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Children's Traditional Game Festival to Foster Local Cultural Awareness Amid Gadget Dependence

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Abstract−Traditional games are a cultural heritage that carries local wisdom and supports children's social, physical, and cultural development, yet they are increasingly displaced by gadgets, especially in urban areas. In RT 17, Tani Aman Urban Village, most children spend more time playing with gadgets because of limited facilities and guidance. This community service activity aimed to foster local cultural awareness among children through a traditional games festival as a response to gadget dependence, and to analyze the festival's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on participants' and partners' responses. The partners were the children, the RT head, and the local youth organization (Karang Taruna). The festival introduced nine traditional games, eight of which were played in a rotation of six stations. The evaluation used a descriptive qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and questionnaires from 21 informants, followed by SWOT analysis. The festival was attended by 54 children, equivalent to 18.8% of the 287 children aged 6–18 years in RT 17. Among the six identifiable child informants, four (66.7%) played directly, all six (100%) wanted to play again, and three (50.0%) tried or learned a new game. All 12 adult informants (100%) saw potential for a regular activity. These percentages describe perceptions, not measured changes. Limited equipment, facilitators, and play space, and the dominance of gadgets, need attention. The festival offers an engaging, community-based response to children's gadget dependence. Karang Taruna is recommended to develop it into a routine program with clearer roles, more equipment, and more facilitators.

Keywords: Traditional Games, Local Cultural Awareness, Children's Festival, Gadgets Dependence, SWOT Analysis, Community Service

1. INTRODUCTION

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory argues that children's cognitive development is shaped through social interaction with more knowledgeable others and the mediation of physical and symbolic tools within the zone of proximal development (Chen, 2025; Wan et al., 2025). From that perspective, learning takes place in socio-cultural spaces where children interact with others and use tools such as objects, rules, and language. A traditional games festival provides such a space, where children negotiate rules, learn from peers and older participants, and internalize cultural meaning through collective play. At the same time, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory emphasizes that child development is shaped by nested environmental layers, from family and peers to broader cultural values and societal trends (Karaca et al., 2025), including digital media experiences influenced by family, community, and policy (Munzer et al., 2026). When children spend extensive time on gadgets, opportunities for face-to-face play and social learning may decrease (Karaca et al., 2025). Traditional games, which embed local identity and social norms and support cooperation and communication (Chen, 2025; Hasan et al., 2024), can therefore serve as a community-based alternative that enriches peer interaction, strengthens connections among families and neighborhood partners, and sustains local cultural values (Chen, 2025; Karaca et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the concern for preserving traditional games is reflected in national policy. Law Number 5 of 2017 on the Advancement of Culture serves as the primary legal basis for protecting and preserving the nation's culture. Under Article 5 of this law, folk games are categorized as one of the Objects of Cultural Advancement that must be protected, developed, utilized, and passed on to the next generation (Gultom et al., 2022). In this context, folk games refer to traditional games that have long developed and been passed down within the community. Traditional games are a cultural heritage that embodies local wisdom. For instance, the traditional games of the Sasak people in Lombok contain values of solidarity and responsibility that can be instilled in children (Muliadi et al., 2024). Beyond cultural values, traditional games also support children's physical, social, moral, cognitive, and

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language development (Ashar et al., 2024; Gultom et al., 2022). Studies have shown that games such as gobak sodor and bakiak can improve gross motor skills as well as social skills including communication, cooperation, and adherence to rules (Fakhrurozi et al., 2024). Similar results were found in learning based on traditional games, which improved students' communication, empathy, and collaboration (Widyaningrum et al., 2026).

However, traditional games currently face several challenges amid changing times and shifting patterns of children's activities. Advances in digital technology and the rise of modern games have made traditional games increasingly rare among the younger generation (Handayani & Munastiwi, 2022), and they have begun to be displaced by gadget-based games, especially in urban areas (Gultom et al., 2022). Dependence on gadgets can also hinder children's social, emotional, and physical development and reduce their direct interaction with their surroundings (Az Zahra et al., 2026). These conditions highlight the importance of reintroducing traditional games as part of preserving local culture. Implementing these games in educational or community settings has been found effective in raising children's awareness of cultural preservation while strengthening character values through active participation (Sari & Durrotunnisa, 2025). Through direct involvement in play, children not only become familiar with the forms and rules of the games but also understand the social and cultural values they carry (Ramadani et al., 2025). Such efforts can be realized through integration into school learning (Aries, 2023) and community-based programs (Pujianti et al., 2023), with the involvement of families, schools, and communities considered important for sustainability (Suteja et al., 2022).

This community service activity was carried out in RT 17 of Tani Aman Urban Village, Samarinda. RT 17 consists of 213 households with 862 residents, including 287 children and adolescents (about 33.3% of the population), comprising 68 children aged 6–9 years and 219 aged 10–18 years (data source: Head of RT 17). The neighborhood is densely populated with limited open space, so children's play activities largely depend on Bima Sakti Field, which is safe but not very large. Limited open space in such areas can reduce children's opportunities for social interaction (Hanifatullaila et al., 2026). Socially, residents actively practice mutual cooperation through PKK (Family Welfare Movement), *dasawisma* (neighborhood women's groups), and Karang Taruna (the community youth organization). However, the only activity specifically for children is a reading corner that is not yet active. Despite these limitations, RT 17 has clear potentials: a large number of children and adolescents, the presence of a safe play field, and support from RT administrators and Karang Taruna.

