



Improving Character Education through the Integration of Traditional Games in Primary Education: A Case Study Approach

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Abstract: *Objective:* This study aims to examine in depth the effectiveness of integrating traditional games in enhancing character education in primary school learning activities. The focus of this study is to identify emerging character values, the mechanisms of value internalisation through game activities, and how this approach strengthens pedagogical processes aimed at developing students' holistic character. *Method:* This study used a qualitative case study design in a primary school that implements traditional games as part of its learning strategy. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with teachers, and document analysis related to the implementation of learning. The analysis applied data reduction, categorisation, and verification techniques to produce comprehensive, academically valid interpretations. *Results:* The research findings indicate that traditional games significantly increase student engagement and facilitate the internalisation of character values such as cooperation, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, and responsibility. The social interactions created during the games allow students to experience the fundamental dynamics of character formation, such as decision-making, conflict resolution, and emotional control. Teachers reported that this learning model creates a more inclusive classroom atmosphere and encourages greater motivation for learning. *Novelty:* The novelty of this study lies in its conceptual contribution to character education by demonstrating how traditional games function as experiential and culturally situated learning spaces where character values are enacted and negotiated through social interaction. Rather than positioning traditional games as supplementary cultural activities, this study analytically explains the mechanisms through which culturally grounded play supports value internalisation, thereby offering a process-oriented perspective that extends conventional normative approaches to character education in primary education contexts.

Keywords: Character education; Traditional games; Primary education; Values internalisation; Student engagement.

Introduction

Character education at the primary school level plays a fundamental role in shaping students' moral, ethical, and social foundations from an early age. The success of character education at this stage determines students' personal development at subsequent levels and fosters a generation of integrity and adaptability to social dynamics. Numerous studies have shown that early character education is positively associated with prosocial behaviour, academic achievement, and emotional stability (Brown

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& Roberts, 2023). Global studies on children's play and learning also emphasise the importance of holistic learning experiences in developing social-emotional competencies (Fisher & Lockwood, 2022).

In practice, character education is not simply delivered through declarative statements of values; it requires learning experiences that enable students to internalise values through meaningful social interactions. An experiential approach is considered more effective because it involves experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising, and applying (Kolb-related experiential learning review, 2025). Within this framework, traditional games have strategic potential as learning media that integrate cognitive, social, emotional, and moral dimensions. Research shows that traditional games can foster values of sportsmanship, cooperation, self-control, and conflict-resolution skills (Hafina et al., 2022; Gustian, 2025).

Several studies also confirm that interactions in games contribute to children's social and cognitive development (Hibana et al., 2024; Mwinsa, 2025). Social constructivism and experiential learning perspectives explain how game dynamics enable learning through interaction and reflection (Lazzara et al., 2025). Furthermore, integrating local culture into game-based learning is expected to enhance relevance and student engagement (Ahmed & Kumar, 2021; Lee & Park, 2024).

However, although the literature has extensively discussed the effectiveness of games and their importance in character education, several research gaps remain unexplored. First, most studies focus on measuring the outcomes or impacts of games on specific aspects (e.g., social or academic competence) but have not explicitly outlined the mechanisms of value internalisation that occur during gameplay. Second, studies linking traditional games to character education are often descriptive or normative, lacking in-depth analysis of how the social dynamics within games shape students' moral experiences. Third, there is limited research that positions traditional games as a structured pedagogical space within formal primary school learning, rather than merely as a supporting or extracurricular activity (Oldham, 2025; Komaini, 2024). Thus, there is a need to analytically examine how traditional games function as pedagogical mechanisms in character development, particularly within formal primary school learning. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining in depth the interaction dynamics, the role of teachers, and the reflection processes that enable the internalisation of values in traditional game activities.

