

**ГРАДОСТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО, ПЛАНИРОВКА СЕЛЬСКИХ НАСЕЛЕННЫХ ПУНКТОВ / CITY PLANNING OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS**

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**IMPACT OF THE ABSENCE OR LIMITEDNESS OF CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND ON CHILDREN PLAY ACTIVITY**

*Abstract*

Statistics shows that more than 25% of Indonesia's population in 2015 is comprised of children. For children, play is a very important activity in the process of their physical growth and social development. Play is also a right of children that is reinforced and protected by the constitution. But the rapid urban growth has resulted to the reduction of open spaces for children's playground and this has limited their movement. Therefore, this paper assessed the impact of playground limitations on the playing activity of children in various places in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Qualitative research method was primarily used by which the data were collected through questionnaires, personal interviews, field observation, and literature review. The results showed how limited the spaces for children's playground in the city of Yogyakarta which made children to utilize the road, the space around riverbank, the space around railroad tracks, and vacant land for playing and bicycling. These are spaces which are intended for other purposes but are perceived by children as available for them to play. They may be not aware that this is a very risky condition which they may have not fully realized particularly when no adults had intervened.

**Keywords:** children, play, playground limitedness, physical growth, children safety.

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**ВЛИЯНИЕ ОТСУТСТВИЯ ИЛИ НЕДОСТАТКА ДЕТСКИХ ПЛОЩАДОК В ГОРОДСКОЙ СРЕДЕ**

*Аннотация*

Согласно статистическим данным за 2015 год, более 25% населения Индонезии составляют дети. Для физического и социального развития детей очень важны игры. Также право детей на игры защищено Конституцией. К сожалению, быстрый рост городов привел к уменьшению открытых игровых площадок для детей, и это в свою очередь ограничило их свободу. В данной статье была принята попытка оценить влияние уменьшения количества игровых площадок на игровую активность детей в различных районах города Джокьякарта в Индонезии. Был использован качественный метод исследования, при котором данные собирались путем анкетирования, интервью, наблюдений и обзора литературы. Результаты показали что места для игр ограничены, что заставляет детей играть на дорогах, берегах реки, рядом с железнодорожным полотном и прочие пустые места, которые могут быть использованы для игр и катания на велосипеде. Данные локации не предназначены для игр, но воспринимаются детьми таковыми. Данные условия подвергают жизнь детей риску, особенно если те находятся без присмотра взрослых.

**Ключевые слова:** дети, играть, детская площадка, ограниченность, физический рост, безопасность детей.

**Introduction**

Statistics Indonesia (2013) shows the population of Indonesia in 2010 was 238.5 million and in 2015 increased to 255.5 million people in whole provinces of Indonesia, and will reach 305.6 million by 2035. In the other hand, data provided by the Statistics Indonesia (2013) showed in 2010 and 2015, amounting to 28.6% and 27.3% of Indonesia's population aged 0-14 years. These data indicate that in 2015 the number of children in Indonesia reached 70 million.

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 Year 2012 Article 11 about Child Protection said, "Every child has the right to rest and leisure, interact with other children of the same age, play, recreation, and creation in accordance with their interests, talents and level of intelligence for self-development." Furthermore, Article 22 states "the State and the government is obliged and responsible for providing facilities and infrastructure for implementation of child protection".

Kirazoğlu and Akpınar (2015) said, in urban design processes, children who have a large population in the city have not been considered. Furthermore, Kirazoğlu and Akpınar argue that the basic needs of children is to build social relations and express themselves. On the other hand, the growth of cities in Indonesia is very rapid, it led to a reduction of public open space which used as children playground. Urban land increasingly expensive resulting public open space is getting scarce. This resulted in the children's playground which are freely accessible also decreased. The absence or limitedness of children playground indicated children's right to acquire facilities and infrastructure has not been met. Children eventually use unsafe and hazardous spaces that are not safe as their playground. This study aims to discover the impact of the absence or limitedness children's playground in the play activity of children on several locations in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

**Research Method**

This research was conducted using qualitative method through questionnaires and interviews, field observation, as well as reviewing the related theories. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted for parents and caregivers who accompany the children when playing, while the field observations aim to get physical condition data of open spaces which was used by

children as a playground. The results of the questionnaires and field observations and then analyzed to obtain the conclusion of the study.

### Theoretical Review

All children should have the opportunity to play freely, (Macintyre, 2010). This shows that play is a substantial activity for children growth. According to Dargan and Zeitlin (2006), children learn through play activities in the neighborhood, sharing space, build relationships and establish ties with their neighbors. This was confirmed by Fromberg and Bergen (2006) who said that for the majority of children, play is the same activity with breathing, play activity has ability in developing children's capability in communication, relationship, complex thinking and creative problem solving. From this statement it is clear that play activities for children are learning activities in understanding something and establish social relationships and an opportunity to understand each other and share with each other.

The importance of play activities for children reinforced by the child protection laws that protect the children's rights. Article 11 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 Year 2012 on Child Protection said "Every child has the right to rest and leisure, interact with other children of the same age, playing, recreation, and creation in accordance with their interests, talents and level of intelligence for self-development." Therefore, the law should be able to guarantee the availability of children's playground. The existence of children's playground is a child rights mandated by law. Article 22 states that "the State and the government is obliged and responsible for providing facilities and infrastructure in the implementation of child protection." Similarly, the United Nations (1990) also guarantees the right of children as stated in Article 31 of UN Convention on Rights of the Child: "Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities."

