

Modern traditional games improve early childhood social-emotional skill: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Problems in social and emotional development in children have been increasing in recent years. Children with social emotional problems will become more introvert, experienced sleep disturbances, solitary violent behavior, lack of creativity, and the threat of cyberbullying. From this phenomenon, the right intervention is needed, one of which is play. Intervention that has proven effective in developing social-emotional aspects is play. Play is not just a recreational activity, but has high therapeutic and educational value. Through play, children learn to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, empathize, and build cooperation skills. The purpose of this systematic review is to analyse the types of games and the success of games in improving social emotional development. This study uses a systematic review based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review And Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) stage, articles were collected from PubMed, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Science Direct databases, from 2017 to 2024. Articles were selected according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and critical appraisal was carried out using the JBI Instrument on the selected articles. The results of the review of articles from 2017-2024 obtained eight articles, five articles discuss modern games in improving early childhood social emotional development, three articles discuss traditional games in improving social emotional development, all articles agree that both modern and traditional games can improve social and emotional development with their respective advantages. It can be concluded that both traditional and modern games can enhance the social emotional development in early childhood.

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INTRODUCTION

Preschool children are included in the Golden Age period which is very effective and urgent to optimize the various intelligence potentials of children towards quality results, the success or

failure of developing a child's intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligence often lies in the ability and awareness of parents in utilizing the golden age and can provide appropriate stimulation (Hafiyah & Arifin, 2024; Rijkiyani et al., 2022; Ni'matus Solikah, 2020).

Children with social emotional problems will become more introverted, experience, sleep disturbances, solitary violent behavior, lack of creativity, and the threat of cyberbullying (Onyango et al., 2023). Children may also have Various child development problems, such as delays in motor, language, emotional and social behavior in recent years have increased. The first year of the child is very important and it will determine the quality life in the future (Agustin et al., 2022; Raihana, 2018). There are many children who still need stimulation in social and emotional development, around 8-9% of preschool children experience less stimulation and impaired social and emotional development, this is caused by the lack of stimulation given to children so if this condition not handled properly, it will result in more serious situation (Sri Puspita Wulandari Paputungan et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, traditional and modern play contribute differently to specific dimensions of early childhood social-emotional development. Traditional games emphasize direct social interaction, cooperation, rule-following, and culturally embedded values, which are crucial for developing empathy, prosocial behavior, emotional regulation, and social responsibility. These dimensions are strongly supported by socio-cultural and social learning theories, which highlight the role of shared activities and peer interaction in shaping social competence.

Modern play tends to support individual emotional expression, creativity, problem-solving, and self-regulation through structured or symbolic play experiences. From a constructivist perspective, modern play provides opportunities for children to explore emotions, practice decision-making, and initiate social interaction in a more flexible and adaptive manner. The theoretical urgency of distinguishing these contributions lies in the need to align specific types of play with targeted social-emotional dimensions, ensuring that play-based interventions are developmentally appropriate and responsive to the diverse needs of early childhood.

Children ages 4-6 years represent a critical phase in social-emotional development, as this period is characterized by rapid growth in emotional regulation, empathy, self-awareness, and peer interaction skills. According to Erikson's psychosocial theory, children in this age range are in the initiative versus guilt stage, where they actively explore social roles and develop a sense of initiative through interaction and play. Furthermore, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory emphasizes that social interaction plays a central role in cognitive and social-emotional development, making play-based activities particularly effective during this stage. Empirical evidence also indicates that children aged 4-6 years are highly responsive to both structured and unstructured play interventions, as they begin to internalize social norms, manage emotions, and resolve conflicts collaboratively. Therefore, game-based interventions implemented during this period have strong potential to optimally support children's social-emotional development.

The phenomenon that occurs in the field today is that many parents make gadgets a shortcut for childcare assistance, so that children are more focused on gadgets than playing directly with their friends. Children with gadget users show differences in social development, such as children becoming less self-aware, crying easily when not given gadgets. Tend to be undisciplined, difficult to cooperate with, irritable, and do not like to mingle with the environment. This is a problem in children's social and emotional development.

Based on research by Jati (2022) which states that if children fail to go through the social development stage, they will experience unhappiness and get used to disliking themselves so that they will grow into egocentric, introverted, unsocial or even anti-social individuals (Jati et al., 2022). One of the interventions based on some studies to stimulate children is therapeutic play, Therapeutic play is an activity that is not much in demand but has a very large effect in stimulating children's development. (Fitri et al., 2022; Iswinarti & Wahyu Nur Laily, 2024; Yisa, 2024).

