

Improving Socio-Emotional Competence of Grade IV Elementary School Students by Implementing Traditional Games in Learning

¹Tri Widyanti, ¹Adi Winanto

¹Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Central Java, Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social-emotional competence is important in fostering children's development, because it can help children to solve problems, increase prosocial behavior, build good relationships, and adapt to increasingly large and complex demands. **Aim:** This research aims to improve the social emotional competence of students in class 4 of SD Negeri Kutowinangun Salatiga with social emotional learning. **Method:** The type of research used is Classroom Action Research. The subjects of this research were all 22 Keas IV students at SD Negeri Kutowinangun Salatiga for the 2023/2024 academic year. **Result and Discussions:** The research results showed a significant increase in students' social emotional competence and activeness. At the pre-cycle stage, many students are less active and unable to control their emotions well. However, through traditional implementation, there was an increase in the average score in both social emotional competence and student activity. Cycle 1 shows an increase from the very poor category to poor, while cycle 2 shows a further increase to the good category. Traditional games have proven effective in improving students' social interaction, cooperation and communication skills. **Conclusions:** This research shows that traditional games can be a fun and effective learning tool, helping students develop various competencies and control emotions in a relaxed and interactive atmosphere. Therefore, the research was stopped in cycle 2 because it had achieved the expected results.

Keywords: Activeness, Social Emotional Competence, Traditional Games



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Corresponding Author:

Tri Widyanti,

[Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana](http://www.ukswa.ac.id)

Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia; 7°19'11"S 110°29'55"E / 7.31975°S 110.498583°E

Email: widyantini@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

In the process of teaching and learning activities in schools, many people argue that to achieve high achievement in learning, a person must have a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ), because intelligence is a potential provision that will facilitate learning so that it can produce optimal learning achievements (Purnama, 2016). However, there are other factors that determine the success of student achievement, namely 80% of IQ, including emotional intelligence (EQ), namely the ability to motivate oneself, overcome frustration, control urges, regulate moods, empathize and the ability to work together (Suciati, 2016: 2). Therefore, Dunn (2019) explains the collaborative development of IQ and EQ for academic, social, and emotional learning. Social Emotional Competence (KSE) aims to help realize social and emotional abilities that are an integral part of education, from preschool to high school. Winanto & Makahube (2016), explain that students not only understand the subject matter to develop intellectual abilities (IQ), but how the knowledge is understood can color the behavior displayed in real life. Social emotional competence (SEC) is a competence that should be developed and applied by all

individuals, including students. Social emotional competence is important for all individuals to have, because this social emotional competence teaches students how to have good self-understanding, create students with high empathy towards others and students' ability to build social relationships, social interactions and social communication well in everyday life. There is a significant relationship between social and emotional skills in childhood and various positive outcomes later in life, including physical and mental health, school readiness, academic achievement, decreased crime rates, and success in work and income (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2022:6). According to Susilowati and Haryati (2024), the role of teachers with social-emotional competence is crucial. This is because the implementation of learning requires not only conceptual understanding, but also the ability to build empathetic relationships, manage conflict, and improve school welfare. Teachers who have good social emotional competence (SEC) play an important role in building a positive and conducive learning environment, so that students can develop optimally. Contemporary research underscores the importance of integrating social emotional competencies (SCE) into the

