

# POPULAR GAMES AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AS CHILD CULTURE AND TRADITION GAMES IN WEST SUMATERA

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## **Abstract**

There are few researches on forms of popular games among elementary school children because the commonly accepted concept in society is the preservation of old arts and traditional cultures. In fact, both of these concepts can conflict with one another. This study investigates popular games among children of elementary schools in West Sumatra as one of the elements of child culture as stated by Mars (2010) and Mintz (2009) and whether the traditional games in West Sumatra are still popular among children or already replaced with new types of games. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, it is found that there are at least 288 popular games among children in West Sumatra, of which only 25% come from traditional culture. However, what is called 'traditional' culture is indeed no longer purely local, but a game influenced by external elements. In other words, there has been a shift in the type of children's popular games. Thus, the concept of cultural preservation proclaimed by many parties is actually very loose because what is called traditional games is not independent of external influences. A number of cultures considered traditional are actually the result of enculturation or a mixture of local and external culture which later become a tradition.

**Keywords:** child culture, adult culture, culture and arts education

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## **Introduction**

Pop culture has a significant impact on the development of a community's culture, especially on teenagers. Ardipal (2017), in his book *Budaya Anak Masa Kecil dan Kreatifitas* (Childhood Culture and Creativity), quoting Mintz (n.d) states that mass culture had a significant influence on determining the type of game played by children in the 20th century. Various figures from games and stories occupy an important place in the imagination of 20th century children. Cowboys in shooting games, football players, and superhero figures are often the ones who are adored, and whose roles are imitated, by children.

Marsh (2010) links children's culture with children's creativity in the context of popular culture. According to him, children's popular culture is an ongoing culture, meaning that what is enjoyed or played by children today is what constitutes children's culture. With this concept, we can see the game played by children in West Sumatra as a form of popular culture. With regards to this study, children's popular culture can be seen as texts, artifacts and popular practices of the majority of children, both commercial products and cultures circulated by the children. Various forms of popular culture can be understood from the life of the children, for example, television, computer games, online social networking sites, comics and magazines (Marsh in Ardipal: 2017).

Some of the popular forms of children's culture may have been popular for decades in previous generations, for example, cultures originating from television and comics. This phenomenon raises questions about the originality of the cultures - whether such long-standing cultures can be called tradition. This research investigates various forms of traditional games as part of child culture in West Sumatra today and whether the game is still popular among children or has been replaced with new types of games. The results of this study demonstrate the reality and construction of child culture in West Sumatra that can be used as one of the references in preserving culture considering the fact that the current context of cultural preservation within culture and arts learning is only limited to the preservation of adult culture, instead of child culture.

Research on child culture in Indonesia is arguably not yet available. Even if there is, the research has not been published properly. However, elements of child culture such as types of children games have been studied and written. For example, Mia Permata Sari (2016) wrote various forms of 90s generation games in West Sumatra, but the classifications she have not been done correctly. In addition, the existing writings practically discuss traditional games from adults. For example, A.A Navis in his book *Alam Takambang Jadi*

*Teacher* explains the various traditional games adults in Minangkabau. In general, an increasing number of articles discussing various traditional games began to be written after traditional Indonesian game became one of the themes exhibited in Jakarta National Art Museum in 2015.

This study investigated forms of popular games among children in West Sumatera and how they mean as a part of child culture in West Sumatera. Based on an analysis, it can be concluded that child culture involves a number of dimensions and thus cannot be limited to a particular scope because the culture is shaped and influenced by children and adults.

## Method

This study does not discuss theories or hypotheses based on literature review, but describes the culture of children in West Sumatera, especially the culture of elementary school children, in the form of games. With a qualitative approach, researcher aims to formulate popular game categories, both traditional and modern, among children and their relation to traditional culture. The data in this study are kinds of children's games obtained from open and closed questionnaires and from other sources such as websites that were investigated against the reality observed from the answers of the questionnaires. The combination of these two types of questionnaires is meant to identify several types of popular games played by children while anticipating some answers beyond what the researchers previously projected. Children becoming object in this study age 8-10 years (grade 3) in a number of elementary schools in West Sumatera following the account of Marsh (2010).

