



From *Ucing-Ucingan* to *Bebentengan*: Metaphor and Identity in Traditional Sundanese Games

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Abstract: This research investigates the names of traditional Sundanese games through the lens of *cognitive onomastics*, a branch of onomastics that views naming as a cognitive construction shaped by culture, experience, and conceptual metaphors. Traditional games such as *gatrik*, *oray-orayan*, *ucing-ucingan*, *sondah*, and *bebentengan* serve not only as recreational activities but also as representations of how the Sundanese people conceptualize nature, the body, animals, and social relations. The study aims to identify the linguistic, semantic, and metaphorical patterns embedded in these game names and to interpret the cultural meanings behind their naming processes. Employing a qualitative method, data were collected through literature review, interviews with cultural practitioners, and limited field observations. The analysis was conducted within the framework of cognitive onomastics, focusing on conceptual metaphor mapping, cognitive categorization, and prototype associations. The findings reveal that Sundanese game names are largely based on (1) animal metaphors (*ucing-ucingan*, *oray-orayan*), (2) associations with natural objects (*gatrik*, *sondah*), and (3) representations of social and defensive activities (*bebentengan*). These results indicate that game names function as “cognitive maps” that record how Sundanese society interprets reality through play. This study contributes to the development of cognitive onomastics in Indonesia while enriching our understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and local identity.

Keywords: cognitive onomastics, Sundanese traditional games, conceptual metaphor, cultural naming, local identity.

1 Introduction

Traditional games are one of the cultural expressions that reflect the way a society organizes social relationships, trains skills, and passes on noble values to the next generation. In the context of Sundanese society, traditional games are not just children's entertainment activities in open spaces [1], but also a vehicle for cultural education loaded

with symbols, metaphors, and collective identities [2]. Each game presents social interaction that requires cooperation, communication, and ingenuity in strategizing [3]. For example *Squirting* which places one child as the pursuer and the other as the pursued, can be read as a representation of power relations, ingenuity, and an attempt to escape from threats. Meanwhile, *Fortifications* Presenting a situation of competition between groups that reflects the dynamics of defense and attack, thus teaching solidarity, courage, and loyalty to the group. Behind its simplicity, traditional Sundanese games contain moral messages, such as the importance of togetherness, justice, and respect for mutually agreed rules [4].

However, entering the digital era, the existence of these traditional games is increasingly marginalized by the presence of modern technology-based games, both in the form of gadgets, consoles, and *platform* online [5], [6]. This shift has not only resulted in the disappearance of old forms of play, but also in the dimming of the social and cultural functions inherent in them. In fact, traditional games actually contain fundamental values that shape Sundanese cultural identity, such as the principle of *To love one another, to care for one another, to care for one another* which emphasizes honing each other's abilities, loving each other, and caring for each other. These values are the basis of social ethics that strengthen togetherness and solidarity [7], [8], [9], [10]. Therefore, the study of traditional Sundanese games not only serves as an effort to preserve cultural heritage, but also as a way to understand the metaphor of life contained in it. This kind of research opens up space to read traditional games as cultural texts that record local knowledge systems, as well as as a means of negotiating the identity of the Sundanese people in the midst of modernization.

This research sees traditional Sundanese games not only as an entertainment activity, but as oral archives and cultural practices that store local knowledge and maintain a collective identity. Games can be understood as a form of metaphor that connects individual experiences with the interweaving of the cultural meaning of the Sundanese people. For example, roles in games not only reflect winning and losing strategies, but also become symbols of how societies negotiate differences, organize solidarity, and maintain social balance. Therefore, the study of traditional Sundanese games has academic and cultural urgency. Academically, this research offers an understanding of how oral traditions work as a medium of transmission of values and identity. Culturally, it contributes to efforts to preserve cultural heritage, especially in the midst of globalization that often erodes traditional practices. In this way, traditional games can continue to be positioned as a marker of identity that is dynamic, able to adapt, while reflecting the continuity of Sundanese culture in the midst of changing times. note that the first paragraph of a section or subsection is not indented. The first paragraphs that follows a table, figure, equation etc. does not have an indent, either.

2 Literature Review

Traditional Sundanese games have various educational and cultural functions in Indonesian society. With the development research method, cultural values can be integrated with the modern curriculum without losing local essence. These games contain significant ethnomathematical elements and can be integrated into contextual mathematics education at the elementary and junior high school levels [11]. Meanwhile, gatrik games can also inspire mathematics learning, strengthen children's character through honesty and sportsmanship. Aspects of mathematics — such as counting, odd/even numbers, implicit division and multiplication — that arise naturally in traditional games *Squirt* can be used to develop and strengthen children's character through honesty and sportsmanship [12].

