

RE-CREATION OF MALAYSIAN TRADITIONAL GAME NAMELY 'BALING SELIPAR': A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract: Malaysian traditional game was a popular culture once, before the existence of foreign sports and virtual games. Nowadays, the activities of playing traditional games are getting lesser and there are insufficient efforts in preserving or recreating the game. Furthermore, the preference of today's teenagers towards computer games and foreign recreational activities endangered the existence of traditional game. It also opens themselves to health problems due to lack of physical activities. This research provides an attempt to re-create a traditional game so that the value of the traditional game can be preserved and suit today's trend. Several methods such as observation, field experiment and reference were used in the study. Quantitative method was used to get the final concept of the product. Although the research is not very extensive, the findings suggest that the traditional games are possible to be re-created as the new sport. Throughout the research, the specified game was re-created by focusing on the design of the rules, guidelines and equipment. Nevertheless, this is the preliminary conceptual game based on Baling Selipar, which will open a new dimension of recreating traditional games thus preserving the traditional games. In a nutshell, the new developed Baling Selipar game would be another alternative sport that is capable to be introduced to the society.

INTRODUCTION

During the old days, Malay ancestors held special event after harvesting season to fill their time before entering new season. In this special occasion, there were activities like playing games, cultural dance and etc¹. The most popular activity during this time for children and younger community is playing traditional games, which are also known as folk games. Some games have not being played again but only known by our parents and ancestors. Ibrahim Ismail, the Director General of Malaysia National Museum agreed that "Traditional games and pastimes are being slowly but surely forgotten in the face of the onslaught by technology based entertainment that is in turn becoming more easily

available”². However, there are some of the games still being played until today, such examples are marble, *Congkak*, kite, *Selambut*, and others¹.

For children of new millennium, they are probably not familiar or never even heard of this traditional games from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s era³. Before the ages of digital games started in Malaysia in mid 80s, the only entertainment that can be found is playing local invented games like Rounders (local version of baseball), *Polis Sentri*, *Baling Tin*, *Baling Selipar* or *Tuju Selipar* and *Galah Panjang*. Other than that folk games like kite or *Wau* (traditional Malay kite), *Congkak*, *Konda-kondi*, *Batu Seremban* and game that can be easily played by using any items that they found locally are also popular.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE GAME NAMEDLY *BALING SELIPAR*

The origins of the game name have not being stated in any publication or journal. Hence it is hard to determine the trusted source for the game. It is believed that the term of the game came from the direct translation of the game. “Baling” mean throw or action to fling something and “*Selipar*” mean slipper or sandal that being used in the game. The combinations of the word bring the overall definition of the game itself which is the slipper or sandal is being thrown to the target (slipper shrine or pyramid). There are also various name for this game such as *tuju selipar*, and *tuju kasut*^{13, 14, 16}.

Baling Selipar is a physical game that needs two groups which consist of 5 people for each group (depends). Before the game begins, the flip-flop slipper or sandal will be arranged in a pyramid form. Both groups must decide which group is going to start attacking first and which one to defend. The attacking group will destroy the arrangement of the slipper and then reconstruct the arrangement without the members being counter attack or killed by the defending group. The defending group will prevent the attacking group from reconstruct the slipper arrangement after the attacking group made their move by ‘killing’ each of the members of the attacking group. ‘Killing’ here means, the defending group will throw the slipper that being used for shooting the slipper arrangement to any of the attacking group, and the members which had been shoot by the slipper is eliminated from the round and cannot make any further move.^{13, 14, 16}

3.0 TRADITIONAL GAME PROMOTE HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

The activities of youth up-to-date has changed significantly in the past 20 years. From the real world to virtual space, outdoors to indoors, group based games to single player games and neighborhood games to borderless match, the advancement of technology has reached a stage where pretty much everything is available at the face of a glass screen. With one touch;

shopping, learning, working and entertainment can all be accessed from our homes, in a car or at a cafe, and from all of that we can conclude that we are currently lacking of outdoor activities which affecting our healthy lifestyle. As technology changes the way we live, our young generation will experience a huge difference from what we have been experiencing before. It's during childhood when habits are ingrained and the freedom exists for active play and movement⁴. What we concern the most is the level of physical activity for a man usually declines as young people get older. If these kids insufficiently involve in physical activity, what hope do they have as adults?