curriculum. Children who develop strong SCE tend to demonstrate better classroom behavior, higher levels of engagement, and better academic outcomes. Elementary school-aged students enter the concrete operational stage. At this age, students have three prominent characteristics, including concrete, integrative, and hierarchical (Mawardi, Wardani, Hardini, & Kristin, 2019). Programs designed to enhance these competencies often include activities that enhance self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Sulaiman, Al Hamdani, & Aziz, 2018). The implementation of SCE in elementary schools involves a collaborative effort between educators, parents, and the community. Teachers play a critical role by modeling emotional intelligence, creating a supportive learning environment, and incorporating SCE principles (Subasman, Widiyanti, Aliyiah, 2024) into daily lessons. In addition, schools can adopt structured SCE programs and foster partnerships with families to reinforce these skills at home. By prioritizing social emotional competence, elementary schools can foster students who are broad-minded to develop both academically and socially. KSE learning has a process with stages that are built on the previous stage of observing students' conditions to foster a complete emotional and social foundation. The first stage is self-awareness, where children learn to recognize and identify their own emotions. This process includes understanding personal strengths, weaknesses, and values. Activities carried out include emotion identification games, keeping a journal about feelings, or group discussions about personal experiences. As students' abilities in self-awareness increase, they move on to the second stage, namely self-management. At this stage, students practice managing their emotions and behaviors in various situations. Based on initial observations conducted by researchers regarding the social emotional competence of students at Kutowinangun I Elementary School, Salatiga, they are still less able to apply social emotional competence in everyday life, both in learning activities and in other activities outside of learning. Many students express their anger by shouting and some even throw objects around them, this shows that there are some students who are less able to control themselves, especially for emotions. Some students are also less able to make decisions responsibly and follow their friends' decisions so that the decisions taken are not purely from their thoughts. There are also students who are quiet and more often alone because they feel disturbed when gathering with their friends. Although social emotional competence is important for all individuals including students, there are still many teachers who are indifferent and do not apply learning that uses social emotional competence so that many students still do not understand it. If students are allowed to grow up without good social emotional competence, it is not impossible that their behavior will lead to negative actions such as bullying, low motivation to learn, depression, stress, brawls and other behaviors (Christian & Hidayat, 2020).

According to Willard (2020:45), there is one technique such as deep breathing, mindfulness exercises, and setting personal goals that can help students gain better control over their reactions and impulses. It is also important to prioritize social awareness, which focuses on understanding and empathizing with others. Students learn to appreciate diversity, recognize social cues, and understand other people's perspectives. By going through the stages above, elementary school students build a strong foundation for lifelong social and emotional competence, which is very important for their overall success and well-being. Schools play an important role in this process by integrating KSE into the curriculum, creating a supportive environment, and providing opportunities for practice and reflection. From these problems, researchers want to improve social emotional competence in students, especially grade 4 of SDN Kutowinangun I Salatiga in learning.

Social and emotional development includes a set of skills such as self-awareness, understanding other people's emotions, emotional management, expressing emotions in a constructive way, self-regulation, stable communication (Abdollahian et al., 2013). Social emotional development is also important to achieve optimal growth in social, educational, and career fields (Ryan & Edge 2012). One of the good learning to improve and balance students' emotional levels is playing. Learning through play activities for children can be an educational and teaching process because toys reflect an effective and successful means of self-actualization (Saefudin, Nurlaela, Arlina, & Nurfalih, 2020). According to Saefudin, Nurlaela, Arlina, & Nurfalih, (2020), traditional games are relatively simple games but provide extraordinary benefits if we explore the meaning of the game in depth. With traditional games, we can develop social emotional aspects in students, to train cooperation, togetherness and social interaction. Based on the background and identification of the problems explained above, the problem in this study can be formulated as: can traditional games improve social emotional competence in students in grade 4 of Kutowinangun Elementary School, Salatiga, in the 2023/2024 Academic Year?

Teaching and learning for children is a dynamic and diverse process that involves a combination of strategies to effectively engage children's minds (Ma'ruf & Syaifin, 2021). The foundation of successful teaching begins with the understanding that children learn in a variety of ways, some visually, some auditorily, and some kinesthetically. Social and Emotional Learning refers to the process through which children learn to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2022:4). According to Sudirjo, & Alif (2021:8), teachers and parents must maintain open lines of communication to ensure consistency and social and emotional support in the child's educational journey. By fostering a collaborative and supportive environment, children are more likely to develop a

lifelong passion for learning and feel prepared to tackle academic challenges.

