



Egrang Traditional Game: Cultural Literacy in Elementary School Social Studies

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to analyze the role of the traditional egrang game in fostering cultural literacy in elementary school students, particularly those related to the values of cooperation, cultural identity, diversity, and awareness of preserving local cultural heritage in the context of social studies learning.

Methodology: The study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Subjects were selected purposively, involving fifth-grade students, extracurricular teachers, social studies teachers, and the principal at an elementary school in Purwakarta. Data collection was conducted through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and field documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model with source triangulation to ensure the credibility of the findings.

Main Findings: Egrang have been shown to foster three dimensions of students' cultural literacy: (1) recognition of local culture with a Very good score on the identification of egrang as a traditional heritage and part of regional cultural identity; (2) understanding of the values of cooperation, hard work, and diversity that emerged organically during the game without explicit instruction; (3) the highest cultural awareness, characterized by students' enthusiasm and willingness to pass on egrang to the next generation.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research is the first to specifically integrate egrang into a cultural literacy framework within the context of elementary school social studies education. Unlike previous studies that focused on motor skills or general character, this study offers a new perspective on egrang potential as a contextual and meaningful medium for social studies learning based on local culture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Local wisdom is an inseparable part of Indonesian national identity. Values passed down from our ancestors reflect a rich culture that must be preserved from generation to generation. However, the rapid development of digital technology has shifted the popularity of traditional games that once thrived and thrived within society. Digital games are now much more accessible to children, resulting in traditional games being increasingly marginalized from everyday life [1]. This condition leads to a fading of students' understanding of local culture, which should be an important part of forming the nation's identity and character [2].

This issue becomes even more serious when linked to the objectives of social studies education in elementary schools, which explicitly include developing students' understanding of the socio-cultural life of Indonesian society. Within this framework, traditional games offer great potential as a medium for instilling socio-

cultural values that have not yet been fully utilized. Values such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and responsibility can develop naturally when students are directly involved in traditional games [3]. One relevant game to utilize is egrang, a traditional game played by standing and walking on two long bamboo poles with footrests at the bottom. This game not only trains balance but also embodies the values of perseverance, courage, and a never give up spirit inherent in the process [4].

In relation to cultural literacy, egrang are not just a physical activity, but rather part of a local cultural heritage that embodies noble values such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and a spirit of togetherness. Cultural literacy is understood as the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate culture as part of a nation's collective identity [5]. Usman operationalizes cultural literacy into three main indicators: the ability to know one's own culture, understand the complexity of the values contained within it, and foster concern for preserving it [6]. Hadiq et al. complemented the framework with four more operational categories, namely cultural awareness and knowledge, attitudes of cultural appreciation and pride, preferences for traditional games, and understanding of cultural values [7]. By referring to these two frameworks, egrang have the potential to be an effective medium for fostering students' cultural literacy in the context of social studies education.

Several previous studies have shown that traditional games contribute positively to students' cultural literacy and character. Purnamasari & Sefriyanti found that congklak can help children understand local culture while simultaneously shaping character in the digital age [8]. Sari et al. proved that gobak sodor is effective in instilling the values of cooperation, responsibility, and social interaction in elementary school students [9]. Rahman emphasized that traditional game-based social studies learning has the potential to be a relevant innovation for building students' social character [10].