Therapeutic Play can also be one of the alternatives used to improve development in children (N Solikah & Setyowati, 2020). By playing games, children learn to control their emotions and understand the importance of cooperation, which can increase their self-confidence (Philia Hikmah & Widayat, 2023).

One intervention that has proven effective in developing social-emotional aspects is play. Play is not just a recreational activity, but has high therapeutic and educational value. Through play, children learn to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, empathize, and build cooperation skills (Yuliantina, 2025). Traditional and modern games are now the two main poles in children's play activities. Traditional games such as gobak sodor, clogs and enggrang have been proven effective in stimulating cooperation, emotional resilience and social communication skills. The cultural values, rules and social engagement in traditional games are key strengths in supporting children's development (Aryani et al., 2024).

Traditional games are starting to be alienated and replaced by modern games that continue to emerge, many facts say that traditional games in terms of influence are superior to modern games (Cosottile et al., 2023). According to research by Jozkowski & Cermak, (2019) which states that traditional games have their own uniqueness, which is very useful in teaching the value of unity, honesty, sportsmanship, and discipline while playing, previous research shows the benefits of games related to children's social and emotional development, there are still many shortcomings in understanding how the shift from traditional games to modern games, but this must be explored again regarding the differences in impact between the two types of games (Muliani et al., 2024).

Modern digital-based games are also growing rapidly and have become part of children's daily lives. Games such as digital building blocks, virtual role-playing games and app-based educational games are thought to enhance children's creativity, logical thinking and emotional management. However, these games also raise concerns of social isolation and technology dependence if not controlled wisely (Nurani et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2023).

Research gaps arise when many studies focus on only one type of game - either traditional or modern - without systematically comparing its advantages and disadvantages on children's social-emotional development. Some studies such as the one by Meilina, Sugiyo, & Astuti (2021) highlighted the effectiveness of modern role-playing games, while another study by Mayshita et al. (2020) emphasized the positive influence of traditional games. However, there are still few studies that review these two types of games in one systematic framework. In addition, there is a lack of research that integrates aspects of local culture with technological advances in the context of children's play. In fact, adapting local values into modern games can be an effective strategy to maintain cultural values while meeting the developmental needs of today's children (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016; Kim et al., 2024; Mondri et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is important to conduct systematic research that analyzes the effectiveness of traditional and modern games on early childhood social-emotional development. This research is also expected to provide practical recommendations in the development of child-friendly cultural and technology-based educational games. The problem formulations in this study are: (1) What is the effectiveness of traditional games in improving early childhood social emotional development? (2) What is the effectiveness of modern games on early childhood social emotional aspects? (3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of game in the context of social emotional stimulation?

The purpose of this systematic review is to evaluate and compare the types of play - both traditional and modern - that are effective for improving early childhood social-emotional development based on recent research from 2017-2024 and systematic review is to analyse the types of games and the effectiveness of games in stimulating social emotional development, both with traditional games and modern games in improving early childhood development. Understanding the most appropriate and strategic types of play, it is hoped that educators, parents

and policy makers can design appropriate and sustainable play interventions for children's social-emotional development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method section explains the data sources used, the process of data collection through database searching, the methods employed in data screening and data processing, and the steps of data analysis. A systematic review approach based on PRISMA guidelines was applied to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. The design in this study used a systematic review method with a PRISMA-based approach (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses).

This systematic review aims to collect, evaluate and critically analyze various relevant studies related to the effectiveness of traditional and modern games in improving early childhood social emotional development. With a systematic review format consisting of population, intervention, comparison and Outcome (PICO). P: early childhood (4-6 years old) social emotional development I: games C: traditional and modern games O: improvement of early childhood social emotional development. The use of the PICO framework in this systematic review enhances the clarity and precision of the research focus by explicitly defining the population, intervention, comparison, and outcomes. By clearly specifying early childhood (ages 4–6 years) as the population, game-based activities as the intervention, traditional and modern games as the comparison, and social-emotional development as the outcome, PICO ensures that the selection of studies is consistent and relevant.

