

The relationship between traditional games and social development in children

Abstract

The aims of this study were to examine the relationship between traditional games and children's social development. The study utilized a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with a control group. The participants were 6-year-old children, who were randomly assigned into two groups of 20 each (experimental group and control group). After selecting the participants (6-year-old children) and dividing them into two groups, both groups were simultaneously engaged in traditional games and common preschool activities. Before the intervention of the independent variable, their social development was assessed using the Vineland Social Maturity Scale. The data collected from the pretest and posttest were compared. Data analysis was conducted by using covariance analysis by SPSS-22. The results indicate that the observed F is statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, traditional games can result in a positive effect on various aspects of children's social development, including self-help general, self-help in dressing, self-help in eating, interaction with others, self-regulation of behaviors, socialization, physical activity, profession, and occupation.

Keywords: Traditional game, social development, Self-help, Self-regulation, Children

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The child is a growable being, and the growth process is purposeful. The aim of growth is self-flourishing in one's talents and creativity. The role of sports, especially traditional sports, for

children is so significant that it can play a considerable part in preventing psychological issues and other social problems among them. On the other hand, if this role is not fulfilled effectively, it can inflict internal loss on the child and their future (Jorj & Crestiyani, 1996). The realization of this goal is dependent upon education. A child needs to adapt to the social and natural environment in order to survive. Hence, education strives to pave the way for creating this adaptation. Children are the seeds of our future (Mayar Seriyata, 2013). A child will begin their life by learning within a social environment. Every child goes through a long process of personal and social development. Finally, this process leads to internalizing social values, which include imitation, identification, and internalization. Understanding children is our ability in interacting with them. We can achieve this through our specific knowledge and skills. Additionally, we can positively influence their behavior by providing support to improve a child's athleticism. They need our assistance in their journey to achieve individual and social independence, as well as for attaining personal and social satisfaction. Educational environments are the foundation for nurturing talents that must steer the ship of society to a safe and secure shore in the stormy future. Children are more prefer to play entertainment games. Traditional games are a type of game that can be played with 5- to 6-year-old children (Seriata, 2013). Iran has a rich cultural heritage, and traditional games are one of its many cultural features. But in recent decades, traditional games have slowly begun to forgotten by being replaced with technology-based modern games. Children become familiar with traditional games from early childhood because these games have various functions. The functions of traditional games include the physical development of children's motor skills (Ali, 2020), the acquisition of students' knowledge (Andriana, 2020), personality building (Ali, 2018), and serving as a way to stimulate social skills in early childhood. Additionally, many traditional games can be used as a means for socializing and for the development of multiple intelligences (Dejwovita, 2020). By engaging in traditional games, interactions will occur that facilitate communication. Traditional games, which emerge as local wisdom, can strengthen children's character (Rocmedayati, 2017). Therefore, considering issues related to the development of children's social skills and the benefits of traditional games on childhood social skills during the pandemic, this topic has been examined. A child can express their fears, frustrations, anxieties, and joys in play as they wish, embodying their desired characters. The growth of a child is considered as a process characterized by order, sequence, and lifelong duration, enabling long-term control of the environment, and this process is transformative, involving understanding, attributing meaning, and organizing behavior. In this way, a successful educational system acts as a bright bridge that introduces children to a new and familiar world. Game is the creation of a new world for the child, a tool through which the child manipulates the external world to fit their cognitive framework. It enables the child to become active and voluntarily engage in activities.

The famous Swiss psychologist Piaget identified play based on five criteria: (Jorj & Crestiyani, 1996).

- Play has an intrinsic goal
- Play is voluntary, not compulsory
- Play is pleasant and enjoyable
- Play lacks order and organization

- Play is free from conflict and aggression

The ancient Greeks can be considered the pioneers of play in terms of education and training. Plato (427-348 BCE) regarded primary education and training as a form of play. In his book 'The Republic,' Plato argues that children should be subjected to a legal framework from the very beginning of life regarding play. Without exposure to such an environment, they are not properly guided and cannot become social citizens. In the Persian dictionary, the word "play" is equivalent to "entertainment," "occupation," "recreation," "work," and "sport." However, biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and artists provide different opinions and definitions about play. Biologists believe that their interest in play stems from their curiosity about discovery and understanding of the surrounding environment. Psychologists view the human need for play as a result of having surplus energy that individuals need to expend somewhere. Ultimately, artists believe that artistic play stems from the culture, customs, and traditions of each society. Generally, games hold cultural significance and are designed to fill human leisure time. Local, and traditional Iranian games are not only culturally significant but also are attractive and have a wide range of diversity. With knowledge of these games, one can not only dynamically and profoundly transmit the history and traditions of this land to next generations but also use them as an excuse to escape the consequences of technology and reintroduce meaning and purpose into life. By knowing these games, one can not only dynamically and profoundly transmit the history and traditions of this land to next generations but also use them as an excuse to escape the consequences of technology and reintroduce meaning and purpose into life. Especially in many of these examples of games, simple and fundamental rules of optimal life management and guidance are taught and practiced, equipping individuals with the necessary skills to confront challenging life situations. In fact, there have been over 150 types of traditional games in Iran, ranging from "Haft Sang" (Seven Stones) to "Tileh Bazi" (Shooting Marbles), which, over time and with changes in lifestyle, have become foreign to today's generation. These games are divided into two categories: open-space and closed-space, allowing individuals to make the best use of their time in any location and conditions. Traditional games can also be classified into categories based on gender. Indeed, some games are socially, culturally, and religiously common in most parts of Iran. Efforts should be made to revive the values of these traditional games in order to preserve their significance. Social relationships begin at birth, and it is prominent in daily interactions between the newborn, parents, and caregivers. Children are social beings, which are important for initiating and facilitating social interactions. (Ramzanejad, 2016). Social growth refers to an individual's maturity in social relationships, enabling them to harmonize and be compatible with other members of the community. In other words, an individual is considered social not only when they are with others but also when they collaborate with them. In today's world, children's leisure time is often dedicated to activities such as radio, television, computers, and so on, which can reduce a child's physical activity and verbal communication. It is our responsibility to design traditional games so that both their verbal and physical aspects are emphasized. Social skills encompass various aspects including life skills, cooperation with others, self-regulation, interaction, dialogue, and shared experiences, all aimed at creating a pleasant atmosphere for every member of the group. The spirit of being togetherness will emerge among individuals. In every course, there should be comprehensive educational