However, studies specifically focused on egrang remain limited in scope. Existing research on egrang has predominantly examined motoric aspects, learning interests, and general character formation, leaving the cultural literacy dimension, particularly within the context of social studies learning, largely unexplored [11]. Moreover, previous studies have not yet systematically analyzed how the experience of playing egrang can be connected to the three dimensions of cultural literacy: knowing one's own culture, understanding cultural complexity, and fostering concern for cultural preservation. In fact, the potential of egrang as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values in formal learning is substantial, given the wealth of social values inherently embedded in this game practice [12]. This gap is further compounded by the absence of studies that situate egrang within the formal social studies curriculum, despite its direct alignment with learning objectives related to socio-cultural understanding and local identity. The disparity between this rich potential and the lack of scholarly attention constitutes the primary gap that motivates this research.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on integrating the traditional egrang game specifically into the framework of cultural literacy in the context of elementary school social studies education, a perspective that has not been studied in depth in the existing literature. In contrast to previous studies that generally examine egrang from the perspective of motor development or general character, this study specifically examines how the experience of playing egrang can foster three dimensions of students' cultural literacy that are relevant to the objectives of social studies learning. Based on this gap, this study seeks to answer the question: how does the traditional egrang game play a role in fostering elementary school students' cultural literacy in terms of values relevant to social studies education? The goal is to analyze the role of egrang in fostering students' cultural literacy, particularly those related to the values of cooperation, cultural identity, diversity, and awareness of preserving local cultural heritage.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. A descriptive qualitative approach is a research method that aims to understand and describe a phenomenon in depth based on natural conditions without manipulating variables, so that researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the social reality being studied [13]. This approach was chosen because the research objective was to deeply understand the role of egrang in fostering students' cultural literacy, a socio-cultural phenomenon that cannot be adequately captured through numerical data alone. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate for studying cultural phenomena in the school environment because it is able to capture the meaning, process, and social context underlying a behavior more fully and deeply [14].

The study was conducted in May 2026 at an elementary school in Purwakarta, involving egrang extracurricular activities as the primary unit of analysis. The research sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method in which subjects are selected deliberately based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives [15]. This technique was chosen because the research requires informants who have direct involvement and firsthand knowledge of the egrang extracurricular program, so that the data obtained can reflect the actual phenomenon being studied. The sample consisted of ten participants representing four subject groups: (1) six fifth-grade students who actively participated in egrang extracurricular activities, selected based on their active involvement and ability to articulate their experience; (2) one

extracurricular teacher who supervised the egrang program; (3) one fifth-grade social studies teacher; and (4) the school principal. The selection of these four subject groups was based on the consideration that each held a different but complementary perspective on the phenomenon being studied, thus enabling comprehensive source triangulation. This multi-perspective sampling strategy is consistent with qualitative research principles that prioritize depth and diversity of informant perspectives over statistical representativeness, ensuring that the findings reflect a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study [16].

Data collection was conducted using three mutually supportive techniques. First, participant observation was conducted directly in the field to observe the egrang activities and the values that emerged during the game. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all ten participants using guidelines developed based on Usman's three cultural literacy indicators: knowledge of one's own culture, understanding the complexity of cultural values, and concern for cultural preservation [6]. Third, documentation in the form of photos, field notes, and recordings was used as supporting data to strengthen the findings from observations and interviews. The triangulation of these three data collection techniques observation, interview, and documentation is a widely recognized strategy in qualitative research for enhancing the credibility and comprehensiveness of findings, as each technique captures different dimensions of the same phenomenon and allows for cross-verification of the data [17]. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three simultaneous components: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions/verification. These three components run simultaneously and interact with each other during the research process, so that the analysis is not linear but dynamic and continues to develop along with data collection in the field [18]. The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation, namely by comparing and checking the consistency of the information obtained from the four research subject groups, as well as the results of observations [15], so that the findings produced have credibility and can be scientifically accounted for.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the role of the traditional stilt game as a medium for cultural literacy in the context of social studies education in elementary schools through three main dimensions based on Usman's indicators, namely knowing one's own culture, understanding cultural complexity, and caring about culture [6]. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation at an elementary school in Purwakarta. The triangulation results from the four data sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Triangulation of Students' Cultural Literacy Data through Egrang Games

