

## The Influence of the Traditional Game Congklak on the Social Character of Early Childhood in the Simalagi Village Area, Huta Bargot District

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### ABSTRACT

Early childhood is in a crucial period of social character formation, while the shift in play patterns towards digital games reduces opportunities to learn social values such as cooperation and honesty. This study aims to analyze the influence of playing traditional congklak games on the social character of early childhood children in Simalagi Village, Huta Bargot District. The study used a quantitative approach with a one-group pretest–posttest design on 65 children obtained through unknown population sample calculations, with valid and reliable social character observation instruments (Cronbach's Alpha  $X = 0.869$ ;  $Y = 0.837$ ). The results of the linear regression analysis showed the equation  $Y = 1.324 + 0.774X$  and the t-test produced a t-value of 10.179 with  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which confirmed that congklak playing activities have a positive and significant effect on children's social character. These findings indicate that congklak is an effective local wisdom-based learning medium for fostering cooperation, adherence to rules, honesty, and mutual respect in early childhood. Therefore, it is suitable for integration into early childhood education programs in Simalagi Village and similar contexts.

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### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is in a golden age when cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development is rapid and requires appropriate and continuous stimulation (Sari, 2023). During this phase, the formation of social character, such as the ability to interact, cooperate, obey rules, respect others, and manage emotions, becomes a crucial foundation for children's future success in society (Rahma, 2022). However, the reality on the ground shows that many young children still tend to be egocentric, have difficulty sharing, lack concern for their peers, and have difficulty resolving conflicts healthily, indicating suboptimal social character development from an early age (Putri, 2024).

Technological developments and the rise of digital games have led to a shift in children's play patterns, from primarily interacting directly with peers to becoming more individualistic and focused on screens (Tambunan, 2024). This shift reduces children's opportunities to learn real-life social values, such as waiting their turn, negotiating, and experiencing the dynamics of winning and losing in face-to-face interactions

(Widyaningtyas, 2023). In many areas, including rural areas, traditional games are being abandoned and considered less engaging than modern games, even though they are an important vehicle for internalizing cultural values and positive social character (Hidayat, 2020).

Traditional games, as part of local wisdom, contain character values such as honesty, responsibility, sportsmanship, cooperation, tolerance, and mutual assistance, which are highly relevant to be introduced from an early age (Asih, 2024). Research shows that traditional games play a significant role in shaping the character of children aged 4–6, including discipline, hard work, independence, and communication skills (Lestari, 2020). Traditional game programs in early childhood education (PAUD) have also been shown to improve children's social skills through group interactions, fostering the habit of following rules, and providing experiences in managing conflict constructively (Wijayanti, 2018).

Congklak is a very popular traditional Indonesian game that can be played by young children. Its rules are simple yet rich in educational value (Budi, 2022). In congklak, children learn to count, plan moves, strategize, and interact directly with their opponents, stimulating cognitive, fine motor, and socio-emotional skills (Trisnadewi, 2024). Literature studies show that congklak is effective in enhancing children's cognitive, fine motor, and socio-emotional development, making it suitable as a learning medium in early childhood education (Trisnadewi, 2024).

Other research has found that implementing congklak can improve children's social interaction and socio-emotional skills because the game's rules require children to play fairly, not cheat, and accept the outcome of the game with grace (Nurhayati, 2020). Furthermore, congklak also encourages children to practice patiently waiting their turn, respecting their peers, and learning to cooperate, for example, by reminding each other of the rules or completing a game together (Yuniar, 2022). This indicates that congklak is not just a traditional game, but also a potential medium for developing children's social character in a fun and contextual way (Nurhayati, 2020).

More broadly, various studies have concluded that traditional games can improve early childhood social-emotional skills, including the ability to cooperate, share, control emotions, and obey rules (Sulastris, 2023). Qualitative research at Pertiwi Kindergarten in Cangkringan, for example, showed that traditional games can develop the character of cooperation, mutual assistance, communication, interaction, and a sense of togetherness in early childhood (Widyaningtyas, 2023). These findings strengthen the argument that traditional games can be an effective learning strategy for developing early childhood social character in educational institutions and family environments (Asih, 2024).

Simalagi Village, Huta Bargot District, as a rural area, generally still has the potential to preserve traditional games and local cultural values that uphold togetherness and mutual cooperation (Sari, 2019). However, the influence of modernization and increasingly widespread access to devices has also begun to shift children's play habits from traditional group games to more individual digital games (Tambunan, 2024). This situation raises concerns that if traditional games like congklak are not optimally utilized in children's activities, a golden opportunity to instill social character through local cultural media will be missed (Hidayat, 2020).