An initial survey and informal interviews with children and Karang Taruna members revealed that most children spent more time indoors playing with gadgets. Gadgets were preferred because they were practical and aligned with social media trends, while interest in traditional games remained low due to limited equipment, the absence of instructors, and minimal guidance. Children also had limited knowledge of existing traditional games. To address these problems, this community service activity organized a participatory and interactive traditional games festival. Nine traditional games were introduced, namely *bakiak* (wooden clogs), *egrang kayu* (wooden stilts), *egrang batok* (coconut-shell stilts), jump rope, *engklek* (hopscotch), *congklak* (mancala-style game), *estafet balok* (block relay), *gobak sodor* (team chase game), and marbles—eight of which were played directly by the children. Equipment was partly borrowed from KPOTI East Kalimantan and partly prepared by the team, thereby overcoming the previous lack of facilities. Through this activity, children were introduced to the games and given the opportunity to play them directly with guidance from the implementation team.

Efforts to preserve traditional games through community service programs have been carried out in various regions of Indonesia, yet these initiatives still show several common patterns and limitations. Kurniawan et al. (2024), for instance, organized a traditional games festival at Semarang Multinational School because the school lacked any activity that introduced Indonesian traditional games to its students. The program focused on socialization and direct practice of games such as dakon, jump rope, bedhil bambu, and egrang, and received positive responses from the school community. While this activity introduced cultural heritage in an international school setting, it was a school-based event within a relatively structured educational environment.

A different approach was taken by Sarwani et al. (2024) in Kampung Lali Gadget, Sidoarjo. Using Participatory Action Research (PAR), the program employed traditional games specifically to reduce children's gadget dependence. The results showed increased social interaction and decreased screen time. Similarly, Purwanta et al. (2025) in Magetan trained students in engklek, gobak sodor, and dakon, which encouraged physical activity and peer interaction while reducing gadget use. Both programs demonstrated that traditional games can function as an alternative to digital entertainment. However, as far as these reports describe, they were implemented in community or school settings, and limited open space was not presented as a central condition.

Other programs expanded the goals beyond reducing gadget use. Pricilia et al. (2026) revitalized Angkola traditional games in Rimba Soping Village to strengthen children's literacy, numeracy, and character, while instilling values of cooperation, honesty, and love for culture. Meanwhile, Dewi (2025), working with partners at MIS Syababul Qorib in Perbaungan, formulated four preservation steps—education and socialization, revitalization, community empowerment, and collaboration with the private sector—and reported that students' courage to speak improved after playing.

Despite these positive outcomes, the studies reviewed here share several similarities and limitations. First, they were generally conducted in schools or villages, and none of them describes a densely populated

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neighborhood with limited open space as its setting. Second, the main focuses tended to be cultural introduction, reduction of gadget use, or the development of specific skills such as literacy and speaking. Third, although the programs received positive short-term responses, few of them systematically analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the implementation process as a basis for sustainability and replication in other contexts.

The novelty of the present community service activity lies in its combination of context, format, partnership, and evaluation. Unlike previous programs that were mostly conducted in schools or villages, this activity was carried out in a densely populated neighborhood unit with limited open space. It used a one-day festival format with nine game stations, each equipped with an instruction sheet, and relied on neighborhood-level partners—namely the head of RT 17, Karang Taruna, and residents—with equipment support from KPOTI East Kalimantan. The activity also applied a SWOT analysis to examine participants' and partners' responses as a basis for sustainability. Through this approach, the activity aims to foster local cultural awareness among children in RT 17, understood as their familiarity with traditional games and willingness to play them, while describing its implementation and analyzing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The expected benefits include increased familiarity with traditional games, a temporary shift from gadgets to direct play, greater peer interaction, stronger community support for child-centered activities, and a practical reference for similar programs in urban neighborhoods.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity took the form of a children's traditional games festival designed and run by a student community service (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*) team together with the local community. The implementation used a participatory approach that directly involved the children, the head of RT, and Karang Taruna. The results were then evaluated using a descriptive qualitative approach. The activity consisted of three stages, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The sequence of these stages and the activities within each of them are presented in Figure 1.