Dimensions of Cultural Literacy	Findings
Knowing Your Own Culture	Students first encountered egrang in the school environment. The school consistently introduced the history and origins of egrang before the practice, including their connection to the regional OLTRAD program. Observations showed a very good score for identifying egrang as a traditional game and part of local culture, and a good score for knowledge of the origins and ability to distinguish egrang from modern games.
Understanding Cultural Complexity	The values of cooperation, hard work, and cultural diversity emerged organically during the game without explicit instruction. The social studies teacher identified these three values as relevant to the social studies curriculum, but students had not yet spontaneously connected them to classroom material. Observations recorded very good scores for cooperation, sportsmanship, and perseverance, and a good score for conceptual understanding of the cultural value of egrang.
Concern for Culture	All informants confirmed a significant shift in student attitudes, from viewing egrang as a simple game to understanding them as a cultural heritage that must be preserved. Students expressed their willingness to teach egrang to their juniors. The program is supported by regional policies and parental involvement. Observations recorded excellent scores on all indicators of cultural awareness.

3.1 Egrang as a Medium for Introducing Local Culture.

In the dimension of knowing one's own culture, observation data showed that students scored Very good on the indicator identifying egrang as a traditional game and recognizing them as part of local culture, while good scores were obtained on the indicator of knowledge of the origins and history of egrang and the ability to distinguish egrang from modern games. Interview data supported these findings: students reported that their first introduction to egrang occurred through observing upperclassmen in the schoolyard and through the guidance of extracurricular teachers. The extracurricular teachers explained that before students tried playing egrang, the historical and cultural context was always explained first, including its connection to the OLTRAD (Olahraga Tradisional) program, which is mandatory in all schools in Purwakarta. The principal added that egrang were once used by residents to walk in flooded areas, so this historical value became the institutional basis for establishing egrang as an official school activity. This institutionalization of cultural knowledge before physical practice reflects a deliberate pedagogical strategy that positions cultural understanding as the foundation of experiential learning, ensuring that students engage with egrang not merely as a game but as a living expression of local heritage [19]. The fact that cultural and historical context is consistently introduced before physical engagement suggests that the school has consciously adopted a culturally grounded approach to extracurricular programming, one that treats traditional games not as recreational activities but as pedagogical instruments for cultural transmission [20].

These findings reflect that schools play a primary role in transmitting local culture to students. This aligns with Sihab & Hanafi's [21] view that culture is not only learned cognitively but also internalized through direct experience and social interaction. The role of the school as a primary agent of cultural transmission is particularly significant in the context of rapid modernization, where the dominance of digital media and globalized popular culture increasingly limits children's exposure to traditional cultural practices outside the school environment. In this regard, the school's role extends beyond academic instruction to encompass the preservation and revitalization of local cultural identity, particularly for practices that are no longer commonly encountered in students' daily lives outside the school environment. Emphasized that social studies education must be based on real and contextual experiences, not just abstract textbook content [22]. Egrang, with its strong historical background in Sundanese and West Javanese communities, provides an authentic cultural context that allows students to meaningfully construct their social knowledge.

Traditional games with strong historical roots in a region can serve as a cognitive bridge between students' cultural experiences and formal learning materials [23]. This bridging function is further reinforced by the findings of Al Hadiq et al., who demonstrated that introducing traditional games through structured cultural knowledge sessions significantly enhanced students' cultural identification and sense of local pride. The good score on the knowledge of origins indicator, however, suggests that while students have developed strong cultural recognition, deeper factual understanding of Egrang's historical trajectory remains an area requiring more explicit instructional support. This gap points to the importance of integrating narrative-based cultural content, such as the history of egrang in flood-prone communities of West Java, more systematically into both extracurricular sessions and formal social studies lessons, as contextual narrative approaches have been shown to deepen students' cultural and historical understanding more effectively than purely factual or text-based instruction [24].

