

# Alphabet Knowledge through *Cublak Suweng* Games for Early Childhood Education

Midaiyana Nella Santi  
 Post Graduate School  
 Yogyakarta State University  
 Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
 suparno\_plb@uny.ac.id

Suparno  
 Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini  
 Yogyakarta State University  
 Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
 midaiyana.2017@student.uny.ac.id

**Abstract**—The alphabet is an important factor in the development of literacy, especially for early childhood education. At present learning activities in early childhood education only use activities that are monotonous and less fun for children, such as memorizing, singing, or thickening. To overcome these problems, this study provides an effective way to increase alphabet knowledge on children's education through traditional games of the *Cublak Suweng*. Traditional games are the best efforts that can be used by early childhood teachers to teach basic alphabet knowledge skills to develop optimally. This traditional game emphasizes the knowledge of letters and pronounces letters that are based on the level of achievement of child development. The effectiveness of the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* was evaluated by designing learning activities conducted by quasi-experimental method for 20 children. Two variables: traditional *Cublak Suweng* games and language development. The results show that there is a significant increase in the development of language recognizing alphabet letters in early childhood, which is 95.00%.

**Keywords**—*alphabet knowledge, Cublak Suweng traditional games, early childhood.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Getting to know the alphabet is very important for literacy in children and for subsequent children's performance. Literacy is built from the first day of a child's life. Literacy is defined as the ability to interpret and understand messages conveyed from others as a means of communication. In early literacy or literacy, children need to understand the appropriate letter and sound form. Through alphabet knowledge, children's literacy skills will also develop [1], [2], [3], [4]. In this article, we review research on alphabet knowledge through traditional games of *Cublak Suweng* for early childhood which teachers can use to teach basic skills in alphabet knowledge.

Previous research has noted that currently early childhood children tend to experience difficulties in early literacy such as recognizing letter symbols, sounds and sounds will experience difficulty in reading ability. Therefore, alphabet knowledge becomes an important learning goal for children [4]. The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAECY) recognizes the development of the alphabet principle as a goal for early childhood education NAECY in [5], therefore children must be given motivation in the knowledge of letters with interesting and fun methods. Playing is an activity that is interesting, fun and needs for children [6]; [7]. Play can provide a context in which children achieve deep learning through the integration of intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual values and can provide

opportunities for committed learning, development, and growth [8].

Playing enables children to achieve many things such as literacy skills, develop physical motor skills, practice language processes, gain skills, knowledge and behavior, develop confidence and self-esteem, learn concepts, prepare themselves for adult life, and master and control life situation. When playing the child gets his intellectual development, because he often explores the environment around Morrison (2016, 524). Games can be an effective and important tool for children in learning the cultural environment in which they live. The game is an effective tool used by children in learning the cultural environment of children. However, in the current era of globalization a lot of technology-based games are developing so that it has an impact on the decline in cultural sustainability about traditional games.

This study explores the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* for knowledge of the alphabet which is an essential foundation for further children's education. When children know and know the alphabet letters in children's education it will help children in the next level of education in the future. The aim is to analyze whether traditional *Cublak Suweng* games have a positive influence on alphabet letter recognition in early childhood.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the literature review. Section III describes the materials and proposed methodology. Section IV presented the obtained result and following by discussion. Finally, Section V concludes this work.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Getting to know the alphabet is often overlooked as a result of certain interests compared to other aspects of literacy such as phonology and reading. According to some researchers, alphabet knowledge is considered as one of the best predictors for children to acquire their reading skills. Therefore, many researchers and educators state that alphabet knowledge must be developed in early childhood. Some researchers claim that this lack of knowledge can make children experience reading difficulties and then read. Alphabet recognition learning must be short and interesting. Learning to recognize the alphabet teaches shapes, sounds, and relationships of shapes and sounds. Nonsensical Neuman Cindy in [3] graphically illustrates the planting of alphabet learning in early childhood for 55 minutes. Knowing the alphabet is a unitary construct that is defined by the National Institute for Literacy as the knowledge of names and the

sounds of printed letters. Children develop pre-reading skills, knowledge, and certain attitudes before they can read and write which form the basis for literacy development. This literature appears including alphabet knowledge, awareness of phonology, motivation and form of letters, all learning activities are important for the preparation of children in reading. Because essential alphabet knowledge in reading acquisitions, Heartstar argues that children aged 4-5 years must be able to recognize and know at least half of the letters of the alphabet and say the sounds in the letters. Similarly, the National Association for the Education of Young Children develops the ability to associate letters and sounds must be achieved in preschool children.