Traditional games are believed to be effective for the introduction of local wisdom, the development of learning, and the cultivation of the values of honesty and discipline [13]. Traditional games can be leveraged as part of early childhood education innovations, emphasizing that the integration of local cultures in learning forms a more meaningful learning experience, as children learn through contexts close to their lives. [14]. In early childhood education, such traditional games can be implemented in a culture-based learning model that emphasizes fun, spontaneous, and voluntary play activities while teaching children to obey the rules [15]. The integration of traditional games in character education and community service, confirms the role of games as a vehicle for local cultural involvement in the learning process and community empowerment [16]. On the other hand, traditional games can also be used as a way to convey health information related to the Covid-19 pandemic [17]. This innovation shows the flexibility of traditional games in adapting public health messages, such as maintaining distance and minimizing physical contact, so that games remain relevant in the midst of crisis situations.

Traditional Sundanese games (such as those played by the Sundanese community) can be a tool for building the character of citizens by instilling the values of togetherness, social discipline, and collective responsibility, as well as how aspects of local wisdom can be integrated into civic education [2]. Traditional role-playing games are shaped *Role-play* (events) played by adults with children, as a strategy to build a spirit of cooperation and social character in today's dominated online games: this qualitative research found that *Role-play* facilitates active participation, fun, and cooperative practices among children [15]. Meanwhile, the article *The Preservation Effort* highlighting aspects of cultural preservation by exploring how the Sundanese community maintains *Children's Games* (children's games) as part of local cultural resistance to globalization [18], [19]. His focus on the resilience of local culture underlines that in addition to educational and character aspects, traditional games are also a strategic tool to maintain local cultural identity so that it is not eroded by changes in the times. Overall, they emphasized that traditional games are not just entertainment or physical activity, but dynamic cultural texts that connect generations through collective values, provide a space for social learning, and are an important element in maintaining the sustainability of the identity and cultural heritage of the people — including the Sundanese people — in the flow of modernization and digitalization. These articles show the common thread that traditional Sundanese games are not just childhood entertainment, but multifunctional cultural texts: a means of formal education, a medium for preserving cultural

values, and a space for creative adaptation to face the challenges of the times. Its academic relevance lies in proving that traditional games can be positioned as a social practice that records local knowledge, conveys symbolic messages, and builds the collective identity of the Sundanese people. Together they describe the spectrum of contemporary research on traditional games as a medium of education, cultural preservation, and character development. Two levels of headings should be numbered. Lower level headings remain unnumbered; they are formatted as run-in headings.

3 Theoretical Review

Conceptual metaphor theory [20], [21] Placing metaphor as a style of language that is aesthetic as well as the basic structure of human thought. In this view, man understands abstract concepts through concrete experiences expressed in the form of a mapping between two domains: *Source Domain* (source) and *Target Domain* (purpose). This process explains how the human mind constructs meaning through conceptual analogies born from everyday experience. For example, abstract concepts such as identity, strategy, or feelings are often understood by referring to concrete realms such as wars, objects, or animals. Through this mapping, humans can more easily conceptualize their social and emotional world. In the context of traditional Sundanese games, this theory is an important framework for interpreting how game names, rules, tools, and physical movements reflect the way children understand life and the world around them. Each element of the game can be seen as *Source Domain* which serves to mediate an understanding of social values such as leadership, cooperation, courage, and human relations with nature. Thus, conceptual metaphor theory allows research on traditional Sundanese games to uncover the relationship between language, action, and culture—how the cognitive patterns of Sundanese people are recorded in simple play activities, but retain the depth of symbolic meaning and character education.

In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphorical mapping is understood as a cognitive process that connects two domains of meaning, namely the source domain (*Source Domain*) and target domains (*Target Domain*). These relationships are not random, but rather carry a series of cognitive or *Cuts* that is transferred from the source to the target. For example, when the concept of a game is mapped out through the metaphor "the game is a battlefield" (*The Game Is War*), so the attributes inherent in war—such as strategy, victory, defense, attack, and sacrifice—automatically color the way individuals understand and carry out play. In the recent development of conceptual metaphor theory, experts emphasize the concept of *embodiment*—that metaphor not only lives in language, but is also embedded in the experience of the human body [22], [23]. That is, the way humans think and construct meaning is greatly influenced by sensorimotor experiences and basic image patterns called *image schemas* like *Path* (path), *Balance* (balance), and *Container* (container). These schemas originate from the interaction of the human body with the everyday physical environment and form the basis for the formation of abstract concepts.