In this context, research on integrating traditional games into primary school learning has both scientific and practical urgency. This study strengthens the conceptual framework of character education grounded in local culture and social experiences by drawing on prior research that emphasises the relationship between culture and the effectiveness of game-based learning (Ahmed & Kumar, 2021; Jossan, 2021; Lee & Park, 2024). Practically, traditional games have been shown to increase learning motivation, social-emotional competencies, and an inclusive classroom climate (Cipriano et al., 2024; Kline & Murthy, 2024).

Strengthening character education grounded in local culture is closely aligned with national educational policies, including the Strengthening Character Education program (PPK) and the Pancasila Student Profile framework in Indonesia. These policy initiatives emphasise the cultivation of core virtues such as *gotong royong* (cooperation), integrity, and independence—values that can be meaningfully enacted through structured traditional game activities (Sarifah et al., 2025; Pujiastuti, 2025). Beyond their pedagogical relevance, traditional games also play an important role in revitalising cultural heritage amid the growing pressures of digitalisation, as highlighted in recent studies on the preservation and adaptation of local games in contemporary contexts (Sugiyanti & Pambudi, 2025; O'Connor & Barrett, 2024).

Despite this strong policy and cultural foundation, the translation of these aspirations into everyday classroom practice remains insufficiently conceptualised. In particular, there is a need for a more systematic and empirically grounded model that explains how traditional games can be integrated into formal learning to support character development. Therefore, this study seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of how integrating traditional games can serve as an effective pedagogical strategy for strengthening character education among primary school students.

Method

This research employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because it offered the researcher the opportunity to conduct an in-depth exploration of the integration of traditional games into primary school learning, particularly to strengthen character education. The case study in this research is instrumental rather than intrinsic. It means the study focuses not on the school as a single object but on the pedagogical phenomena occurring within the school context. The case study approach also allows for data triangulation through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, resulting in a rich and valid picture of the phenomenon.

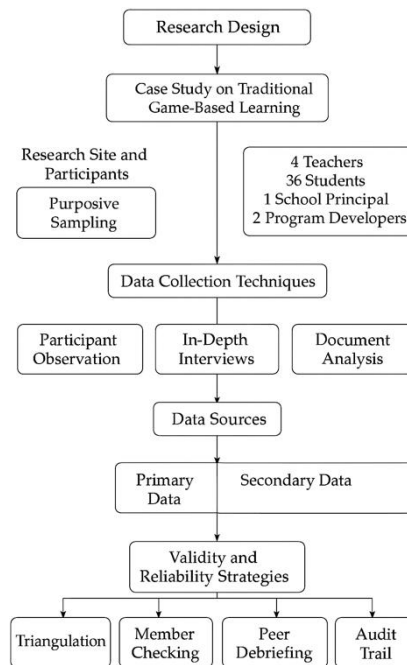


Figure 1: Research Methodological Flow

The figure illustrates the methodological flow of this research, which employed a qualitative case study design to explore the integration of traditional games into primary school learning. The research focused on understanding the process of internalising character values through students' play experiences within the context of thematic learning.

The figure shows that the location and participants were determined through purposive sampling, involving four teachers, 36 students, one principal, and two school program developers. Data were then collected through three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis, to obtain a comprehensive and contextualised picture of the learning process.

Data sources consisted of primary data (direct observation and interviews) and secondary data (school documents, lesson plans, and activity archives). Data were analysed using the Miles & Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions.

To ensure the credibility of the research, validity and reliability strategies were employed, including triangulation of techniques and sources, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail. Overall, the figure illustrates how the qualitative case study method was systematically used to uncover the mechanisms of character formation through traditional games in primary schools.

The choice of a qualitative case study design was based on the need to explore the mechanisms of the internalisation of character values through play experiences. Diverse data collection techniques provided depth of analysis, while validity strategies ensured the credibility of the findings. This approach aligns with the research objective of developing a comprehensive understanding of the

integration of traditional games into character-oriented learning, thereby further advancing the theory and practice of primary education.