On the other hand, empirical studies specifically examining the influence of the traditional game of congklak on the social character of early childhood within the local context of Simalagi Village are still limited (Widyaningtyas, 2023). However, contextual research at the village level is crucial to describe how congklak is implemented, what social values emerge during play, and the extent to which the game contributes to the development of children's social character (Nurhayati, 2020). Based on this description, it is necessary to conduct a study entitled "The Influence of the Traditional Congklak Game on the Social Character of Early Childhood in the Simalagi Village Area, Huta Bargot District" to obtain empirical evidence regarding the role of congklak in the formation of children's social character, as well as to provide practical recommendations for teachers, parents, and local policy makers (Asih, 2024).

## METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to examine the direct effect of the traditional game of congklak on the social character of early childhood (Sugiyono, 2019). Researchers directly observed children playing congklak in the fields of Simalagi Village, interviewed children and teachers regarding social behavior during the game, and conducted measurements before and after the congklak playing intervention (Sulastris, 2023).

The study population was all early childhood children (5-6 years old) in Simalagi Village, Huta Bargot District, with an unknown number. The sample was determined using the Taro Yamane (Slovin) formula for an unknown population:

with  $e = 0.05$  (5% error), resulting in  $n = 65$  children after rounding. The sampling technique was a total sampling of all children who met the age criteria and had parental consent, resulting in 65 children being directly studied by the researcher (Rangkuti, 2021).

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Uji Validitas X**

Statement	r count	r table	Information
X1	0,616	0,2058	Valid
X2	0,777	0,2058	Valid
X3	0,612	0,2058	Valid
X4	0,878	0,2058	Valid
X5	0,866	0,2058	Valid
X6	0,761	0,2058	Valid
X7	0,777	0,2058	Valid
X8	0,451	0,2058	Valid

The table shows the results of the validity test for variable X (Congklak Playing Activity) with 8 statement items (X1–X8). The calculated r value for each item ranges from 0.451 to 0.878 and is all greater than the table r of 0.2058, so all items X1–X8 are declared valid and suitable for use as indicators of congklak playing activity.

**Table 2. Uji Validitas Y**

Statement	r count	r table	Information
Y1	0,440	0,2058	Valid
Y2	0,784	0,2058	Valid
Y3	0,851	0,2058	Valid
Y4	0,819	0,2058	Valid
Y5	0,682	0,2058	Valid
Y6	0,816	0,2058	Valid
Y7	0,765	0,2058	Valid
Y8	0,323	0,2058	Valid

The table contains the results of the validity test for variable Y (Social Character) with 8 statement items (Y1–Y8). The calculated r values for each item ranged from 0.323 to 0.851 and were all greater than the table r of 0.2058, so all items Y1–Y8 were declared valid and suitable for use as indicators of social character.

**Table 3. Uji Reliabelitas X**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.869	8

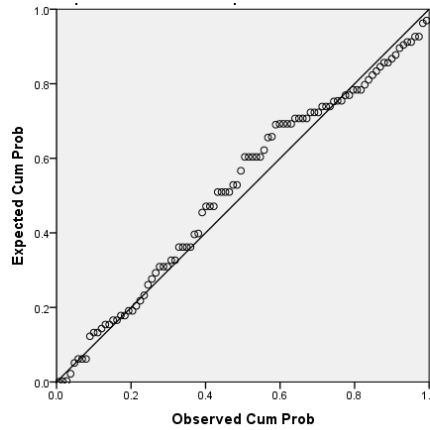
The table shows the results of the reliability test for instrument X (Congklak Playing Activity) with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.869 and a total of 8 items. The alpha value of 0.869 is above 0.60 so that the instrument can be declared reliable or has high internal consistency for measuring congklak playing activity.

**Table 4. Uji Reliabelitas Y**

**Reliability Statistics**

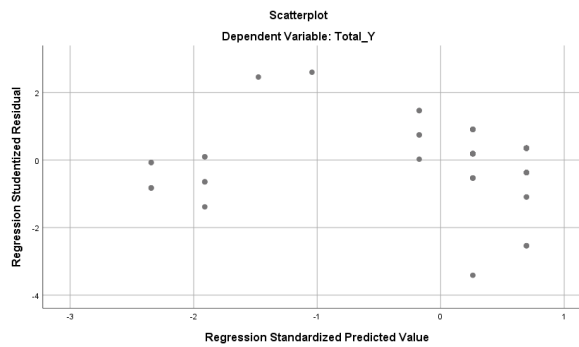
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.837	8

For variable Y (Social Character), the table shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.837 with a total of 8 items. The alpha value of 0.837 is above 0.60 so that the social character measurement instrument used is also reliable, meaning that the internal consistency between items is high and suitable for use in research.