Traditional games can be understood as a multimodal phenomenon, which is a form of cultural expression that involves various channels of meaning simultaneously: language, gestures, sounds, and material objects [24]. In this context, metaphors are not only present in the form of words or speech, but are also manifested through actions, sounds, as well as interactions with objects. The name of the game, the verbal rules, the movement patterns, and the tools used can all serve as metaphors that shape the playing experience. Therefore, conceptual metaphor theory needs to be expanded with a multimodal metaphor approach as developed by [24], [25]. This approach allows metaphorical analysis to be carried out not only on a linguistic level, but also on the visual, auditory and kinesthetic dimensions. By understanding games as a multimodal metaphorical system, research can reveal how different modes of representation work in an integrated manner in constructing meaning, experience, and cultural identity through the practice of play.

Conceptual metaphors in traditional games not only serve as a way of thinking, but are also performative [26]—that is, it is manifested through real actions and the roles played by children. When a child plays the role of an "attacker", "guardian", "cat" or "boi" (buffalo/cow), he or she does not simply understand the concept in the abstract, but also brings it to life through movement, emotion, and social interaction. In this context, metaphor becomes experience *embodied* which shapes the way children view themselves and others. By playing certain roles, Sundanese children learn to recognize values such as courage, responsibility, cooperation, and justice. That is, metaphors not only describe the social world, but also construct it—becoming a means of internalizing norms and forming cultural identities. Therefore, the analysis of metaphors in traditional games needs to connect between cognitive maps (how meaning is formed in the mind) and social practice (how meaning is manifested in social actions and relationships). Local values such as *Love*, *Nurture*, and *Nurture Each Other* become an important context that gives color to the meaning and execution of the game. By understanding the performative dimension of metaphor, research can reveal how traditional Sundanese games are not just entertainment spaces, but social arenas where children learn and practice their cultural identities concretely through bodies, roles, and interactions.

4 Method

This research follows the steps in the metaphor identification procedure as developed by Pragglejaz [27] and its advanced versions [28]. This method is a systematic method for identifying metaphorical linguistic units in texts. This procedure leads the researcher to analyze each word in its context, determine its basic meaning and contextual meaning, and then assess whether there is a mismatch of meaning that can be explained through metaphorical relationships. In the research of traditional Sundanese games, MIP or MIPVU can be applied to analyze the transcript of children's conversations, game rhymes, or oral rules, to find metaphorical forms that live in the verbal practices of local cultures. Through this procedure, metaphors are not only identified

as expressions of language, but are also understood as cognitive representations that structure the way children think and interact in the context of traditional play.

The analytical approach in the research of Sundanese traditional games is carried out in multimodal and ethnographic forms. Linguistic analysis is combined with the analysis of motion (through video), sound or onomatopoeia (through audio recordings), as well as material culture (through photographic documentation of game objects) to understand the overall meaning manifested in the practice of play. In addition, the use of participatory ethnography allows researchers to engage directly in game activities to capture local nuances, social values, and forms of identity performance that are not always represented in the text. Narrative interviews with children, parents, and indigenous elders were conducted to enrich interpretation by delving into the experiences, memories, and cultural meanings inherent in the game. Thus, the combination of these methods not only results in a robust linguistic analysis, but also a holistic reconstruction of how traditional games function as cultural, educational, and symbolic practices in Sundanese society.

An approach that combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and multimodal analysis in the study of traditional Sundanese games opens up a more comprehensive research space for the relationship between language, the body, and culture. Through this framework, research can (a) uncover the hidden conceptual maps behind play practices, such as how actions, sounds, and objects represent social or moral ideas; (b) explain the role of metaphors in the formation of the collective identity of Sundanese children through symbolic participation in play; (c) mapping the transformation of metaphorical meaning that occurs when the game undergoes modification due to modernization, urbanization, or digitalization; and (d) enriching the realm of cognitive onomastics with ethnographic data that links game names, cognitive structures, and social contexts. This integrative approach not only connects linguistics and culture, but also bridges theory with the dynamic living practices of local communities.

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 Metaphors of War/Weapons

The category of war or weapons in traditional Sundanese games plays an important role in shaping the way children understand the world of strategy, tactics, and leadership. Games such as *Ketepel*, *Bedil Sorolok*, *Bebentengan*, as well as *Galah Asin* and *Galah Bandung* not only present physical excitement, but also become complex social learning media. In the game, children learn to get to know the concepts of defense and offense, teamwork, and the importance of tactical communication in achieving common goals. For example, in *Bebentengan*, the meaning of "fortress" serves a dual function: as a shelter and a territorial symbol that must be guarded, so that the game reflects the social structure of boundaries, territory, and group solidarity. Meanwhile, *Ketepel* and *Bedil Sorolok* serve as miniature simulations of the world of "battle" that train reflexes, precision, and the ability to make quick decisions. In terms of conceptual metaphor, these games illustrate that life is seen as a battlefield, where ingenuity, courage, and cooperation are the keys to victory. Thus, war games in the Sundanese tradition not

only represent competitive activities, but also become a symbolic space to internalize the values of leadership, sportsmanship, and responsibility. Through this game, Sundanese children are indirectly invited to understand the balance between power and wisdom, between rivalry and solidarity — a cognitive and social process that forms the basis for the formation of their character and cultural identity.