Just like sports and any other physical game, traditional game have something to offer the community and society; a healthier lifestyle. It is believed that traditional game also capable in being one of the medium to develop children and teenagers in the term of their social, psychomotor and cognitive skills^{5,8}. Traditional game can be categorized as recreational sports as most of the game needs the physical interaction. As were mentioned by Mohd. Yusof Abdullah and Mohd. Noor Ismail⁵, every traditional game has their own function and value towards the player, audience and community. They also mentioned that traditional games would not only serve as entertainment value but also:

1. Improve player physical attribute and their 5 senses.
2. Trains players in the term of managing and building their leadership skills.
3. Train the player to create better strategy to win the game.
4. Develop a creative community.
5. Interaction process during the game derive towards creating a team-building value.

Recreational activities are important to enhance the social value of a community⁶. Recreation and outdoor activities involving a physical activities are really important for a healthy childhood development, whereas, during the growing stage of a children, this kind of activities might help them to foster psychological well-being and also promoting the acquisition of motor skills, social skills, creativity, and the development of cognitive function⁶.

Culture and recreation contribute to better health of individuals and communities by keeping them healthier and well⁷. Nowadays, the teen societies are more attracted towards virtual gaming. Although virtual gaming contribute some good perks towards teenager development, but there are comparison being mentioned in an article between playing modern virtual games and playing traditional games¹². Traditional game is not the same as virtual games where usually the virtual games being played alone¹¹. There is more to that where traditional

games is not just for fun, but it is one of recreational sport or physical practice that develop the spirit of team-work, and social among the children^{8,15}. This game offers the children to learn on how to work as a group in their near future.

4.0 THE POTENTIAL OF *BALING SELIPAR* AS A NEW SPORTS

Sports field contributed to a variety of goals such as fostering a sense of patriotism, unity, national integration and improved health and social well-being⁹. To prepare youth and sports facilities, the government has set a 6 year plan for long-term planning, starting from 2010 to 2015. The purpose of this plan is to establish the direction and development of youth and sports itself towards an integrated and comprehensive country and the realization of Vision 2020 as well as the national agenda⁹. In line with this two strategic pillars of those strategic plans, the acculturation sports for all and sports industry development for national economic generator, which promotes a variety of programs / activities of sports, fitness and recreation, introducing new programs of community-based, fitness and sports tourism and focus to increase production and sports services for local consumption and exports⁹. Expected development of traditional games as a new sport can be a way to achieve the objectives of this strategic plan.

Effects from the rapid globalization, urbanization and development in information technology has greatly influenced the perception and thought for the youth generation, causing the youth scene today often pose new challenges to the survival of our cultures and values. According to Dato' Ahmad Shabery Cheek, ex-Minister of Malaysia Youth and Sports, the Strategic Plan for the period of six years (2010-2015) is in line with one of the country's development policies to develop the human capital⁹. The Government wants to ensure that the youth of this country will become responsible, in carrying our identity accordance with the national vision⁹. The reality of globalization and sophistication of information and communication technology (ICT) has opened a vast space for youth to obtain information without borders, and exposure to foreign cultures that are incompatible with the way of life for the local communities. Consequently, youth are faced with a variety of elements that can shape the perception and value system at the expense of harmony in life. This scenario is considered to be a major challenge to be faced by our community for youth character developments, towards the building of Malaysia's real identity and national culture in terms of personality, values, morals and lifestyles.

Traditional sports and games round table meeting hosted by UNESCO in 2006 concludes that:

- Traditional sports and games are important in promoting cultural diversity and in protecting cultural identities at the local, national and international levels;
- Traditional sports and games play an important role in national, regional, and international construction – in particular by fostering intercultural contacts, protecting the memory and the national cultural and sports heritage, and impact national cohesion and respect for the identity of communities from different cultural backgrounds;
- Traditional sports and games serve an educational dimension, sharing knowledge and enhancing understanding, especially among younger generations;
- Traditional sports and games should be inventoried and mechanisms capable of revitalizing or ensuring their continued existence should be identified;
- Traditional sports and games should be promoted;
- Traditional sports and games should be incorporated into cultural components as major sports events and festivals at the national level;
- Traditional sports and games should have a world festival;
- Traditional sports and games directory should be initiated along with academic research and scientific data¹⁰.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This research concluded that it is a good indicator for us in developing our traditional sports and games on a big scale. Traditional sports and games provide opportunities to experience, learn about, and appreciate aspects of certain cultures, as well as essential training in social interaction and promoting healthier lifestyle. The future research will established the game and the product would not only boost the popularity of Malaysian culture, but it would also preserve the originality of this original game. The *Baling Selipar* game is one of the Malaysia traditional game that have a high probability to be introduced as a modern sport in the future, but it must be done through further research and new product development. The new re-creation of *Baling Selipar* game will bring this traditional game to another level.

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