

Traditional Sundanese Games as Play Therapy for Traumatic Risk Reduction of Child Earthquake Victims: A Cultural and Psychological Study

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This research aims to investigate the Sundanese traditional games that could be used as Play Therapy for reducing the traumatic risk of children after natural disasters; especially earthquakes. In addition, the main purpose of this research is to describe the types of Sundanese traditional games in regards to their roles as Play Therapy which are based on the local genius of the Sundanese. The methodology used in this research is qualitative ethnography. The theories employed in this research from the cultural sciences focus on Sundanese language and psychology. The results of this research show that there are five traditional Sundanese group games that have potency as Play Therapy which can be used to reduce the traumatic risk for child earthquake victims. Those games are suitable to be played in natural disaster areas since they do not use media in the playing process. Furthermore, the games are also able to develop the attitudes of cooperation, socialisation, fitness, support one another, strategies, problem solving, anticipation, happiness, and emotion control. The values and characters during and after playing could be used as therapy for the children, i.e. to resolve resistance, open communication and socialisation, redevelop creativity and problem solving, and rebuild the positive emotion of the children.

Key words: *Culture, Psychology, Traditional Games, Therapy, Trauma, Sunda.*

Introduction

Located in South East Asia, Republic of Indonesia is the biggest archipelago consisting of 13.487 islands. Geographically, it is located in between two continents: Asia and Australia. Meanwhile, geologically, Indonesia is between two circums: the Pacific and Mediterania, and among three plates: Australia, Pasific, and Eurasia. Due to its geological position, Indonesia is included in an earthquake risk country. Earthquakes and other natural disasters can occur anytime and any place in Indonesia.

According to the Indonesian Disaster Information Data (DIBI)-BNPB, around 1.800 disasters occur in the period of 2005 to 2015, more than 78% (11.648) of disasters are hydrometeorology and around 22% (3.810) are geological disasters. (National Disaster Risk Management Agency, 2016). The hydrometeorology disasters are floods, extreme waves, land and forest fires, droughts, and extreme weather. On the other hand, the geological disaster are earthquakes, tsunamis, eruptions, and landslides (National Disaster Risk Management Agency, 2016). According to the National Disaster Risk Management Agency (BNPB) Republic of Indonesia, there were 654 disaster in 2017 overall Indonesia.

Any disasters occurring in an area, there are injuries, stress and depression, and deep trauma for the victims. The post-trauma stress and depression are sustainable mal-adaptive reactions towards traumatic experience for some months; even years. Such conditions tend to decrease the life quality of the victims in a long period. (Elita, Sholihah, & Sahiel, 2017, p. 1).

This stress can be experienced not only by adults; but also by children. For children, the disaster can cause a deep mental crash. Therefore, the handling of children in disasters is not only in physical care but also mental care to minimise or even to cure the trauma since children are more susceptible to prolonged trauma than adults; therefore it causes a mental quality that is decreasing and impacts on life quality decrease (Nugroho, R, Rengganis, & Wigati, 2013, p. 98).

There has been some handling of post-earthquake trauma of children. Various models have been formulated from the psychological aspects, one of them is Play Therapy. This can be a psychological impact handling program, where their neighbourhood should provide playground and tools according to their local culture (Mukhadiono, Subagyo, & Wahyudi, 2016). Nevertheless, the physical destruction of an area of earthquake causes the obstacles to distribute the media commonly used as Play Therapy for children.

On the other hand, every region in Indonesia has rich cultures which have potential as media for decreasing the trauma risk of victims highly suitable to local culture and do not need modern tools or equipment that is in a traditional game. Traditional games are a manifestation

of cultural heritage. Moreover, it is also close to nature and giving contributions to children's personal characters.

Data of Indonesian Statistics Agency (BPS) state that there are 1331 tribes (2015). Principally, every of them have their own cultures, language, customs, including traditional games. One of them is Sundanese with a population with as many as 20 million and has become the second biggest tribe after the Javanese. It has a Sundanese language and most of them live in the *Jawa Barat* province in Java island.