Result and Discussion

Results

The results section of this study presents the main findings on the implementation of traditional games in primary school learning activities as a strategy to strengthen character education. The results are presented descriptively in accordance with the characteristics of the Results section in scientific articles. The findings were obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of the learning process, which integrated several traditional games, including *gobak sodor*, *engklek*, *ular naga*, and *Bentengan*.

1. Dynamics of Traditional Game Implementation in Learning

Observations indicated that traditional games were implemented through structured procedures with clear rules and sequential stages. The games integrated in classroom activities included *gobak sodor*, *engklek*, *ular naga*, and *bentengan*. Students actively engaged in physical activity, verbal interaction, and group coordination during gameplay.

In *gobak sodor*, students organised themselves into defensive and attacking teams. Team members communicated to block opponents or identify open pathways. In *engklek*, students waited for their turns, observed peers' performance, and responded spontaneously during play. *Ular naga* involved coordinated group movement with continuous verbal interaction among participants. In *bentengan*, students developed team strategies to approach opponents' bases while avoiding capture. Across activities, students adapted to the rules and engaged in peer interaction in accordance with game structures.

2. Character Behaviours Emerging During Games

Various character values emerged during traditional games. Findings indicate that traditional games provide a natural space for expressing, practising, and strengthening character values without explicit instruction. The character values that emerged can be categorised as follows:

Table 1: Character Values

Cooperation	The value of cooperation was particularly evident in games like <i>gobak sodor</i> , <i>ular naga</i> , and <i>Bentengan</i> . Students were seen discussing strategies, giving each other directions, and spontaneously assigning roles. Some groups even demonstrated the ability to make collective decisions to determine the game's course.
Discipline	Student discipline is evident in adherence to game rules, maintaining order, following teacher instructions, and consistently playing their roles. Students who break the rules generally accept the consequences without protest.
Sportsmanship	Sportsmanship is demonstrated by accepting defeat, not forcing oneself when declared defeated, and showing appreciation to the other group. In the game of <i>fort</i> , for example, students admit when they're caught without being forced.
Responsibility	Responsibility is reflected in students' awareness of maintaining their roles and not leaving the group. When the group needs a new strategy, students discuss it and adhere to the collective decision.
Ability to Control Emotions	Some games can be tense, especially when there are differences of opinion or competitive situations. However, students are generally able to control their anger, engage in dialogue, or report the problem to the teacher. In some cases, students are seen trying to calm down a friend who is becoming emotional.
Honesty	Honesty emerged as spontaneous admissions of mistakes. Some students admitted they had crossed the line or touched an opponent without being reprimanded.

3. The Role of Teachers in Facilitating Traditional Game-Based Learning

Teachers act as facilitators who guide the learning process through three stages: (1) preparation, (2) implementation, and (3) reflection.

Preparation	During the preparation stage, the teacher explains the game rules in detail, demonstrates how to play, and strategically groups students to ensure balanced interaction. The teacher ensures that all students understand the rules and the learning objectives.
Implementation	During the game, the teacher provides minimal direct intervention. They act more as observers, recording student behaviour. However, at critical moments, they reinforce values such as honesty, cooperation, or sportsmanship. They occasionally ask provocative questions to encourage students to reflect on their actions.
Reflection	After the game, the teacher invites students to reflect. The teacher asks students how they felt, what values they learned, which conflict situations occurred, and how they resolved them. Reflection provides a significant opportunity to clarify the relationship between the game and character values.

In general, teachers successfully integrated traditional games with character-strengthening strategies through effective communication, active observation, and positive reinforcement.

4. Student Responses to the Integration of Traditional Games

Data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews indicate that students responded predominantly positively to the integration of traditional games into learning activities. During gameplay sessions, students demonstrated high levels of participation through active movement, verbal interaction, and group coordination. Compared with regular classroom sessions, students appeared more enthusiastic and willing to engage in learning tasks, as evidenced in their readiness to participate, initiate interactions, and remain involved throughout the activities.

