

# Preservation of Traditional Games in Ngarak Blarak Cultural Festival: A Study of Cultural Ethnography and Educational Values in Local Communities

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## Abstract

**Background** - Traditional games are an integral part of cultural heritage that reflects the identity and values of local communities. One of the most interesting traditional games to research is Ngarak Blarak, which is often held in the context of cultural festivals. Cultural festivals serve not only as celebratory events, but also as platforms for preserving and transmitting cultural values to the younger generation. The Ngarak Blarak Cultural Festival is one of the ways local communities defend traditional games from extinction. These games not only serve as entertainment, but also as a means of informal education that instills values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for tradition. However, very few studies have documented and analyzed the role of these traditional games in a socio-cultural and educational context. Therefore, this research is important to fill the void of literature on traditional games in the context of cultural preservation and education. In an effort to maintain and preserve Indonesia's cultural diversity, the government has a very important role (Yudhoyono, 2009). Various forms of culture spread throughout the archipelago need to be maintained and preserved so as not to be lost in the times (Lidyasari et al., 2023). One form of culture that still exists in society is traditional games. Traditional games are part of Indonesia's cultural wealth that needs to be fostered and developed (Regiana et al., 2020) (Syafriadi et al., 2021). Traditional games have cultural values that are very important to be transformed to the younger generation today. Traditional games can be a medium for instilling positive characters in children, such as sportsmanship, honesty, discipline, and cooperation (Regiana et al., 2020) (Muzayanah et al., 2021) (Triansyah, 2023). In addition, traditional games can also be a means to introduce and preserve local culture. One form of effort to preserve traditional games is through cultural festivals. Cultural festivals can be a medium to introduce and popularize traditional games to the wider community, especially the younger generation. The Ngarak Blarak cultural festival held in kulon progo Regency, Central Java, is one example of an activity that aims to preserve traditional games. In this festival, various types of traditional games are played and shown to the community. (Lidyasari et al., 2023) (Muzayanah et al., 2021) (Syafriadi et al., 2021) (Regiana et al., 2020) . Through the study of cultural ethnography and educational value, this research aims to analyze the preservation of traditional games in the Ngarak Blarak Cultural Festival. In this context, this research utilizes relevant sources such as Muzayanah et al. (2021), Najiah & Jamaludi (2023), Syafriadi et al. (2021), and Lidyasari et al. (2023). According to Wahyu Budoyo Kethoprak Art in Preserving Cultural Values, culture is a very important heritage for a community group. This research focuses on exploring how the traditional game of Ngarak Blarak is preserved in cultural festivals and how it can contribute to the formation of cultural identity and education of local communities.

**Purpose** - The objectives of this study are to: 1) analyze how the Ngarak Blarak game is preserved in the cultural festival and the role of the festival in maintaining local traditions; 2) identify the educational values contained in the Ngarak Blarak game and how these values are transmitted to the younger generation; and 3) explore the social and cultural impacts of the implementation of the cultural festival on local communities, especially in the context of social transformation and cultural identity. Several previous studies provide relevant context for this research. For example, research by Wijayanti and Heriyanti Hijriati (2017) showed that cultural festivals can serve as a significant method of social transformation, especially among teenagers. This research emphasizes the importance of social planning in creating changes in people's mindset and behavior. In addition, Damani Hasanah et al. (2022) outlined efforts to internalize national character values through cultural literacy in schools, which can be linked to the educational values contained in traditional games.

**methodology** - In collecting data, this research will use several techniques, including participatory observation, where researchers are directly involved in the Ngarak Blarak cultural festival, observing social interactions, games, and activities that take place during the festival. This observation will help researchers to understand the social and cultural dynamics that occur (Adiprasetyo & Vinianto, 2020; Kaligis, 2023). The next technique is in-depth interviews, which will be conducted with various parties involved in the festival, including organizers, participants and local communities, to explore their views, experiences and values associated with the Ngarak Blarak game (Utaminingsih, 2023; Paramitha, 2023). In addition, documentation will also be used to collect data from festival promotional materials, historical records, and publications related to the Ngarak Blarak game, which will provide additional context for analysis (Yusanto, 2020; Dewi & Zuroida, 2022). The collected data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, where the researcher will identify key themes that emerge from the observation and interview data. This analysis process involves coding the data to find patterns and relationships between themes related to game preservation and its educational value (Muljono et al., 2019; Rofiq et al., 2022). To ensure data validity and reliability, researchers will use data triangulation, which is by comparing information obtained from various sources, such as observations, interviews, and documentation. The researcher will also conduct member checking, where the results of the analysis will be shared with participants to obtain feedback and ensure that the researcher's interpretation is accurate (Efthariena, 2023; Yusanto, 2020). This research will also adhere to the principles of research ethics, including obtaining permission from participants before conducting interviews and observations, and maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study to participants and ensure that they participate voluntarily (S, 2018; Akib et al., 2022). By using this methodology, the research is expected to provide in-depth insight into the preservation of the traditional game Ngarak Blarak in cultural festivals, as well as the educational values contained in it.

**Findings** - The findings also provide insight into how the Ngarak Blarak Festival openly bayan the dynamics of culture transfer through its utilization of traditional games as a mechanism for cultural preservation and projection, these games that are considered as part of material culture imagery are actually performed and experienced within the framework of socio-cultural context that is purported to facilitate the transfer of multi-dimensional heritage. The development proposes several aspects of knowledge transmission and retention which cultural festivals depict for instance historical practices and heritage portrayal as noted by the ethnographic context. The value of such representing symbols goes beyond functionality to include the underlying cultural aspects while coconut fronds and squashes are attachments that existed.

**Originality** - This research on the preservation of traditional games at the Ngarak Blarak Cultural Festival in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, makes significant contributions to cultural studies and educational development. It highlights how traditional games serve as tools for cultural transmission and community identity reinforcement, while also offering developmental benefits for children. The study underscores the role of traditional games in preserving cultural heritage, supporting the claims of Asfina & Ovilia (2017) on maintaining cultural identity in the face of globalization. It also reveals the educational potential of games like \*egrang\* and \*gobak sodor\*, fostering various intelligences and character traits in children, as noted by Akbar et al. (2023) and Garzia (2020). The research further suggests integrating digital technologies to promote traditional games, providing an innovative strategy for cultural preservation. Additionally, the use of recycled and natural materials in educational play equipment aligns with sustainability and local wisdom, supporting Wulansari's (2017) advocacy for integrating cultural practices into education. The study also positions the Ngarak Blarak Festival as a dynamic mechanism for cultural transmission, echoing Hindaryatiningsih (2017) on the active performance of heritage. Overall, the research offers practical recommendations for sustaining traditional practices in the face of modern challenges, emphasizing the importance of traditional games in fostering cultural identity and community resilience.

Keywords: Festival Ngarak Blarak, Permainan Tradisional, Pelestarian Budaya, Pendidikan dan Sosialisasi, serta Etnografi Budaya.

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