



Engrang Patok as a Physical-Motor Stimulation Strategy in Early Childhood

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Abstrak

Permainan tradisional engrang patok memiliki potensi sebagai media stimulasi fisik-motorik yang murah, kontekstual, dan bernilai pelestarian budaya, namun pemanfaatannya secara terencana di lembaga PAUD masih jarang dikaji. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan perkembangan penerapan permainan engrang patok sebagai strategi stimulasi fisik-motorik anak usia dini serta dampaknya terhadap perkembangan motorik kasar anak kelompok B di TK Alfirdaus, Desa Muara Delang, Kecamatan Tabir Selatan, Kabupaten Merangin. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terstruktur (30 butir) dan observasi lapangan terstruktur (10 butir) terhadap empat informan, yaitu dua guru kelas dan dua orang tua/wali, serta pengamatan langsung terhadap aktivitas bermain anak. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan, dengan keabsahan diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permainan engrang patok diperkenalkan secara terprogram dalam dua tahun terakhir dengan alat berbahan lokal, dilaksanakan melalui bimbingan guru bertahap, dan menstimulasi sejumlah aspek motorik kasar—terutama keseimbangan tubuh, koordinasi tangan-kaki, dan kekuatan otot tungkai—sekaligus mendukung perkembangan sosial-emosional anak. Permainan ini dinilai menunjang capaian Standar Tingkat Pencapaian Perkembangan Anak (STPPA) aspek fisik-motorik dan direkomendasikan sebagai alternatif strategi stimulasi berbasis kearifan lokal.

Kata Kunci: Anak Usia Dini; Engrang Patok; Motorik Kasar; Permainan Tradisional; Stimulasi Fisik-Motorik

Abstract

The traditional game of engrang patok (stilt walking) holds potential as a low-cost, contextual, and culturally meaningful medium for physical-motor stimulation; however, its planned use within early childhood education institutions remains underexamined. This study aims to describe the development of engrang patok implementation as a physical-motor stimulation strategy for early childhood, as well as its impact on the gross motor development of Group B children at TK Alfirdaus, Muara Delang Village, Tabir Selatan Sub-district, Merangin Regency. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through a structured interview guide (30 items) and a structured field observation guide (10 items) involving four informants—two classroom teachers and two parents—together with direct observation of children's play. Data were analysed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, with validity tested through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that engrang patok has been introduced in a programmed manner over the past two years using locally sourced equipment, delivered through graduated teacher guidance, and stimulates several aspects of gross motor development—particularly body balance, hand-foot coordination, and leg-muscle strength—while also supporting children's social-emotional development. The game is considered supportive of

the physical-motor domain of the national developmental achievement standards (STPPA) and is recommended as an alternative locally rooted stimulation strategy.

Keywords: *Early Childhood; Engrang Patok; Gross Motor; Physical-Motor Stimulation; Traditional Game*

Introduction

Early childhood is a golden age marked by rapid development across all domains, including the physical-motor domain. Between the ages of five and six, children are at the stage of refining the gross motor skills that form the foundation for independent movement, physical health, and readiness for the next level of education [1]. Appropriate stimulation during this period helps determine the quality of a child's neuromuscular maturation so that locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills can develop optimally in line with their developmental stage.

Gross motor skills do not develop automatically; they require stimulation, repetition, and adequate opportunities for movement. From a motor-development perspective, biological maturation must be accompanied by structured movement experiences for children to reach their peak movement potential [1], [2]. Selecting an appropriate stimulation medium is therefore one of the keys to successful physical-motor learning in early childhood education (ECE) institutions.

Within the national regulatory framework, physical-motor development is one of the developmental domains that must be stimulated under the Child Developmental Achievement Standards (Standar Tingkat Pencapaian Perkembangan Anak, STPPA), as stipulated in the National Standards for Early Childhood Education [3]. The ECE curriculum likewise directs learning activities to be meaningful, enjoyable, and child-centred through play

[4]. Play is not merely a way to fill time; it is the principal medium through which children build their knowledge, skills, and social relationships [5], [6].

One culturally rich national asset relevant as a stimulation medium is the traditional game, which simultaneously combines physical movement, social interaction, and local-wisdom values [7]. Among the variety of traditional games, engrang patok—also known as enggrak or egrang batok—is a game of walking on raised footholds controlled by cords. It requires children to maintain balance, coordinate their hands and feet, and exert leg-muscle strength simultaneously, which makes it theoretically highly promising as a medium for gross motor stimulation.