Traditional games as a form of children's games that circulate orally and collectively, are traditional and passed down from generation to generation, and have many variations (Cahyani, N. L., Kristianatar, M. R., & Manuaba, 2014). Nowadays, traditional games are rarely played. In fact, traditional games sometimes contain higher educational and social values than modern games, because traditional games involve a lot of physical activity, strategy setting, teamwork, language skills such as singing and social emotional interactions (Cendana & Suryana, 2022).

Social emotional competence (SEC) learning is a methodology built through policies, programs, and practices that enhance the capacity of children and adults to understand and manage emotions, regulate and achieve positive things with goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017). According to Ahmed, Hamzah, & Abdullah (2020), social-emotional competence is the ability to interact with others, monitor and control cognitive processes, regulate one's emotions and behavior. SEC also includes encouraging students to get motivated and act to achieve targeted goals, solve problems, and communicate effectively. This ability has attracted the attention of educators, researchers and policy makers who have recognized the importance of educational goals that consist of improving students' ability to learn, producing individuals who have healthy self-esteem, who have self-control, empathy, social skills and morality.

Kumari & Rao (2024) explained that qualitative data findings revealed that activating students' social emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, can ultimately bring about positive changes in students' perceptions of their social emotional aspects, while helping to improve their personality. This study also emphasizes the important role of teachers in instilling social emotional competencies, as well as highlighting the importance of a supportive school environment. This study underlines that through the integration of experiential activities, there is an opportunity to bring about real change. Wallender, Hiebel, PeQueen, & Kain (2020), explained their findings using a dependent t-test, elementary school students showed significant differences in self-perceptions in the areas of self-regulation and problem-solving skills, although it should be noted that these were negative outcomes. In analyzing the results, it is impossible to know whether the negative outcomes experienced by elementary school students were truly negative, because students initially rated themselves very high in these areas. Because self-report measures, especially in younger students, may provide limited results, school districts should carefully consider the costs and benefits of KSE curricular programs. Jones, Barnes, Bailey & Doolittle (2017), described their findings that teachers should focus more on classroom outcomes, because teachers' social-emotional competencies and the quality of the classroom environment

can have a significant impact on students' KSE. Elementary school students are a time of many developmental and environmental transitions, KSE programs should focus on skills that are appropriate for each grade and age, rather than taking a universal approach. Such as students' writing, and reading. Measurement of KSE skills among children in the elementary age range should be increasingly narrow in focus but broader in context and depth.

METHOD

The research design used is qualitative research. The type of research used is Classroom Action Research. Classroom Action Research is a research that aims to improve the learning process and outcomes (Parnawi, 2020). The purpose of action research is to explore practical problems obtained during the preliminary class with the aim of developing solutions to these problems. In addition, through action research, teachers are also believed to be able to increase enthusiasm and self-confidence (Jenkins & Crawford, 2016). The subjects of this study were all 35 students of Grade IV of Kutowinangun Elementary School, Salatiga, in the 2023/2024 Academic Year. The research was conducted in the odd semester of July 2024. The data collection techniques used include observation, testing, and documentation. Data collection refers to the Sugiyono model by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2019). Learning activities are obtained through observation sheets, while social science learning outcomes are obtained through test questions. Furthermore, data on students' social emotional competencies were obtained from observations in class.

This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle is carried out by implementing traditional games in order to improve social emotional skills in grade 4 students of Kutowinangun Elementary School, Salatiga, in the 2023/2024 Academic Year. The design of the cycle model uses the Tagart and Kemmis model which consists of four components, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher makes a learning plan before carrying out the action. The researcher also prepares materials and media that can improve the students' abilities. In the Acting stage, the researcher applies the previously created RPP. In this study, the researcher used cartoon conversation videos to teach pronunciation to improve students' abilities. After that, the researcher gave assignments and exams to the students. In the observation stage, the researcher observed the activities, responses, attitudes, and abilities of the students during the learning process. The researcher made notes of the related situations in the classroom. Observations, the researcher uses observations to obtain information about the actual conditions in teaching and learning activities. The researcher makes notes about the situation in the classroom during the teaching and learning process, such as student activities and student pronunciation abilities. The researcher uses an observation checklist to determine students' psychomotor skills and obtain

data from observations. In the reflection stage, the researcher identifies problems found during the learning process. At this stage, researchers must overcome existing problems.