The short brief above shows that Play Therapy for children is an important factor for improving life quality, and traditional games provide big opportunities as the media for therapy. Therefore, this research formulates the traditional games as the media of *therapy risk reduction* for children experiencing post-disaster trauma.

Responding to earthquakes that recently happened in some areas of Indonesia, especially Lombok island, this interdisciplinary research between culture and psychology presents the potency of cultural science in contributing to and collaborating with psychology for improving the quality of life of disaster victims with trauma, tries to help the Indonesian government and people to resolve the impacts of the earthquakes. This research can also be a model of interdisciplinary research contributing in the development of cultural psychology or cultural science and psychology itself.

Material and Method

Playing and Traditional Games

Playing is one of the most interesting elements in the development of child's physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, creative and social wellbeing. Playing is an activity that is unavoidable in a child's world and is a basic need for them to have optimal growth. A child with adequate playing opportunity will become an adult who is more friendly, creative, and smart than the one with less playing opportunity in his/her childhood (Soetjiningsih, 2004, p. 17).

This statement is supported by Isbell that, "*In play, children develop problem solving skills by trying different ways of doing things and determining the best approach. When playing, they learn about other people as they try out different roles and adjust to working together* (Isbell, 1995).

One of them that can be played by children are traditional games. Traditional games are, principally, rich of philosophy and education values. Many of them can be played only in a group or team and cooperated with others. The cooperation activities in a game is the

implementation of social behaviour. A child with interpersonal intelligence can do socialisation well since it is a skill to interact with others (Suyadi, 2014) (Nurfitri, 2018, p. 16).

Traditional educative games are effectively proved to help improving the young child's character acquisition. They can help children to own various positive characteristics developed in every game (Hapidin & Yenina, 2016, p. 1). Arikunto, (1997, p. 4) also stated that in children's games, particularly the traditional ones, there is important meaning in cultural education of a nation to establish the values, social norms, and way of life.

The traditional games in this archipelago are able to stimulate some child development aspects, such as motor skills to train for endurance, flexibility, sensory motor skills, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills. Cognitive aspects develop imagination, creativity, problem solving, strategic thinking, anticipation, and contextual understanding. The emotional aspect is to control emotion, empathy, and self-control. The language aspect is to understand the value concepts. The social aspect is to make relations, cooperation, social maturity with same age friends, and put foundations to train the skill of role play in society. The spiritual aspect is to realise the connectivity with God. The ecological aspect is to understand the using of nature's resources wisely. Moral/values aspect is to appreciate the moral values inherited from the former generations (Hidayat, 2013, p. 1062).

Play Therapy

Play therapy is a counselling technique given to children by means of playing concept as a way of communication with adults in order to state natural expression. Then, this approach is used to intervene or to make a dialogue with them to create better feelings and develop a situation for solving an existing problem. Playing therapy uses some tools as media. Every game has symbolic meaning that can help the therapist to identify the source of a child's problems (Sukmaningrum, 2001, pp. 14–23)

Some principal concepts are used as the base of Play Therapy as follows: First, Play Therapy is developed based on a systematic theoretical foundation. Regarding this, Play Therapy is developed based on established counseling and psychology theories such as psychoanalysis, person-centred, gestalt, and so on. Second, Play Therapy focuses on the strength of the games as playing media to help children prevent and solve their psychological matters and assist their achievement of their growth and development in line with the development tasks optimally (Dwi, Chandra, & Ahmad, 2016, p. 64).

