significant difference observed between the group that engaged in traditional games and the group that did not ($t(58) = 7.92, p < 0.001$).

Games such as jump rope and *congklak* have been proven to enhance muscle strength and coordination. In addition to their physical benefits, these games also strengthen social and emotional interactions, foster family bonds, and improve children's teamwork skills. Children also demonstrate a greater interest in local culture through traditional games.

These findings emphasize the importance of integrating traditional games into early childhood education curricula to support holistic development. However, this study is limited by its small sample size, indicating the need for further research with larger samples and longer durations to ensure better validity.

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