



BALINESE TRADITIONAL GAMES TO DEVELOP CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on children, with restrictions and changes in daily routines affecting their psychological well-being, including their resilience. This study examines the role of traditional Balinese games, specifically Curik-curik, in fostering children's resilience. Using the case study method, we analyze the aspects that shape children's resilience during the game of Curik-curik. The results reveal that this traditional game provides a natural and effective means for children to communicate their feelings, reducing their worries and anxieties. Moreover, participating in Curik-curik enables children to develop self-control, emotional management, and problem-solving skills, preparing them to face real-life changes and obstacles. By engaging in traditional Balinese games, children can cultivate resilience and be better equipped to tackle new challenges in their growth journey.

Keywords: Balinese Traditional Games; Resilience; Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus or Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which primarily affects the human respiratory system (Sugihantono et al., 2020). Since the first reported case in Indonesia in March 2020, the country has faced challenging times due to the pandemic. Covid-19 has transformed from a national issue to a global crisis, impacting countries worldwide (Syafri & Hartati, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) reported a staggering 14.9 million deaths related to the Covid-19 pandemic (WHO, 2022). The pandemic's effects have been far-reaching, affecting almost every aspect of life, including the education sector, which has encountered significant disruptions and difficulties (Aji, 2020; Dewi, 2020).

Teaching and learning activities have been severely hampered, and face-to-face schooling was suspended to prevent virus transmission. Educational institutions, from Early Childhood Education to the tertiary level, have had to transition to distance learning or online classes from home. These changes have caused children to adapt to new daily situations, such as limited socializing and spending extended periods at home, leading to feelings of boredom and vulnerability to stress, either from their own experiences or from the stress experienced by their parents and families at home. As the situation evolves, the government has taken steps to ease pandemic restrictions, allowing school students to return to their classrooms. This transition poses a new challenge for children as they move from studying at home back to studying in schools.

Adjusting to this change may require support and understanding to help

children readjust to the school environment after an extended period of distance learning. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought various challenges to families, and these challenges can have significant impacts on children's mental health. The restrictions and changes in daily routines caused by the pandemic have affected parents' psychological conditions, which, in turn, can influence children's well-being (Cusinato et al., 2020). Research conducted by Cui and Hong (2021) highlights the diverse impacts of the pandemic on families and children. Economic pressure resulting from the pandemic's economic consequences can create additional stress within households. The financial difficulties faced by parents can lead to strained family functioning, including conflicts and interaction problems between parents and children. These stressors can contribute to emotional and psychological difficulties in both parents and children. Parent-child interactions are crucial for children's development and well-being.

However, when parents experience heightened stress and economic pressures, these interactions may be affected. Negative interactions and conflicts within the family can create an emotionally challenging environment for children, impacting their mental health and resilience. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes providing support to parents in managing economic pressures, promoting healthy parent-child interactions, and fostering an understanding and supportive family environment. Supporting parents in coping with stress and economic burdens can contribute to maintaining a more positive family dynamic, ultimately benefiting children's mental health during these challenging times.

Reivich and Shatte (2002) explain that resilience is the ability to bounce back and adapt in the face of adversity. Several aspects contribute to building resilience in individuals. Here are seven key aspects:

- 1) Emotion Regulation: The ability to remain calm and manage emotions effectively, especially during stressful situations.
- 2) Impulse Control: The capacity to resist immediate desires or pressures and make thoughtful decisions.
- 3) Optimism: Maintaining a positive attitude and outlook, even when facing challenges, by focusing on a brighter future.
- 4) Causal Analysis: The skill of accurately identifying the root causes or factors contributing to the problems one encounters.
- 5) Empathy: The ability to understand and relate to the emotional and psychological states of others.
- 6) Self-efficacy: Believing in one's own capabilities to solve problems and overcome obstacles.
- 7) Reaching Out: Seeking and embracing positive aspects of life even in the face of adversity.

Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Education Assessment of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, Dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia) in 2022, stated that playing is a form of learning for early childhood. If children are given quality play stimulation that suits their interests and challenges appropriately, then this can be an opportunity for children to show their identity as Indonesian children, as well as their ability to explore, solve problems, think, and apply Pancasila values. Playing is also one of the children's rights presented by the United Nations. According to research conducted by Kurniati (2011), it has been demonstrated that traditional games can encourage children's development of communication skills and cooperation. These games also aid children in adapting to new situations, promoting positive interactions, and fostering self-discipline.