According to The Association for Play Therapy, there are fourteen kinds of advantages that can be attained by using Play Therapy as an intervention (Nawangsih, 2014, p. 170), namely:

1. Resolve the resistance: games are a way to attract children involved in the counselling activities.
2. Communication: games are natural media used by children to express themselves.
3. Competence: games give opportunities for children to fulfill their needs in exploring and mastering a skill.
4. Creative thinking: games provide a big opportunity to develop self competence for having creative thinking to resolve the matters.
5. Chatarsis: through games, children are able to convey more freely the emotional pressure experienced by them therefore they are able to grow up optimally without mental burden.
6. Abreaction: during the games, children have opportunities to process and adjust the experienced difficulties symbolically with proper emotional expression.
7. Role playing: children are able to practice some new roles and develop empathy to others.
8. Fantasy: children are able to use imagination to understand their bad experience. They are also able to try their life slowly.
9. Metaphoric teaching: children are able to have deep understanding about their experienced difficulties and fear with metaphorical expression using in the games.
10. Attachment formation: children are able to develop a bond with their counselor and develop their connection ability with others.
11. Relationship improvement: games are able to improve positive therapy relations, to give children freedom to actualise themselves and grow closer to others in their surroundings.
12. Positive emotion: children enjoy games, in this condition, they are able to laugh and have an enjoyable time in the place where they feel welcome.
13. Mastering fear: with repeated fun with the game, it will reduce the child's anxiety and fear.
14. Playing games: games help children to socialise and develop their ego strength. They have opportunities to improve their skills.

Traumatic Symptoms of Natural Disaster Victims

Specific symptoms of children after natural disaster are fear, depression, self-blaming, feeling guilty, loss of interest in the school and other activities, regression, insomnia, nightmares, aggression, poor concentration, and separation anxiety (Baggerly & Exum, 2008, p. 80). However, the symptoms are varied from mild to severe ones based on a child's development level, self-experience, emotion and physical health, response of the parents towards the symptoms. In children ≤ 5 years old, the specific symptoms are separation anxiety, excessive adjacency, crying, moaning in fear, screaming, and regressive behaviour such as thumb sucking and fear of darkness (National Institute for Mental Health, [NIMH], 2001). In children from 6 – 11 years old, the specific symptoms are extreme withdrawal, increasing

conflict and aggression, hyperactivity and carelessness, irrational fear, easy to get angry, insomnia, school strike, stomach ache, and emotionally numb (NIMH, 2001). In teenagers from 12 – 17 years old, the specific symptoms are flashbacks, nightmares, emotionally numb, avoiding traumatic memories, substance (drug) abuse, and depression (NIMH, 2001). The common physical symptoms of the natural disaster victims are headache and stomach ache.

Method

Theoretical and methodological approaches are employed in this research. Theoretically, cultural study and psychology approached are used, while methodologically, this research uses a qualitative, ethnographic method. (Moleong, 2010, p. 6) said that qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically and descriptively in the words and language in a particular natural context by using a natural method. Ethnography focuses on research process and the results of the process.

This preliminary research focuses on identifying the types of traditional games derived from Sundanese culture that are played in group. In that case, this research investigates those that have potency such as Play Therapy. Then, it will be followed with the application of the Sundanese traditional games towards the children of natural disaster victims experiencing trauma in order to investigate their effects and uses.

Results and Discussion

The Types of Group Traditional Sundanese Games

There are many types of traditional games in a Sundanese area. In this research, they are classified and analysed as group games that are possible to be used as Play Therapy to decrease the trauma risk of earthquake victims. Among the traditional Sundanese games categorised as Play Therapy are as follow:

Oray-orayan

This game is often called *ular-ularan* in Bahasa Indonesia or having snake formation since it has a snake shape. Since it is a group game, it is played by more than 10 people. This snake formation is, although does not need any media, moving around and curling up. The players only memorise and sing-the-song together when the game is still running, i.e.: “*Oray-orayan... Luar leor ka sawah. Entong ka sawah... Parena keur sedeng beukah. Oray-orayan... Luar leor ka kebon. Entong ka kebon... Di kebon loba nu ngangon. Mending ka leuwi ...Di leuwi loba nu mandi. Saha anu mandi?... Anu mandina pandeuri*”.