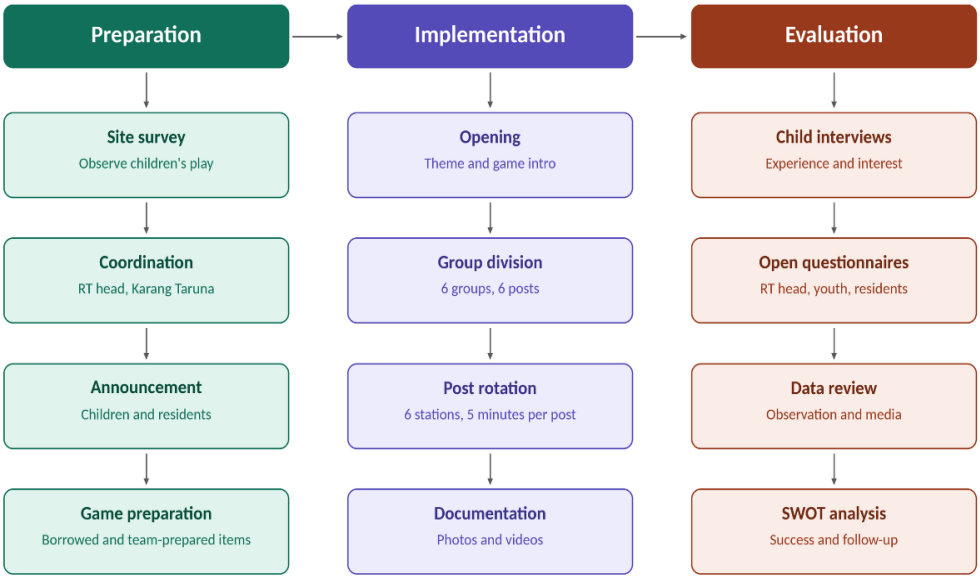


Figure 1. Stages of the Traditional Game Festival

Figure 1 shows the three stages of the activity, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation, which are arranged sequentially from left to right. The preparation stage begins with a site survey to observe children's play, followed by coordination with the head of RT and Karang Taruna. The activity is then announced to the children and residents, and the stage concludes with game preparation, in which some items were borrowed and the rest were prepared by the team. Once these preparations are complete, the process moves to the implementation stage, which opens with an introduction to the theme and the games. The children are subsequently divided into six groups and assigned to six stations, rotating every five minutes, while the team documents the process through photos and videos. Finally, the evaluation stage begins with interviews with the children about their experience and interest, complemented by open questionnaires for the head of RT, youth, and residents. The data obtained from observations and media are then reviewed, and the stage ends with a SWOT analysis to identify the successes of the activity and the points for follow-up.

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2.1 Partner Location and Date of Implementation

The activity was held at Bima Sakti Field, RT 17, Tani Aman Urban Village, Loa Janan Ilir District, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan. The partners were the RT 17 community, especially the children living in the area, together with the local Karang Taruna. The festival was held on Sunday, 2 August 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. WITA. It was attended by 54 children, accompanied by several parents and some Karang Taruna members.

2.2 Stages of Implementation

a. Preparation
The team began by surveying the location in RT 17 to observe children's daily activities and the available play spaces. The survey revealed that children tended to spend their free time playing with gadgets. Based on these findings, the team planned the festival concept, the game equipment, the socialization materials, the target participants, and the overall delivery of the event. Coordination was carried out with the head of RT 17, who suggested using Bima Sakti Field and announced the festival to residents through the neighborhood WhatsApp group. The team also coordinated with Karang Taruna to determine the schedule and the division of roles. Children were invited through the RT head's announcement and through direct invitations from Karang Taruna members, after which the children themselves invited one another. Of the eight games that were played, *egrang kayu, bakiak,* and *estafet balok* were borrowed from the Indonesian Committee for Folk Games and Traditional Sports (KPOTI) of East Kalimantan, while the remaining equipment was prepared by the team. Karang Taruna assisted in preparing unavailable items, such as *egrang batok* made from coconut shells, and helped arrange the venue. In addition, the team prepared an instruction sheet in Indonesian for each game station, stating the name of the game, how to play it, and its rules.

b. Implementation
The festival carried the theme "Preserve Traditional Games, Create an Active and Cheerful Generation." It began with an opening session of about 20 minutes. The children sat together and listened to a presenter from the community service team, who introduced the nine traditional games in turn, namely *egrang batok, egrang kayu*, jump rope*, engklek, gobak sodor, congklak, bakiak,* marbles, and *estafet balok*, covering the history, rules, and way of playing of each game. After each explanation, team members and Karang Taruna members who would staff the stations demonstrated how to play. *Gobak sodor,* which requires no equipment but only players, was introduced through a demonstration of about one minute by Karang Taruna members on the field and was not played during the rotation. After the opening, the committee divided the children into six groups with mixed, randomly assigned ages, and each group lined up and was directed to its first station. The eight games that were played were arranged at six stations: station 1 for *egrang kayu*, station 2 for *egrang batok*, station 3 for jump rope and *bakiak*, station 4 for *engklek*, station 5 for *congklak*, and station 6 for *estafet balok* and marbles. Each station had an instruction sheet so that children who had not heard or had forgotten the explanation could read it again. Each group stayed at a station for five minutes. When time was up, the committee gave a signal, and each group moved to the next station: group 1 to station 2, group 2 to station 3, and so on, until group 6 moved to station 1. In this way, each group tried all six stations in about 30 minutes. Each station was staffed by one or two committee members from the community service team and Karang Taruna, who accompanied the children, explained how to play when needed, answered questions, and guided children who had difficulty, rather than leaving them to play alone. The committee consisted of about ten team members and about seven Karang Taruna members. Throughout the activity, the team documented the event with photos and videos and recorded the children's attendance on an attendance list. After all groups completed the rotation, the children could freely choose any station to play at, without groups or rotation, until the activity ended at about 6:00 p.m.

c. Evaluation
The evaluation was conducted after the festival to assess the overall implementation of the activity as well as the responses of participants and partners. The evaluation process consisted of four steps. First, the team interviewed children from the RT 17 neighborhood about their experiences, including the games they liked, the traditional games they had just learned about, the difficulties they encountered, and their continued interest in playing traditional games in the future. Second, the team distributed open-ended questionnaires to the head of RT 17, Karang Taruna members, and local residents. The questionnaire contained questions about the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities for sustaining the traditional games festival that had been held. Third, the team reviewed the observation results and the photo and video documentation from the festival. At the end of the festival, the team also asked the children informally how they felt about taking part. These brief remarks supported the observation but were not counted as interview data. Fourth, all the data were compiled and analyzed using SWOT analysis, and the results were used as the basis for assessing the success of the activity and formulating follow-up actions.