Gross motor skills refer to movement abilities that involve the body's large muscles, such as walking, running, jumping, and maintaining balance. At the age of five to six, children are in the phase of refining these skills, in which movement becomes more coordinated, controlled, and efficient [1]. This development is shaped by the interaction among nervous-system maturation, physical growth, and the movement experiences children gain from their environment [2], [8]. Mature gross motor skills are an important prerequisite for children's independence and their readiness to engage in more complex learning activities.

As the natural activity of children, play serves as the primary means of constructing knowledge and skills. From a constructivist perspective, children build understanding through active interaction with their

environment, whereas from a sociocultural perspective, play provides room for children to develop their abilities through social interaction and the guidance of more competent others [5], [6]. The concepts of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding explain that children can reach higher levels of ability when given appropriate assistance, which is then gradually reduced as their independence grows [5], [9]. Moreover, play that is challenging yet attainable can train executive functions and self-regulation that support lifelong learning, so that demanding traditional games such as engrang patok are pedagogically defensible rather than mere diversions [10].

Despite its strategic value, the planned use of engrang patok as a physical-motor stimulation strategy in ECE institutions remains rarely examined empirically. Most of the literature highlights traditional games in general, whereas documentation of how an institution introduces, guides, and evaluates such a game in a graduated manner is still limited [7]. Yet a picture of this process is important for understanding the success of stimulation from the standpoint of implementation, not merely the equipment. Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) describe the development of engrang patok implementation as a physical-motor stimulation strategy for early childhood at TK Alfirdaus; (2) describe the gross motor aspects stimulated through the game; and (3) identify the supporting factors and obstacles in its implementation. The novelty of this study lies in tracing the programmed development of the game's implementation—from introduction and forms of guidance to evaluation—and formulating it into an adaptable conceptual model, thereby bridging the gap between literature that emphasises the potential of the

equipment and practitioners' practical need for systematic implementation guidance.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The approach was chosen because the aim was to understand and describe the phenomenon of engrang patok implementation comprehensively in its natural setting rather than to test hypotheses [11], [12]. The study was conducted at TK Alfirdaus, Jalan Sepat, Muara Delang Village, Tabir Selatan Sub-district, Merangin Regency, with data collected on 8 June 2026.

Subjects and Informants

The research subjects were Group B children (aged 5–6 years) observed while playing engrang patok. Informants were determined purposively based on their direct involvement in the activity, comprising two classroom teachers and two parents/guardians. The informant profile is presented in Table 1.

No.	Initials	Role	Code & Notes
1	FH	Classroom teacher	G-1, Group B companion
2	IN	Classroom teacher	G-2, Group B companion
3	NH	Parent/guardian	O-1, guardian of a Group A/B child (5-6 yrs)
4	SW	Parent/guardian	O-2, guardian of a Group B child (5-6 yrs)

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, structured interviews used a 30-item interview guide covering the history of the game's introduction, the rationale for its selection, the frequency and forms of guidance, the motor aspects developed, obstacles, parental involvement, teacher assessment, learning integration, safety aspects, and links to STPPA attainment. Second, structured field observation used a 10-item observation

guide examining body posture, stepping ability, hand-foot coordination, leg-muscle strength, expression and enthusiasm, reactions when nearly falling, social interaction, independence, endurance, and the progression of ability within one observation session. Third, documentation comprised field notes and activity photographs. The researcher acted as the main instrument, assisted by a field interviewer/observer.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analysed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which comprises three concurrent activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [13]. Condensation was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the interview and observation data according to the categories of motor aspects and implementation. Data display took the form of narrative descriptions and tables so that the patterns of relationships among the data could be readily understood, and conclusions were drawn progressively and then verified.

Data Validity

Data validity was tested through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation compared information from teachers and parents, whereas technique triangulation compared the results of interviews, observation, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation matched the informants' intended meaning [11], [12].

Findings and Discussion

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The presentation of findings is organised into several foci: the development of the game's introduction and implementation, the gross motor aspects stimulated, the social-emotional impact, and the supporting factors and obstacles. The following data are the result of reduction and display from interviews with four informants and direct observation of the play activities of Group B children.

Development of the Introduction and Implementation of Engrang Patok

Interviews with the four informants showed a convergence of views that engrang patok was introduced to children at TK Alfirdaus within the last two years—neither since the institution's founding nor merely at the planning stage. This indicates that the traditional game is a relatively new and programmed activity innovation, so its implementation can be traced as a developmental process. The rationale for selecting the game related to efforts to preserve traditional games as well as the practical consideration that the equipment is easy to make from local materials at low cost.

