

Local Culture Games for Post-Disaster Trauma Healing in Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

The natural disasters that occur will have a negative impact, one of them, namely, a psychological impact, especially on children mental. It is necessary to take action to solve that negative impact on purpose children do not draw on trauma state. One of the possible solutions which can be used to deal with trauma is through playing therapy based on local culture games. However, until now the research on local cultural games for healing post-disaster trauma has been still little. Therefore, this study aims to describe the local cultural game for post-disaster trauma healing in early childhood. Furthermore, the research method used was qualitative with an action research approach. Data collection methods used interviews, FGDs and questionnaires. The results gained in this study were announced in 10 teachers interviewed about 4 teachers who had never dealt with trauma and used local cultural games as a means of overcoming trauma in early childhood. It is necessary to develop local cultural games that correspond to the characteristics and trauma that are perceived by early childhood approved on the social emotional. Then, the results obtained were three games that could be used for healing post-disaster trauma in early childhood among them are *egrang kaleng*, *ular naga* and *bentengan bola*.

Keywords: local culture games, post-disaster, trauma healing, early childhood

1. INTRODUCTION

Magelang is one of regencies in Indonesia that are prone to disaster. Due to the geographical location close to the volcano and in the mountainous area. So the intensity of natural disasters experienced by Magelang area is very high. Especially natural disasters of landslides, floods and volcano erupting. Natural disasters are unpredictable events, causing many victims to be both children and adults. The number of children affected by natural disasters each year is increasing and can be expected to grow in line with climate change occurring [1]. The impact of natural disasters can be both physical and mental. If the victim suffered physical injuries then it can be immediately assisted by medical personnel. However, if the impact comes from the psychological wounds are not visible like a physical injury then it is necessary the existence of a special action. Children who have experienced natural disasters vulnerable and potentially against trauma [2]. The Trauma felt by children are different from adults. Children victims of disasters tend to be more easily traumatized than adults because children do not yet have the maturity of self-identity and the limited ability of coping (efforts of individuals to cope with stress) so if the psychic trauma occurs in children will arise the impact of the cessation of emotional development [3].

Research mentioned that the condition of early childhood experiencing post-disaster trauma, in general, shows the behavior of crying, whining, having sleep disorders,

friendship problems, decreased concentration, irritability, health problems, excessive fear and feeling uncomfortable living in refuge [4]. The impact of which often appear in early childhood is the emotional reaction that the negative grief, anger, and fear [5]. In addition the reaction of the stress and trauma associated with the development of social-emotional in children aged 2-5 years including: repetitive play or talk about the event, tantrums, irritable outbursts, Crying and tearfulness, Increased fearfulness (e.g., the dark, monsters, being alone), "magical thinking" (believing they caused the event, or that the event can be undone), excessive clinging to caregivers and trouble separating, and re-emergence of earlier behaviours (e.g., bed-wetting, thumb-sucking) [6]. Unfortunately, those psychological post-disaster reaction often could not be well identified [7]. Children age 5 and younger may not have the vocabulary for these emotions yet. They are still in the process of acquiring language, and the words they need to express themselves may not readily be available [5]. On the other hand, those children need treatment from parents and community support as well to reduce the trauma and stress they face [1]. Hence, treatment for healing the trauma in early childhood is indeed important. According to his research result, Rahman [8] said that 41.7% of the children choose entertainment to heal the trauma. One of the entertaining activities is playing games.

Playing is unseparated part of children's life. Playing is usually done voluntarily and spontaneously to gain pleasure and excitement [9]. Playing can affect the development and growth of early childhood. Stegeline [10] states that playing is able to improve the children's skills, improve the thinking skill in term of children's cognitive development. In addition, he mentions that playing involves languages encouraging the use of new vocabularies, involves physical activities, help children to express their emotions, increase

children's creativity, and strengthen the socialization. According Freud (in [11]) views playing as the media to remove painful memories and feelings. Furthermore, playing is a means of communication for early childhood [12] [13], so that it becomes the appropriate therapy media for early childhood as they often find it difficult to communicate verbally to express their feelings [14]. Therefore, the investigation on the role of playing as the media of post-disaster trauma healing in the early childhood needs to be conducted.