Furthermore, engaging in traditional games allows children to develop empathy towards their peers, learn to abide by rules, and cultivate respect for others. Based on the observations of researchers during January 2024 at a kindergarten in Denpasar, it shows that children aged 5-6 years have not been

able to adjust and have not been able to interact properly when they enter face-to-face school again. The findings from interviews with teachers revealed that children faced challenges in adjusting to their peers and the school environment, as they had been accustomed to online schooling and were now transitioning to in-person classes. These real-life observations served as strong motivations for researchers to conduct this study.

METHODS

The research methodology utilized in this study is qualitative research, employing a case study approach. This method delves deeply into exploring and analyzing a specific case or a small group of cases to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject and its contextual complexities. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell & Creswell (2018), aims to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups facing social or human issues. The study's primary data sources encompassed 21 students, school principals, and three teachers, while secondary data sources included documentation of children's play activities, their learning outcomes, references to articles and books on resilience, and traditional Balinese games. By employing a range of data collection techniques, the researchers gathered a diverse array of perspectives and observations of the children's interactions and behaviors during their participation in traditional games and their transition back to face-to-face schooling. Interviews with school principals, homeroom teachers, and students allowed for in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of different stakeholders. Simultaneously, observations of children's activities during play offered valuable contextual information on how traditional games can foster resilience. The documentation of various school activities provided additional supporting evidence for the study. This comprehensive approach to data collection likely yielded rich and valuable insights into the topic of children's resilience development through traditional games and their adaptation to the return to school. The combination of qualitative methods and the case study design offers a nuanced understanding of the subject matter, enabling researchers to explore the complexities and nuances of children's experiences in the context of Balinese traditional games and education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in the field show that there are two traditional games that are routinely played in kindergarten, namely the game of stealth. *Curik-curik* is a traditional Balinese group game that involves a minimum of 4 children. Two children act as guards by extending their right hands upward, creating a "gate" through which other children will pass. The remaining children form a line and pass through the gate while a song is sung. When the song ends, the child who is in the middle of the gate becomes "closed" and is given the choice to join either the left or right gate group. The objective of the game is to have the most followers by the end of the round, and the child with the highest number of followers is declared the winner. Conversely, the child with the fewest followers becomes the loser and must try to catch the last child from the opposing group in the next round. This traditional game fosters social interaction, cooperation, and decision-making skills among the children, making it a fun and engaging activity in Balinese culture.

Curik-curik game song:

*Curik-curik semental layang-layang boko-boko, tiang meli pohe,
aji satak aji satu kepeng, mara bakat anak bagus peceng, enjok-enjok*

Traditional games hold significant cultural value as they encompass various elements, such as movement, social interaction, and cultural expressions. These games are more than just leisure activities; they are a

representation of a community's heritage, customs, and beliefs. Through traditional games, cultural values are reinforced and passed down from one generation to another. Participants learn about their cultural identity, history, and the importance of cooperation, respect, and fair play. These games also foster a sense of belonging and strengthen social bonds within the community. Moreover, traditional games often involve imaginative play and creativity. Children and adults alike can explore their creativity while playing these games, coming up with new strategies, and adapting to different situations. This creativity contributes to the evolution and preservation of these games over time. Overall, traditional games are an essential aspect of cultural heritage, promoting cultural continuity and enriching the lives of those who participate in them (Taro, 1999).

Traditional games look at noble values and certain moral messages such as togetherness values, open-mindedness and getting back up if you lose, honesty, responsibility, encouragement to achieve, and obedience to rules (Cahyono, 2011). One of the traditional Balinese games, namely the game of stealth, does not require tools, it only requires a wide and flat field so that children are safe while playing. Play can support physical development and good mental health. Playing facilitates children in physical activity, including sports activities, which allows for increased body coordination and balance, as well as developing skills in child growth. The contribution to mental health is helping children to build and develop resilience (endurance) to pressures in life (Iswinarti, 2010). By observing and interviewing children, teachers, and school principals throughout the research conducted in February 2024, the data from these observations and interviews can provide a deeper insight into how this game can shape and enhance various aspects of resilience in them. This study can offer valuable information on how traditional play experiences like *Curik-curik* can influence the social and emotional development of children within their cultural context. Here are some aspects of resilience that have emerged during the research:

- 1) Emotion Regulation: When the children line up and walk past the gatekeeper one by one, they learn patience and self-control. They must manage their emotions and wait their turn without interrupting the game. This practice of forming a line and taking turns helps them understand the importance of waiting and cooperating in a group setting. It also encourages them to regulate their emotions, especially when they may feel excited or eager to participate. Similarly, the child who takes on the role of the gatekeeper also learns emotional regulation. As the gatekeeper, they must exercise patience and self-discipline while waiting for the line of children to pass. They need to follow the rules of the game, such as waiting for the song to finish before catching the child passing through the gate. This reinforces their ability to manage their emotions and stay composed even in a position of responsibility and authority. By practicing emotional regulation through *Curik-curik*, children develop essential social and emotional skills that can benefit them in various aspects of life. These skills help them handle various situations with composure, empathy, and respect for others, contributing to their overall emotional intelligence and well-being (Lemerise, E. A., & Arsenio, W. F., 2000).
- 2) Impulse Control: Despite their fear of being caught, the children who form the line show remarkable discipline and sportsmanship. They resist the temptation to overtake each other while passing the gatekeepers, maintaining a fair and orderly approach to the game. This displays their respect for the rules and their willingness to cooperate, creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere during the game. Similarly, the children who take on the role of gatekeepers demonstrate integrity and fairness. Despite their desire to catch a specific child or end the game quickly, they do not rush the tempo of the song being sung. They adhere to the rules, ensuring that each child has a fair chance to pass through the gate before attempting to catch them. This fosters a sense of trust and respect among all

participants, promoting a healthy and enjoyable playing experience. The way the children handle the game with such maturity and respect for one another reflects their understanding of the importance of fairness and teamwork (Garner, P. W., Robertson, S., & Smith, G., 1997). This showcases the positive values instilled in them through traditional games like *Curik-curik*, which not only entertain but also contribute to their character development and social skills.

- 3) Optimism: It's wonderful to see how traditional games like *Curik-curik* foster resilience and a positive mindset in children. Even when children get caught by the gatekeepers, they maintain their optimism and confidence, refusing to give up or feel defeated. They continue to participate enthusiastically in the game, undeterred by challenges. Similarly, the children who act as gatekeepers also display optimism and confidence, even if only a few children choose to join their group. They do not lose hope or give up but instead continue to engage in the game with determination until the end. These positive attitudes and resilience exhibited by the children during the game not only contribute to their enjoyment of the activity but also serve as valuable life skills that can be applied in various situations beyond the game. They learn the importance of perseverance, maintaining a positive outlook, and embracing challenges with confidence (Jones, S. M., Bailey, R., Barnes, S. P., & Partee, A., 2016). Traditional games like *Curik-curik*, in addition to being fun and culturally enriching, can also play a role in nurturing important social and emotional qualities in children, enhancing their overall development.
- 4) Causal analysis: It's remarkable to see how the traditional game of *Curik-curik* not only encourages resilience but also promotes strategic thinking and analysis among the gatekeepers. Even in the situation where one gatekeeper ends up with the least number of group members and loses the round, they don't give up but instead, continue to strategize. The losing gatekeeper reflects on the situation and analyzes their options carefully. They understand the need to make quick decisions on whether to run to the left or right to catch the child who is in the rearmost position in the opposing group. This analytical approach helps them develop critical thinking skills and adapt their tactics for the next round. On the other hand, the victorious gatekeeper understands the importance of strategic planning to maintain their group members' unity and cohesion. By keeping their group members close and well-organized, they can prevent their opponent from catching the members in the back row, thereby securing their victory. This ability to strategize and lead their team reinforces leadership qualities and teamwork in the winning gatekeeper. In addition to being a fun and cultural game, *Curik-curik* presents valuable opportunities for children to learn problem-solving, decision-making, and teamwork, making it a meaningful and enriching experience for all participants (Goleman, D., 1998).
- 5) Empathy: It's heartening to observe the positive and respectful attitudes displayed by the children while playing *Curik-curik*. The game seems to promote a spirit of cooperation and teamwork, fostering a sense of unity among the participants. Despite the competitive nature of the game, every child willingly works together and supports their group mates in their pursuit of victory. They understand the importance of collaboration and helping each other to achieve a common goal, which is winning the game. Furthermore, the children exhibit sportsmanship and maturity in both victory and defeat. Even when they lose, they remain gracious and respectful towards the group that emerged as the winner. Likewise, the winning group shows empathy and consideration by refraining from ridiculing or belittling the group that lost. These displays of mutual respect and positive attitudes create a healthy and enjoyable environment for everyone involved in the game. It also reinforces important values such as sportsmanship, empathy, and understanding that can carry over into other

aspects of their lives (Weiss, M. R., & Williams, L. (Eds.), 2004). *Curik-curik*, in addition to being a traditional cultural game, seems to instill valuable life lessons that extend beyond the boundaries of play, contributing to the overall character development of the children.