Playing is an important characteristic of children's behavior [9], [10] and is an official tool for them [11]. Playing can provide a context in which children achieve deep learning through the integration of intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual values [12] and can give them the opportunity to commit to them for learning, development, and growth [13]. The entertaining interaction of children with other children or adults while playing games constantly stimulates them in different areas of development. For example, the game was an important contribution to children's cognitive development [14],[15],[16] and psychosocial development [17]. Because play is a key feature that determines and expresses enthusiasm in childhood [9],[10]. Playing is very important for the development and quality of life of children [18].

Traditional game provides an effective and efficient way to use the alphabet recognition. Children's games, often passed down from generation to generation are one of the important activities for learning and socializing childhood. Learning activities through traditional games can be done to help children develop alphabet knowledge. Traditional games have developed a lot in the environment both in the community and school environment. Recently many modern technologies have developed to develop children's knowledge of the alphabet. Even though so few people have exploration to use in alphabet learning. Therefore, this article discusses how traditional games can be used to be used in children's knowledge of the alphabet. Thus, traditional games are performed to help children acquire alphabet knowledge and apply that knowledge to read and write.

Traditional games are one form of game from a particular culture. Traditional games are assets of a society to maintain their regional identity in the midst of modern society. For children, the value of the benefits is to fantasize, recreation, creations, sports and as a means to practice good manners with the community [19],[20]. In community life there are cultural values that are used as life guidelines and are considered important and valuable. Culture has a universal value system that includes five important issues, namely the problem of human nature and life, the problem of human nature and work, the problem of the nature of human position in the space of time, the problem of human relations with others, and the problem of the nature of human relations with fellow. Therefore, in order for the cultural value system to become the foundation of the community, children must be equipped and prepared from an early age to preserve culture through traditional games [21].

*Cublak Suweng* traditional game is a game originating from the Java Region. *Cublak Suweng* comes from the word

unique term that is *cublak* which has the meaning of being punched, tapped or dredged and *suweng* or *subang* made of horns which means *uwer* (jewelry in ears). *Cublak Suweng* is a game that uses the game tools in the form of users to move the palms of the players. However, at present *uwer* or *subang* are rarely found so that the use of *uweng* or *subang* can be replaced by using stones, grains or gravel [19]. *Cublak Suweng* game can be played by 5-7 boys and girls. This game is usually played in the afternoon, at night, in the yard or outside the house [19]. Following are the steps that must be taken when playing *Cublak-Cublak Suweng*. When carrying out this game accompanied by the song *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* which was played by all players. This *Cublak Suweng* game is very simple and has noble values and has many benefits including giving pleasure to the child, introducing the alphabet to children, training social emotional children, motoric children, and cognitive children [19].

### III. MATERIAL & METODOLOGY

This section presents the materials used and the proposed methodology.

#### A. Data

The type of research conducted is quantitative with experimental methods. Research subjects were children aged 4-5 years totalling 20 children, consisting of 11 girls and 9 boys. The purpose of this study is to improve the introduction of early childhood alphabet letters. Observation sheets are designed to measure the ability of early childhood alphabet letters before and after treatment. Pre-test and post-test were carried out to determine the effect of the traditional game *Cublak Suweng* on the child's ability to recognize the alphabet letters.

The ability of children to recognize the alphabet is measured by referring to the level of achievement of language development of children aged 4-5 years stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning 2013 Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014) such as repeating simple sentences, participate in conversations, recognize symbols, imitate (write and say) the letters A-Z, and answer questions according to questions.