The metaphor of war or weapons in traditional Sundanese games is not only present through physical devices such as kemps, sorolok guns, or fortifications, but is also embedded in the narratives, language, and rules of play that shape children's playing experience. In this context, games become a symbolic arena in which children learn social structures and life strategies through the roles they play. They learn to devise tactics, divide roles—such as attackers, guards, or spies—and develop an intuition for risks and opportunities. Activities such as "freeing prisoners" in *the Fortress* or "shooting the opponent" in *the Ketepel* are not just physical games, but linguistic representations of strategic thinking and tactical communication. The language used in the game shows how the concept of warfare is adapted into a safe and creative means of social learning. Furthermore, the dynamics of cooperation and competition in this game reflect the collective ethos of the Sundanese agrarian community which emphasizes the value of mutual cooperation, prudence, and balance between attack and defense. Children learn that victory is not solely determined by physical strength, but by ingenuity, coordination, and the ability to read situations. On a conceptual level, the metaphor of war becomes a bridge between the real world and the world of the imagination: on the one hand, it trains courage and fighting power; On the other hand, it fosters social awareness and responsibility towards the group. Thus, traditional games with war elements not only function as entertainment, but also as cognitive and cultural tools that instill the values of leadership, strategy, solidarity, and life wisdom — values that have long been the foundation of the character of Sundanese society.

In addition to educational and social aspects, the category of war or weapons in traditional Sundanese games also serves as a space for emotional and psychological expression for children. Through games such as *Galah Asin*, *Bebentengan*, *Ketepel*, or *Bedil Sorolok*, children get the opportunity to channel energy, a desire to win, and positive aggression in a directed and controlled form. Physical activities such as running, attacking, or defending provide a healthy release of adrenaline, while also teaching the importance of self-control in competitive situations. In this game, victory is not only the result of physical strength, but also of the ability to regulate emotions, read opponents' strategies, and maintain harmony in groups. In the context of Sundanese culture that emphasizes the principles of mutual love, mutual hoarding, mutual nurturing, the metaphor of war has never been interpreted as an invitation to violence, but rather as a means of character formation and self-balance. Children learn that courage must be accompanied by responsibility, and victory is only meaningful when achieved with sportsmanship and respect for the opponent. Games become a safe space for the exploration of roles and emotions, where children learn the boundaries between competition and friendship. Through the rules of the game and the symbols contained in them, values such as leadership, solidarity, perseverance, and the ability to work in a team are naturally embedded. Thus, traditional games with war elements not only function as

childhood entertainment, but also as traditional pedagogical tools that shape the personality and social character of the young generation of Sundanese, as well as strengthen their cultural identity within the framework of the noble values of their society.

5.2 Animal Metaphors

Animal metaphors are one of the most distinctive elements in traditional Sundanese games because they reflect the closeness of the community to nature and their ability to observe the behavior of fauna around their agricultural life. In games such as *Ucing Sumput*, *Ucing Beling*, *Ucing Udag*, *Boi-Boian*, and *Hahayaman*, the use of the terms "ucing" (cat), "boi" (buffalo/cow), and "chicken" (chicken) not only serves as a name marker, but also as a symbol that carries social and psychological meaning. Through this metaphor, children are invited to enter an imaginative world where they imitate the agility of cats, the strength and togetherness of cows, as well as the boisterousness and vigilance of chickens. These activities are not just physical games, but also exercises in empathy, observation, and self-control of the rhythm of the surrounding environment. Furthermore, the game based on animal metaphors also shows how the Sundanese culture understands humans as part of an ecosystem that is interconnected with other creatures. In a cognitive context, children build conceptual schemas about roles, hierarchies, and social adaptations through play experiences that represent animal behavior. For example, chase games (*cats*) teach hunting and survival strategies, while *Boi-Boians* instill a collective spirit and group cohesiveness. Values such as meticulousness, courage, cooperation, and the ability to read situations are created naturally without formal instruction. Thus, animal metaphors in traditional Sundanese games are not only a symbolic form of play activities, but also ecological and social educational tools that instill awareness of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and culture. This game is a miniature of life that teaches a balance between instinct, strategy, and wisdom in living a life together.