The results of this study are divided into two parts, namely the results of the pre-cycle and the results of the implementation of the action or cycle. Based on the results of the pre-cycle stage, namely observations in Class IV of Kutowinangun Elementary School, Salatiga, it is known that there are still many students who show inactivity and are less able to control their emotions during social interactions when studying in class. The low social interaction observed in students is due to the fact that in daily learning activities, teachers tend to use a rigid approach, focusing on lectures and other traditional methods. In response to these challenges, researchers tried the use of traditional games "benthik" in cycle I and "engklek" in cycle 2 as potential solutions. Each cycle is carried out with several stages of the process starting from planning, action, observation and reflection to represent improvements after the action.

Cycle I

Based on the results of observations in cycle I, at the first meeting which carried the theme of learning about parts of plants. Students were introduced to a traditional game called benthik. In this game, the tools used come from plant stems, which must be hard and strong enough to support the game. Through this playing activity, students not only feel the excitement, but also gain an understanding that hard plant stems have various benefits and can be used for various daily needs. And at this meeting the losing group will be given questions related to the parts of the plant.

At the second meeting, the learning theme focused on the process of photosynthesis, which is one of the vital functions in plant life. In this session, each group of students was invited to better understand how plants produce food through the process of photosynthesis. Similar to the first meeting, the losing group in the benthik game was given questions about

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the pre-action test results of students are presented in bold as follows:

photosynthesis in plants. With this benthik game, it is known that students look active and enthusiastic in answering questions given related to parts of plants and the process of photosynthesis in plants. They can work together or discuss with their groups in answering the questions that have been given.

Cycle 2

Based on the results of observations in cycle 2, the first meeting focused on learning about plant reproduction. In this session, students were invited to participate in a modified hopscotch game for educational purposes. Students will throw broken roof tiles into a certain box, then answer questions that match the box number where the broken roof tiles fall. These questions are about plant reproduction such as cuttings, grafting, seeds and many more.

In the second meeting, the learning theme focused on the form of matter and its changes. In the same way, students must answer questions according to the number on the box where they throw the broken roof tiles. In this session, students answer questions and learn about various forms of matter, such as solid, liquid, and gas, as well as how substances can change from one form to another through certain processes, such as melting, freezing, evaporation, and condensation. In this second cycle, students looked more active and enthusiastic in answering the questions given. This shows significant progress in more dynamic interactions between students, creating a positive and supportive learning environment with the implementation of traditional games.

Observation or assessment of attitudes in this study, consists of two categories, namely KSE assessment, and assessment of student activity in class. The following are the results of the KSE and student activity assessments:

Table 1. Social Emotional Competence

Item	Pre Cycle	Cycle I Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Cycle II Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Average Score	1,8	2,4	2,6	3	3,3
Minimum Score	1	1,6	1,8	2,6	2,8
Maximum Score	3,2	3,2	3,4	3,4	3,6
Criteria	Very Bad	Not Good	Not Good	Good	good

Table 2. Percentage of pre-cycle Social Emotional Competence Attitude Values

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Bad	12	55 %
2	Not good	6	27%
3	Not good	2	9%
4	Good	2	9 %
5	Very good	0	
	Amount	22	100 %

The results of observations of students' social emotional competence in the table above show an average pre-cycle

score of 1.8 with very poor criteria. The results obtained have not reached the predetermined indicators. This shows that

student learning activities still need to be improved so that researchers need to continue classroom action research with traditional games in learning.