2.3 Analysis and Techniques for Assessing Success

The success of the activity was assessed using a descriptive qualitative approach. Because the team acted both as implementer and data collector, the team was directly involved in the field as participant observers. To ensure

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that the data could be verified as valid, information was collected from several groups of informants through three techniques. First, participant observation was conducted during the festival to see children's enthusiasm and participation, interaction among participants, the games that were already familiar and those that were new to the children, the difficulties they experienced, and the involvement of Karang Taruna and residents. Second, data were collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaires with 21 informants, namely nine children from the RT 17 neighborhood, most of whom had taken part in the festival directly, the head of RT 17, two local community members, and nine Karang Taruna members. The interviews and questionnaires explored their experiences, responses to the activity, and views on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities of implementing traditional games in the future. Third, photo and video documentation of the activity was used to support the observation, interview, and questionnaire data.

After the data were collected, they were analyzed using SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The analysis was carried out in three steps: (1) the interview, questionnaire, observation, and documentation data were collected and organized, (2) the data were grouped into the four SWOT factors, and (3) each factor was interpreted to describe the extent to which the festival ran well in the community and what could still be improved. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and technique triangulation.

The interviews with children were audio-recorded. The recording of the children's group interview was transcribed using an automatic transcription tool. Because several children often answered at once and speakers could not be reliably distinguished in the recording, responses were attributed to an individual child only when the interviewer addressed that child by name, and the remaining responses were treated as group responses. Of the nine child informants, six gave responses that could be attributed to an individual child, and these six were used for the child-based percentages. Informants' responses were grouped into categories, and the number of informants mentioning each category was counted. Percentages were calculated relative to each informant group (interviewed children, n = 6; adults, n = 12) and are descriptive.

The indicators of the activity's success included the number and activeness of participants, children's enthusiasm and interest in trying traditional games, children's improved understanding of traditional games, and the support and involvement of the RT, Karang Taruna, and local residents. These indicators were assessed descriptively through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The indicators used to assess the success of the activity, together with their assessment methods, data sources, and criteria, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators for Assessing the Success of the Activity

Indicator	Assessment Method	Data source	Criteria (signs looked for)
Number and activities of participants	Number of children who attended and tried the games at the activity	Observation, documentation	Children were recorded on the attendance list and were seen taking part in the station rotation or free play
Children's enthusiasm	Children's responses while playing and their desire to play again	Observation, interviews with children	Children smiled, laughed, or cheered while playing, and said the games were fun and that they wanted to play again
Familiarity with traditional games	Games that were previously unfamiliar and are now known to the children	Interviews with children, questionnaires	Children said they had not known or played a game before the festival, or learned how to play it during the festival
Support from RT 17, Karang Taruna, and residents	Their involvement in and responses to the activity	Questionnaires, observation	Partners helped prepare equipment and the venue, coordinated the children, and expressed support or ideas for continuing the festival

Table 1 presents four indicators used to assess the success of the activity: the number and activities of participants, children's enthusiasm, familiarity with traditional games, and support from RT 17, Karang Taruna, and residents. Each indicator was connected to specific methods and data sources, such as observation, documentation, interviews, and questionnaires, allowing the findings to be viewed from multiple angles. The criteria in Table 1 explain the signs the team looked for. Participation was shown through children's attendance and involvement in the station rotation or free play. Enthusiasm was observed through smiles, laughter, cheers, and the desire to play again. Familiarity was indicated when children had not known a game before the festival or learned how to play it during the event. Support was demonstrated when partners helped prepare equipment and the venue, coordinated the children, and suggested ways to continue the festival. Observation and documentation were used to describe the implementation and attendance, while the indicator percentages reported in the Results are based on informants' responses.

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3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis of the Community Service Implementation

The traditional games festival was held on Sunday, 2 August 2026, at Bima Sakti Field, RT 17, and was attended by 54 children, accompanied by several parents and some Karang Taruna members. The activity began with an introduction to the nine traditional games. After that, the children, who were divided into eight groups, took turns playing the games at the available stations for five minutes per station. One of the games played during the rotation, *bakiak*, is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Children trying *bakiak* (wooden clogs)

Figure 2 shows a child trying *bakiak* (wooden clogs) as one of the traditional games played during the station rotation. A member of the community service team stands nearby to accompany the children and explain how to play the game, while other children wait for their turn. During the festival, the team observed children's enthusiasm, interaction among participants, the games that were already familiar and those that were new to the children, and the difficulties that arose. These observations were in line with the head of RT 17's assessment that the children were very enthusiastic and joyful, and with the children's remarks during the festival describing the traditional games as fun and enjoyable. In terms of added value, the activity did not focus on economic aspects but on social and cultural change. The children had the opportunity to play outdoors directly with their friends and to become acquainted with traditional games that they rarely saw. Institutionally, the activity involved the head of RT and Karang Taruna in preparation and implementation, including helping to prepare games that were not yet available, such as egrang batok, preparing the venue, and coordinating the children. The cooperation with KPOTI East Kalimantan, which lent the egrang kayu and bakiak, shows that activities like this can be supported by institutions outside the RT neighborhood. The equipment borrowed from this institution is presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Borrowing *bakiak*, *egrang kayu*, and *estafet balok* from KPOTI East Kalimantan.

Figure 3 shows several members of the community service team holding *egrang kayu* (wooden stilts) at the KPOTI East Kalimantan premises, where the equipment was borrowed. In addition to the *egrang kayu*, the team also borrowed *bakiak* and *estafet balok* for the festival, which supplied part of the games needed for the activity. Alongside the support from partner institutions, the festival also brought early changes among the children. In the short term, the observed changes were that children tried new games, played in groups, and said they wanted to play again. In the long term, the activity has the potential to become a routine Karang Taruna program, for example through competitions for Indonesian Independence Day (17 August) or weekend activities, as proposed by several Karang Taruna members and residents. These initial results indicate that the activity has begun to move toward the expected goals and benefits, while its sustainability depends on the support of Karang Taruna and the local community.