This structured approach minimizes ambiguity in the scope of the intervention and allows for a more systematic analysis of social-emotional outcomes across studies. Consequently, the use of PICO strengthens the methodological rigor of the review and supports a more transparent and focused synthesis of evidence regarding the effectiveness of play-based interventions.

Search Methods

Articles reviewed are articles that have been published in national and international journals. There are several databases that are used as search tools including PubMed, G.scholar, ProQuest, Science Direct, from 2017 to 2024. The inclusion criteria including 1) research on games with modern and digital traditional categories 2) articles published from 2017 to 2024 3) article writing in English 4) articles can be accessed and available with full text of the original article. In searching for articles in the database using keywords and Boolean operators. The keywords used by the search engine are shown in (table 1)

Table 1. Keyword on search

Data based	Search strategy	Total
Pubmed	"game"[All Fields] AND ("stimulate"[All Fields] OR ("social behavior"[MeSH Terms] OR ("social"[All Fields] AND "behavior"[All Fields]) OR "social behavior"[All OR "emotions"[MeSH Terms])	69
G.Schoolar	"Sosial AND emotional, Games Or (Stimulation) (Traditional) OR Modern"	16.900
ProQuest	Social AND emotional AND (Games) OR (Stimulation) AND (Traditional) OR Modern	53
Cochrane	Social AND emotional AND (Games) OR (Stimulation) AND (Traditional) OR Modern	138

Studi Selection

Articles collected from the data base were then entered into the reference manager (Mendeley) to eliminate duplicates. Articles were checked by two independent reviewers to assess whether the article title and abstract were relevant to the topic. If they are not relevant, they will be eliminated. If the title and abstract are relevant, they will be analyzed further. If there are

discrepancies and doubts about the inclusion of the research article, the full text will be reviewed from beginning to end and resolved by discussion and involving a third reviewer. The results of the assessment of each stage of the article are presented in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) in Figure1.

Critical Appraisal

Assessment of the quality of articles reviewed using the jaoana briggs institute (JBI) instrument. Research with quasi-experiment methods using a checklist for quasi experiment consisting of 9 question items. The reviewers of each study gave a rating of “yes”, “no”, “unclear”, or “not applicable” for each article reviewed. And for research with the pre experiment method, you can use the checklist for quasi experiment which consists of 9 question items. But with a note on question number two the answer is “no”. And for number three “if in a single group pre or post-test study where patients are the same and post-test measurements are compared with pre-test measurements, then the answer is ‘yes’ (Joana Briggs Institute, 2020).

Table 2 is the list of JBI critical assessment items for the quasi-experiment study: Q1: Is it clear in the study what is the “cause” and what is the “effect” (i.e. there is no confusion about which variable comes first)? Q2: Was there a control group? Q3: Were participants included in any comparisons similar? Q4: Were the participants included in any comparisons receiving similar treatment/care, other than the exposure or intervention of interest? Q5: Were there multiple measurements of the outcome, both pre and post the intervention/exposure? Q6: Were the outcomes of participants included in any comparisons measured in the same way? Q7: Were outcomes measured in a reliable way? Q8: Was follow-up complete and if not, were differences between groups in terms of their follow-up adequately described and analyzed? Q9: Was appropriate statistical analysis used? (Barker et al., 2024; Joana Briggs Institute, 2020).

Table 2. Critical appraisal

Study	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
(Garaigordobil et al., 2022)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y
(Mo et al., 2021)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
(Page et al., 2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
(Meilina et al., 2021)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
(Mayshita et al., 2020)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
(Utami et al., 2023)	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
(Harahap & Yus, 2023)	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
(Hasibuan & Marbun, 2023)	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y: Yes N: No U: Unclear

Data Extraction and Analysis

Data from each article were extracted into a matrix table that included information on: author, year, country, study design, number of participants, age of children, type of play, duration of intervention, and social-emotional outcome measures. Next, the data were analyzed descriptively-qualitatively to identify trends, advantages, and differences between traditional and modern games. In addition, quantitative data such as significance values, pre-post scores, and effect sizes were reviewed to determine the strength of the intervention. A comparative analysis was conducted to compare the effectiveness between the two types of games.