The observation sheet in this study was adjusted to the Republic of Indonesia Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning 2013 Early Childhood Education Curriculum tailored to the needs of the study. In the item or item of this research question using a 3-point Likert scale as described in Table I below :

TABLE I. INSTRUMENT FOR INTRODUCTION OF 4-5 YEARS OLD CHILDREN ALPHABET

Description: G = Good, S = Sufficient, and L = Less

B. Method

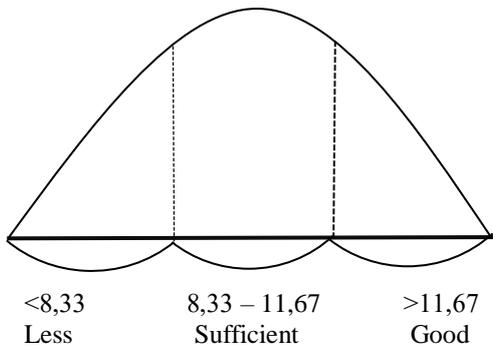
This study uses a quasi-experimental research. Before the treatment is given to children aged 4-5 years, a pre-test is carried out to determine the child's ability to recognize the alphabet. Then the child is given treatment by applying the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* in the learning process, after being given child treatment then a post-test is carried out again to find out the effect of the traditional game *Cublak Suweng* on alphabet letter recognition in children.

Assessment criteria are obtained through the calculation below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mean} &= \frac{N_{max} - N_{min}}{2} + N_{min} \\ &= \frac{15-5}{2} + 5 \\ &= \frac{10}{2} + 5 \\ &= 5 + 5 \\ &= 10 \end{aligned}$$

Category: Good => 11,67  
Sufficient = 8,33 – 11,67  
Less = < 8. 33

$$SD = \frac{\text{mean}}{6}$$



The results of the study are categorized as good if more than < 11.67, categorized as sufficient if they are in the range 8.33 - 11.67 and are categorized as low if they are less than 8.33.

C. Experiment design

Pre-test is done first before using the traditional game *Cublak Suweng* to children to find out the ability of children to recognize the alphabet letters. Then after applying the traditional game, *Cublak Suweng* was carried out again post-test to find out the differences in children's ability to recognize the alphabet letters before and after treatment. *Cublak Suweng* traditional games performed by children use media to support alphabet letter recognition in early childhood.

This game is done in several stages. First, the planning stage is that at this stage the teacher designs the game, feeds the tools and materials used in the game, namely stones or gravel wrapped in paper containing letters, blackboards, and markers. Second, the implementation phase is (1) the teacher

forms 4 groups, each group contains 5 children, (2) determines who is "dadi" (guarding player) and who is "mentas" (player)

Variabel	Sub Variabel	Indikator	G	S	L
Language Development	Speak the Language	Repeat simple sentences			
		Answer questions according to questions			
		Hold on to conversation			
	Literacy	Know symbols			
		Imitate (text and say) the letter A-Z			

by doing *hompimpa* or *gambreng*, (3) losers who become dadi players, sit limp and face down on the ground, (4) other children who become "mentas" players, sit around "dadi" players, (5) all players except players "dadi" open palms facing up and placed on the back of the player "dadi", (6) children who are mentas status, one of them will become "embok" (in charge of holding the stone), the child who becomes embok (the stone holder) moves the song from the palm of one hand to the other hand with the song *Cublak Suweng* until the song is finished. "*Cublak-Cublak Suweng, suwenge ting gelenter, mambu ketundung gudel. Pak empo lirak-lirik, sapa mau sing delekke. Sir sir pong dele gosong, sir sir pong dele gosong*". After arriving at the lyrics "*sir-sir pong dele gosong*", "embok" handed a pebble to one of the children to hide in his hand, (7) at the end of the song, all the children held their hands and pretended to hide the stones while moving like they were combing sugar, (8) players who "got up" and guessed who the stones were hidden, (9) after finding the stone then the player "dadi" Mentioning the alphabet letter on the stone and imitating the letter in writing, if the "dadi" player can mention the alphabet letter and imitate the alphabet letter, the "dadi" player will be replaced with the "mantas" player. But if the "dadi" player has not succeeded in mentioning and imitating the alphabet letter, the player who "dadi" must "dadi" again in the next round, and so on. Third, the evaluation phase or assessment phase is that the teacher assesses the child's ability to recognize the alphabet based on the instruments that have been made. The child is said to be successful if the child's ability to recognize the alphabet letters before and after treatment meets the standards contained in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning the 2013 Early Childhood Education Curriculum.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After knowing the methodology and procedure of this study, various results were found and discussions related to the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* on children's ability to recognize early childhood alphabet letters. The results and discussion in this study are presented as follows:

A. Result

In this study, researchers test assumptions before testing hypotheses. The assumption test is normality test, homogeneity test, linearity test. Test assumptions or hypotheses are used to verify the research hypothesis and when the results are asymmetric. Sig test reaches p 5 0.05 so this indicates that the hypothesis is accepted means that the traditional game *Cublak Suweng* can significantly improve the

ability of children to recognize the alphabet letters for children aged 4-5 years.