There were 9 regions from which the researcher obtained the data. They were: Padang city, Padang Panjang city, Bukittinggi city, Pariaman city, Payakumbuh city, Solok district, West Pasaman district, Padang Pariaman district, and Lima Puluh Kota district. Special attention was paid to the answers of respondents who live in urban settings, with the assumption that the answers of research objects from urban areas are more meaningful for this study. If the analysis is based more on the answers of children in rural areas, the substance of the research becomes less meaningful because respondents in rural areas generally still preserve traditional culture, making the observation of existing modern culture less visible. Since one of the research questions in this study is whether the children's traditional game still exists, the prioritized respondents are those children living in urban areas. Of the 1000 targeted respondents, the researcher obtained answers only from 794 people.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Popular Games among Children of Elementary Schools

Marsh (in Ardipal, 2017) links child culture with the culture taking place among children at the time the children live. According to him, any culture resulted from the children's creativity can be seen as a part of children's popular culture. After analyzing the respondents' answers to the questionnaires, the researcher obtained 288 types of games recognized by third grade students in West Sumatera. Table 1 below shows the forms of games that are popular among children of West Sumatera and whether the games contain elements of creativity. Games are categorized as popular if more than 50% of the respondents know and/or play the game.

**Table 1. Popular games among elementary school children in West Sumatera**

No	Games	(%)	Creativity Element
1	<i>bola sepak</i>	97,5	1
2	<i>cik mancik</i>	85	1
3	<i>Congklak</i>	80	
4	<i>masak-masak</i>	75	1
5	<i>pistol air bambu</i>	75	1
6	<i>layang-layang maco/ikan</i>	72,5	1
7	<i>adu layang-layang</i>	65	1
8	<i>ular tangga</i>	65	
9	<i>boneka</i>	65	1
10	<i>gundu lubang</i>	62,5	
11	<i>kincir angin</i>	62,5	
12	<i>perang air</i>	60	1

No	Games	(%)	Creativity Element
13	<i>Kelereng</i>	60	
14	<i>balon sabun</i>	57,5	
15	<i>gobak sodor</i>	55	
16	<i>layang layang padang panjang</i>	55	
17	<i>roda rodan ban bekas</i>	55	1
19	<i>semba lakon</i>	55	1
20	<i>alek-alekan</i>	55	1
21	<i>balon air</i>	55	
22	<i>lompat tali/karet</i>	52,5	1
23	<i>balap karung</i>	52,5	
24	<i>katapel benen</i>	52,5	
25	<i>lempar kotak rokok</i>	52,5	
26	<i>Monopoli</i>	52,5	
27	<i>bola plastik</i>	50	
28	<i>lempar gambar</i>	50	
29	<i>layang-layang kupu</i>	50	
30	<i>Boneka</i>	50	1

Number 1 in the column 'CreativityElement' signifies a game that researcher considers creative. Classification of the game into creative or not in nature is only a temporary hypothesis, and requires further research for verification, but in this game, children do activities with words that can be categorized as creative verbs such as: creating, expressing, compiling, shaping, conceptualizing, explaining, and composing, which are part of the cognitive domain. For example, playing a beam or drawing can be said to be creative.

Besides popular games, researcher also observed some forms of games that are not popular among the children. Table 2 below lists the unpopular games.

**Table 2. Unpopular games among elementary school children**

No	Games	(%)	Creativity Element
1	<i>main doremi</i>	12,5	
2	<i>puput daun kelapa</i>	12,5	1
3	<i>lempar kelereng</i>	10	
4	<i>boneka dari daun ubi</i>	10	1
5	<i>kupu-kupu kertas</i>	10	1
6	<i>puput dari bambu</i>	10	1
7	<i>kijang dan rusa</i>	10	
8	<i>bongkar pasang</i>	10	1
9	<i>main simbang</i>	10	1
10	<i>mbek kambing</i>	7,5	1
11	<i>engklek</i>	7,5	
12	<i>main enggong/lempat batu</i>	7,5	1
13	<i>baling-baling kertas</i>	7,5	1
14	<i>sepak takraw</i>	5	
15	<i>main sirapak/ trakoci</i>	5	
16	<i>bedil dari pena</i>	5	
17	<i>balap mobil sendal</i>	5	1

No	Games	(%)	Creativity Element
18	<i>bedil pelepah pisang</i>	5	1
19	<i>lempar parasut plastik</i>	5	
20	<i>rakit batang pisang</i>	5	

## 2. Childrens' Gaming in West Sumatera and the Changes

It is rather difficult to find literature and data about the types and forms of children's games originating from tradition in West Sumatera. What is meant by tradition is a game that is passed down from generation to generation. Table 3 lists some types of games considered traditional as also explained by Sari (2016) and the area from which the game originates. Symbols (1), (2), and (> 3) explain whether the game is played by a single child, by two children, or in groups. The AA symbol signifies the game which is the original creation of children, TD for games believed to be inherited, and PP for games made / influenced by adults. M stands for male, while F stands for female.