planning. (Uliyana, 2015). In children, learning predominantly occurs in the home environment. To prevent boredom and increase children's activity at home, parents need to engage them, and one alternative is play. Parents and families can help children prepare for social life by playing indoor games and replacing passive activities with entertaining physical activities. According to the findings, traditional games have a significant impact on social development, and it can be said that young children imitate the games of older children. These young children also imitate the games of children from the previous generation. In this way, in every culture, one generation passes on the type of play that is most satisfying to them to the next generation. The type of game that becomes cultural, national, and traditional depends on the values of that culture.

In the opinion of James & Porot (1999), childhood is understood as a complex social structure. Play is a part of a child's life that occupies a significant amount of their time and interest. All children are born and grow up in particular communities. Each of these communities consists of a group of people who share in legal, political, and economic structures. An important part of the growth process for a child is acquiring a pure understanding of these structures. So that by the time they reach adulthood, they are able to function appropriately within this social framework. Researchers have emphasized the use of local games in preschool centers to improve children's motor development and reduce aggression (Ilchizadeh, 2021). Various factors influencing social development and mental health. Among these factors that are mostly considered in research are physical activities such as play, sports, competition, and physical education (Smith et al., 1, 2009; Nazar et al., 2012; Im et al., 2013). Social development is defined as the changes that occur in an individual as a result of mutual influences with others, social conditions, and organization. Throughout their evolutionary journey, humans enter new levels of social development and eventually can perceive themselves within a broader dimension of society. In terms of socialization, children learn through traditional games that play is not possible without other children. They learn how to accept one another. They learn how concepts such as cooperation, victory over opponents, defeat, rivalry, and the desire for superiority develop in a social environment through group games. They become familiar with the roles they will need to play in the future by imitating adult behaviors through play. In the process of socialization through play, children learn to have positive self-talk, feel competent, develop a sense of independence, and cultivate self-discipline. It is through traditional play that children internalize the social values of the community to which they belong. Ultimately, play helps children adapt to their social environment, offers an easy method for improving certain aspects of social development and subscales of mental health in children. An individual's social development is the extent of their ability to adapt to others. Social development plays a role not only in adapting to those around us but also in academic progress and success (Kashi, 2015). Traditional games encourage motor and social development of 6-year-old children. By proper and purposeful planning, traditional games (without the need for special equipment) can create an environment for children's growth in areas such as motor, social, and psychological development. This, in turn, can enhance morale, resilience, self-esteem, and ultimately play a vital role in shaping the well-being of our future generations. According to Piaget's theory of social development (1987), children and adolescents not only progress in the domains of language, play, and memory but also experience growth in social and moral aspects. This cognitive developmental period is influenced by interactions with others. People can actualize

their roles in a personalized manner when interacting with others. Therefore, local, and traditional games can cover a wide range of individuals of all ages, with the simplest and available means in society and regardless of any limitations (Alafyani, Sheikh, Minooei, 2016). This process (including sports and traditional games) can serve as a pathway for releasing inner energies of children and adolescents, making their learning journey smoother and leading to their social development and improvement of their communication skills. Children and adolescents can release their inner energies through this process (traditional games and sports), making their learning journey smoother and leading to their social development and improvement of their communication skills (Jafari, 2010). The body and mind work together as one, so improving one positively affects the other (Ghaseminejad Dehkordi, 2007). Play allows children and adolescents to explore their unpleasant feelings without facing the consequences of adult activities. Erikson (1902-1994) rejects Freud's very limited view that the main function of play is to reduce anxiety. He believes that since play promotes the development of physical and social skills, which increase an individual's self-esteem, it can also function to 'build the self'. Playing with peers, sharing imagination and reality with them, and showcasing skills in social situations are all forms of wisdom play that rejuvenate the self of children and adolescents. This helps them realize that they can succeed in the larger society (Abadani, Araei, 2015). Although many people often perceive play merely as a pastime, it nevertheless plays a crucially accepted role in a child's life. In a way that its absence or scarcity deprives children of many learning opportunities, situations that cannot be compensated for in other ways.

Play is the most effective and meaningful way of learning for children (Hosseini, 1977).

Unknown aspects of the problem

The search is for identifying the dependent variable in the social development of children. The social development of children (including dimensions such as self-help general, self-help in dressing, self-help in eating, interaction with others, self-regulation of behaviors, socialization, physical activity, profession, and occupation).