Table 3. Percentage of Social Emotional Competence attitude values cycle 1

No	Category	Cycle I			
		Meeting 1	Percentage	Meeting 2	Percentage
1	Very Bad	4	19 %	2	9 %
2	Not good	2	9 %	2	9 %
3	Not good	13	59 %	13	59 %
4	Good	3	13 %	5	23 %
5	Very good	0			
	Amount	22			100 %

Table 4. Percentage of Social Emotional Competence attitude values cycle 2

No	Category	Cycle I			
		Meeting 1	Percentage	Meeting 2	Percentage
1	Very Bad	0			
2	Not good	0			
3	Not good	7	32 %	3	14 %
4	Good	15	68 %	19	86 %
5	Very good	0			
	Amount	22			100 %

After implementing learning activities in the classroom, it was continued with the implementation of the traditional benthik game outside the classroom. This observation activity was to determine the social interaction of students during the game. The results of the analysis can be seen in the Table that the social and emotional interactions of students in cycle I meetings 1 and 2 were included in the less good category with an average value of 2.4 and 2.6. The

results in cycle I showed that students were not yet able to condition their emotions and lacked interaction in the classroom, both friends and teachers. So the researcher continued the action in cycle 2. The researcher used the traditional engklek game in learning and the results of observations during learning showed a good category with a value of 3, and increased in meeting 2, namely 3.3.

Table 5. Student activity

Item	Pre Cycle	Cycle I		Cycle II	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Average Score	1,7	1,9	2,1	2,4	3
Minimum Score	1	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,8
Maximum Score	2,2	3	3,4	3,6	4
Criteria	Very Bad	Very Bad	Not Good	Not Good	Good

Table 6. Percentage of pre-cycle Activeness attitude values

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Bad	18	82 %
2	Not good	2	9%
3	Not good	2	9 %
4	Good		
5	Very good		
	Amount	22	100 %

Table 7. Percentage of attitude value of cycle I activity

No	Category	Cycle 2			
		Meeting I	Percentage	Meeting II	Percentage
1	Very Bad	12	55 %	7	32%
2	Not good	5	23 %	9	41 %
3	Not good	3	13 %	4	18 %
4	Good	2	9 %	2	9 %
5	Very good	0		0	

Table 8. Percentage of attitude value of Activeness cycle 2

No	Category	cycle 2			
		Meeting 1	Percentage	Meeting 2	Percentage
1	Very Bad	1	5 %	2	9 %
2	Not good	6	27 %	1	5 %
3	Not good	12	55 %	11	50 %
4	Good	3	13 %	8	36 %
5	Very good	0		0	
	Amount	22			100 %

The results of the observation of student activity in the table above show an average pre-cycle score of 1.7 with a very poor criterion. The results obtained have not reached the predetermined indicators. This shows that student learning activities still need to be improved so that researchers need to continue classroom action research with traditional games in learning. After carrying out learning activities, the results of the analysis can be seen in the table that the social and emotional interactions of students in cycle 1 meeting 1 are still very poor with a value of 1.9. Then at the second meeting it increased to

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the KSE observation value increased in each cycle. The researcher used traditional benthic and hopscotch games in learning and the results of observations during learning showed a good category with a value of 3, and increased at meeting 2, namely 3.3. These results indicate that the application of traditional games in learning has succeeded in increasing social emotional competence in grade IV students of Kutowinangun Elementary School, Salatiga. This is in line with research by Harahap, (2023), Atusholichah, et al. (2022), and Dewi et al. (2024) which states that traditional games in learning can increase students' social emotional competence.