"We only made this game a routine activity about two years ago. At first it was occasional, then we added it to the physical-motor schedule because the children were enthusiastic and the equipment was easy for us to make ourselves." (G-1)

In terms of implementation, the game was conducted on a scheduled basis within physical-motor activities, with equipment mostly made by the teachers themselves or through joint activities with the children. Teacher guidance proceeded in a graduated manner: the teacher first demonstrated and then supervised the children, while children who were still hesitant received more intensive assistance. This graduated

guidance pattern is consistent with the concept of scaffolding in sociocultural theory—assistance that is gradually reduced as the child's independence increases [5].

"I demonstrate first how to stand and pull the cord, then the child tries. If a child is still afraid, I hold their hand until they dare to do it alone. Eventually they no longer need help." (G-2)

Direct observation reinforced these accounts. At the start of the session, most children still needed help to stand upright on the stilts, but after several attempts a number of children were able to take a few steps unaided. This shows that the implementation of the game did not stop at providing equipment but was supported by a consistent pattern of teacher guidance.

Gross Motor Aspects Stimulated

Structured observation showed that engrang patok stimulated several gross motor aspects simultaneously. The most prominent aspect was body balance, evident in the children's ability to stand and hold their position on the stilts. The next aspects were hand-foot coordination—the synchronisation of cord-pulling with stepping—and leg-muscle strength when treading. A summary of the motor aspects and observed indicators is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Gross Motor Aspects Stimulated through Engrang Patok

No.	Gross Motor Aspect	Observed Indicator in Engrang Patok
1	Body balance	The child can stand and hold a stable body position on the stilts
2	Hand-foot coordination	Synchronisation of pulling the control cord with foot steps when moving forward.
3	Leg-muscle strength	The power to tread and bear body weight while standing on the stilts.
4	Agility	The ability to change direction and keep a stepping rhythm without losing balance.
5	Endurance	The duration of play the child can sustain in one session.

Developmentally, the children's ability showed gradual improvement over time, with variation among individuals. The difficulty that most often arose in the early stage was maintaining balance, which then

diminished as practice intensity increased. This finding is consistent with the principle that gross motor skills develop through maturation and repeated practice in an environment that provides sufficient opportunities for movement [1], [2]. Children who played more regularly displayed noticeably different motor ability compared with those who played rarely, so the frequency of involvement became a factor relevant to attainment.

"Children who often join in have much better balance. Those who rarely join are usually still wobbly and get down quickly. So what makes the difference is how often they practise." (G-1)

Social-Emotional Impact and Children's Enthusiasm

Beyond the physical aspect, engrang patok had an impact on the social-emotional domain. Children learned to be patient and to wait their turn, gained confidence, and were trained to get up and try again when they nearly fell. This adaptive reaction to failure indicates the growth of resilience and persistence, which—from the perspective of social cognitive theory—relates to the strengthening of self-efficacy through gradual mastery experiences and the imitation of peers [14]. The children's enthusiasm for this game was generally higher than for device-based play because of its active, social, and challenging nature.

"My child has become more confident and more patient about waiting for a turn. At home she tells me she managed to walk on the stilts, even though she used to be afraid. She also prefers playing outside to holding a phone." (O-1)

This affective impact is an important note because early childhood development

is holistic and interconnected. Physical stimulation through play turned out to proceed hand in hand with the formation of children's positive attitudes, so that a single play activity could touch several developmental domains at once.

Supporting Factors, Obstacles, and Safety Aspects

The main supporting factors for implementation were the principal's support and the availability of inexpensive locally sourced equipment. Teachers' strategies for maintaining children's interest combined several approaches, such as giving praise, varying the obstacles, and adding a healthy competitive nuance. Meanwhile, the obstacles encountered included concern about the risk of injury, time/schedule limitations, and differences in some children's interest. To mitigate risk, safety aspects were addressed comprehensively, including adult supervision, adjusting stilt height to the child's age, and periodically checking the condition of the equipment.

In terms of assessment, teachers generally monitored children's progress through direct observation and notes, but structured assessment documentation still needs strengthening. This is an important note because systematic assessment will reinforce the evidence linking the game to children's developmental attainment.

"What worried me most at first was the risk of falling. But because the children are always supervised by the teacher and the stilt height is adjusted to their age, it has been safe so far. I actually support it because my child has become more active." (O-2)

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce several theories relevant to the domains of motor development and early childhood education. The following discussion links the field results to the theoretical framework to explain why engrang patok is able to stimulate gross motor development as well as children's social-emotional aspects.