Play therapy is defined as the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development [15]. The children experiencing disasters really need the safe and pleasant environment through play therapy. Likewise, Jordan, Perryman, & Anderson [16] mention that play therapy for the victims of natural disasters is aimed to fulfil the children's growth needs, provide secure feeling, and enable the children to express their feelings and thoughts symbolically. Play therapy helps children learn to accept themselves, restore self-control and feel free to express everything [17]. The Trauma of a natural disaster on preschool children allows for can be addressed through play therapy [18].

Play therapy is applied as much as possible to meet some of the basic concepts of the game that can be used in play therapy. Basic concepts that can be used in play therapy is refers to the view as follows [19]:

- a. Play is one way that can be used in understanding the world of children
- b. Aspects of the development in the activities of the play is the way children discover and explore their self-identity
- c. Children can experiment with a wide selection of imaginative and avoid such consequences when in the real world
- d. The game on the situation and the right conditions can be as meaningful as physical activities as well as therapy

The selection of kinds of play therapy used for children should consider the developmental stages, characteristics, needs, and culture of the children. Each region in Indonesia has its own culture. As the effort to keep the culture, it needs to bequeath the heritage to the children. One of the culture could be instilled to the early childhood is local games. Based on research results, traditional games can improve the development of the children's religious and moral values aspect, cognitive aspect, social-emotional aspect, language aspect, physical-motor, and artistic aspect [20-21]. In the previous research, the play therapy games used as trauma healing on early childhood were drawing, storytelling, puzzle games, board games, *ketapel* (slingshot) playing, plasticine playing, singing, train-like playing, monopoly, and free games [17,18],[22,23]. None of that research, however, applies the local games existing in the children's surroundings. Hence, this study aims to describe the local games for post-disasters trauma healing on the early childhood.

2. METHOD

This research was a qualitative research using action research approach. The main purpose of this study was to describe the local games used as trauma healing in disaster-prone areas. The subjects of the research were 10 preschool teachers whose schools affected by the disasters. To do so, this study was conducted in two steps: 1) Identified the traditional games have been used in the program of Trauma Healing, and 2) developed the model of local games. The first step to do was collecting the initial information on the local games have been used in trauma healing program by using interview and survey. Furthermore, the data results of the identification of the traditional games are used to develop traditional games through the FGD.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of questionnaire given to the preschool teachers whose schools have ever experienced disaster, it was found that:

3.1. The Use of Playing Activities as the Post-Disaster Trauma Healing on Early Childhood

The result of interview with teacher 1 revealed that playing activities as post-trauma healing on early childhood have been done in his/her school for more than 5 times since the school is located on flood and landslide disaster prone area. Teacher 2 said that he/she has ever conducted trauma healing on children for 1-2 times, while teacher 3 said he/she have conducted it for 3-4 times due to the high intensity of disaster. However, 6 out of 10 teachers mentioned that they have never conducted play therapy as post-trauma healing in their schools. It was due to their lack of knowledge and reading on what happened and what should be done to the children after the disaster. Furthermore, they did not receive any socialization nor training on trauma healing on early childhood.

Teachers often regard nothing different with the children as they behave as usual. On the other hand, early childhood children often find difficulties in verbal communication related to their feelings [14]. So the teachers have less find out if the child needs help to be able to cope with the trauma on the child. Though families and schools are the first respondents for children at school ages at the time of disaster [24].

Early childhood who experience trauma was a scary experience that ever happened to kids from new-borns up to the age of five years. Because the reactions of infancy and early childhood may be different from the reaction of the child-the older child. Early childhood is usually not able to express feelings about the events that are threatening or scary, a lot of people assume that early childhood did not feel the impact of a scary experience. It is possible that children may feel scared and nervous but think that it is wrong to express these emotions, so they keep their worries and fears to themselves [5].

Children are not little adults: children's experiences of the events that lead to trauma should be considered in the context of various aspects of the development. Natural disasters can cause myriad emotionally harmful circumstances for children [25]. Therefore, the early childhood experience of trauma that is very different than adults [26].