This increase in students' social emotional competence occurs because traditional games implemented in learning involve direct interaction between students, both in the form of cooperation and competition. This is in line with Nurjani and Sopiarti (2020) that social emotional development has a very close relationship with interaction. Social interaction activities that demonstrate social skills in children are usually carried out through play activities. While playing, students learn about values such as empathy, patience, and respecting the opinions of others. These interactions help develop communication skills and build good relationships with their friends. By practicing healthy collaboration and competition, students learn how to handle conflict and negotiate, which can ultimately improve students' social emotional. According to Mayshita, & Mustaji (2022) that through games, children can understand and feel the emotions of their friends, which helps them develop empathy and the ability to put themselves in other people's shoes. Through traditional benthic games, students are faced with situations where minor conflicts can

2.1 with a poor category. The results in cycle 1 show that students have not been able to condition their emotions and lack interaction in class, both friends and teachers. So the researcher continued the action in cycle 2. The researcher used the traditional engklek game in learning and the results of observations during learning showed a good category with a value of 2.4 with a poor category, and increased at meeting 2, namely 3 with a good category. Therefore, the research was stopped in cycle 2 because the average score had increased and was successful.

occur. Children learn how to handle these conflicts in a constructive way, for example through negotiation and compromise. Participation in traditional games can increase children's self-confidence because they get the opportunity to show their skills and receive recognition from their friends. In accordance with the results of the study by Gustiana, Agustin, & Djoehaeni (2017) that the application of traditional games in group experiments was carried out systematically starting with planning to evaluate. In the planning stage, teachers and students were informed by the researcher. The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference in increasing character values between the control and the experiment. Traditional games are effective in improving and developing childhood character values.

The most important factor in implementing traditional games in learning is that traditional games are more fun and involve children emotionally. This fun learning helps children be more open and motivated to participate, making it easier for them to develop social and emotional skills. Traditional games often require students to use their imagination in creating roles or solving problems. This honed creativity can be applied in learning to find innovative solutions in academic situations. According to the research results of Rahayu, Iswinarti, & Fasikhah (2021), it was found that there was an increase in three aspects of socio-emotional competence in children through traditional games with the experiential learning method compared to only playing traditional games. To improve the competence that children have in the future, traditional games are an alternative learning media through experience. With feedback from the game, children will gain new knowledge to apply in everyday life. Traditional games involve strategy, planning, and decision making. These skills are

important in the learning process and can help students think critically and solve academic problems. Through traditional games, Nariati and Cahyani (2024) explain that children will be able to learn so that they can develop their abilities, through this activity they can develop the social emotional skills that children have such as being able to work together with their friends, besides that they can also preserve traditional games and local culture so that it does not become extinct, one of which is traditional games. The results of the actions by Garaigordobil, Berruoco, & Celume, (2022) showed that there was a significant impact: (1) in social development, by increasing various positive social behavioral impacts and reducing many negative social behaviors; by increasing cognitive assertive strategies and prosocial resolution of interpersonal problems; and by increasing positive relationships and communication between group members; (2) in emotional development, by increasing self-concept, peer image, and emotional stability; and (3) in cognitive development, by increasing verbal intelligence, verbal and graphic-figurative creativity, and creative personality behavior and traits. This work provides empirical evidence of the relevance of cooperative-creative play in child development.

CONCLUSION

Research using traditional games "benthik" and "engklek" was implemented with the aim of improving KSE and student activity in learning science for grade IV. The results showed a significant increase in social emotional competence and student activity. In the pre-cycle stage, many students were less active and unable to control their emotions well. However, through the implementation of traditional games, there was an increase in the average score in both social emotional competence and student activity. Cycle 1 showed an increase from the very bad category to less good, while cycle 2 showed a further increase to the good category. Traditional games have proven effective in improving students' social interaction, cooperation, and communication skills. This study shows that traditional games can be a fun and effective learning tool, helping students develop various competencies and control emotions in a relaxed and interactive atmosphere. Therefore, the study was stopped in cycle 2 because it had achieved the expected results. The researcher would like to thank the principal, class teachers and students of grade IV of SD Kutowinangun 01 Salatiga who participated in this study so that this study ran smoothly and successfully.

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