In the implementation of traditional Sundanese games, animal metaphors not only serve as a name marker, but also form the overall structure, atmosphere, and logic of the game. Games such as *Ucing Sumput*, *Ucing Udag*, *Ucing Beling*, and *Boi-Boian* present a gaming experience that is full of symbolic meaning. In *Ucing Sumput* (hide and seek), for example, a player plays the role of a "cat" — a chaser who has to find another player who is hiding. The tension in the process of searching and hiding creates a game atmosphere that mimics the behavior of cats: agile, calm, strategic, and relying on foresight and instinct. Through this game, children learn about spatial perception, patience, and the ability to read environmental signs — values that are actually rooted in the ecological knowledge of the Sundanese people. Meanwhile, *Boi-Boian* depicts strength and togetherness that are identified with farm animals such as cows or buffaloes. Players work together to maintain position and protect the "boi" from the opponent's attack, a metaphor for endurance and solidarity. Elements of movement and sound that mimic animals are not just entertainment, but become traditional pedagogical tools that strengthen children's social skills, coordination, and emotional expression. Through this process, they practice recognizing roles, feeling empathy for other beings,

and understanding the balance between competition and togetherness. Thus, games based on animal metaphors serve as a space for identity and imagination experimentation that teaches the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. It is a means of inheriting ecological and moral values, where children learn to see life through a symbolic lens that unites nature, culture, and local Sundanese knowledge.

In addition to cognitive and social aspects, animal metaphors in traditional Sundanese games also reflect the deep ecological relationship between humans and the surrounding nature. In the life of Sundanese agrarian people, animals are not just part of the physical environment, but symbolic partners that teach many things about the balance of life. Children growing up in the village know chickens, cats, buffaloes, or birds not only as living beings, but also as representations of life's values: perseverance, vigilance, courage, and togetherness. Through games such as *Ucing Sumput* or *Boi-Boian*, they not only play, but at the same time learn to observe animal behavior, understand the rhythms of nature, and cultivate a sense of empathy for other creatures. Animal metaphors also serve as a tool of traditional ecological education, in which children are introduced to the concepts of harmony and balance without the need for formal instruction. In the game, the principles of *mutual honer*, *mutual love*, *mutual care* (honing each other, loving and protecting) are manifested through teamwork, collective strategy, and appreciation for the role of each player. This illustrates the way the Sundanese people instill the values of *manners* and *pamali* in the ecological context—that every creature has a place and function that must be respected. Thus, traditional games based on animal metaphors are not just entertainment, but a forum for ecological socialization and the transmission of cultural values. It becomes a bridge between natural reality, social structure, and the symbolic world, where tradition transforms into a vehicle for creative education. It is in that playroom that the local wisdom of Sundanese finds a concrete form: simple in form, but rich in meaning and philosophy of life.

5.3 Onomatopoeic Metaphor

Traditional Sundanese games that use onomatopoeic metaphors show how closely the relationship between language, sound, and the experience of play is in the local culture. Sound is not only an aesthetic element, but also a source of meaning and the structure of social interaction. In games such as *Anyang-anyangan*, *Cing-Ciripit*, *Bebeletokan*, *Hahayaman*, *Hong-hongan*, or *Sorodot Goplok*, the sounds produced—whether from clapping hands, singing, exclaiming, or simple instruments—become an integral part of the rules of the game and the rhythm of the game. Each onomatopoeia contains rhythmic and expressive elements that create a cheerful atmosphere, while strengthening group cohesion through the simultaneity of movement and sound. Apart from being a musical element, onomatopoeia also functions as a form of representation of the oral culture of the Sundanese people, which is rich in oral traditions and natural sound expressions. For example, the sound of "kepin" in *Cing-Ciripit* mimics a light, playful tone that reflects children's playfulness, while "bebelete" describes the sound of a small bang or explosion full of energy. Through this imitation of sound, children not only play, but also learn to imitate and understand the world around them, hone their auditory

sensitivity and language skills. Furthermore, onomatopoe-based games reflect the concept of musicality in the daily life of the Sundanese people, where rhythm, harmony, and sound expression are a means of nonverbal communication that fosters a sense of togetherness. The sounds in play become an affective medium that unites individuals in laughter, competition, and cooperation. Thus, onomatopoeic metaphors in traditional Sundanese games are not only a form of linguistic creativity, but also a form of local wisdom that affirms the importance of sound as a language of emotions, solidarity, and cultural identity.