Significance and necessity of research

Considering the significant impact of traditional games on various aspects of children's development, especially their social development and its effect on personality formation in adulthood, attention and focus on this stage seem highly essential. Because all activities and attention given to the child during this period contribute to enhancing the quality of the child's relationship with themselves, their family, and their surrounding environment in the future. Children have a greater hope for learning and life expectancy. To this end, it is suggested that physical education and sports be recognized as valuable concepts in today's world, with their effects on well-being encompassing various aspects such as physical, mental, emotional, social, and biological. These are influencing factors on an individual's overall health and well-being. Therefore, to achieve comprehensive well-being and optimal health, particular attention should be paid to physical education and sports, especially traditional games rooted in our culture. Practical measures for their implementation in the educational system of schools should

be considered. In this regard, in the coming years, we should not see students entering school with tears or displaying shyness and other similar issues.

Theoretical Basis and research background

Social Development

It is a process through which an individual learns skills and develops social interactions and relationships with others.

Definitions of socialization

Socialization is a process through which a child learns behaviors and thoughts (culture) characteristic of the society in which they are growing up. The prevailing values in societies differ; therefore, socialization in different cultures has different meanings. Additionally, there are cultural differences between subgroups and among families within cultures. For example, industrial societies that are economically competitive. These societies, have goals and values that differ from those of agricultural societies. In an industrial society, individuals play different roles (for example, managerial or labor roles), each with its own distinct culture. Even each family has its own culture, which is different from others. In other words, some families value education and acquiring knowledge, while others may not prioritize it. Some families value independence and self-sustainability, while others prioritize obedience and conformity. Each of these differences indicates that the ultimate outcome of socialization will be different. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of socialization are largely common across all groups (Yan et al., 2006). Socialization is the mechanism by which a child internalizes the societal behaviors and thought patterns prevalent in their upbringing environment. Three strategies have been proposed for socialization: reinforcement, social learning (based on imitation and modeling), and a cognitive approach, where the child becomes an active agent in their own socialization process. Three parenting styles have been identified: Autocratic, Permissive, and Authoritative. It appears that socialization is better achieved in children who have been raised in an authoritative parenting style (Yan et al., 2013).

Socialization factors

Socialization happens primarily in the family and parents serving as the main agents of socialization. Three mechanisms have been proposed as the basis of socialization:

1- Approaches to reinforcement

These approaches consider socialization as a result of learning. In these approaches, good behaviors are rewarded, while bad behaviors are punished. However, many believe that this approach is not sufficient to explain the complexities of the socialization process.

2- Social Learning Theory

This theory argues that imitation and modeling play a significant role in socialization. In this way, children imitate specific behaviors of their parents during the process of acquiring parental culture and model their own behavior based on their approach.

3- Cognitive approach

In this approach, the child is considered as a factor in their own socialization, rather than emphasizing reinforcement or modeling. In this way, the child expands their understanding of culture by distinguishing between right and wrong (Yan et al., 2006). For a long time in the twentieth century, it was believed, according to psychoanalytic theory, that the most significant factors influencing social development, such as personality development, were childhood events.

However, it later became clear that the existing differences (for example, in toilet training and feeding habits) have little or no effect on subsequent behavior. Childhood is considered the most crucial stage for socialization. So far, significant efforts have been made to classify various parenting styles and assess the impact of these styles on children's socialization. The general distinctions made between parenting styles include:

- Autocratic parents

Strict parents are those who expect their children to obey rules without any questioning or explanation.

- Permissive parents

Permissive parents exert minimal control over their children; they establish very few rules and rarely use punishment.

- Authoritative parents

Authoritative parents exert control when necessary, explaining the rationale behind rules and paying attention to their children's perspectives. It seems that the best socialization happens in children raised with an authoritative parenting style. Children exposed to strict and rigid rules tend to become dependent and disobedient. If they are subjected to harsh and severe punishment, they are prone to aggressive behavior. Children of permissive parents prefer to have little social responsibility, quickly become irritable, and may not become independent individuals (Yan et al., 2006).

Traditional Game

Games generally have a cultural dimension. Indigenous, tribal, local, and traditional Iranian games, in addition to their cultural significance, also boast high levels of attractiveness and diversity. Due to the geographical diversity and the presence of various ethnic and tribal groups in Iran, different types of games have been designed with specific objectives and have been widely practiced among the people. In fact, there have been over 150 types of traditional games in Iran, which, over time and with changes in lifestyle, have become foreign to today's generation. These games are divided into two categories: outdoor and indoor, providing people with the opportunity to make the most of their time in any location and situation. Some of these games are common in most parts of Iran from a social, cultural, and religious perspective. Here are some examples of these traditional and local games.

Dodgeball

To start the game, two groups line up facing each other, and the first group is chosen by flipping a coin. The selected group has the right to choose whether to be the middle group or the attacking group. The selected group has the right to choose whether to be the middle group or the attacking group. This game is played with a ball. The number of participants in this game is not limited. Regardless of how many children are playing, they divide into two groups and decide which group will be in the middle first. The group that is not in the middle also divides into two subgroups, with each subgroup positioned on either side of the playing field. They throw a ball from one side to the other, aiming to hit one of the players in the middle. Following distribution, players aim to hit one another. If a player is hit by an opponent's ball, they are "out". If someone catches the ball in the air without it touching their body or the ground (live), they can either bring one of their teammates who was out back into the game, or they can use it to stay in the game if they were hit once. The ball continues to be thrown from one side to the other until the most agile and clever children remain in the middle. Then, the game continues by swapping the positions of those in the middle with individuals from the two sides of the field.