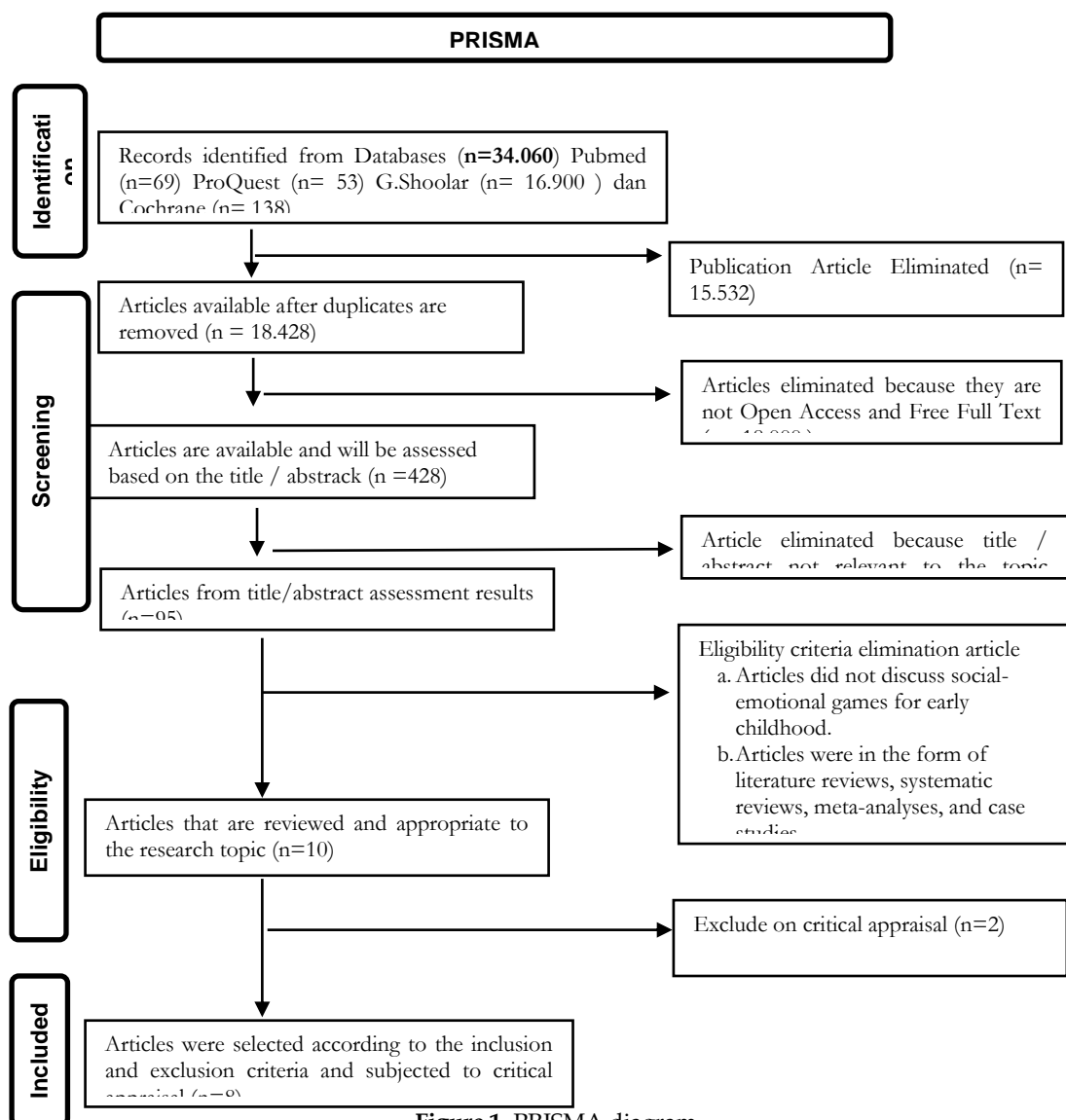
Ethics and Validity of the Study

As this study was a literature review, no ethical approval was required. However, academic integrity was maintained by following the PRISMA protocol and using valid quality assessment tools from JBI. All sources of the articles used were listed in full in the bibliography. With this design and procedure, the results of the review are expected to provide a valid and credible contribution to efforts to improve the quality of children's social-emotional stimulation through a developmentally and culturally appropriate play approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

The Results and Discussion section presents the results of the literature selection and analysis process. Furthermore, the findings are discussed by comparing the current study with existing research to identify patterns, consistencies, and research gaps.



