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## The Impact of Lato-Lato Games on Behavioral Changes in Elementary Children

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to identify and obtain information about parents' views of lato-lato games, whether they have an impact on behavior change or not. At present the game lato-lato is a game that is loved by people of all ages, both young and old. The game lato-lato is a game in the form of two small balls or pendulums which are connected to each other by means of a rope which is played simply by hitting the two balls with the palms of the hands to make a loud sound with an up and down motion. The descriptive-qualitative research method was used in this study which aims to provide an overview and present information about something according to the conditions at that time. The data collection technique in this study was through interviews and observations around the Matauli Pandan bouse complex. The results showed that children who play lato-lato tend to be more active in interacting and socializing, considering that this game is more fun when played together. In addition, with increasing social interaction, children also reduce the intensity of children's use and dependence on gadgets. Therefore, if it is still under good supervision from parents, this game will help children to improve their motor and cognitive abilities, as well as their social skills.*

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan memperoleh informasi tentang pandangan orang tua terhadap permainan lato-lato, apakah berdampak pada perubahan perilaku atau tidak. Saat ini permainan lato-lato merupakan permainan yang sangat digandrungi oleh masyarakat di segala usia, baik tua maupun muda. Permainan lato-lato merupakan permainan berupa dua buah bola kecil atau Pendulum yang dihubungkan satu sama lain melalui tali yang dimainkannya cukup dengan cara memukul-mukulkan kedua bola tersebut menggunakan telapak tangan hingga mengeluarkan suara yang cukup keras dengan gerakan naik-turun. Metode penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini yang bertujuan untuk memberikan gambaran dan memaparkan informasi tentang sesuatu hal sesuai dengan kondisi pada saat itu. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah melalui wawancara dan observasi di sekitar komplek rumah Matauli Pandan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak yang bermain lato-lato cenderung lebih aktif dalam berinteraksi dan bersosialisasi mengingat permainan ini akan lebih seru jika dimainkan secara bersama-sama. Selain itu, dengan meningkatnya interaksi sosial anak juga mengurangi intensitas penggunaan dan ketergantungan anak terhadap gadget. Oleh karena itu, jika tetap dengan pengawasan yang baik dari Orang Tua permainan ini akan membantu anak untuk meningkatkan kemampuan Motor dan kognitifnya, serta kemampuan bersosialisasinya.*

### PRELIMINARY

Play and children are inseparable. By playing, children are trained to be able to develop affective, cognitive, and psychomotor abilities, interact socially, and practice self-control and emotions. Development is a cumulative process, meaning that previous developments will become the basis for subsequent developments. Therefore, if there was a bottleneck in the previous development, the later development is likely to become a bottleneck (Khaulani, *et.al.*, 2020). Playing for children is a means to

shed active activities in achieving enjoyment from the activities they do. Playing also plays a role in arousing motor and sensory nerves (Hasan, 2013).

According to Assingkily & Hardiyati (2019) playing with children is aimed at developing three basic abilities, namely; First, physical-motor abilities (psychomotor). By moving, such as running or jumping, a child will be trained in gross motor skills, so that he has a well-formed and healthy muscular system. Second, social-emotional (affective) abilities. Children do play activities because they feel happy doing it. Parents are the ultimate playmates in the early stages of their development. Third, the ability of Intelligence (cognition). In the process of playing, children can also introduce them to the vocabulary of letters, numbers, words, language and mutual communication, or recognize certain objects, such as shapes (big or small) and tastes (sweet, salty, bitter or sour).

Basically various developmental theories can be concluded that childhood is a time of play. Children who like to play are often involved in a game. Veronica (2018) concluded that a game is a game situation that is associated with certain rules or goals. So, the game can be understood as a set of rules-bound actions to achieve a goal. After the many negative impacts of digital games that look modern, it turns out that Indonesian people have children's games that are rich in value and based on the results of studies on traditional children's games can encourage the growth and development of children and can even be used. as a means of educating children.

The rapid development of technology also affects children's playing activities. Children now often play digital games such as video games on Play Station (PS) and online games. This game has become a modern game because it is played using sophisticated equipment and modern technology which is very different from traditional children's games. While traditional children's games sometimes do not require any equipment, the equipment used is only simple tools that already have sticks, stones or dry leaves available around the child while playing (Iswantiningtyas & Wijaya, 2015).

Currently there are lots of various games, both games that are relatively new and old that are back viral. Talking about this, of course, at this time one of the things that is back in vogue in society is lato-lato toys. Recently, the lato-lato toy has become a viral toy that is widely discussed and loved by the public, especially children. Judging from its shape, this toy is in the form of two pendulums with connected strings. The unique shape and easy way to play it, namely by hitting the two balls using one palm until a loud sound makes children really like this game (Jawati, 2013). But in fact, there are still some pros and cons regarding this toy, which on the one hand is considered to be able to help improve students' motor skills, and on the other hand its existence is considered dangerous.