The description of the results of the child's ability to recognize the alphabet letters performed, obtained the average value of pre-test for children aged 4-5 years by 7.2 then after the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* obtained the post-test score of 12.95 therefore there are significant changes between the ability to recognize the alphabet letters for children aged 4-5 years before and after the application of traditional games *Cublak Suweng*, shown as in Table II below.

TABLE II. DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS OF ALPHABET RECOGNITION

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	20	5.00	10.00	144.00	7,2000	1.23969
Posttest	20	11.00	15.00	259.00	12.9500	0.99868
Valid N (listwise)	20					

To find out to test the hypothesis or relationship, the researchers first tested the form of normality test, homogeneity test and linearity test as a requirement in the use of t-test analysis. Normality tests are carried out to determine whether the distribution of data is normal or not. The results of the normality test can be seen in the following Table III:

TABLE III. NORMALITY TEST

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Pre-test	Posttest
N	20	20
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>		
Mean	7,2000	12,9500
Std. Deviation	1,23969	,99868
Most Extreme Differences		
Absolute	,186	,180
Positive	,164	,180
Negative	-,186	-,170
Test Statistic	,186	,180
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.068 <sup>c</sup>	.089 <sup>c</sup>

It is known that the sig value before treatment is 0.068 and the sig value after treatment is 0.089 which means that the value of Sig > 0.05 then the data is normally distributed.

The homogeneity test aims to provide confidence that a set of manipulated data in a series of analyzes comes from a population that is not much different in diversity. The results of the Homogeneity Test can be seen in the following Table IV below:

TABLE IV. HOMOGENEITY TEST

Test Statistics	Pre-test	Posttest
Chi-Square	10.000a	8.000b
Df	5	4
Asymp. Sig.	.075	.092

Based on the Table IV above, the value of Asymp sig obtained before treatment 0.075 and after treatment 0.092 the value is greater than 0.05. So it can be concluded that both groups are homogeneous or have the same variance.

Linearity testing aims to determine whether the data has a linear line or not (is the relationship between variables to be analyzed follow a straight line or not). Linearity test results can be seen in the following Table V:

TABLE V. LINEARITY TEST

ANOVA						
Pre-test						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)	17,471	4	4,368	5,586	.006
	Linear	15,262	1	15,262	19,519	.000
	Unweighted Term	15,612	1	15,612	19,966	.000
	Weighted Deviation	1,860	3	,620	,793	,517
Within Groups		11,729	15	,782		
Total		29,200	19			

In linearity testing, the provisions apply if at deviation sig > 0.05, the relationship between variables is linear. Conversely, if the deviation sig is < 0.05 then the relationship between variables is not linear. Table V above data shows that the sig is 0.517, the value is greater than 0.05 (0.571 > 0.05) therefore it is concluded that the relationship between variables is linear.

After testing the assumptions, the next step is to test the hypothesis. Hypothesis testing is done to see the ability of 4-5 year olds to recognize the alphabet after being given treatment by applying the traditional game *Cublak Suweng*, so it is necessary to see the relationship between pre-test and post-test data as shown in Table VI below:

TABLE VI. HYPOTHESIS TEST

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Posttest	5,75000	,85070	,19022	6,14814	5,35186	30,228	19,000

With provisions if the value of P < 0.05, there is a difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test. And if P > 0.05, there is no difference between the pre-test and post-test results. Based on the table above shows the average difference of 5,75 and the value of P (2 tailed) of 0.000 means that the value of sig < 0.05 so it is concluded that there are differences in values after treatment and experience a significant increase and indicate that there is a difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test.

Comparison of the recapitulation of the pre-test-post-test results can be seen in the Table VII below:

**TABLE VII. PRE-TEST-POST-TEST TABLE**

No	Category	Category	Score Range	Pre-test		Post-test	
				F	%	F	%
	Good	66,7%-100%	> 11,67	0	0	19	95%
	Sufficient	33,4%-66,6%	8,33 - 11,67	2	10%	1	5%
	Less	0,5% - 33,3%	< 8,33	18	90%	0	0

Based on the Table VII above, it is known that all children experience an increase in the ability to recognize the alphabet letter symbol. This can be seen in different children in a good category from 0% to 95%, sufficient.