Interview data revealed that students perceived the learning process as enjoyable and distinct from their usual classroom experience, with several students reporting excitement and increased motivation to attend and participate in class activities. Observations also showed that passive behaviour was relatively limited and mainly occurred during instructional explanations rather than during gameplay.

In addition, the implementation of traditional games facilitated increased peer interaction during learning activities. Students frequently communicated to coordinate actions, clarify rules, and negotiate strategies within their groups. Emotional expressions such as excitement, disappointment, or frustration emerged during competitive moments but were generally brief and followed by continued participation.

Students who were typically less vocal during regular lessons were observed to become more engaged, contributing ideas, responding to peers, and assuming group roles. During post-activity reflection sessions, many students recounted their experiences and described their participation in the games, indicating sustained engagement throughout the learning process.

5. Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Traditional Games in Learning

Research results indicate several key factors that support the successful integration of traditional games into primary school learning.

Table 3: Main Factors for the Success of Traditional Games

Teacher Support and Pedagogical Competence	Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation. The teachers involved in this study demonstrated strong enthusiasm and a clear understanding of the character values they intended to instil. Furthermore, they were able to modify games to align with learning objectives, such as linking <i>gobak sodor</i> to the topic of "cooperation" and fortification to the topic of "strategy and sportsmanship."
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Open Learning Environment	The school provides ample space for traditional games. The open field allows students to move freely, ensuring optimal game dynamics.
School Policy Support	The principal provides formal support for the use of traditional games as a learning strategy. The school has incorporated traditional games into a program to strengthen local cultural values.
Characteristics of Primary School Students	Primary school-aged students tend toward active learning and require physical activity. Traditional games meet their motor, social, and emotional development needs.
Flexible Time Availability	Teachers utilise thematic lesson hours, allowing them to integrate game activities without disrupting curriculum targets.

6. Inhibiting Factors and Challenges to Implementation

Although implementing traditional games yielded positive results, several obstacles were encountered during the research.

Table 4: Inhibiting Factors to Implementation

Students Have Different Physical Abilities	In some games, such as Fort or Dragon, students with lower physical abilities tend to lag behind. Some students admit to feeling less confident because they can't move as quickly as their peers.
Potential Conflict Between Students	The competitive environment gave rise to minor conflicts, particularly when students felt the game's decisions were unfair. Although these conflicts were quickly resolved, the case demonstrates that games can also spark disputes.
Teachers' Limited Knowledge in Game Modification	Several teachers expressed that they did not fully understand how to modify traditional games to better align with specific learning competencies. This situation prompted them to seek further training.
Limited Equipment or Space During Unfavourable Weather	If it rains, outdoor play activities cannot be held. Classrooms are not large enough for large group play.
Classroom Organisation is Time-Consuming	Teachers need considerable time to group students, explain the rules, and ensure that everyone is ready to participate. This means that some students are not always able to experience the game in a single learning session fully.

These findings indicate that although traditional games are effective for character education, their implementation requires a mature classroom management strategy.

7. Contribution of Traditional Games to an Inclusive Classroom Climate

Observations show that traditional games contribute to the formation of an inclusive classroom climate in the following aspects:

Table 5: Contribution of Traditional Games

Eliminating Social Barriers	Students from different groups and with varying ability levels can interact as equals. There is no hierarchical structure determining who is smarter, as traditional games provide equal opportunity for every student.
Increased Empathy and Emotional Closeness	Students in groups were seen helping each other, encouraging each other, and calming down angry or disappointed peers. Play activities foster emotional closeness that doesn't always occur in traditional academic learning.
Feelings of Safety and Comfort	Students stated that they felt freer to express themselves in games than in regular lessons. Teachers also confirmed that games helped shy students gain confidence.

Developing Cultural Identity	Traditional games reintroduce local cultural values to the younger generation. Students begin to recognise games they previously only heard about from their parents or teachers.
Reducing Academic Anxiety	Students find learning more relaxed and enjoyable. Play activities help reduce the academic stress often experienced by students in conventional learning.