3.2. Socio-Cultural Values of Egrang in the Framework of Social Studies Learning

In the dimension of understanding cultural complexity, three of the four observation indicators received a Very good score, namely cooperation, sportsmanship, and never giving up, while the conceptual understanding of egrang as a game with cultural values received a good score. The social studies teacher identified three main cultural values that are directly relevant to the social studies curriculum, namely cooperation, which is evident in the habit of students helping each other stand, maintaining balance, hard work and perseverance, because not all students can immediately master egrang so that repeated practice is needed, and cultural diversity, where students learn that Indonesia has a wealth of traditional games that are diverse in each region. The extracurricular teacher observed that the behavior of helping each other emerged spontaneously from the beginning of the practice, and the students themselves confirmed that no one was left to struggle alone during the practice session. This spontaneous collective behavior reflects the internalization of cooperative values that are naturally embedded in the mechanics of egrang, reinforcing the idea that traditional games function not merely as physical activities but as social learning environments that organically cultivate culturally rooted values [25]. The alignment between the values emerging from egrang practice and the competencies targeted in the social studies curriculum further reinforces the argument that traditional games can serve as authentic and contextually meaningful learning media when deliberately integrated into formal education [26].

The emergence of these values organically without explicit instruction can be explained through the experiential learning cycle (*experiential learning cycle*), where concrete experiences become the foundation for reflection, conceptualization, and internalization of values [27]. Students who stabilize each other while climbing egrang are bringing to life the value of cooperation through real actions, not memorization of concepts. Susanti, Darmansyah & Aulia showed that traditional games are very effective in character education because they involve physical, emotional, and social dimensions simultaneously [28]. Nuryanti et al. added that social values in traditional games are inseparable from the game mechanics, so that the transmission of values is a natural result

of playing activities [29]. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of egrang, where the physical demands of the game, maintaining balance, supporting peers, and persisting through repeated failure create an immersive social environment in which cultural values are not merely observed but actively enacted and internalized through the body and through peer interaction. Within the social studies framework, Sudirman et al. argue that social studies must develop students' capacity for social participation, which requires affective engagement with the values underlying social practices and still provides authentic spaces for such experiences [30]. Furthermore, Fisabilillah & Husain emphasized that social studies learning that is based on local cultural practices has higher relevance for students because it presents a familiar and meaningful social context in their lives [31]. However, the social studies teacher noted that students had not yet spontaneously connected the egrang playing experience to the social studies material in the classroom, indicating the need for intentional pedagogical scaffolding to bridge the play experience with conceptual understanding. This finding suggests that while egrang is highly effective in generating affective and behavioral responses aligned with social studies values, explicit instructional mediation remains necessary to ensure that students can articulate and transfer these experiential insights into formal academic understanding [32].

3.3 Student Cultural Awareness and Factors Supporting Program Sustainability

The dimension of concern for culture produced the highest achievement, with all four observation indicators obtaining a Very good score, including student enthusiasm, willingness to teach friends, expression of cultural pride, and awareness of the importance of preservation. Interview data revealed a significant change in attitude. Students who initially considered egrang a mere game began to view them as a cultural heritage that must be preserved after understanding their history and values. Students expressed their willingness to teach egrang to their juniors, motivated by their experience of winning second place in a stilt competition. This condition aligns with Batubara's findings that achieving success in local culture-based activities significantly increases students' intrinsic motivation to actively participate in efforts to preserve that culture [33]. The extracurricular teacher emphasized that discontinuing the stilt program would not only eliminate the game but also all the cultural values that students had internalized. The principal confirmed that the program was supported by the regional OLTRAD policy and the active involvement of parents who made egrang at home, so that cultural ownership was formed not only at the school but also at the family level. This finding is in line with research by Riska & Zulkarnaen, which showed that the integration of OLTRAD egrang in project-based learning can increase the cultural awareness of elementary school students through contextual and locally based learning experiences [34].