In practice, traditional Sundanese games based on onomatopes are an important vehicle for children to express creativity through sounds, rhythms, and gestures. Each game presents a multisensory experience that blends hearing, motor and social interaction. For example, in *Cing-Ciripit*, the repetitive pattern of clapping hands not only serves as a marker of rhythm, but also as a signal of coordination between players to maintain cohesiveness and focus. Meanwhile, *Bebeletokan* imitates the sound of small eruptions such as gunshots, training children in responding to sound stimuli with quick movement reflexes and situational improvisation. Through these sound imitation activities, children naturally develop phonetic awareness, fine motor control, and coordination skills that are the foundation of communication skills. This process also introduced them to the concept of local musicality—how sound can be a symbol of action, social cues, and even a representation of mood. In the context of games, sounds create a lively atmosphere, foster a sense of togetherness, and strengthen the affective dimension in peer relationships. In addition, onomatopoeic games foster a sense of cultural ownership and linguistic creativity, as children are given the freedom to modify sounds according to their imagination and the context of the game. Sounds that are initially simple can develop into new rhythmic patterns, showing a spontaneous ability to create and adapt. Thus, onomatopoeia is not only a phonetic aspect of the game, but also a pedagogical tool that stimulates the creativity, empathy, and musical intelligence of Sundanese children, while strengthening social ties through collective and culturally meaningful sound expressions.

The onomatopoeic metaphor in traditional Sundanese games not only serves as an aesthetic element of sound, but also as a means of forming a collective identity and the continuity of oral traditions. Typical sounds such as the call "*Hong-hongan!*" or the rhythmic clapping in *Sorodot Goplok* creates a space of togetherness that brings children together in the same emotional experience. The sounds that are recited repeatedly build a kind of *cultural soundscape*, which is a sound landscape that represents the harmonious, expressive, and intimate social life of the Sundanese people. In this atmosphere, sound becomes a nonverbal communication tool that contains messages of solidarity, mutual understanding, and cheerfulness. Furthermore, the verbal processes that appear in this game involve not only the pronunciation of voices, but also the creation of new meanings through contextual phonetic expressions. For example, the rhythm of clapping hands, the tone of calling, or the intonation of laughter together represent the spirit of *mutual cooperation* and *mutual love*—fundamental values in Sundanese social ethics. Children learn to adapt to group rhythms, understand social dynamics through sound, and internalize interaction norms such as patience, turn, and sensitivity to others. Thus, onomatopoeic metaphors not only play a role in the linguistic dimension, but also

become an instrument of cultural transmission and character education. Through sound-based play, children learn that sound is not just the result of articulation, but a representation of togetherness and identity. In every echo of *Hong-hongan* or Sorodot Goplok's *applause*, there is a cultural message that has been passed down through generations: that tradition can remain alive and meaningful, as long as there is still a voice that echoes it in the laughter of Sundanese children's games.

5.4 Metaphor of Objects/Tools

The metaphor of objects or tools in traditional Sundanese games reflects a philosophy of life based on the principles of simplicity, creativity, and closeness to nature. Everyday objects used in games such as *Beklen*, *Congklak*, *Jajangkungan*, *Gatrik*, *Kelom Batok*, or *Bedil Sorolok* not only function as play equipment, but also become a symbol of the ingenuity and adaptability of the Sundanese people in utilizing what is available in the surrounding environment. Through this play activity, children learn that every object has the potential to be useful if managed with imagination and cooperation, reflecting the view of life of the *duduga peryoga system*—that is, wisdom in acting with limited resources. Apart from being a recreational medium, object-based games also play a role in motor, cognitive, and social learning. For example, *Beklen* and *Congklak* practice coordination, calculation, and logical thinking strategies; *Jajangkungan* and *Kelom Batok* develop body balance and concentration; while *Gatrik* hones reflex speed and teamwork. This activity shows that simple objects are not only physical aids, but also educational vehicles that foster a sense of responsibility, sportsmanship, and tenacity. More deeply, the metaphor of objects in traditional Sundanese games also represents the relationship of man with his material environment philosophically. The use of natural objects or leftovers shows ecological awareness and sustainability values, that nature is not only to be exploited, but to be treated wisely. Thus, each traditional game is not just entertainment, but also a mirror of local wisdom that affirms the harmony between humans, nature, and culture—a heritage of ecological and social education inherited through simple but meaningful games.