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3.2 Participants' Level of Understanding and Satisfaction with the Activity

The success of the activity was assessed with four indicators, as presented earlier in Table 1, namely the number and activeness of participants, children's enthusiasm, familiarity with traditional games, and the support of RT 17, Karang Taruna, and residents. The data came from 21 informants, comprising nine children, the head of RT 17, two residents, and nine Karang Taruna members. Among the children, some liked particular games such as jump rope, *congklak*, and *bakiak,* and several tried games that they were playing for the first time, for example *egrang batok*. One child said they had rarely seen bakiak before the festival and learned that *bakiak* is a traditional game only after taking part. Another child said that they initially did not know how to play *congklak* but learned after joining the festival. Difficulties were experienced mainly with *egrang* and jump rope. Overall, the children said they would play again if similar activities were held in the future.

The head of RT 17, Mr. Mujiono, also considered the festival beneficial for the children but noted that some children did not yet understand how to play traditional games, so assistants or trainers were needed. Meanwhile, Karang Taruna members considered that traditional games can foster togetherness, train physical ability, and introduce culture, and saw an opportunity to make them a routine activity. Residents, for their part, felt that the activity had a positive impact, strengthened closeness among neighbors, and was easy to carry out. Taken together, the responses of the children and the partners show that the festival was well received. To summarize the results more systematically, Figure 4 presents the success indicators defined in Table 1.

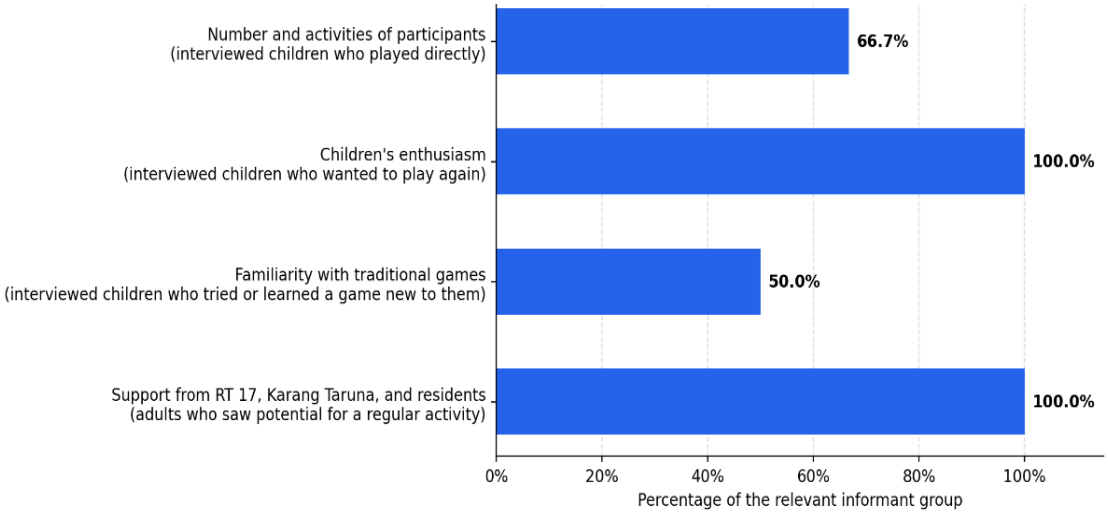


Figure 4. Success Indicators of the Children's Traditional Games Festival

Figure 4 is based on the interview and questionnaire responses of the informants, not on direct observation or measured outcomes, because no quantitative data were collected before the activity. It shows the percentage of informants whose responses reflect each of the four success indicators in Table 1. Among the six children whose answers could be clearly identified, four (66.7%) played the games directly. In addition, 54 children attended the festival, approximately 18.8% of the 287 children aged 6–18 in RT 17 (source: Head of RT 17). This attendance is reported as a count and is not shown in the chart. Note that the percentage covers all children up to age 18, whereas the festival mainly targeted elementary and junior high school students.

The remaining indicators were likewise based on informants' responses. Children's enthusiasm emerged as the strongest indicator, with all six children (100%) expressing a desire to play again. Familiarity with traditional games was lower, as only three of the six children (50%) tried or learned a game that was new to them. Community support was equally strong. All 12 adult informants (100%), consisting of the head of RT 17, two residents, and nine Karang Taruna members, saw the potential for making the festival a regular activity. The percentages describe the perceptions of participants and partners within each informant group and should not be read as measured changes. Overall, the festival was well received and supported by the community, even though not every child played the games directly or encountered a new one.

To examine the strengths and gaps in more depth, the responses of the children and partners were analyzed using SWOT analysis, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are summarized in Figure 5.