After observing the causes of low ability to recognize alphabet letters is the process of implementing learning that tends to be monotonous and less fun and rarely uses traditional games. then researchers apply learning that tends to make children active in activities, making learning fun by playing. This study involved 2 teachers who taught children aged 4-5 years, the treatment was carried out 4 times to prove that the traditional game *Cublak Suweng* can improve the ability of children to recognize the alphabet letters. The results showed that the ability of children to recognize alphabet letters significantly increased to 95% which included in the good category. Within a period of 1 month, this research was said to be successful because it increased the ability of children to recognize the alphabet letters. In addition to fun learning activities and children actively involved in the learning process, the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* can preserve culture and quiet children are used to socializing with friends, teachers and the play environment.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the influence of traditional *Cublak Suweng* games to improve the ability to recognize alphabet letters for children aged 4-5 years. The results of experimental research show that the traditional game of *Cublak Suweng* significantly influences the ability to recognize the alphabet letters. The purpose of *Cublak Suweng* traditional games is not only to develop children's ability to recognize alphabet letters but also prosocial attitudes and a sense of responsibility when playing. Learning by playing is very necessary to be applied in early childhood education because when playing children will interact with each other and communicate with friends and teachers so that children's prosocial attitudes also develop. Thus the child will become the next generation who is not only intellectual intelligent, but also can preserve regional culture.

#### REFERENCES

[1] Anna, J., Keskitalom A., & Urmson, K. (2016). ABC Shaping Alphabets with Methods of Outdoor and Multisensory Learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 5(1), 2016, 19-43.

[2] Tracey, D.H., & Morrow, L.M. (2015). Best practices in early literacy. Preschool, kindergarten and first grade. *LB Gambrell, & LM Morrow, Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*, 85-106.

[3] Jones, C.D., Clark, S.K., & Reutzell, R.D. (2012). Enhancing alphabet knowledge instruction: Research implications and practical strategies for early childhood educators. *Early Childhood Educ J.*

[4] Piasta, S.B., & Wagner, R.K. (2012). Developing Early Literacy Skills: A Meta-Analysis of Alphabet Learning and Instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45(1), 8-38.

[5] National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1998). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children*. A joint position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Washington, DC: Author.

[6] Whitebread, D. (2012). *The importance of play. Written for Toy Industries of Europe (TIE)*. University of Cambridge.

[7] Lifter, K. et al. (2011). Overview of Play Its Uses and Importance in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. *Journal Infants & Young Children*, 24(3), 225-245.

[8] Aypay, A. (2016). Investigating the role of traditional children's games in teaching ten universal values in Turkey. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 62, 283-300.

[9] Fromberg, D.P., & Bergen, D. (2006). *Introduction. In D.P. Fromberg and D. Bergen (Eds) Play from birth to twelve: Contexts, perspectives and meanings*. New York: Routledge

[10] Mayall, B. (2002). *Towards a sociology for childhood*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

[11] Anning, A., & Edwards, A. (2006). *Promoting children's learning from birth to five: Developing the new early years professional*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

[12] Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

[13] Kolb, A.Y., & Kolb, D.A. (2010). Learning to play, playing to learn: A case study of a ludic learning space. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 23(1), 26-50.

[14] Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

[15] Vygotsky, L.S. (1966). Play and its role in the mental development of the child. *Voprosy Psikhologii*, 12, 62-76.

[16] Vygotsky, L.S. (1997). *Thought and language*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

[17] Elkind, D. (2007). *The Power of play: How spontaneous, imaginative activities lead to happier, healthier children*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

[18] Foley, P. (2008). *Introduction. In J. Collins and P. Foley (Eds) Promoting children's wellbeing: Policy and practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.

[19] Dharmamulya, S. (2008). *Permainan Tradisional Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Kepel Press.

[20] Sujarmo. (2010). Nilai-nilai Yang Terkandung Dalam Permainan Tradisional Di Kabupaten Cilacap. *Jurnal Partrawidya*, 11(1), 145-175.

[21] Dwiningrum, S.I.A. dkk. (2012). *Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya Dasar*. Yogyakarta. UNY Press.