The use of objects as the center of play in Sundanese tradition indicates how close the relationship between culture, creativity, and the environment is. Simple objects such as seeds, stones, bamboo, or coconut shells are not just playing aids, but symbols of local wisdom that emphasizes the values of sustainability, togetherness, and perseverance. In the game of *Congklak*, for example, small grains or pebbles become a simulated medium for resource distribution—teaching children concepts of planning, calculations, and economic strategies in a fun way. Every step and decision taken in the game reflects a systematic mindset and ability to predict outcomes, a form of cognitive learning that is integrated into cultural practice. Games such as *Kelom Batok* and *Jajangkungan* contain a meaning that is more than just a test of physical balance. The use of coconut shells and bamboo indicates the ability of the Sundanese people to turn natural waste into valuable educational means. It contains lessons about resilience, creativity, and appreciation for nature. Children not only train motor skills and coordination, but also learn about the harmony between bodies, objects, and space. This activity is a reflection of the way the Sundanese agrarian community understands nature as a living

partner, not just an object of exploitation. Furthermore, object-based games also strengthen the concept of collective ownership and mutual cooperation. Game tools are often created, stored, and shared together, fostering a sense of responsibility and social solidarity from an early age. Thus, the objects in the game not only serve as technical instruments, but also as symbolic *mediums* that bind the social, ecological, and spiritual values of the Sundanese people—teaching the balance between human creativity and the preservation of nature through meaningful simplicity.

In addition to being a means to hone technical and social skills, the metaphor of objects or tools in traditional Sundanese games also functions as a medium of moral education and social responsibility. Children are not only invited to use the play tools, but also to understand the important value of caring, guarding, and sharing these objects. Processes such as cleaning *kelom batok*, recollecting *congklak* seeds, or repairing *broken gutters* are part of small rituals that instill ecological awareness and shared responsibility. This shows that play does not stop at physical activity, but includes the formation of attitudes towards objects and the environment that surrounds them. Through the practice of caring for and using tools collectively, Sundanese children learn about mutual cooperation and social solidarity. Each game is a collaborative effort—created, agreed upon and maintained communally. When tools break, they repair them together, forming a pattern of social interaction that fosters empathy, cooperation, and a sense of belonging. This process also strengthens the tradition of *mutual honing, mutual love, mutual nurture* which is the core of Sundanese cultural values, where togetherness is the main foundation in every community activity. In the end, simple objects such as coconut shells, congklak seeds, or bamboo that seem trivial actually transform into a "small heirloom" that is full of meaning. It is not just a toy, but a symbol of intergenerational connection, a reminder of childhood, and a representation of cultural identity that is passed down from generation to generation. In this context, traditional Sundanese games function as a living museum—a place where objects, values, and memories combine to form a cultural consciousness that continues to pulsate in the midst of changing times.

5.5 Action Metaphor

The metaphor of action in traditional Sundanese games describes the integration between gestures, cultural expression, and social construction. Games such as *Empet-Empetan*, *Ucing Kuriling*, *Ucing Udag*, *Oray-Orayan*, *Ucang-Ucang Angge*, and *Engklek* are not just a place for physical recreation, but a learning space that demands sensitivity to body rhythms and social togetherness. Running, jumping, spinning, or circling movements train children to manage balance, understand space boundaries, and adjust to group rhythms. Through these physical activities, they learn about motor coordination, patience, and the ability to read social situations—skills that are then transformed into cultural capital in community life. Furthermore, the metaphor of this action contains a symbolic meaning about the dynamic and adaptive social life of the Sundanese people. For example, in *Snakes*, the marching and wavy movements resembling snakes not only train cohesiveness, but also represent a philosophy of harmony in diversity. While

Engklek emphasizes balance and concentration, as if describing the balance of life between the playing world and the real world. In *Ucing Udag* or *Ucing Kuriling*, the chase activity mimics social dynamics involving strategy, courage, and the ability to read the opponent's movements—a simple simulation of social interaction in Sundanese agrarian society. The body in this game serves as a medium of communication and a symbol of social negotiation. Every jump, clap, or spin is not just a physical action, but a cultural expression that reflects the values of togetherness, healthy competition, and spontaneity. Thus, action-based play becomes a space where body, culture, and meaning meet—reviving tradition as an experience that is not only understood through the mind, but also through movement and sense that is passed down through generations.

Traditional Sundanese games based on actions and gestures instill important values of spontaneity, adaptation, and agility in the face of social dynamics. Through games such as *Empet-Empetan*, *Ucing Udag*, *Ucing Kuriling*, and *Oray-Orayan*, children are trained to think quickly, react spontaneously, and adjust to changes in situations directly. In *Emptiness*, for example, the ability to read space and find gaps is the key to surviving in tight areas, training agility as well as tactical ingenuity. Meanwhile, in *Ucing Udag* and *Ucing Kuriling*, running speed is combined with thinking strategies to outwit opponents, form skills in reading other people's gestures and anticipate the next action. Games like *Snake-Orayan* highlight the collective aspect: children line up to form long "snakes" and move together, keeping the rhythm so that the formation is not interrupted. This activity not only tests physical coordination skills, but also strengthens the sense of togetherness and trust between group members. In the social context, this kind of game reflects the pattern of interaction of the Sundanese people which emphasizes the balance between individual independence and group harmony. Children learn that success is not determined by personal strength alone, but by the ability to fit into interconnected social structures. Furthermore, action games also serve as a stage for character formation. Spontaneous movement fosters the courage to make decisions, while constant physical interaction trains empathy and social awareness. In the chase dynamics, children learn about winning and losing sportsmanship, about body limits and play ethics. Thus, action games not only form motor skills, but also become a means of internalizing social, cognitive, and emotional values that are relevant to social life.