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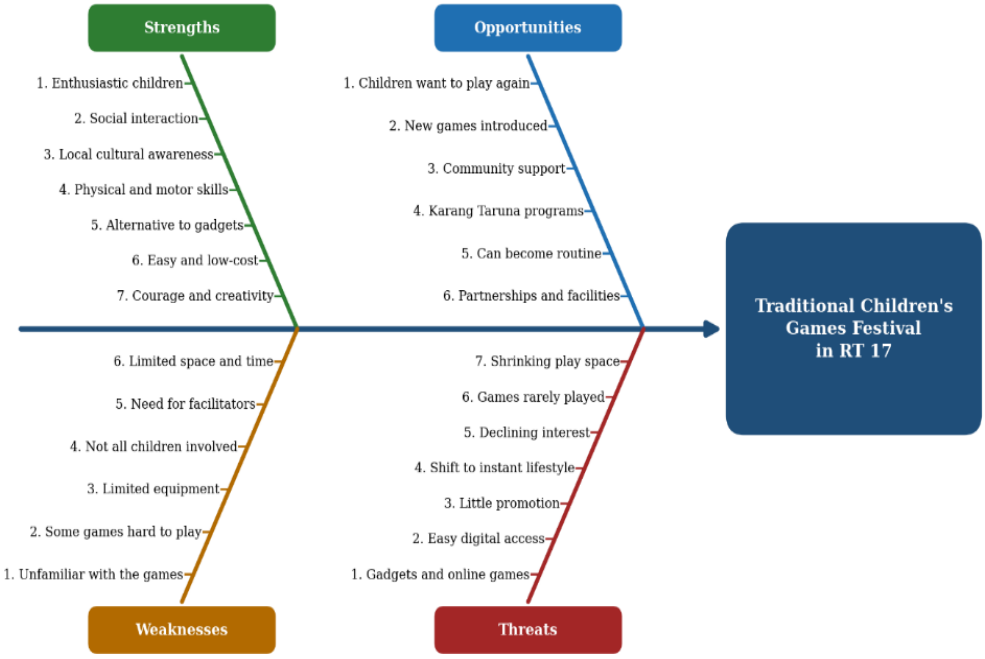


Figure 5. Fishbone Diagram of the SWOT Analysis Results of the Children's Traditional Games Festival

As shown in Figure 5, the main strengths of the festival lie in children's enthusiasm, social interaction, and the introduction of local culture. Children's enthusiasm was clearly reflected in their expressed desire to play again and their positive evaluation of the games. For example, coconut-shell stilts (*egrang batok)* were described as "fun" even by those who tried them for the first time. This positive response is important because enjoyment during play often encourages children to stay engaged longer. Recent studies have shown that traditional games can effectively stimulate children's cognitive and motor development (Hasan et al., 2024).

Playing together may have given children opportunities to practice communication and cooperation, although these skills were not directly measured. From a sociocultural perspective, children's development is shaped by their social relationships and interactions, which makes play with peers an important context for learning (Chen, 2025). This idea is relevant to the festival, where children learned and enjoyed the games through interaction with peers and adult facilitators. Similar enthusiasm has also been reported in community service festivals at an international school in Semarang (Kurniawan et al., 2024) and at SDN 17 Sungai Raya (Gandasari et al., 2025). A community service program in Maluku also used traditional games to support the social development of elementary school children (Sopakua et al., 2024). Furthermore, one child said they rarely saw *bakiak* before the festival. This suggests that the activity also helped introduce local cultural knowledge. Previous studies have noted that traditional games can serve as a medium for transmitting cultural values (Yulianto et al., 2025).

Despite these strengths, several weaknesses were also identified. The festival showed limitations related to children's readiness, the difficulty of certain games, uneven participation, and limited equipment. Several children were unfamiliar with particular games before the event, while activities that required balance and coordination—such as stilts and jump rope—needed intensive adult support. This need for adult support is consistent with the concepts of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding in sociocultural theory, which explain that children can master new skills more easily with help from more capable others (Chen, 2025). In this festival, the adult facilitators and Karang Taruna members played exactly this supporting role.

Participation was also uneven: some children played actively, others only observed, and some did not attend. These conditions indicate that not all children had equal opportunities to benefit from the games. Current literature emphasizes that consistent adult support is important for children to develop values such as cooperation, patience, and emotional regulation through play (Farahani & Mirsafi, 2024; Masudah & Sudaryanti, 2024). Limited equipment and restricted play space further compounded this issue, which is also commonly found in culture-based community service programs in Indonesia (Yulianto et al., 2025). Therefore, a one-time festival cannot fully guarantee equal and sustained developmental experiences for all children.

At the same time, the festival presents clear opportunities for further development. All identifiable children expressed a desire to play again and named preferred games such as jump rope, marbles, and *congklak*. This shows that the activity successfully created interest and motivation. In self-determination theory, motivation becomes stronger when children's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. A recent review confirms that interventions supporting these needs increase autonomous motivation and active engagement (Barbosa Cano & Gomez-Baya, 2025). In the festival, children's freedom to choose games, their growing ability to play, and their interaction with peers appear to have supported these needs.

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Research has also shown that traditional games can support children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development at the same time (Astarina et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). In addition, social group dynamics during traditional games can help children internalize character values such as honesty, empathy, cooperation, and sportsmanship (Yulianto et al., 2025). Community-based continuity has also been reported in Nongkosawit Village, Semarang, where a traditional games community was involved and the village head hoped the activity would continue every year (Raharjo et al., 2025). With clearer role distribution among the RT, Karang Taruna, and adult facilitators, the festival has strong potential to become a sustainable community program that supports children's development while preserving local culture.

However, several threats must also be considered. The most prominent threat comes from the dominance of gadgets and online games. Some children said they still play on mobile phones, games, and TikTok at home, which may reduce the time available for traditional play. From Bronfenbrenner's socioecological perspective, children's experiences with digital media are shaped by multiple systems, including the family, community, and broader social environment, and cannot be seen as individual behavior alone (Munzer et al., 2026). This perspective helps explain why gadget use remains strong among children in RT 17 despite their enjoyment of the festival. A similar problem was reported in a community service program in Jayapura, where children also spent more time on online games and gadgets at home (Mangolo et al., 2024).