Motor-Development Perspective

The gradual pattern of improvement in children's ability is consistent with Gallahue's theory of motor development, which views movement skills as the result of interaction among biological maturation, the demands of the movement task, and environmental conditions [1]. Within this framework, engrang patok acts as an optimally challenging movement task that can nonetheless be mastered, thereby encouraging children to move beyond the fundamental movement phase towards more specialised movement. Balance that was initially unstable gradually became steady because the child's neuromuscular system received repeated feedback through practice—a mechanism known as experience-based motor learning [1], [2].

The difference in attainment between children who played regularly and those who played rarely affirms that biological maturation alone is insufficient without adequate movement experience. This supports the view that an environment rich in movement opportunities is a prerequisite for the optimal development of gross motor skills [2]. Thus, the frequency of involvement becomes a variable that cannot be ignored when designing stimulation programmes.

Sociocultural and Constructivist Perspective

The teachers' graduated guidance pattern—demonstrating, supervising, then reducing assistance—is a direct embodiment of the concept of scaffolding in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory [5]. Children move across the zone of proximal development (ZPD) from a state of needing help towards independence, with teachers and peers as mediators. The finding that children imitated the movements of more skilful peers is also consistent with the idea that learning is social before it becomes individual [5]. In line with this, Piaget's perspective emphasises that children build knowledge through active interaction with objects and the environment; here, the stilts and cords become concrete media that allow children to construct an understanding of balance and coordination through direct experimentation [6].

Social Cognitive Perspective and Self-Efficacy

The observed social-emotional impact—particularly the growth of confidence and persistence when children got up after nearly falling—can be explained through Bandura's social cognitive theory [14]. Gradual mastery experiences are the principal source of strengthened self-efficacy, while observing the success of peers (vicarious experience) reinforces a child's belief that they too are capable. Teachers' praise functions as verbal persuasion that further supports this efficacy. In other words, engrang patok not only trains the muscles but also builds a child's self-belief through mutually reinforcing psychological mechanisms [14], [15].

Traditional-Game and Cultural-Preservation Perspective

Beyond its motor value, engrang patok places children in an activity rich in cultural content. Sutton-Smith views play as an ambiguous yet richly functional phenomenon—simultaneously recreational, educational, and cultural [7]. The use of traditional games therefore serves a dual function: stimulating development while transmitting local wisdom. This is relevant to studies highlighting the role of challenging-yet-attainable play in developing executive functions and supporting lifelong learning [10]. This position strengthens the argument that traditional games deserve to be elevated as a legitimate learning strategy rather than a mere interlude.

A synthesis of these four perspectives shows that the success of engrang patok as a stimulation medium is no coincidence but the result of the integration of maturation, movement experience, social guidance, psychological reinforcement, and cultural context. To summarise this integration operationally, the study formulates a conceptual model described below.

The Role of Teacher–Parent Collaboration

The findings show that the game's implementation does not stand alone but is supported by an ecosystem involving the principal, teachers, and parents. The principal's support provides legitimacy and room for teachers to programme the game routinely, while parental acceptance—as seen in the statements of informants O-1 and O-2—reinforces the continuity of the activity beyond the school environment. Continuity of stimulation between school and home has the potential to accelerate children's motor attainment because it multiplies opportunities to practise.

Nevertheless, the parental involvement observed was still passive—limited to supporting and observing, and not yet extending to active involvement in facilitating practice at home. Strengthening two-way communication between teachers and parents—for example, through sharing progress notes or simple practice guides—could improve the consistency of stimulation. This aligns with the principle of early childhood education that positions the family as the institution’s principal partner in optimising child development.

In addition, the still-limited assessment documentation is a point that needs addressing so that the link between the game and developmental attainment can be demonstrated more convincingly. Systematic assessment is not merely an administrative tool but a basis for teachers to adjust the level of the game’s challenge to each child’s development, so that the principle of a challenging-yet-attainable movement task is maintained.

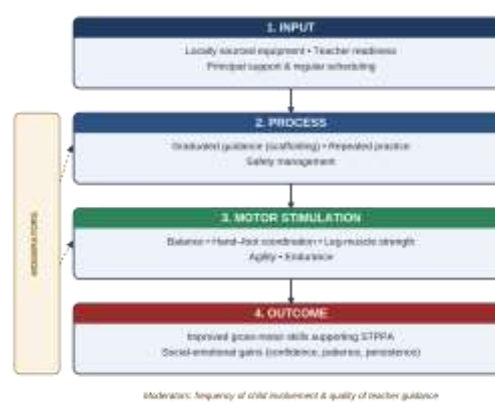
Conceptual Model of Engrang Patok-Based Motor Stimulation

Based on the overall findings, this study formulates a conceptual model that explains the relationship between the implementation of engrang patok and children’s gross motor development. The model is named the Traditional-Game-Based Motor Stimulation Model (hereafter the EPM Model—Engrang Patok-Motor), which depicts the causal flow from input and process to developmental outcomes. The EPM Model emphasises that the success of stimulation is determined not merely by the availability of equipment but by the quality of the guidance process and the frequency of the child’s involvement.