In addition to honing physical skills and coordination, action metaphors in traditional Sundanese games have an important role in the formation of children's character, emotions, and social mentality. Activities such as running, jumping, defending, and chasing in the games of *Ucing Udag*, *Empet-Empetan*, *Engklek*, and *Oray-Orayan* create a learning experience that involves both the body and the mind. In each game, children learn about sportsmanship, how to appreciate victory without arrogance, and accept defeat without frustration. These values are instilled naturally through the process of play, not through lectures or moral advice, so that they are deeply embedded in children. More than that, traditional Sundanese games function as a natural cathartic medium. In the dynamics of a game full of laughter, chases, and small bumps, children channel their energy and emotions in a positive and directed way. Intense physical activity is a means of releasing stress as well as a space for the formation of confidence. They learn to manage fear, disappointment, and even the courage to take risks in a safe and fun atmosphere. This process is important to build mental resilience and the ability

to adapt to changes in social situations in the future. The metaphor of action also illustrates the concept of balance in Sundanese culture, namely *uniting in the chaos*—uniting in the dynamics of life. Spontaneous and coordinated body movements are a symbol of harmony between mind, body, and social environment. Through play, children not only practice physically, but also practice understanding social rhythms, time, and empathy for others. Thus, action-based games become a form of holistic education that combines cognitive, affective, and social elements, forming the foundation of a child's personality that is resilient, adaptive, and in harmony with Sundanese cultural values that uphold balance, politeness, and togetherness.

6 Conclusion

The traditional Sundanese games are a profound representation of local wisdom that unites educational, social, and moral values in a single living play experience. Through the metaphor of objects, actions, and rules of the game, this game instills the important values of life naturally without the need for formal instructions. Games such as *Ucing Udag*, *Oray-Orayan*, *Empet-Empetan*, and *Engklek* show that play activities are not just physical activities, but also the process of forming character and cultural identity. Every movement and interaction in it teaches children about cooperation, sportsmanship, perseverance, and the ability to manage emotions. In addition, these games are a means for children to learn to recognize their own limits, understand social roles, and respect mutually agreed rules. In the context of education, traditional Sundanese games can be positioned as a *contextual learning model* that unites cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner. Children not only learn to think quickly and creatively, but also interact, adapt, and build healthy social relationships. Furthermore, this practice of playing strengthens Sundanese cultural identity through the repetition of symbols, language, and interaction patterns that are inherited across generations. Thus, traditional games are not only a form of entertainment in the past, but also a medium for preserving cultural values and character education that are relevant for the formation of children's personalities in the modern era.

Efforts are needed to revitalize traditional Sundanese games systematically through integration into the basic education curriculum and extracurricular activities in schools. This step is important to ensure that the cultural values and characters contained in the game remain alive and relevant amid the modernization and dominance of digital games. Teachers play the role of main facilitators who can utilize traditional games as a fun and meaningful contextual learning medium. Through play activities such as *Ucing Udag* or *Oray-Orayan*, students can learn about cooperation, sportsmanship, and social responsibility naturally without rigid academic pressure. In addition, parental involvement is also needed in reintroducing traditional games in the home environment as a form of strengthening family-based character education. To expand its reach and appeal, the documentation and digitization of traditional Sundanese games is a strategic step. Through digital platforms, young people can access guides, videos, and game history interactively, making them part of popular culture that remains rooted in local values. This revitalization effort also needs to be supported by training for educators to be

able to adapt traditional games into creative learning methods across fields, such as physical education, art, and socio-culture. Thus, traditional Sundanese games are not only preserved as cultural heritage, but also revived as a means of character education, identity formation, and strengthening the values of togetherness and creativity among the younger generation.

The next research can examine aspects that have not been touched much, such as the linguistic and symbolic dimensions in naming traditional Sundanese games through the *cognitive onomastics approach*. In addition, research on the relationship between traditional games and the formation of the ecological identity of Sundanese children is still wide open, especially in the context of human-nature relations in local culture. A comparative study between Sundanese games and traditional games from other ethnicities in Indonesia is also interesting to explore the similarities in value patterns and meanings across cultures. Digital ethnography-based research can also be developed to see how traditional games are adapted in virtual spaces, as well as assess their effectiveness in preserving culture in the modern era.

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