Other threats include limited equipment, the possibility that children's interest is high only at the beginning, insufficient promotion, and the scarcity of safe open spaces in the densely populated RT 17 area. Recent literature confirms that in the digital era, traditional games are increasingly marginalized despite their contributions to children's social and character development (Hasan et al., 2024; Yulianto et al., 2025). Without repeated and structured community intervention, the positive experiences from a single festival may not last. The long-term sustainability of such activities therefore depends on the availability of equipment, consistent adult facilitation, and the ability of community organizations such as Karang Taruna to maintain children's interest through regular programs (Astarina et al., 2023; Yulianto et al., 2025).

3.3 Analysis of Conditions Before and After the Activity

Because no numerical measurements were taken before the activity, the changes are presented qualitatively based on initial observations and informants' accounts after the festival. These changes reflect the perceptions of participants and partners and are not test results. Table 2 summarizes the conditions of traditional games in RT 17 before and after the activity.

Table 2. Conditions of Traditional Games in RT 17

Aspect	Before Implementation	After Implementation
Children's play activities	Children's free time was mostly spent playing with gadgets	Tried traditional games directly and played together with friends
Familiarity with games	Some games were unfamiliar, for example *bakiak, egrang batok*, and *estafet balok*	Became familiar with nine games, and one child only just learned that *bakiak* is a traditional game
Sustainability of the activity	The last activity featuring traditional games was the Independence Day competition in 2025	Karang Taruna and residents saw an opportunity to make traditional games a routine or weekend activity
Local cultural awareness	Traditional games were rarely seen or played by children and had not been associated with culture	All children received an introduction to the nine traditional games along with their rules and how to play, began to recognize these games as part of culture

As shown in Table 2, the biggest change was how children spent their free time. Before the activity, most children played with gadgets, and some traditional games such as *bakiak, egrang batok*, and *estafet balok* were unfamiliar to them. After the activity, the children tried the traditional games themselves and played together with friends. They said playing together was more enjoyable. Regarding sustainability and local cultural awareness, the last time traditional games were held before the festival was during the Independence Day competition in 2025. After the festival, Karang Taruna and local residents saw an opportunity to make traditional games a regular or weekend activity. Meanwhile, children rarely saw traditional games and did not associate them with culture, but after the activity, all of them were introduced to the nine games, including their rules, how to play them, and their cultural background.

The changes summarized in Table 2 are also reflected in the themes that appeared most often in the responses of the 21 informants. Figure 6 shows the number of informants who mentioned each theme.

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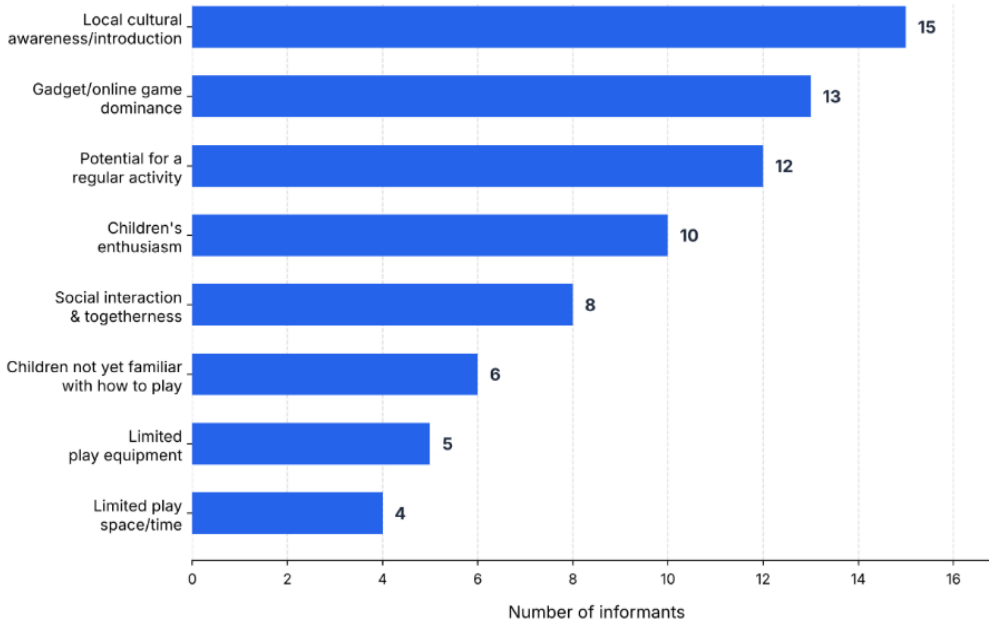


Figure 6. Chart of the Number of Informants Mentioning Each Theme

Figure 6 shows that informants most frequently mentioned the introduction of local culture (15 informants), followed by the dominance of gadgets and online games (13), the potential to become a regular activity (12), and children's enthusiasm (10). Themes such as social interaction (8), children's unfamiliarity with how to play (6), limited equipment (5), and limited play space and time (4) were mentioned less often. The prominence of local cultural introduction and children's enthusiasm is consistent with the positive changes described in Table 2. Meanwhile, the frequent mention of gadget and online game dominance suggests that the challenge faced before the activity remains and needs continued attention. Limited equipment, play space, and time were mentioned less frequently. Even so, the limitations still point to aspects that need improvement so that the changes can be sustained over time.