The extracted articles are depicted in table 3:

Table 3. Selected articles

Author (years), country	Design	Participant		intervention	outcome
		e/c	Age		
(Garaigordobil et al., 2022) Leioa, Spain	Quasy- Experimental	Experimental = 53 Control = 33	5-6 years	Modern games "Game Program" Developing Children's	There was a significant difference in the results of both groups at the beginning and end of the games

Author (years), country	Design	Participant e/c	Age	intervention	outcome
(Mo et al., 2021) Mandalay, Myanmar	Quasy- Exerimental	Experiment = 45 Control = 45	5-6 years	Creativity and Social-Emotional Competencies through Play Games modern Using Play To Improve The Social And Emotional Development Of Preschool Children	program, while the difference between the two groups at the end was statistically different, \pm SD 2.15 ± 2.74 in the experimental group and \pm SD 5.04 ± 4.70 in the control group with a p-value of 0.04. Independent sample t-test showed that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test, $t(1,88)$ $= -29.966$; $p < 0.001$, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of preschoolers of the control group, $t(1,88) = -14.948$; $p <$ 0.001 . the mean score of post- test of preschoolers of the experimental group ($M =$ 63.87) is higher than that of the control group ($M =$ 47.44).
(Page et al., 2019) Indonesia	Quasy- Experimental	Experimental : 6 Control = 6	4-5 years	Modern games "Bulding Block Game" On Social Emotional	Wilcoxon analysis in SPSS showed significant results. For the experimental group, the p-value was 0.026, indicating a significant impact of the building blocks game. For the control group, which did not receive the building blocks intervention, the p-value was 0.059, indicating no significant impact of the alternative activities used. The building blocks game specifically contributed to better social and emotional development compared to other forms of play.
(Meilina et al., 2021) Indonesia	Quasy- Exerimental	Experiment : 15 Control = 17	5-6 years	Modern game "Role-Playing Methods" for Early Childhood Emotional Social Development	The results showed that there was a significant difference between the Dharma Wanita Tungu Kindergarten treatment group and the Dharma Wanita Pahesan Kindergarten control group of $0.005 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference children who get treatment from the traditional game of "team clogs" will be better than children who play without treatment. With the results of the study it is known that the Fcount value is 835.373 because the Fcount
(Mayshita et al., 2020) Indonesia	Quasy- Exerimental	Experimental : 24 Control = 24	5-6 years	Tradisional games "bakiak bereg" on the socio-emotional ability of children	

Author (years), country	Design	Participant		intervention	outcome
		e/c	Age		
(Utami et al., 2023) indonesia	Experimental	Intervensi = 10	5-6 years	Modern games "Picture Card Games" on the Emotional ntelligence of Children	value is $835.373 > F_{table}$ 4.279, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that the traditional game of team clogs (X) has an effect on social emotional abilities (Y1). The results showed that there was a significant increase in the average score of emotional intelligence with a significance value obtained through the paired sample T- test of $0.001 < 0.05$. From the results of this study it can be concluded that picture card games can be an effective alternative in improving emotional intelligence in early childhood.
(Harahap & Yus, 2023) indonesia	Pre- Experimental	Experiment = 30	5-6 Years	Traditional Game "Mallogo" on the Social Skills of Children	This is based on the results of hypothesis testing on children's social skills data using a real level of 0.05 with $dk = 1$, it is obtained that the tcount is 13.808 and the ttable is 1.699, so it can be concluded that $tcount >$ ttable, which means that Ha traditional mallogo game has a significant effect on the social skills of children aged 5-6 years.
(Hasibuan & Marbun, 2023) indonesia	Pre- Experimental	Experimentl: 10	5-6 years	Traditional Games "Gobak Sodor" on the Social Emotional Abilities of Children	The results of this study show that the number of positive steps = 4.5 and the number of negative steps = 10. So, Jcount = 10, that is, the number of steps is smaller. From the findings of these data, if Jcount is compared with the temporary value of Jtabel N 10 with $\alpha = 0.05$, Jtabel = 8, it can be concluded that the hypothesis in this study is accepted.