Trauma experienced by the children should be treated properly by using play therapy. Mukhadiono et al [17] stated that play therapy significantly affects the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) victim children of disaster. Play therapy is one of solution could be implemented to victim children [22]. Play therapy is a better medium of communication as play itself may create emotional reactions and make such emotional reactions more powerful [27]. Driving factors successful development of media play therapy as follows: a) awareness and cooperation related agencies who care about the education of children in the disaster area; b) Age of child is age/play phase; c) convenience in the acquisition of media making materials play therapy; d) Regional Policy collection; e) Human resources availability and high child care level; f) Parent parenting pattern; g) vulnerability to disasters [28].

3.2. The Implementation of Local Games as Trauma Healing on Early Childhood

The survey result conducted to 10 preschool teachers on the use of local games as trauma healing is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Type of styles

Teacher	Types of Game
1	<i>Gobak sodor</i> , marble, <i>engklek</i> (hopscotch)
2	Singing
3	Hide and seek & hula hoop
4	Clapping, <i>Dakon & Bakiak</i> (clogs)
5	Never
6	<i>Engklek</i> (hopscotch)
7	Role play
8	Never
9	Never
10	Never

Table 1 showing the result of the use of play therapy as trauma healing revealed that 3 teachers used local games, 3 teachers used free games, and 4 teachers never used any games as the trauma healing. Based on the result of interview, the 4 teachers acknowledged that they never used play therapy because they never conducted any trauma healing on the children before. So far, after the disasters, either mild or severe disasters, other parties like health services, social services, and also non-governmental organization.

In the results of the survey, 10 teachers have used local cultural games for the handling of trauma in early childhood including gobak sodor, marble, engklek (hopscotch), bakiak (clogs), and dakon. The game that has been used for trauma treatment in early childhood is particularly able to handle the social-emotional developmental aspects of post-

disaster. Children can be supported emotionally through the engagement processes, explained about difficult situations, bereavement and suggested coping methods through the play content [7]. But there are still many local cultural games that have not been applied to trauma treatment in early childhood. Therefore, it is necessary to develop other traditional games. Refers to the type of game used for the treatment of trauma in early childhood which is using rough motor games, family theme drama games and safety or security themes [19]. In addition to choosing the play activities should be fun, interesting and meaningful [29].

Previous research proven that there were some games could be used as trauma healing such as drawing, storytelling, puzzle games, balloon, board games, ketapel (slingshot), and plasticine playing [17]), singing a song "Naik Kereta Api (getting in train)" and playing "Kereta-keretaan (train-like game)" [22], monopoly game [23], drawing and free games [18]. None of those games is a local game, and thus this research develops local games that never been used as trauma healing on early childhood.

Based on the results of the implementation of local culture games used by early childhood teachers for the handling of trauma in the disaster-prone areas can be concluded that still has not been done. Through the process of FGD in analyzing the game local culture that can be used for the handling of trauma in early childhood obtained three forms of game type. Games developed are games that have not been used in schools. It is also based on interviews and literature studies. These types of games include egrang kaleng, ular naga and bentengan bola. It aims to address trauma to the social and emotional aspects while introducing local cultural games in early childhood.

4. CONCLUSION

Post-disasters trauma could happen to early childhood. Therefore, it is important for teachers to heal the trauma. Play therapy could be an effective way for early childhood to reduce the trauma. It is due to the characteristics of children's development that is the playing phase. The games used as trauma healing should consider some aspects, one of them is the local culture. The local games become the concern of this study as they are no longer popular in nowadays children life. Based on the results shows that there are still teachers who have not dealt with trauma in early childhood and also have not used local cultural games as a means for the handling of post-disaster trauma. This indicates that there is a need for the development of local cultural games adapted to the characteristics and trauma experienced by early childhood. The development of local cultural games that can be developed include egrang kaleng, ular naga and bentengan bola.

The next research may investigate the effectiveness of local games toward post-disaster trauma healing on early childhood. As well as the need for training and development of other local cultural games to be applied to early childhood education in disaster prone areas.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization (L.M, R.E.S); Material research preparation (R.E.S); Methodology (L.M); Data collecting (R.E.S); Data analysis and visualization (L.M, R.E.S); Writing—original draft (L.M, R.E.S); Presentation (R.E.S).

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