3.4 Discussion

The results of the activity show that the festival helped shift how children in RT 17 view traditional games. Before the festival, children's interest in traditional games was not yet evident because gadgets were easier to reach and fit social media trends such as TikTok, but after the festival, the children who tried the games described them as fun, and all the children interviewed said they wanted to play again. These responses are in line with a festival at an international school in Semarang, which introduced *dakon*, jump rope, *bedhil bambu*, *egrang batok*, and *egrang bambu* (bamboo stilts) and received satisfactory responses from the principal, teachers, parents, and students (Kurniawan et al., 2024), and with an activity at SDN 17 Sungai Raya, West Kalimantan, which reported high student enthusiasm (Gandasari et al., 2025). These similarities show that traditional games can be accepted in different settings, from schools to residential neighborhoods such as RT 17.

The design of the activity also contributed to these results, because introducing the nine games at the beginning let the children learn the name, method, and rules before trying them, while the station rotation gave every group an equal opportunity, with assistants helping with difficult games such as egrang. This pattern of playing directly with friends was also found in the UGM community service program (KKN-PPM) in Magetan, which used a qualitative approach, began from concerns about children's dependence on gadgets, and reported increased enthusiasm and social interaction among children while playing (Purwanta et al., 2025).

The SWOT analysis results show the festival's strengths in children's enthusiasm, social interaction, and the introduction of local culture, while its weaknesses were uneven involvement, limited equipment, difficulty with *egrang* and jump rope, and the need for assistants, which also requires attention. The biggest threats were the dominance of gadgets and Karang Taruna's concern that children's interest might be high only at the beginning. Nevertheless, Karang Taruna and residents saw an opportunity to make the festival a routine activity, similar to a traditional sports festival in Tamalanrea, Makassar, which involved elementary school children, Karang Taruna youth, community leaders, and urban village officials, and whose participants were motivated to join follow-up activities regularly (Sadzali et al., 2026). In this festival, the implementation team was the main driver, while the RT and Karang Taruna were partners who relayed information, prepared the games and venue, and coordinated the children. Karang Taruna's experience as organizers of community events in the local area can be an asset for continuing the activity, provided that equipment, assistants, and safe play space are available.

These findings have several implications. For the local community, the festival can be made a routine Karang Taruna agenda with a clear division of roles among the RT, Karang Taruna, and assistants. For implementers of

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similar activities, introducing the games before they are played and rotating stations can be considered so that all groups of children try every game, with education on gadget use as a complement. For efforts to foster local cultural awareness, the experience of playing directly with friends can be an entry point that children accept for getting to know traditional games. In addition, this activity has limitations in its implementation, namely that it was held only once and for a short time and was not accompanied by measurements before and after the activity. In terms of data, the number of informants was limited, and the authors acted as both implementers and data collectors. Future activities could add measurements before and after the activity, involve more children, and examine long-term effects on local cultural awareness.

4. CONCLUSION

The children's traditional games festival held in RT 17, Tani Aman Urban Village, Samarinda City, was a community-based response to children's gadget dependence that introduced traditional games as part of local culture. During the festival, 54 children played together with friends in a rotation of six stations, nine traditional games were introduced, and the eight that were played directly received an enthusiastic response, so that children's attention was diverted from gadgets during the activity. All six identifiable child informants said they wanted to play again, and all 12 adult informants saw potential for making the festival a regular activity, supported by the RT head, Karang Taruna, and KPOTI of East Kalimantan. The SWOT analysis shows that the festival's strengths lie in children's enthusiasm, social interaction, and the introduction of local culture, while its weaknesses and threats relate to limited equipment, assistants, and play space, uneven participation, the difficulty of some games, and the continuing dominance of gadgets. These findings do not show that gadget dependence has been resolved, but they indicate that the festival succeeded in providing an engaging alternative that children want to repeat. Karang Taruna is therefore recommended to develop the festival into a routine program with the RT, for example during Independence Day competitions or weekend activities, with a clear division of roles, more equipment and its maintenance, more facilitators for difficult games, and more adequate play space, so that its impact on children's local cultural awareness can be sustained.

5. AUTHOR STATEMENTS

5.1 Author Contributions

Conceptualization: All authors;
Methodology: Khoirun Nisa, Lina Romdiyani, Alya Asmini, Ridky Adelia, Cintania Boy Astuti;
Software: Not applicable;
Validation: Lina Romdiyani, Khoirun Nisa, Julita Rahma Tiara Saputri;
Formal Analysis: All authors;
Investigation: All authors;
Resources: All authors;
Data Curation: Lina Romdiyani, Niken Sri Akbar Wati, Rifka Zazkirani, Khoirun Nisa, Julita Rahma Tiara Saputri;
Writing – Original Draft Preparation: Lina Romdiyani, Khoirun Nisa;
Writing – Review and Editing: Lina Romdiyani, Khoirun Nisa, Julita Rahma Tiara Saputri;
Visualization: Cintania Boy Astuti, Septia Wulan Sari, Ahmad Sultan Zaky Irhamsyah.
All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript..

5.2 Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

5.3 Funding

This research received no external funding.

5.4 Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable

5.5 Informed Consent Statement

Verbal informed consent was obtained from all informants, as well as from the parents or guardians of the children for the interviews and for photo and video documentation

5.6 Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or known personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

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5.7 Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors used Generative AI (Claude) to improve the clarity of the writing in this article. The authors have reviewed and edited the AI-assisted content and take full responsibility for the final version of the publication.

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