Figure 1. Traditional Sundanese Game: *Oray-orayan*



(source: www.uniknya.com)

As can be seen in Figure 1, the game starts with two children holding hands together and forming a tunnel that will be passed by their mates rolling as the snake, then the other children are forming a straight line like snake and the front child playing a role as the snake head and the back child playing role as the tail. The child in the front as the snake head should chase the child as the snake tail when the song being sung is stopped.

Hahayaman

This fun game should be played in a group and operated by 10 students or more. It describes a rooster being chased by a weasel and the other children form a circle cage and one plays the role of the cage keeper. There is a drawing to determine a child as the rooster or as the weasel. The rooster fights for escaping from the rooster while the weasel tries to catch the rooster.

Other children play the role of the cage keeper who struggle to save the rooster by blocking the weasel to enter the cage and catch the rooster when it gets into the cage. If the rooster is caught, the weasel is the winner and vice versa. The description can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Traditional Sundanese Games “Hahayaman”



(Source: ciburuan.wordpress.com)

Perepet Jengkol

As described in Figure 3, this fun game is played by 3-4 boys or girls. The players are standing back to back, holding hands with one another, and one of their legs is tied and hooked behind them. Standing by one leg, the players should keep their balance in order to not fall to the ground since they should move around together right and left following the instruction of a “*dalang*” who is clapping and singing: “*Perepet jengkol jajahean, Kadempet kohkol jejeretean...*” during the dance. The longer they are standing, the faster their leg movement. In this game, there is no the winner or the loser. The game is over when one or some of the players cannot use their balance and finally make the group members fall.

Figure 3. Traditional Sundanese Fun and Games: *Perepet Jengkol*



(Source: www.antarafoto.com)

Galah Asin

Galah Asin is game which is divided into two in which each group consists of 3-5 players. The first group keeps the horizontal border lines (keeper group) and the second group keeps the vertical border line (opponents group). Galah Asin games use a square similar to a badminton court with some lines. The group members have the task as horizontal line keepers, who should strive for blocking their opponents who are struggling to pass over the lines that are used as free line borders. The group members, commonly one person, who has a task keeping the vertical line, then he/she has access for all vertical border lines in the middle of the yard.

The “opponent” team is the winner if one of the group members is able to go back to start line safely (he/she is not touched by keeping team). While the “opponent” team is lost if one of the members is touched by the “keeping” team and out of border line. There will be an exchange of position as “keeper” or “opponent” after one of the groups wins or loses. The visual description can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Traditional Sundanese Game: *Galah Asin*



(Source: www.andirustandisunarya.wordpress.com)

Bebentengan

Bebentengan is an exciting game since it is played by some children. It can be played by boys or girls and needs a wide area with two pillars/trees/walls that function as a fortress of each group with the distance around 2 - 4 metres. There are at least 6 children who play *Bebentengan* because it is divided into 2 groups. Each group will strive for touching their opponent fortress in order to be the winner. The lost group will get punishment from the winner.

As can be seen in Figure 5, the important part of this game is competing to take over the opponent's fortress by touching the opponent pillar and shouting out "benteng". The winning can also be achieved by capturing all of the members by touching their bodies. In order to decide who becomes capturer or being captured, is determined by the last time he/she touch his/her own fortress. In this game, usually each of the members has a task as capturer, spy, disturber, and fortress keeper. This game needs a fast runner and a good strategy.

Figure 5. Traditional Sundanese Fun and Game: *Bebentengan*



(Source: www.garut.co)

Traditional Sundanese Games as Play Therapy

The five traditional game explained previously, have big potential as the medium for Play Therapy for children with traumatic experiences after earthquakes is since they have some relation and advantages namely:

First, the five traditional Sundanese games explained above are *oray-orayan*, *hahayaman*, *perepet jengkol*, *galah asin*, dan *bebentengan* that are played on open yards and do not need any media to play them. Some games are only accompanied with short songs sung by the players. This is in accordance with situation and condition post natural disaster such as an earthquake that is difficult to provide playing media and it is rather impossible for children to play in the room due to trauma of darkness. A playground or yard also brings free and open situations for children to have expressions so that they do not feel confined and moody.