**Table 3. Games considered Traditional in West Sumatera**

	Games	1	2	>3	AA	TD	PP	Local	Non-local	Origin	M	F	M/F
1	Badia Batuang	1				1			1	Introduced by Portuguese		1	
2	Bakiak/ Tarompa Panjang			1	1			1		Minangkabau	1	1	1
3	Cak Bur/ Gobak sodor			1	1				1	Riau/Java			
4	Caktum			1					1	Java			
5	Congklak		1						1	Middle East		1	
6	Dakak-Dakak							1					
7	Gasiang	1	1					1	1	Tidak jelas	1		
9	Lompat Tali	1	1						1	possibly Dutchor Egypt	1	1	1
10	Main gambar	1	1								1	1	1
11	Main kasti			1					1	Dutch andJapan	1	1	1
12	Main kelereng / gundu		1						1	France, Dutch	1		1
13	Main Kuciang-kuciangan/ Mancik-mancik/ Petak umpet			1	1			1		from Java	1	1	1
14	Lore / Tapak Rok, Engklek			1					1	Tapak rok/minang since Dutch colonialism	1	1	1
15	Main ramal-ramal pakai tangan		1								1	1	1
16	Patok lele, Gatrik atau Tak Kadal			1				1		Exists long time ago	1		
17	Pijak bayang / Injak Bayangan			1							1	1	1
18	Randai			1				1		Minangkabau			1
19	Silek / Pencak Silat		1					1		Minangkabau	1	1	1
20	Sipak Rago									Minangkabau			
21	Sipak Tekong			1				1		Minangkabau	1		1
22	Suruak lidi / Sembunyi lidi			1						Minangkabau			
23	Layang-layang	1		1					1	from abroad /Cina	1		

	Games	1	2	>3	AA	TD	PP	Local	Non-local	Origin	M	F	M/F
24	Lenggang Rotan/Hula Hop			1							1	1	
25	Alek-alekan/Masak-masakan			1								1	

From Table 3, it can be seen that numerous children's games actually do not originate from tradition. The games come from outside of West Sumatra but are considered to be a tradition, for example, congklak, originating from the Middle East. Some sources also consider the game such as *Cak Bur* or *Galah Panjang* to come from Java or Riau. In other words, the term tradition game here is also loose, and needs to be revised in accordance with the concept of popular culture. The games basically scatter in the same way that pop culture spreads, that is, a culture that takes place at a time spreads and becomes popular among children through a certain channel. This is the same as the phenomenon of popular songs which spread beyond the geographical boundaries where it was created, favored by many until they spread to other regions, even though at certain point of time, the songs fade and are no longer loved before completely disappearing. From this explanation, it can be concluded that traditional games can be categorized into those: (1) whose origins are from the local area; (2) which come from outside of a community and have become a local tradition; and (3) which originated from abroad and become popular in a local community.

Moreover, after classifying 288 games recognized by children, it was found that as much as 34% of the games were new types of games made by children. However, further analysis shows that the games were actually influenced by adult culture (41%), while only 25% of the games came from tradition. This tendency shows that tradition games gradually lost, leading to children no longer recognizing them.

## Conclusions

Child culture is a multi-faceted term and its definition cannot be limited into a single dimension. In terms of sources, children's games as a work are actually a form of child's culture that: (1) is made by the children; (2) is influenced by adults (such as movies, videos and toys); and (3) comes from an old tradition. Thus, the current children's cultural practices by means of game need to be contextualized in historical traditions. From the results of the research, children are able to create their own cultural practices in the form of games through their interaction with the wider community and under the influence of adult culture. In today's society, the child's game culture is influenced by various forms of commercial products which are often marketed in recreational areas, supermarkets and other types of shopping centers in urban areas. In addition, it should be noted that traditional children's games may disappear if they are no longer popular among children. Thus, the term cultural preservation is actually very loose because what is called traditional games is not independent of external influences. A number of cultures considered traditional are actually the result of enculturation or a mixture of local and external culture which later become a tradition.

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