**Picture 1. Uji Normalitas Grafik Normal Probability Plot**

The figure above shows a Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals for the dependent variable, Social Characteristics. This graph is used to test the assumption of normality in regression analysis. The graph shows that the dots (circles) are spread around the diagonal line and follow the direction of the line. This pattern indicates that the residual data has a distribution close to normal.



**Picture 2. Uji Heteroskedastisitas Grafik Scatterplot**

This is a scatterplot of the linearity/homoscedasticity test between the standardized predicted values (Total\_Y) and the standardized residuals. The points are randomly distributed around the zero line, without forming any particular pattern (e.g., tapered or curved), so the assumption of a linear relationship and a relatively constant residual distribution (homoscedasticity) can be said to be met.

**Table 5. Uji t Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.324	.517		2.563	.013		
	Aktivitas_Bermain_Congklak	.774	.076	.789	10.179	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Total\_Y

In the "Congklak\_Playing\_Activity" row, the calculated t-value is 10.179 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. Because the Sig. value is <0.05, the regression coefficient of 0.774 is statistically significant: the null hypothesis "there is no effect of congklak playing activities on social character" is rejected, and the working hypothesis "there is an effect of congklak playing activities on social character" is accepted. Therefore, congklak playing activities have a positive and significant effect on the social character of the early childhood in your study.

The constant 1.324 means that when the congklak playing activity score is 0, the child's baseline social character score is 1.324. The coefficient of 0.774 indicates that every 1-unit increase in the congklak playing activity score will increase the child's social character score by 0.774 points.

## DISCUSSION

The t-test results indicate that congklak playing activities have a positive and significant effect on the social character of early childhood children in your study. The regression coefficient for the Congklak\_Playing\_Activity variable is 0.774, with a t-value of 10.179 and a significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), thus  $H_0$  "no effect" is rejected and  $H_1$  "there is an effect" is accepted. This means that each increase in the congklak playing activity score is directly followed by an increase in the child's social character score, and this relationship is statistically very strong.

In a theoretical context, these results align with the view that traditional games are effective social learning media because they allow children to practice following rules, taking turns, negotiating, and accepting victory and defeat in a sporting manner (Asih, 2024). Congklak activities, which require children to count seeds, develop strategies, and interact with their opponents, provide repeated opportunities for children to practice cooperation, honesty, and mutual respect (Apriyanti, 2024). Thus, the regression coefficient of 0.774 not only indicates a statistical relationship but also reflects the social learning process that occurs while children play congklak.

This finding is consistent with Nurhayati's research, which shows that playing congklak improves children's social-emotional skills, particularly in terms of social interaction and the ability to manage emotions when interacting with peers (Nurhayati, 2020). Sulastri also reported that traditional games, in general, have a significant effect on the social-emotional skills of early childhood, as indicated by a significant difference in scores before and after the intervention (Sulastri, 2023). The results of your research strengthen the evidence that one form of traditional game, congklak, specifically contributes significantly to the formation of social character, not just general social-emotional skills.

From a practical perspective, the very large t-value (10.179) with  $p = 0.000$  confirms that the influence of congklak is not a small or coincidental effect, but rather a strong and stable influence on the population of early childhood participants in the study. This reinforces the recommendation that early childhood education teachers and parents in Simalagi Village integrate congklak as a regular part of learning and play activities, as it has been shown to improve children's social character traits such as cooperation, adherence to rules, honesty, and respect for peers (Lestari, 2020). In other words, the t-test not only statistically proves the hypothesis but also provides a strong scientific basis for making congklak a strategy for developing social character based on local wisdom.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that congklak play has a positive and significant effect on the social character of early childhood children in Simalagi Village. This is demonstrated by a regression coefficient of 0.774 with a t-value of 10.179 and  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the higher the child's involvement in congklak play, the higher their social character score.

The instrument used in this study proved to be appropriate, as all items in the congklak play (X) and social character (Y) variables were declared valid and had high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha X = 0.869 and Y = 0.837). Therefore, the data obtained from the 65 sample children are reliable and support the conclusion that congklak is effective as a medium for developing social character, particularly in areas of cooperation, honesty, adherence to rules, and mutual respect.

Practically, these results confirm that the traditional congklak game can be used as a learning strategy and routine activity in PAUD/RA to foster social character in early childhood based on local wisdom. Therefore, teachers and parents are advised to integrate congklak in a planned manner into children's play activities as part of a character education program.

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