The highest achievement in this dimension of concern is in line with Hakim's transformative approach in multicultural education, which states that true cultural learning results in attitudinal transformation and active participation in cultural preservation [35]. The willingness of students to teach egrang to the next generation is a manifestation of what Wirianty call it the highest level of social action integration of multicultural curriculum [36]. This achievement is also relevant to the objectives of Strengthening Character Education as stated in Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018. This success is inseparable from a layered ecological support system that is consistent with the bioecological model, a supportive school microsystem, an active school-family collaboration mesosystem, and a binding OLTRAD policy ecosystem. Ugobueze strengthens this perspective by showing that cultural preservation programs in elementary schools that involve collaboration between schools, families, and local governments simultaneously have a much higher level of sustainability compared to programs that only rely on one party [37]. The region's commitment to egrang was even documented nationally through a MURI Record in 2012, when Purwakarta successfully gathered 14,570 egrang players simultaneously, breaking the previous record of only 4,000 participants. This fact confirms that support for egrang in Purwakarta is not merely an administrative policy, but rather a deep-rooted cultural movement that involves all levels of society.

These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the role of school-community synergy in sustaining traditional culture-based programs. Susanti, Darmansyah & Aulia demonstrated that traditional games are most effective in character and cultural education when supported by a consistent ecological system involving teachers, families, and local policy [21]. Similarly, Riska & Zulkarnaen confirmed that the integration of egrang into project-based learning significantly increased cultural awareness among elementary school students when supported by contextual and locally grounded learning environments [26]. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that cultural awareness, the highest dimension of cultural literacy, can be achieved not only through structured learning but also through sustained extracurricular engagement embedded within a supportive cultural ecosystem.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific positioning of egrang as a medium for fostering all three dimensions of cultural literacy within the social studies learning context, an angle that has not been previously explored in the literature. Unlike prior studies that examined egrang primarily from motoric or general character perspectives, this research provides empirical evidence that egrang can serve as a contextual, meaningful, and curriculum-aligned medium for cultural literacy development in elementary school social studies education, aligning with the call for local wisdom-based approaches in social studies learning [38].

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted at a single elementary school in Purwakarta, which has a particularly strong institutional and regional commitment to egrang through the OLTRAD program. This contextual specificity may limit the generalizability of the findings to schools in other regions that lack similar cultural and policy support. Second, the qualitative nature of this study, while appropriate for capturing the depth of the phenomenon, does not allow for causal claims or statistical generalization [39], [40]. Third, the influence of digital technology and online games remains a structural challenge that must be addressed through integration strategies at the curriculum level, as recommended by Saryono et al., so that traditional games are not confined to extracurricular activities but are systematically embedded into formal learning [41], [42]. Future research is therefore recommended to develop and test a more structured social studies learning model based on egrang across diverse school contexts, in order to validate and expand upon the findings of this study.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the traditional stilt game plays a significant role in fostering cultural literacy of elementary school students in the context of social studies learning. Thus, traditional games such as egrang can be an innovative alternative in strengthening stilt literacy and can be a medium for introducing local culture while instilling socio-cultural values that are relevant to social studies learning. The results of the study show that through stilt games, students not only learn about their own culture, but also understand the values of cooperation, hard work, sportsmanship, and cultural diversity that emerge naturally during the playing process. In addition, students show increased concern for the preservation of local culture, which is reflected in their sense of pride in playing egrang and their desire to introduce them to the next generation. The successful implementation of egrang as a medium for cultural literacy is inseparable from the support of the school environment, teachers, principals, parents, and local government policies through traditional sports programs. This demonstrates that culture-based learning requires synergy between schools, families, and the social environment for its sustainability. This research provides the potential for development, suggesting that traditional games can be positioned not only as extracurricular activities but also have the potential to be more systematically integrated into formal social studies learning as a culturally based, contextual learning medium. Further research is recommended to develop a more structured social studies learning model based on traditional games and to test its effectiveness at a wider educational level and school context. Thus, traditional games such as egrang can be an innovative alternative for strengthening cultural literacy while maintaining the sustainability of local cultural heritage in the digital era.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

For research articles with several authors, a short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

None.

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