Second, the traditional games such as *oray-orayan*, *hahayaman*, *perepet jengkol*, *galah asin*, and *bebentengan* are group games that need cooperation among group members. All members should work together and prioritise their groups. Cooperation among the group members can be media for children of earthquake victims to build socialisation and

communication with their surroundings. It can resolve the resistance experienced by children as the form of traumatic due to earthquake.

Third, all traditional games described above require children as the players to have body movements. To play *oray-orayan*, children must be able to walk slowly and hard, *Hahayaman* requires children to move with their hands up and down also walking to form a small to bigger circle, *perepet jengkol* requires children to jump with left leg and spinning, *galah asin* requires the children to move lively avoiding line keeper, and *Bebentengan* requires children to run defending their own. All those movements are able to make the children fit after an earthquake in which commonly they are still in fear and reluctantly having physical activities.

Fourth, *Oray-orayan*, *Hahayaman*, *Perepet Jengkol*, *Galah Asin*, and *Bebentengan* require the players to be compacted, supporting, protecting, and keeping balance one another in their group. In this game, the front player should be able to protect the players behind him/her. In *Perepet jengkol*, all players should be able to keep balance for making their group stable and not fall. In *Galah Asin*, the keepers should support one another to protect their house then it cannot be passed through by the opponent. On the other hand, becoming an opponent should be compacted to be able to break the defence of the keepers. The compact and supporting characters are able to develop an attitude of protecting one another among the players in the game. Such attitudes are very important to rebuild children's self confidence after an earthquake.

Fifth, in playing *Oray-orayan*, *Hahayaman*, *Perepet Jengkol*, *Galah Asin*, and *Bebentengan* there are some rules that must be obeyed by the players. It requires problem solving and creative attitudes to arrange strategies for winning their group in the game. It can also build anticipative attitude of children to make sure that the strategies used are accurate and their team is undefeated. Such attitudes are important to reform the positive characters of the children after the earthquake.

Sixth, basically the traditional Sundanese group games do not have purpose for win or loss competition but they are to create happiness among the players. Therefore, these games are able to resolve fear commonly experienced by children after earthquake. They will be happy, singing and playing together and having particular movements together. Often, those games make the players laughed together. It can not only train children to control their emotion but also as Chatarsis media since they are freely having their own expression in the games.

Conclusion

The results of this research show that geographical and geological position of Indonesia have made Indonesia as a susceptible country to natural disasters. Any disasters occurring in Indonesia always cause injuries and trauma for the victim; especially children. Many things can be conducted to reduce the post-disaster trauma of children. Various models have been formulated from psychological aspects, one of them is *Play Therapy*. In the post-disaster condition which is difficult to get the playing media, Play Therapy can make use of cultural assets around the earthquake location, namely traditional games.

This research identifies there are five traditional group games that can be used as Play Therapy media for children namely (1) *Oray-orayan*, (2) *Hayam-hayaman*, (3) *Perepet Jengkol*, (4) *Galah Asih*, dan (5) *Bebentengan*. The traditional games do not need media in the playing process, furthermore, they can strengthen values and characters such as cooperation, socialisation, fitness, support one another, strategy, problem solving, anticipation, happiness, and emotion control. The formed values and characters can be used as therapy of post-earthquake trauma of children, i.e. to resolve resistance, open communication and socialisation, rebuild creative and problem solving attitudes, become *chatarisis*, and rebuild positive emotion of the children of earthquake victim.

This research focuses on Traditional Sundanese games, however, the pattern of the games for media of traumatic therapy of the children of earthquake victim can be used in other areas of Indonesia or other countries by adapting the local culture and types of games.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors hereby declare there are no conflicts of interest associated with this study or any of the procedures and materials used for the purpose of the study.

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