These data show that traditional games can create a learning environment that values diversity, fosters empathy, and cultivates healthy social relationships.

Discussion

The Discussion section interprets the research findings and connects them to theory and previous findings. Its primary objective is to answer the research questions and develop a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of the integration of traditional games into character education.

1. General Interpretation of Research Findings

The findings indicate that traditional games serve as an effective pedagogical medium for instilling character values in primary school students. This reinforces the social constructivist perspective, which holds that social interaction is foundational to moral and cognitive development. Traditional games, which involve rules, cooperation, strategy, and group dynamics, create a rich social context for character building.

Interactions within the games serve as mini-social laboratories for students to practice moral values such as empathy, sportsmanship, and responsibility. When students negotiate, make decisions, and resolve conflicts, they indirectly internalise values. This finding aligns with Kolb's theory, which holds that concrete experiences serve as the starting point for reflection and value learning.

2. Traditional Games as a Context for Experience-Based Character Learning

The study's results indicate that traditional games provide rich, authentic learning experiences. In games, students encounter social situations that demand self-control, cooperation, decision-making, problem-solving, and tolerance. These findings confirm that traditional games are inherently aligned with Kolb's experiential learning, in which concrete experience serves as the foundation for knowledge formation and behavioural change. In traditional games, students experience the real-time consequences of their actions. When a student disobeys the rules, they face immediate consequences, such as disqualification from the match or reprimands from their peers. When they cooperate, their group is more likely to achieve, and the situation creates a tangible cause-and-effect relationship that is difficult to replicate through moral lectures. Therefore, traditional games not only provide entertainment but also offer a concrete, reflective arena for practising character values.

Therefore, traditional games are an effective pedagogical intervention because the learning approach used situates values that are not taught verbally but are lived through concrete actions in classroom activities. Students do not simply hear or memorise concepts; they learn through repetition in real, yet safe and controlled, social situations, allowing them to directly experience the context of these values without the risk of harm. In this process, there is a direct connection between behaviour and its consequences, which helps students understand the moral reasoning behind an action rather than merely following it. Through repeated, consistent experiences, the process of internalising values is both spontaneous and structured, so that character values become more deeply embedded in students and are sustained over time.

These findings reinforce the position of traditional games as a model for character education grounded in social experiences.

3. Integration of Findings with Social Constructivism

The findings of this study are also highly relevant to Vygotsky's social constructivism perspective, which states that learning occurs through social interaction, language, and meaningful activities within a cultural context. Traditional games contain all of these elements. In the learning process, social

interaction is evident as students develop strategies, give instructions to one another, and engage in dialogue during minor conflicts, thereby enabling them to work together and resolve problems constructively. Language plays a crucial role in expressing feelings, providing support, negotiating decisions, and clarifying game rules, allowing students' communication and empathy skills to develop naturally. Furthermore, culture is present through traditional games used in learning activities, as these games are part of local heritage and convey social values such as *gotong-royong* (cooperation), sportsmanship, and togetherness, which students then internalise through direct experience. From Vygotsky's perspective, games facilitate the development of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), a space in which students learn from their peers through collaboration. During games, more socially skilled students help their peers understand strategies, resolve conflicts, or calm emotions. It shows that the ZPD occurs not only in academic learning, but also in character and social learning through play activities.

In other words, traditional games create a learning environment that naturally combines real social practices, language, and cultural values—exactly as emphasised by social constructivism.

4. Traditional Games as a Mechanism for Forming an Inclusive Learning Community

One significant finding is that traditional games foster an inclusive classroom climate. The classroom becomes a space without hierarchical barriers because every student has an equal opportunity to participate. In some cases, students who are less academically proficient actually demonstrate strengths in physical and social play.

This dynamic has the following impact: the use of games in learning has various positive effects on classroom dynamics. Student self-confidence increases as previously passive students become more active and assume roles during activities. Furthermore, academic stigma is removed, as students who are often considered "less intelligent" can emerge as leaders and demonstrate their strategic abilities in games. These activities also broaden social relationships, enabling students who previously rarely interact to become close friends after working together as a team. Furthermore, games can reduce learning anxiety by fostering a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, thereby reducing students' fear of making mistakes and increasing their willingness to try new things.