The EPM Model comprises four sequentially interconnected components. First, INPUT, encompassing locally sourced

equipment, teacher readiness, and institutional support. Second, PROCESS, encompassing graduated guidance (scaffolding), repeated practice, and safety management. Third, MOTOR STIMULATION, the core of the game’s influence on body balance, hand-foot coordination, leg-muscle strength, agility, and endurance. Fourth, OUTCOME, in the form of improved gross motor skills that support STPPA, accompanied by attendant effects on the social-emotional domain. The interconnection of these components is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The EPM Model (Engrang Patok–Motor): Gross Motor Stimulation Flow



The EPM Model affirms the existence of two strengthening paths (moderators) that influence the strength of the relationships among components, namely the frequency of the child’s involvement and the quality of teacher guidance. The higher the frequency of involvement and the more appropriate the guidance, the more optimal the motor attainment. The implication is that ECE institutions need to programme this game routinely and prepare teachers capable of providing graduated guidance, not merely supply the equipment.

As a practical guide to implementing the EPM Model in the field, this study derives

four implementation steps that other ECE educators can follow.

1. **Preparation:** prepare safe, locally sourced equipment and set a regular schedule within physical-motor activities.
2. **Modelling:** the teacher demonstrates first, then supervises and provides intensive assistance to children who are still hesitant.
3. **Habituation:** train children repeatedly with varied obstacles and a healthy competitive nuance to maintain interest.
4. **Assessment:** systematically document the progress of each motor aspect to monitor STPPA attainment.

Link to STPPA Attainment and Implications

The informants considered engrang patok to support STPPA attainment in the physical-motor developmental domain, particularly on the indicators of balance, coordination, and movement strength [3]. Overall, the game was judged effective and recommended for application in other ECE institutions, with the caveat of adjustments to the children's condition and the availability of supervision. This finding strengthens the position of traditional games as a stimulation strategy that is not only effective for motor development but also valuable for cultural preservation and character formation [7], [10].

A practical implication of this study is the need for ECE educators to design traditional games in a planned manner—including the preparation of safe equipment, graduated guidance, integration with learning themes, and documented assessment—so that their motor-stimulation potential can be optimised. Broader parental involvement and the development of innovations such as varied tracks and

systematic evaluation documentation are directions for future development.

Furthermore, the application of the EPM Model opens opportunities to integrate engrang patok with other learning themes, for example the introduction of local culture, group cooperation, and the habituation of an active life. In this way, a single play activity can stimulate several developmental domains holistically at once, in line with the principle of meaningful, child-centred ECE learning [4]. Such integration also reinforces the relevance of traditional games amid the dominance of device-based play, while positioning the teacher as a facilitator who designs meaningful movement experiences for children.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that engrang patok at TK Alfirdaus was introduced in a programmed manner within the last two years using locally sourced equipment and implemented through graduated teacher guidance. The game stimulates several gross motor aspects simultaneously—particularly body balance, hand-foot coordination, and leg-muscle strength—with improvements that are gradual and vary among children. Beyond its physical impact, the game also fosters children's confidence, patience, and persistence, and elicits enthusiasm higher than that for device-based play.

This study also formulates the EPM Model (Engrang Patok-Motor), which explains the flow from input and process through motor stimulation to outcome, with the frequency of involvement and the quality of guidance as strengthening factors. Engrang patok is judged to support STPPA attainment in the physical-motor domain and is worth recommending as an alternative

locally rooted stimulation strategy. For future strengthening, institutions are advised to improve systematic assessment documentation, broaden parental involvement, and develop variations of the game.

The contribution of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it enriches the study of early childhood education by linking traditional games to motor-development, sociocultural, social cognitive, and cultural frameworks in an integrated manner through the EPM Model. Practically, it provides implementation-step guidance that other ECE educators can adapt in designing locally rooted motor stimulation.

This study has several limitations worth noting. Its scope is limited to one institution with four informants, so the findings are contextual and not intended for broad generalisation. The measurement of motor development is qualitative and based on observation rather than a standardised instrument. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a broader design—for example, a multi-case study across institutions or an experimental quantitative approach with standard instruments—to test the effectiveness of engrang patok in a more measurable and generalisable way.

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