Astep havay

In this game, played with an unlimited number of participants and a ball, the initiator throws the ball into the air while simultaneously calling out the name of one of the players. The person whose name is called tries to catch the ball before it hits the ground. During this time, the other players start running and moving away from that spot. The player whose name was called, if they successfully catch the ball, throws the ball back into the air and calls out the name of another player. In case they fail to catch the ball, they must chase after it and try to retrieve it as quickly as possible. As soon as they catch the ball, they shout "Stop"; the other players must immediately stop wherever they are upon hearing this command. The player holding the ball can choose to throw it towards anyone nearby or any player they wish. In this situation, none of the players are allowed to move (<https://www.beytoote.com>).

Haft Sang

Players should be divided into two teams with an equal number of members, and each team should select a leader. The "haft-sang" ball is a small ball—usually a number one, about the size of a tennis ball. The total number of players in a game of haft-sang can range from 4 to 16 individuals, so dividing into teams of 2 to 8 players each is the best option. First, through mutual agreement or drawing lots, one of the teams positions themselves at a certain distance from the seven stones to throw the ball towards the arranged stones.

The aim of these teams is to ensure that fewer stones fall after the ball hits them, making it easier to stack them on top of each other and achieve victory more smoothly. Therefore, one team stands at the throwing location while the other team positions themselves behind the stones. In this situation, two scenarios arise: 1) If the ball thrown by the throwing team does not hit a stone, the positions of the teams are switched so that the opposing team has a chance to try their luck. If the ball hits the haft-sang stones, the players of the throwing team must flee because the members of the other team must target them with the ball, passing it around and trying to hit them. The throwing team must return to the haft-sang area in a suitable position and rearrange the

scattered stones back on top of each other. On the other hand, the defending team must prevent this by trying to eliminate all members of the opposing team with accurate throws of the ball (<https://www.beytoote.com>).

Zoo Zoo

First, the players are divided into two groups. After picking teams, a stone is chosen; and the selected team starts the game. A line is drawn between the two groups, and both teams stand behind it. Each time, one member of the starting group, while continuously saying "zoo," enters the opposing team's area to try and tag one of their members. If the player can tag a member of the opposing team and return to their own side without breaking their breath, the tagged player is "out". However, if the opposing team manages to catch the player and cause them to run out of breath and stop saying "zoo," the player loses. Each time, a member from one of the teams enters the opponent's field and the game repeats. Ultimately, the team that has all its members eliminated loses, and the winning team starts the next game (<https://www.beytoote.com>).

Pantomime

The stages of the game in each round are as follows:

One team is selected to start the game. A member from the first team picks a paper from the basket of the second team. After the member of the first team reads and understands the phrase on the paper, the timekeeper activates the timer, and the game begins. The selected member then pantomimes (acts out without speaking) the word or phrase written on the paper. The other members of the first team try to guess what is being pantomimed. The first team has a maximum of three minutes to guess the phrase. After the first team correctly guesses the phrase, the referee notes the response time based on the timer. If the first team fails to guess the correct phrase within three minutes, the referee announces the end of time and records the response time as three minutes.

In the next round, a member of the second team picks a paper from the first team's basket, and the game continues as previously described. The best approach is to set the game such that, in each round, every member of both teams has to act out at least one phrase. The total response times of each team across all rounds determine the score of that team. The team with the shortest total response time will be the winner. Another way to decide the winner is by counting how many phrases each team guesses correctly. The goal of this creative drama is to give children a valuable and imaginative experience, where numerous educational and developmental issues can be finely incorporated.

It is important to note that children greatly enjoy performing. After collaborating for a while and feeling comfortable with their performance, they can present it to a group of children. They can even perform it for adults. In fact, creative drama can be considered one of the foundations of formal theater.

In creative show, our emphasis is on creativity. Therefore, a completely creative plan must be considered for designing its educational course. Despite the precise steps that exist for its implementation, we ensure that this program remains flexible. The changes and improvements suggested by the group should be taken into account. Adjusting and presenting it also involves considering the age of the group members, which is the first step in shaping the content of the program. Since each age group is in particular stages of comprehensive development (mental, physical, social, emotional, etc.). These conditions form the basis of the practices and activities (<https://www.beytoote.com>).

Hopscotch

It's a group game that can be played outdoors. The game-play involves jumping over squares drawn on the ground. Playing this game on Nowruz evokes nostalgic memories and brings us a lot of joy. Each player tosses a small object inside one of the squares on the hopscotch grid, then hops from square to square, hopping over the square with their rock in it. Each player's goal is to hop all the way down to the end and back without the other foot touching the ground.

Game of jacks

Local games vary according to each culture and bring a lot of joy and happiness. It's interesting to note that federations have been formed for these traditional and local sports, which play a fundamental role in promoting these games. Even you can find the bylaws for these sports in federations. This is one of those famous and engaging local games that most families are familiar with and consider highly important. This game plays differently in various cities. A creative individual can add new levels to make it even more challenging. In some provinces, this game progresses up to level 20.

The following authors have investigated the impact of play on children's development of social skills.