These findings support the literature that suggests play activities can improve interpersonal relationships and facilitate social-emotional learning. Traditional games, due to their entertaining and familiar nature, are an effective medium for fostering positive social relationships and a sense of belonging to the classroom community.

5. Answering the Research Question: Mechanism of Character Internalisation

Based on all research findings, the mechanism of character internalisation through traditional games can be synthesised as follows: Traditional games provide a structured social activity space, with rules, roles, and goals that must be adhered to by each participant. This structure naturally requires that children adhere to specific values, such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility. During the game, students also experience a variety of emotional and social responses, ranging from joy upon achieving a goal, disappointment upon losing, anxiety under pressure, to pride upon helping the team. These diverse emotions encourage students to reflect on their actions and understand the consequences of their behaviour. Furthermore, there is intense group interaction in which students negotiate, cooperate, and resolve emerging conflicts. This process fosters the spontaneous and authentic emergence of character values. After playing, teacher-guided reflection helps students more consciously and purposefully connect these experiences to their character values. When this entire process is carried out consistently, repeated experiences make these values more ingrained and absorbed into students' daily behaviour.

This mechanism differs from the normative approach, which only emphasises moral lectures. Traditional games provide repeated social experiences that underpin character development.

6. Integration of Findings with Previous Research

The findings of this study are consistent with global studies showing that play contributes to the development of character, social competence, and self-regulation skills in children. Several studies have

suggested that physical play and rule-based games help children develop empathy, obedience, and communication skills.

However, this study makes a novel contribution by focusing on local traditional games rather than modern games or sports. This novelty addresses a gap in the literature, which rarely includes traditional games as a formal strategy for character education in primary schools. Furthermore, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating that traditional games can foster an inclusive learning climate and reduce academic anxiety. It is rarely discussed in modern game studies.

7. Development of a New Conceptual Framework

Based on the research findings, a conceptual framework for Character Formation Through Traditional Games in Primary Education can be developed. This framework comprises essential components of the traditional game-based learning process that interact to form a comprehensive learning experience. Cultural stimuli are present through traditional games, which are not only physical activities but also convey local values and identity. It includes a social context comprising rules, interactions, negotiations, and conflicts that naturally arise during the game. These situations elicit psychological responses, such as emotions, empathy, and self-regulation skills, which continue to develop as students engage.

Simultaneously, the game triggers cognitive activity, including rapid decision-making, strategic planning, and action evaluation. Through these experiences, students internalise values such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, and sportsmanship without the need for verbal theoretical explanations. This process is reinforced by teachers' directed reflection, which helps students understand the meaning behind their experiences. Finally, repeated reinforcement of consistent gameplay makes these values more ingrained in students' daily behaviour.

This framework can serve as a basis for further research and the development of a local culture-based curriculum.

8. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Table 6: Contribution of Traditional Games

Theoretical Implication	Practical Implications
1. This research strengthens the concept of experience-based character learning.	1. Teachers can use traditional games as an effective and enjoyable character-building strategy.
2. It confirms that character education can be implemented through cultural activities.	2. Schools can incorporate traditional games into the local curriculum.
3. It adds empirical evidence that Vygotsky's ZPD applies in the context of traditional play.	3. The government can use traditional games as part of a cultural and character-building program.

9. Theory Development or Modification

This research contributes to the development of character education theory by demonstrating that: 1) traditional games have pedagogical capacity equivalent to modern learning models such as project-based learning or cooperative learning; 2) character values can be formed through local cultural contexts, not just global models; and 3) game dynamics provide social structures and stimuli capable of activating the process of internalising values without direct instruction.