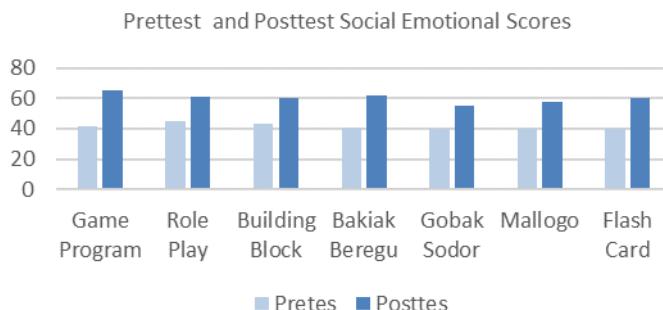


Figure 1. Comparison of pretest and posttest social emotional scores

Table 3. Mean score of pretest and posttest social emotional by game type

Game Type	Mean Pretes	Mean Posttes	P value
Game Program	42,3 ± 5,2	63,8 ± 4,1	0,04
Role Play	45,6 ± 6,3	61,2 ± 3,9	0,005
Building Block	43,1 ± 4,8	59,9 ± 5,0	0,026
Bakiak Beregu	41,5 ± 5,1	62,7 ± 3,8	<0,05
Gobak Sodor	40 ± 5,2	5,2 ± 4,1	0,00
Mallogo	40 ± 5,8	5,8 ± 4,1	0,00
Flash Card	40,2 ± 4,5	58,7 ± 4,0	0,001

Discussion

A systematic review showed that games, both traditional and modern, have a significant positive impact on the social-emotional development of early childhood. The aspects most improved through play are interaction skills, emotional regulation, empathy, cooperation, and social initiative.

Traditional games such as Gobak Sodor, Mallogo, and Bakiak show a strong impact on increasing empathy and cooperation, while modern games such as picture cards and role-playing are more prominent in increasing emotional expression and self-confidence. From the results of the literature review, it is found that there are several points that will be discussed in the discussion including:

- a. Improving Social Emotional Development Using Traditional Games. The types of games reviewed from various regions that are carried out are different including *Gobak sodor* (Hasibuan & Marbun, 2023), *Bakiak beregu* (Mayshita et al., 2020), *mallongo* (Harahap & Yus, 2023), and in terms of implementation time in different studies including 8 times with 2 hours per day (Mayshita et al., 2020), 2 months (Hasibuan & Marbun, 2023), 1 months (Harahap & Yus, 2023), the results of the systematic review conducted The advantages of traditional games are games that are popular with children to social, train agility and communicate. Traditional games played by children follow their own customs, and derive norms and deep meanings from the game, there are rules that must be carried out this trains the emotions of each child. Some articles still have shortcomings where there is no follow-up after the intervention is given, both from the control group and the experiment group (Hasibuan & Marbun, 2023; Harahap & Yus, 2023; Mayshita et al., 2020).
- b. Improving Social Emotional Development Using Modern Games. Types of modern games include Game Program (Garaigordobil et al., 2022). Bulding Block Game (Page et al., 2019), Role-Playing Methods (Meilina et al., 2021), Picture Card Games (Utami et al., 2023). The aspects of time in research include 1 year with a duration of time of 75 minutes per week (Garaigordobil et al., 2022), 1 month (Meilina et al., 2021), 3 weeks (Mo et al., 2021), The results of the systematic review conducted on the advantages of modern games are also a magnet for children because the games are very instant and simple, the games are more varied which can

not only stimulate children's creativity, but also improve their skills, which makes children feel not outdated. Modern games also have a great impact on the people who play them. Playing these modern games has positive effects such as exercising the body, preventing stress, improving learning ability. Play is an activity in which participants engage in interactions with others in a specific context and follow specific rules (Garaigordobil et al., 2022; Meilina et al., 2021; Mo et al., 2021; Page et al., 2019; Utami et al., 2023).

Games can be categorized into two types: traditional games and modern games. Traditional games are popular with children to socialize, train dexterity and communicate (Ashar et al., 2024). The traditional games played by children follow their own customs, and derive norms and deep meanings from the games (Shahin & Krishnaveni, 2022). Modern games also have a great impact on the people who play them. Playing these modern games has positive effects such as exercising the body, preventing stress, improving learning ability. Play is an activity in which participants engage in interactions with others in a specific context and follow specific rules (García-Gil et al., 2024). Play has an important role in supporting preschoolers' social and emotional well-being. Elements of traditional and modern play can provide a holistic approach to supporting social and emotional growth and development and may reduce anxiety in preschoolers (Putri & Cahyanti, 2021).