The study by Shah Mohammadi et al. 2022, titled "Effect of Play Based on Constructivism Learning Environment on Collaborative Learning and Social Development of Children," The results of this study showed that play based on a constructivist learning environment significantly increased collaborative learning and social development among students in the experimental group. The study by Babakhani et al. (2022), titled "The Effect of Dynamic Playground Games on Social Development and Perceived Physical Competence in 8 to 12-Year-Old Students." According to the findings of this study, dynamic playground games have a significant and positive impact on children's social development and perceived physical competence. The study by Rezaei et al. 2021, titled "Play Efficiency in the Mental, Emotional, and Social Development of Preschool Children." They stated that play promotes the emotional, social, physical, and cognitive growth of children. Active and brain teaser games have always been the best natural activity for any child. During play, a child's mental and physical abilities such as attention, memory, imagination, organization, agility, skills, physical strength, etc., develop. In addition, through play, a child becomes motivated and driven to acquire social experiences. Naturally, a child expresses themselves through their own play. The study by Mogadamfar et al. 2021, titled "Investigating the Relationship Between Successful Intelligence

and Empathy with Social Development of Preschool Children." Their research showed that there is a significant and direct correlation between successful intelligence and the social development of students. However, there was no significant correlation between empathy and social growth. The study by Mogadamfar et al. 2020 titled "The Effect of Empathy on the Social Development of Preschool Children: The Mediating Role of Social Adequacy." According to the findings, social development, as an important component of the developmental process, has both positive and negative effects on the mental health of children. The current study aimed to identify the effects of empathy on the social development of preschool children, with a focus on the mediating role of social adequacy. The analysis of hypotheses in this research indicated that empathy has a direct significant impact on the social development and social adequacy of preschool children ($\beta=0.001$, $p < 0.24$). Additionally, it was found that empathy has an indirect effect on the social development of children through the mediating role of social adequacy ($\beta=0.12$, $p < 0.02$). Social adequacy also has a direct significant impact on the social development of children ($\beta=0.001$, $p < 43.0$), and the model fits analysis showed that the model has a good fit. The conclusion drawn is that the variables of empathy and social adequacy significantly impact the social development of preschool children. This finding suggests that integrating these aspects into formal education as fundamental skills and parenting practices can be effective in preventing and addressing interpersonal issues. The study by Fahti Rezaei et al. 2020, titled "The Effect of Play in Natural Outdoor and Indoor Spaces on the Social and Perceptual Development of Preschool Children." The results of the analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that activities in both outdoor and indoor spaces had a significant and positive impact on the social and perceptual development of children. However, play in natural outdoor had a greater effect on the social and perceptual development of children compared to indoor spaces. In a way that 84% of the variations in children's social competence and 88% of the variations in their visual-motor integration were attributed to activities in outdoor and natural spaces. The study by Rezaei et al. 2019, titled "The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavior-Based Play Therapy on Social Development and Social Phobia of Preschool Children in Kermanshah City." Based on the ANCOVA analysis, cognitive behavior-based play therapy resulted in increased social development and decreased social phobia among children. The most important findings of this research highlight the effectiveness of play therapy and the usefulness of employing a cognitive-behavioral approach in enhancing social development and reducing social phobia in these children. The study titled "Effects of Perceptual-Motor Training Program on Social Development in Children Aged 6-11 Years with Mental Retardation" highlights the positive impact of this intervention on improving social development outcomes in children with mental retardation (Monzari Tavakoli et al., 2019). Ataei Gharehchahi et al. (2019) demonstrated in their study titled "The Effect of Creative Movement Games on the Social Skills Development in Educable Intellectually Disabled Children" that intervention with creative movement games led to a significant difference in social skills between the experimental and control groups. Ali Pour et al. 2019 conducted a study titled "Effect of Spark and Traditional Games on Motor Proficiency and Social Growth in Children with Developmental Coordination Disorder," revealing a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores among the Spark training and traditional local game groups. Hosseini Sabat et al. 2019 in their study titled "The Relationship Between Play and Learning and Social Development of Elementary School Students" found that one of the

prominent challenges in education is the necessity to employ methods that are up-to-date and engaging, fostering deeper learning, which unfortunately is not always the case. Various factors affect the students' learning and academic progress, and teaching methods is one of them. The active teaching method involving the use of games is preferred today because games can motivate students, thereby helping improve their performance and progress. Barzegar Bafrooei et al. (2017) in a study titled "The Impact of Playing with LEGO on the Psychological Health of Preschool Children" demonstrated that playing with LEGO has a significant effect on enhancing the social skills of preschool children aged 4 to 6 years. Herlini Melianasari & Suparno, 2018 conducted a study in Indonesia titled "The Importance of Traditional Games to Improve Children's Interpersonal Skills." The results showed that educators had a positive attitude towards traditional games. The study by Baradaran Bazaz, Shiva, et al. 2018, titled "The Effect of Traditional Games on Social Development and Emotional Intelligence of Preschool Children," showed that before the intervention, there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of average social development and emotional intelligence scores. However, after the intervention, the average social development and emotional intelligence scores in the intervention group were significantly higher than those in the control group. Hence, traditional games are effective in improving the social development and emotional intelligence of preschool children. Marlina, Surly (2017), in a study titled "The Effect of Traditional Games on the Social Ability Development of Children in Kindergarten," conducted in the state of Padang, concluded that the development of social abilities in the experimental class using traditional games was more effective than in the control class using modern games. Lesteri, Pata Ina, and Prima, Elizabeth (2017), in a study titled "Implementing Traditional Games to Improve Social-Emotional Skills in Childhood" conducted at Diana Pura University in Nigeria, found that playing traditional games improves children's emotional skills. This study demonstrated that physical activities are an essential part of children's leisure time and are necessary for their development. These activities not only enhance physical health but also improve mental and social well-being. Choi (2000), in a study titled "Cognitive Effects of Social Skills Training in Preschool Children," found that children showed significant improvement in their relationships with peers through play. Goldman (2007) conducted a study titled "Investigating the Effects of Brain Teasers on the Psychological Development of Children," which examined 92 children aged 3 to 7 years. The study concluded that brain teasers have a significant and positive impact on children's psychological development.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of this research, the hypotheses are formulated as follows:

Main Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between traditional games and the children's social development.

Subsidiary Hypotheses:

- 1- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and self-help general in the social development of children.

- 2- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and self-help in dressing in the social development of children.
- 3- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and self-help in eating in the social development of children.
- 4- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and interaction with others in the social development of children.
- 5- 5-There is a significant relationship between traditional games and self-regulation in behavior in the social development of children.
- 6- 6-There is a significant relationship between traditional games and socialization in the social development of children.
- 7- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and physical activity in the social development of children.
- 8- There is a significant relationship between traditional games and career aspirations in the social development of children.

Definition of Terms and Technical Vocabulary:

Traditional Play: A set of physical and mental movements and activities that bring joy, pleasure, and interaction with others. While play is a way to entertainment, it also has educational and constructive aspects (Jafari, 2011). Traditional games and sports are among human behaviors that have great potential for fostering communication and dialogue. They are often used as a means to resolve conflicts or to create interaction among individuals and communities (Rezvanfar, Morteza, 2011).

Social Development: Social development is a balanced collection of social skills and adaptive behaviors that enables individuals to have positive reciprocal relationships with others, exhibit positive reactions, and avoid behaviors with negative consequences. Skills such as cooperation, responsibility, empathy, patience, and self-sufficiency are components of social development (Gallagher, D. L., 1997).

Operational Definition of Social Development: In this study, social development scores are obtained from the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (1965).

- Self-help general: It is the total score obtained from questions 2-3-5-6-8-9-11-13-15-21-23-30-38-39-46-60 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Self-help in eating: It is the total score obtained from questions 16-20-25-26-29-33-34-56-62-70 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Self-help in dressing: It is the total score obtained from questions 19-32-35-37-42-43-47-58-59-61-67-80 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Self-directed or Self-ownership: It is the total score obtained from questions 69-110-77-81-85-86-89-91-93-94-95-96-98-99 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Occupational and Vocational Issues: It is the total score obtained from questions 4-18-22-31-36-44-49-51-65-68-107-108-109-74-76-83-92-100 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Mobility and Movement: It is the total score obtained from questions 13-17-40-48-55-71-90 of the Vineland questionnaire.
- Interpersonal Relations: It is the total score obtained from questions 1-10-27-28-52-57-66-72-73-75-78-84-87-88 of the Vineland questionnaire.

- Socialization: It is the total score obtained from questions 14-24-41-45-50-53-63-64-111-79-83-97-101-103-105 of the Vineland questionnaire.

Method

The research method is semi-experimental. The present study has conducted with two groups: the traditional games group and the control group, accompanied by a pretest-posttest design. The statistical population includes 6-year-old preschool children in District 8 of the Tehran Department of Education. The sample size will consist of 50 preschool children from District 8, randomly selected and then randomly assigned to two groups: the experimental and control groups. In both groups, traditional games and common preschool activities, the independent variable in the area of social development will be assessed simultaneously and before intervention. During the implementation of the scheme, the experimental group will be exposed to the independent variable of traditional games. However, during this period, the control group will engage in typical and conventional preschool activities. The intervention training for the traditional games group (experimental) will include games such as Dodgeball, Astop Havay, Haft Sang, Panj Sang, Zoo Zoo, Pantomime, Hopscotch, and Game of Jacks. These activities will be conducted over 8 weeks, with one session per week, each lasting 90 minutes. Both groups will be reassessed on social development after the completion of the intervention training. Participants' social development aspects will be assessed using the Vineland Social Maturity Scale in both the pretest and posttest stages.

Statistical population of the present study consisted of 6-year-old preschool children engaged in study in District 8 of Tehran city, starting from December 2022. A number of samples will be selected from among the 6-year-old preschool children in District 8 of Tehran. This will be done using the Morgan table and Cochran's formula. The sample size has been determined using Cochran's formula due to the limited population size of 40 individuals.

Data Analysis

The data has been analyzed at two levels (descriptive and inferential), using the SPSS statistical software after the distribution and collection of questionnaires. In terms of descriptive level, statistical indicators such as frequency, standard deviation, and mean have been used. At the inferential level, statistical tests such as analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) have been employed.

Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, we present the descriptive statistics related to the characteristics of the samples. Understanding the characteristics of the sample is useful because it helps define the general attributes of the population under study and provides a framework of its general features for other researchers. The statistical population consists of 40 individuals. 20 participants (50%) in the experimental group and the other 20 participants (50%) in the control group. The study sample consists of 40 individuals. The experimental group comprising 20% of 5-year-old children and 30% of 6-year-old children. The average age of the children in the experimental group is 5.6 years. In the control group, 22.5% of the children were 5 years old and 27.5% were 6

years old. The average age of the children in the experimental group is 5.55 years. The educational level of the fathers of the children is as follows: 2 individuals (5%) are under - educated, 5 individuals (12%) have a high school diploma, 13 individuals (32%) have an associate degree, 16 individuals (40%) have a bachelor's degree, and 4 individuals (11%) have a master's degree or higher. The educational level of the mothers of the children is as follows: 4 individuals (10%) under diploma, 11 individuals (27%) have a high school diploma, 10 individuals (25%) have an associate degree, 12 individuals (30%) have a bachelor's degree, and 3 individuals (8%) have a master's degree or higher. Among the fathers of the students, 5% are unemployed, 20% are teachers, 42% are office workers, 8% are doctors, and 25% are self-employed.

Testing Hypothesis 1

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and the self-help general aspect of children's social development.

ANCOVA used in the testing of hypothesis. The results demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the posttest mean scores between the control and experimental groups for the dependent variable "self-help general social development (children)" ($F = 37.00, p = .01$) (Table 1). The effect of the independent variable, group, on the dependent variable, self-help general social development, was significant. There was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 50.81, p < .001$). Therefore, the first research hypothesis, which posited the impact of traditional games on the dimension of "self-help general social development (children)," was confirmed.

Table 1: ANCOVA Results for Hypothesis 1

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Children's Cooperation	Pre-test	2760.75	1	2760.75	37.00	.001	.57	1.00
	Group	36380.52	1	36380.52	500.81	.001	.94	1.00
	Error	2106.64	29	72.64				
	Total	952159.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 2

H2: The relationship between traditional games and self-help in dressing in children's social development is significant.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. The findings revealed a significant difference between the posttest mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "self-help in dressing in social development" ($F = 31.89, p = .001$) (Table 2). The independent variable (group) affects the dependent variable "self-help in dressing in social development" was, indicating a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 44.19, p < .001$). Therefore, the second research hypothesis was also confirmed. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significant effect on the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

Table 2: ANCOVA Results for Hypothesis 2

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Children's Cooperation	Pre-test	2329.69	1	2329.69	311.89	.001	.91	1.00
	Group	330.11	1	330.11	44.19	.001	.60	1.00
	Error	216.61	29	7.46				
	Total	65981.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 3

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and self-help in eating as part of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data presented in Table3, there is a statistically significant relationship between the mean posttest score of the two groups in the dependent variable "self-help in eating as part of children's social development" ($F = 19.96, p = .001$). The independent variable group had a significant effect on the dependent variable, indicating a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 71.76, p < .001$). Therefore, the third hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significant impact on the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

Table 3: ANCOVA Results for Hypothesis 3

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Children's self-control	Pre-test	145.42	1	145.42	19.96	.001	.40	.99
	Group	5176.53	1	5176.53	710.76	.001	.96	1.00
	Error	211.21	29	7.28				
	Total	48553.00						

Testing Hypothesis 4

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and interaction with others as part of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. Based on the findings outlined in Table4, a statistically significant distinction exists between the average posttest scores of the control and experimental groups concerning the dependent variable ($F = 37.00, p = .01$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001, F = 81.500$). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed.

Table4: ANCOVA hypothesis 4 tests

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Interaction	Pre-test	2760.75	1	2760.75	37	.001	.57	1.00

with others	Group	36380.52	1	36380.52	500.81	.001	.94	1.00
	Error	2106.64	29	72.64				
	Total	952159.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 5

H5: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and self-regulation of behavior as part of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. Based on the findings outlined in Table5, a statistically significant distinction exists between the average posttest scores of the control and experimental groups concerning the dependent variable ($p = .221$, $F = 29.711$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 44.19$). Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significantly affects the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

Table5: ANCOVA hypothesis 5 tests

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Self-regulation of behaviors	Pre-test	2329.69	1	2329.69	311.89	.001	.91	1.00
	Group	330.11	1	330.11	44.19	.001	.60	1.00
	Error	216.61	29	7.46				
	Total	65981.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 6

H6: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and socialization as part of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. Based on the findings outlined in Table6, a statistically significant distinction exists between the average posttest scores of the control and experimental groups concerning the dependent variable ($p = .001$, $F = 19.96$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on dependent variable of irrational thoughts, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 710.76$). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significantly affects the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

Table6: ANCOVA hypothesis 6 tests

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
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Socialization	Pre-test	145.42	1	145.42	19.96	.001	.40	.99
	Group	5176.53	1	5176.53	710.76	.001	.96	1.00
	Error	211.21	29	7.28				
	Total	48553.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 7

H7: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and physical activities as part of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. Based on the findings outlined in Table7, a statistically significant distinction exists between the average posttest scores of the control and experimental groups concerning the dependent variable ($p = .01$, $F = 37.00$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 500.81$). Hence, the seventh hypothesis was confirmed.

Table7: ANCOVA hypothesis 7 tests

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Physical activities	Pre-test	2760.75	1	2760.75	37.00	.001	.57	1.00
	Group	36280.52	1	36380.52	500.81	.001	.94	1.00
	Error	2106.64	29	72.64				
	Total	952159.00	32					

Testing Hypothesis 8

H8: There is a significant relationship between traditional games and professional/occupational aspect of children's social development.

ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. The results from Table8 indicate that between the mean posttest scores of these two groups there is a significant difference ($p = .001$, $F = 311.89$). Additionally, the effect of the independent variable of the group on this variable has been significant, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 44.19$). Therefore, the eighth hypothesis was accepted.

Table8: ANCOVA hypothesis 8 tests

Dependent Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Effect Size	Statistical Power
Assertiveness	Pre-test	2329.69	1	2329.69	311.89	.001	.91	1.00
	Group	230.11	1	330.11	44.19	.001	.60	1.00
	Error	216.61	29	7.46				

	Total	65981.00	32					
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Conclusion

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and the self-help general aspect of children's social development. ANCOVA used in the testing of hypothesis. The results demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the posttest mean scores between the control and experimental groups for the dependent variable "self-help general social development (children)" ($F = 37.00, p = .01$) (Table7). The effect of the independent variable, group, on the dependent variable, self-help general social development, was significant. There was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 50.81, p < .001$). Therefore, the first research hypothesis was confirmed. In this term, the study is aligned with the research findings of Wari et al. (2016), Cordes and Somes (2015), Carey et al. (2015), Rhodes (2014), Eden and Inbar (2014), Spencer et al. (2014), Aidin et al. (2013).

H2: The relationship between traditional games and self-help in dressing in children's social development is significant. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. The findings revealed a significant difference between the posttest mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "self-help in dressing in social development" ($F = 31.89, p = .001$) (Table8). The independent variable (group) affects the dependent variable "self-help in dressing in social development" was, indicating a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 44.19, p < .001$). Therefore, the second research hypothesis was also confirmed. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significant effect on the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Fienberg (2001), Gut, D. M. & Safran, S. P (2002), Dodd, S. (2006), Gresham, F.M (2007), Towhirkani (2007), and Mofrad Taheri.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and self-help in eating as part of children's social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data presented in Table8, there is a statistically significant relationship between the mean posttest score of the two groups in the dependent variable "self-help in eating as part of children's social development" ($F = 19.96, p = .001$). The independent variable group had a significant effect on the dependent variable, indicating a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($F = 710.76, p < .001$). Therefore, the third hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significant impact on the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and interaction with others as part of children's social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data presented in Table8, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "interaction with others as part of children's social development" ($F = 37.00, p = .01$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001, F = 81.500$). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed. These results are also consistent with the findings of Wari et al. (2016), Cordes and Somes (2015), Carey et al. (2015), Rhodes (2014), Eden and Inbar (2014), Spencer et al. (2014), and Aidin et al. (2013).

H5: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and self-regulation of behavior as part of children's social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data in Table8, there is a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "self-regulation in behaviors as part of

children's social development" ($p = .001$, $F = 311.89$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 44.19$). Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significantly affects the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Fienberg (2001), Gut, D. M. & Safran, S. P (2002), Dodd, S. (2006), Gresham, F.M (2007), Toyserkani (2007), and Mofrad Taheri.

H6: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and socialization as part of children's social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data in Table 8, there is a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "socialization as part of children's social development" ($p = .001$, $F = 19.96$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on dependent variable of irrational thoughts, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 710.76$). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis was confirmed. Additionally, the findings indicated that the pretest had a significantly affects the posttest results, which was controlled for in this study.

H7: There is a statistically significant relationship between traditional games and physical activities as part of children's social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. According to the data in Table, there is a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control and experimental groups in the dependent variable "physical activities as part of children's social development" ($p = .01$, $F = 37.00$). The independent variable has had a significant effect on this dependent variable, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 500.81$). Hence, the seventh hypothesis was confirmed. These results are also consistent with the findings of Wari et al. (2016), Cordes and Somes (2015), Carey et al. (2015), Rhodes (2014), Eden and Inbar (2014), Spencer et al. (2014), and Aidin et al. (2013).

H8: In children, there is a significant relationship between traditional games and professional/occupational aspect of social development. ANCOVA was used in the testing of the hypothesis. The results from Table indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of these two groups ($p = .001$, $F = 311.89$). Additionally, the effect of the independent variable of the group on this variable has been significant, and there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups ($p < .001$, $F = 44.19$). Therefore, the eighth hypothesis was accepted. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Fienberg (2001), Gut, D. M. & Safran, S. P (2002), Dodd, S. (2006), Gresham, F.M (2007), Toyserkani (2007), and Mofrad Taheri.

Proposals

Regarding the final achievement of this research, it can be said that various educational strategies and approaches have been developed for the social growth of children. When planning to choose the appropriate approach for students, it is crucial to consider their personal differences. However, the use of traditional games for every student, without the need to consider differences, will be practical. This approach helps students actively participate in the learning process. Social skills, as antecedent factors in adaptation and interaction with others, are among the most important metacognitive and personality elements in students. According to the results of this research, traditional games, due to their impact on the hidden aspects of children's personality and cognition, can be effective in changing and improving children's social development.

Given the results of this research, it is expected that the strategy of social development of children, as an educational method, will be used by teachers in classrooms and for educating children with special needs.

The results of this research can also inform officials about the effectiveness of using traditional games for children aged 6, which can help create suitable environments for improving children's social development. Furthermore, employing these results could encourage education officials to include storytelling as part of educational activities in schools in future educational planning.

Conducting in-service training on the social development of children and presenting the experiences of successful countries to participants in order to enhance teachers' scientific and practical skills.

Implementation of traditional games in schools by teachers, leveraging experienced instructors.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

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