According to Sociologist from Sebelas Maret University, Kartono in Sutini (2018), explains that there are several benefits of playing lato-lato, including: first, keeping children away from gadgets. Lato-lato toys will be more fun if played together. This can be used by parents to keep children away from gadgets, especially children who are born and raised in the midst of rapid technological developments and will indirectly be familiar with technology (gadgets) since childhood. Second, strengthen social relations. Lato-lato is not a new game. This game was previously viral in the 90s and even in America, this game has been popular since the 1970s. The game brings up memories of parents whose childhoods were no strangers to ancient games. This triggers the capitalization of the lato-lato game making it easier to bring it to life.

Third, technology. The rapid growth of social media has also affected the virality of these lato-lato. Through social media, everything can spread quickly without knowing the time. This triggers society into the Bandwagon Effect, that is, if someone does not follow a trend or an activity, that person is likely to be subject to social sanctions such as being ostracized or considered strange by the people around them. Fourth, improve the economy. The existence of lato-lato certainly opens business opportunities for the community, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to produce lato-lato. Before it reaches the hands of the community, of course, there are many processes to go through, both from MSME owners and workers, to the cuppers and sellers who are often found on the streets. Indirectly, this can boost the economy. Fifth, the opportunity for the reappearance of old games. The lato-lato trend that tends to enter as an old game creates opportunities for other old games to reappear. Moreover, the existence of social media can help spread this.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study method. The purpose of this study is to analyze the phenomenon of the appearance of "lato-lato" in Pandan City, Central Tapanuli. This research was conducted in January 2023. The participants in this study were parents and children who were in the Matauli Pandan Residential area. The determination of participants was adjusted to the demographics of the research. Parents and children stated that they were willing to provide the information needed in this research. Data collection was carried out using interviews, observation, and document review techniques. Furthermore, the data is analyzed by reducing relevant information, presenting data and drawing conclusions. The data validity test was carried out by triangulation of methods and data sources (Assingkily, 2021).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Children's Play Activities***

Playing is an activity that has practical value, meaning that playing is used as a medium to improve certain skills and abilities in children. Playing is basically an activity that has active and fun characteristics. Playing is also done voluntarily and usually arises from internal motivation. Play activities are usually symbolic or mock because they don't happen in real-time. The play has important meaning for children, even though this play activity does not actually occur (Ardini & Lestarinigrum, 2018).

Playing is very important for children because it forms aspects of child development. These aspects are physical, social emotional and cognitive. Playing develops physical/motor aspects, namely through gross and fine motor games, the ability to control limbs, learning balance, agility, hand-eye coordination, and so on.(Assingkily & Hardiyati, 2019). As a child grows and develops physical/fine motor skills the child becomes more confident and comfortable and has a positive self-concept. The development of the socio-motor aspect is one aspect that forms the child's socio-emotional aspect.

Play develops the social and emotional aspects of children. In other words, through playing, children develop a sense of belonging to a group, feel included/accepted in a group and learn to live and work together in a group with all the differences that exist. Group play helps children adapt their behavior to other children controlling themselves and their egos controlling their emotions and sharing them with others. Emotionally unspoken desires are also formed when children act out their imaginations and social dramas (Hasanah, 2016).

Cognitive aspects develop when children play. This means that children can develop their focus and concentration, develop creative thinking, train their memory, develop their focus, and develop their language skills. Even abstract concepts that require cognitive skills are built through play and integrated into children's lives to help them better understand the world around them.

There are many types and variations of games that can be played by children, ranging from traditional games to modern games. Traditional games, which are often called folk games, are games that grew and developed in the past, especially growing in rural communities. Like today, the phenomenon of playing lato-lato is much loved by children. Traditional games grow and develop based on the needs of the local community, most traditional games are influenced by the natural environment, therefore traditional games are always interesting and entertaining in accordance with the conditions of the times.

Toys have benefits, including (a) optimizing children's physical and mental development; (b) meet the emotional needs of children; (c) developing children's creativity and language skills; (d) assisting the child's socialization process. Playing also functions to develop aspects of child development, including developing motor, cognitive, affective, language, and social aspects (Batoebara & Junaidi, 2023).

Parents' efforts to understand the meaning of play must be focused on the child's experiences and opportunities. With unlimited time and rules, children have enough time to explore and build their knowledge. Child Protection Measures parents can provide a comfortable and supportive play environment and design the play environment. The goal is for children to be free to play without being disturbed by a dangerous environment. Children can choose any toy and play freely without worrying about getting hurt (Hopeman & Rahma, 2023).

Parents can also respond to children's needs in playing by paying close attention to children during spontaneous play and when to control children's behavior and help children express their feelings in play. Parents must see play as something that can make a valuable contribution to a child's total development. Through play, children can have experiences of success and achievement. In addition, several social goals

can be achieved through play, such as social skills, accepting rules, and a better understanding of themselves in competitive and cooperative situations.