Urban growth is very rapid and influenced by urbanization resulted in the availability of land in urban areas. The population living in urban areas affected urban density level in Indonesia. According to United Nation (2014), in 2014 more than 50% of Indonesia's population live in urban areas and is predicted by 2050 about 134 million people in Indonesia live in urban areas. High population growth in urban areas resulted in increased land requirements, both for housing, and public facilities. These conditions resulted in land for public open space becomes less and unable to meet the needs of urban communities. Dewiyanti (2011) said that the open space is reduced due to land use that occurs continuously and is accelerated to the development of various urban facilities. And as a result, as it is said Haryadi and RJ (2009) rapid urban growth in Indonesia resulted in congestion and air pollution problems. Reduced open space and high levels of congestion and air pollution would have led to the shortage of space to play in urban areas and affect the safety of the child due to the increased volume of motor vehicles and air pollution.

### Results and discussion

The study was conducted in three open space used as a children's play area located in three different districts, namely Jetis, Wirobrajan and Gondokusuman. These locations were selected by criteria of an informal settlement located in the city center with similar characteristics. The first location is located in District of Jetis, Yogyakarta. Based on field observations, an open play area is situated on the riverbank (Figure 1). Observation had been conducted in the morning and evening for a few days found that the play area had not been used by children. Results of a questionnaire to parents and caregivers on the field showed that more than 90% say the location is designated as unsafe play areas, and 87% say the location is not convenient. The interviews showed the reason why this location is considered unsafe and uncomfortable because of access to site deemed to be hazardous. Furthermore, the respondents also said that the location is not safe because the playground is located on the riverbank with high cliffs which is unsafe for children. Based on field observations, it was found that children tend to use street as a play area for the reason that is more accessible and relatively flat contour, and most of the children choose cycling as their activities.



Fig. 1 - Existing condition: (a) Playground area; (b) The cliff and river; and (c) Access to the playground area





Fig. 2 - Children play on the street

The second location is located in the District of Wirobrajan. At this location there is no playground area provided for children although great number of children live in this area. Without no children's playground provided, most of children use street and vacant land to accommodate their play activities. Field observations indicated there are three locations used as children's play area: streets, vacant lands, and the space around riverbank. Children aged five to ten years used street and vacant land (Figure 3) for playing and cycling in the afternoons and whole day on Sunday and holiday. Vacant land that has been used as a playground is quite dangerous because it is close to the river. From a total of 27 parents and caregivers who answered the questionnaire, 87% said vacant land used as a playground is unsafe. Respondents answered unsafe because of the location close to the river. In terms of play activities, most of children choose cycling as their play activity without parents and caregivers supervision. Meanwhile, activities for toddlers is organized by the PKK (Fostering of Family Welfare) integrated activities PAUD (Education for Early Childhood), which was held in the afternoon on the way home (Figure 4).



(a)



(b)

Fig. 3 - Children activity at District of Wirobrajan (a) children play on the street; and (b) children play on a vacant land



(a)



(b)

Fig. 4 - Toddlers activity (a and b) utilize street space

The third location is District of Gondokusuman (Figure 5). The location is situated next to the railway track. Based on field observation, at this location all children played without supervision of their parent or caregiver. The majority of children at this location were playing on the street and around the railway where they spending time for playing and cycling. The absence of a representative playground (Figure 6) leads the children to play in the hazardous area.



Fig. 5 - Space around railway used by children as playground



Fig. 6 - (a) Existing condition open space provided for children: and (b) Some children cycling to the area around railway

Research held on three locations found that, in the absence and the limited playground facilities have affected to the children play activities and the way how they utilize vacant land or a wide area as a playground. This area could be an open space on the riverbanks and around railway track. In addition to utilizing the open space around their homes, children in those locations also use the street as a playground. Most children spending time for cycling activity, this activity allows them have more space because are able to move from one location to another. As the results of research conducted Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in 2002, the road is very dangerous for children because of traffic congestion and pollution, on the other hand children require exploration of the environment so adult supervision on the activities of children outside very important. Observations had done in three locations found that children play on the street with cycling activities were not supervised by parents or caregivers. With the traffic density and the level of high-speed motor vehicle, it is very dangerous to be. Factors air pollution also pose a threat to children's health, as Kay et al. (2011) that children living near busy road has the potential for 50% exposed to the risk of respiratory.

### Conclusion

The results showed that the absence or limitedness of children's playground makes children looking for another open space as their playground. Furthermore, when the accommodating space is not available, the safety of children is threatened because they will be play at some hazardous area such as on the street, the riverbank, around railway or another hazardous spaces.



The majority of children on research area choose cycling as their alternative activities because they will have opportunity in order to extend their playing space when the space is not available representative. This activity also allows children to look another open space outside their district and to use street as their alternative playground. On the other hand, cycling on the street and hazardous area can jeopardize the safety of children. To accommodate the needs of children's growth, both the learning process, recognize the environmental, social interaction and other activities, especially children playing in the open space to be accommodated properly. When the child's right to play and learn are met, then the mandate of the law has been realized. On the contrary, if the children's right to play is not fulfilled, the child protection legislation has not been able to protect the rights of children.

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