Thus, this research opens the opportunity to develop a richer, more relevant model of character education theory grounded in local culture. By integrating traditional games, primary schools can realise holistic learning that integrates cognitive, affective, social, and cultural dimensions within a single activity. The findings of this research not only answer the research questions but also provide a scientific basis for developing more contextual, relevant, and humanistic character education policies and practices.

Conclusion

This study concludes that integrating traditional games into primary education offers a meaningful pedagogical approach to strengthening character education through experiential, socially situated learning. The findings indicate that traditional games function not only as recreational activities but also as contextual learning media that allow students to encounter values through direct interaction, cooperation, and negotiation within group dynamics. Such experiences enable the internalisation of values – including responsibility, respect, empathy, and self-regulation – in ways that are less attainable through purely instructional or normative approaches. However, the findings also suggest that the effectiveness of traditional games is not inherent in the games themselves, but largely depends on intentional pedagogical design and the teacher's ability to facilitate reflection and guide learning experiences toward explicit character outcomes.

The study contributes to the field of character education by critically highlighting the limitations of dominant approaches that emphasise declarative moral instruction without sufficient experiential engagement. While character education policies often promote value formation as an educational goal, classroom practices frequently remain oriented toward cognitive achievement and behavioural compliance. This study demonstrates that integrating culturally grounded play activities can help bridge this gap by creating learning environments in which values are practised rather than merely discussed. At the same time, the findings caution against romanticising traditional games as universally effective solutions. Without clear instructional objectives, structured facilitation, and alignment with curriculum goals, traditional games risk being reduced to supplementary activities that have limited educational impact.

From a practical perspective, the study underscores the need for teachers to reposition traditional games as intentional pedagogical tools rather than occasional cultural or recreational insertions. The integration of traditional games requires pedagogical sensitivity, including the ability to manage group interaction, encourage reflective dialogue, and connect play experiences with broader character learning objectives. Schools may benefit from incorporating traditional games into thematic learning and extracurricular programs; however, institutional support, teacher training, and curriculum flexibility remain critical factors determining successful implementation. The study, therefore, implies that character education through traditional games should be understood as a process requiring systematic planning rather than as a spontaneous outcome of play.

This study also acknowledges several limitations that open directions for further inquiry. The present research primarily examines character education within a specific educational context, limiting the generalisability of the findings across diverse cultural and institutional settings. Future research should employ experimental or mixed-methods designs to examine measurable impacts on specific character indicators and to compare traditional game-based approaches with other pedagogical interventions. Longitudinal studies are particularly necessary to determine whether character outcomes developed through play-based experiences can be sustained over time. Additionally, future studies should critically examine the integration of traditional games within digital or hybrid learning environments, considering both opportunities for innovation and potential risks of cultural dilution.

In conclusion, the integration of traditional games represents a promising yet context-dependent approach to character education in primary schools. Its effectiveness lies not merely in preserving cultural practices but in transforming them into structured learning experiences that support social-emotional and moral development. By positioning local culture as a pedagogical resource, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to develop culturally relevant, experientially grounded character education models that are responsive to contemporary educational challenges, while simultaneously emphasising the need for critical, evidence-based implementation in future educational practice.

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Author Contributions

All four authors contributed significantly to this research. First author Apit Dulyapit conceived the research idea, developed the methodological design, led data collection, and drafted the initial manuscript. The second author, Venna Puspita Sari, was involved in data validation, methodological verification, and instrument development and provided substantive revisions to the literature review and theoretical framework. The third author, Otib Satibi Hidayat, was responsible for data visualisation, table and illustration preparation, integrating the analysis results into the discussion section, and providing technical editing. Meanwhile, the fourth author, Laely Farokhah, supervised the overall research, ensuring compliance with ethical and academic standards, providing critical feedback, and refining the manuscript until it was ready for publication. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research. The entire research process, from instrument development and data collection to analysis and report preparation, was conducted independently, without influence from any party that could potentially affect the objectivity of the research results. There are no personal, financial, or professional relationships that could bias the interpretation of the data or the presentation of the research findings.

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