### ***Lato-lato and Its History***

If we look at its history, the lato-lato toy itself is not a new toy and not an original toy from Indonesia. Initially this toy was inspired by the ball/bolase, a weapon used by cowboys in Argentina or Gauchos to help them catch targets or hunt. At the start of the advent of the game, instead of using real balls, children used materials made of metal, wood, or hard acrylic plastic to produce a loud, satisfying sound. But at that time, to avoid harm to materials that were considered unsuitable and not good for children, the material for making these toys was replaced with plastic (Yulianingsih, *et.al.*, 2023).

Lato-lato was popular in Indonesia. According to said data before it became popular now, lato-lato is estimated to have started to enter Indonesia in the 70s. This toy became increasingly popular among Indonesian children in the 90s, the longer the lato-lato's popularity declined. Influenced by many other toys, and technological developments that create various kinds of non-physical game innovations. The increasing number of digital games has finally made toys like lato-lato sink.

Reporting from brtb.com, the clackers ball toy is a toy known by many names. The game consists of two balls connected by a sturdy rope with a ring between the ropes. This game is played by placing our finger on the ring and making the ball appear to hang. Furthermore, this is where the real fun begins, which is banging both balls up and down until they make a loud sound. When we have mastered it, we can increase our playing speed when hitting the ball so that it goes faster and up and down faster (Hopeman & Rahma, 2023).

Now, after not being played for a long time, these lato-lato are suddenly becoming popular again. According to Ikhsan Rasyid Mujahidul Anwari, Lecturer in History, Airlangga University, Surabaya: "because we humans are homo ludens, literally homo ludens means creatures that like to play." So, humans have an identity, a strong instinct to play. Humans do like to seek pleasure. In every era there is always a trend of each game. Lato-lato is considered fun to be played by many people, so it's no wonder that lato-lato can become a trend again. The dissemination of information through the media also has a big role in making lato-lato trendy again.

### ***Positive and Negative Impacts of playing lato-lato***

According to psychologist from the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) Hening Widyastuti said, there are positive and negative impacts from playing lato-lato. The positive impact of this game is that it can improve motor nerves, where players have to move, there must be positional shrewdness, and there are hours of flying when playing it with friends. In addition, playing lato-lato also plays a role in the cognitive side of players, because players have to think and concentrate. Another thing that makes lato-lato games so popular is the existence of social interaction with friends, so you don't just sit with gadgets or daydream (Tifani, 2023).

Another positive side of playing lato-lato is the potential for a competitive attitude to emerge which triggers the players to fight until they can win the moment. Not only that, playing lato-lato is also referred to as a form of healing in a simple way. That is, games can make someone laugh, and feel good, for a small price. However, it should also be noted that playing lato-lato has a negative side, namely it creates a loud sound that can disturb other people.

Batoebara & Junaidi (2023) state that role playing in children affects many areas of a child's life. Play plays an important role in learning. In this case playing can complement school activities and provide opportunities for children to absorb and give meaning to what they have learned in formal education. Play is very important in helping children acquire a general mindset rather than specific knowledge to solve problems. Play can support physical development and good mental health. Play facilitates children's physical activity including sports activities that allow the body to develop coordination and balance and develop skills in child development.

Contributing to mental health helps children develop resilience and adapt to the pressures of life. As well as providing opportunities to test children in the face of challenges and dangers. In addition, if it is not supervised, this lato-lato game will be dangerous, especially for children if it is played too close to the eyes and the installation of the connecting rope between the balls is not tight, considering that if the ball is

thrown and hit by the body, it will be quite painful, as in some cases injuries and injuries to children in America and Canada which eventually resulted in the massive withdrawal of these toys from the market.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the children's parents in the Matauli Pandan housing area, he explained that currently his child really likes playing lato-lato and often plays it after school with his friends. Through this game, children now play together with their friends more often after school than they are busy playing with gadgets alone. This is certainly a positive thing where in childhood, they need and must be known to be able to interact socially in order to become more independent, develop communication skills, be able to adapt to the values and norms that apply in society and be ready to face any situation. unforeseen situations and conditions may occur.

In line with this, one of the children also interviewed named Ahmad Rozali said that at this time if he had to choose, he would prefer to play lato-lato rather than playing gadgets because it is more fun and busy when playing it. According to him, the shape is cute and colorful, and produces a loud sound that makes him like to play it, especially when they are together because they will compete to get the loudest sound of lato-lato.

## CONCLUSION

Based on this research, it can be concluded that through playing lato-lato, the intensity of gadget use by children is relatively decreasing. This is because children will continue to try to be able to master the game until they can and the game will be more exciting when played together. Therefore, it will help children to interact and socialize with other people so they are not just fixated on gadgets. In addition, this game helps children to develop different developmental domains, from motor to cognitive. However, for children in particular, the use of this game must still be supervised considering that the materials of the two pendulums are quite hard, which when played at high speed and hits the limbs will be quite painful and can be dangerous. Playing is a child's world and it is appropriate for parents to always supervise when their children are playing, considering that not all games are suitable for all ages. The return to popularity of the game lato-lato makes everyone, especially children, want to be able to master the game.

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