- 6) Self-efficacy: Each child participating in the game believes in their abilities and is determined to succeed. The children who are part of the line approaching the gatekeepers are full of confidence that they will be able to get past the gate successfully and contribute to their team's victory. This self-assurance not only adds to their enjoyment of the game but also empowers them to face challenges with optimism. Likewise, the child who takes on the role of the gatekeeper is also confident in their skills. They believe in their ability to catch the line of children attempting to pass through the gate, and they strategize to win the game. This confidence is essential in maintaining their focus and determination to fulfill their role effectively. The collective confidence and belief in their capabilities create a positive and engaging atmosphere during the game. This sense of assurance not only contributes to the enjoyment of the participants but also nurtures their self-esteem and resilience as they continue to participate in other activities beyond the game (Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D., 1990). Overall, *Curik-curik* seems to encourage a positive and confident outlook in children, instilling in them the belief that they can overcome challenges and achieve success through determination and teamwork.
- 7) Reaching Out: It's truly heartwarming to see that the competition in *Curik-curik* does not negatively affect the friendship and communication between the children. Despite the intensity of the game and the desire to win, the children understand that it is just a playful competition, and they do not let the outcome hinder their relationships with each other. After the game is over, the atmosphere returns to normal, and they resume their camaraderie. The children continue to play together, share laughter, and engage in friendly interactions. They do not hold grudges or allow any differences in the game's outcome to come between their friendships. Their ability to play and laugh together, as well as their willingness to ask each other to play again, showcases their mature and positive attitude towards the game (Pellegrini, A. D., & Smith, P. K., 1998). It emphasizes the spirit of sportsmanship and the understanding that winning or losing in a game is a temporary and minor aspect of their relationships. *Curik-curik*, as a traditional game, not only provides fun and entertainment but also serves as a medium to strengthen bonds and foster a sense of unity among the children. The game's positive impact on their friendships highlights the valuable social and emotional lessons that can be learned through cultural activities like this one.

Traditional Balinese games, namely *Curik-curik* can develop children's resilience abilities. This game does not require tools so it can be done at any time and without the need to pay. This game is a medium for emotional catharsis and can hone children's empathy and self-control. This game is also conditioning children to be able to establish relationships, work together, and practice social maturity with peers while at the same time being able to train children's socialization skills so that children are ready to enter society and face changes and obstacles that occur.

CONCLUSION

Balinese traditional games like *Curik-curik* can play a significant role in supporting children's mental health. These games provide a natural and enjoyable platform for children to express their emotions and communicate their feelings effectively. During the games, children may experience a range of emotions, such as excitement, joy, frustration, or even disappointment. Participating in Balinese traditional games provides children with a safe and non-judgmental space to release and share their feelings openly. The playful and social nature of these games creates an environment where children can

express themselves naturally, which can be a therapeutic outlet for them. This expression of emotions helps reduce internal worries and anxieties, contributing to improved emotional well-being. Furthermore, traditional games offer valuable opportunities for children to develop essential life skills. Through the games, children learn to control themselves, manage their emotions, and solve problems effectively. These skills become valuable assets as they face various challenges and changes in real-life situations. Learning to control themselves and manage emotions during the games helps children respond more calmly and thoughtfully in challenging situations outside of the game context. They develop emotional resilience, enabling them to cope with setbacks and navigate through obstacles in their lives with greater ease. Additionally, problem-solving skills honed through traditional games contribute to a child's ability to approach challenges in a systematic and constructive manner. This problem-solving ability is transferable to various real-life situations, enhancing their capacity to adapt and find solutions. Overall, Balinese traditional games serve as a valuable platform for holistic development. Beyond providing entertainment, they foster emotional expression, strengthen important life skills, and prepare children to face the complexities of real life with confidence and resilience.

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