Children's social and emotional development is the sensitivity in understanding the feelings of others and interacting in everyday life. The hallmark of a child's social emotional development is where the child is able to adapt to the environment and develop a sense of friendship involving feelings, thoughts and actions (Harahap & Yus, 2023). Children's social and emotional development are two different things but must go hand in hand, so the stimulation given to early childhood is much easier to receive stimulation (Mukhlis & Mbelo, 2019).

In improving children's social and emotional development cannot be done in just one or two days, not only that it takes patience and consistency in providing stimulation in the form of games both modern and traditional. This is in accordance with research conducted by Harahap & Yus, (2023) and Meilina et al., (2021) who had 1 month to intervene with the results (p value 0.05) and (p value 0.005) this shows that both traditional and modern games can improve social-emotional development (Harahap & Yus, 2023; Meilina et al., 2021). This is proven by previous researchers Traditional games have the advantage of being able to increase children's enthusiasm and sportsmanship compared to other games. The game of cokolak involves strategic decision-making and waiting for one's turn, which can train children to be patient and respect the rules agreed upon. This is supported by research by Mukhlis & Mbelo, (2019) showing that children who actively participate in traditional games have better empathy and sharing skills than children who rarely participate in these games. In addition, traditional games involve elements of healthy competition that directly help children learn to manage emotions both in victory and in defeat.

Traditional games excel in aspects of social-emotional development compared to modern games. This is due to the nature of traditional games which are based on direct interaction. The results of Zulkhi & Jannah, (2022) stated that traditional games such as enggrang or clogs are more effective in developing group cooperation skills than team-based video games, this is because traditional games are carried out directly and realistically. In contrast, research conducted by Green & Bavelier (2017) shows that team-based games such as Minecraft can improve collaboration and problem-solving skills in children, but this also encourages children to have their own world and results in social isolation, especially if played for a long duration (Decroocq et al., 2020; Pebriani et al., 2021).

According to Erikson's theory of social-emotional development, young children are in the "initiative versus guilt" stage, where they learn to take on social roles and develop empathy. Traditional play greatly supports this through collaboration and group rules. Lev Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) also explains that social play—especially cooperative play—provides optimal stimulation for developing social skills that children do not

yet possess independently. Games like Gobak Sodor provide a context for real-life interactions that accelerate this development (Dussault & Thompson, 2024).

From all the selected articles, it is found that both modern games and traditional games can have an influence on social emotional development. This can be a solution in the development of traditional games based on modern technology without losing the meaning and characteristics of the culture, this will also be an attraction for children in playing the game and become one of the stimulation therapies in improving social and emotional development.

- c. Implication and limitations, digital games that adapt the rules and values of traditional games can attract children, this can maintain social interaction and cultural values. So that there are modern play facilities but do not eliminate the heritage of the ancestors. Traditional and modern games have their advantages, but both need to be managed wisely to support early childhood social and emotional development, so the implications of this research emphasize the importance of collaboration between parents, educators, policy makers, game developers and communities to create balanced games that support the growth of the whole child.

The findings of this review suggest that early childhood education policies should emphasize a balanced integration of traditional and modern games in learning activities. Traditional games can be utilized to strengthen social interaction, cooperation, and cultural identity, while modern games may support creativity and emotional expression when used appropriately. Therefore, policymakers should develop curriculum guidelines, teacher training programs, and play-based learning standards that encourage the complementary use of both types of games to support holistic child development.

Future research is strongly recommended to strengthen the causal evidence regarding the effects of play on children's social-emotional development. Longitudinal and experimental studies, particularly randomized controlled trials (RCTs), are needed to examine causal relationships between specific types of play and social-emotional outcomes. In addition, future studies should employ standardized and validated measurement tools, control for contextual variables such as family environment and cultural background, and explore the long-term sustainability of play-based interventions. Such approaches would provide more robust evidence to support causal inferences and inform evidence-based policies and practices in early childhood education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a systematic review of eight selected studies, it can be concluded that both traditional and modern games have a positive impact on the enhancement of early childhood social-emotional development. Traditional games such as gobak sodor, bakiak beregu, and mallogo effectively improve children's cooperation, empathy, and emotional regulation through direct peer interaction and culturally embedded values. Likewise, modern games such as role-playing, picture card games, and building blocks have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering emotional expression, creativity, and social initiative. All studies reviewed showed significant improvements in social-emotional skills after game-based interventions. Therefore, both traditional and modern games are proven to be effective alternatives for stimulating the social and emotional development of young children.

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