

# Traditional Games as Cultural Heritage and Character Education Media in the Globalization Era

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**Abstract.** Traditional games represent cultural heritage rich in noble values. Amid globalization and technological advancement, traditional games are increasingly marginalized, replaced by modern digital-based games. However, traditional games function not only as entertainment but also as effective learning media for character formation and positive values development among students. This research aims to examine the importance of traditional games preservation and explore their inherent meanings for student value formation, including cooperation, sportsmanship, discipline, responsibility, creativity, and appreciation of local culture. Furthermore, preservation and development of traditional games—as cultural objects—constitute a mandate from Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning Cultural Advancement that must be implemented by government alongside communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), artists, and cultural practitioners. The research method employed literature study analyzing various sources related to traditional games and their relevance to character education. Research findings demonstrate that traditional games can serve as holistic educational media, naturally integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of students. Therefore, traditional games preservation needs integration into school learning activities through local content or extracurricular activities, ensuring the noble values contained therein continue to be passed down to younger generations.

**Keywords:** traditional games, cultural preservation, character education, noble values, cultural advancement

## Introduction

Indonesia was born with diverse cultures deeply rooted in community life. Culture emerges as a result of human interaction with their environment. As a great nation rich in culture, the values contained within this culture should naturally become an inseparable part and cannot be separated, serving as society's worldview in their daily lives. Culture is not merely a symbol or identity but extends beyond that—culture becomes fundamental foundations in every aspect of life. Culture is abstract and complex because culture becomes a great house for societal life arrangements within it.

Human activities within a culture conducted repeatedly become habits or rituals and are inherited to every generation below, forming traditions that develop naturally among communities. This aligns with Ali Puddin's research stating that tradition represents human creations in the form of norm inheritance in life, habitual activities, and principles that cannot be easily changed (Alifuddin & Setyawan, 2021). One important part of national tradition existing in community life is traditional games.

Traditional games emerge from community traditions as expressions of society in maintaining their culture and traditions. Traditional games are not merely limited to literal play or pursuing pleasure and entertainment alone. Traditional games contain philosophical values, education, social interaction, and other important elements in community life arrangements. Traditional games represent cultural heritage rich in noble national values. As cultural tools, video games and traditional games have proven to be powerful instruments for cultural dissemination and preservation, transcending borders and generations while maintaining their cultural significance (Martínez-Borda et al., 2023). Zaini Alif in his writing on *Republika Online* states that there are 2,600 traditional games throughout Indonesia. This extraordinary condition makes traditional games an important part of learning in educational units.

Traditional games function not only as entertainment but also as effective learning media for character formation and positive values development among students.

Recent research demonstrates that heritage-based games enhance engagement through narrative-driven gameplay, information capsules, and meaningful cultural content, creating immersive educational experiences (Mystakidis et al., 2024). Character formation among students cannot be accomplished instantly but requires continuous efforts in the form of character education. This aligns with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System stated in Article 3, declaring that national education functions to develop capabilities and form national character and civilization. Even in Article 37 explanation, it explicitly states that art and culture study materials are intended to form student character as humans possessing artistic sense and cultural understanding. Therefore, traditional games should become an important part in forming student character in both formal and non-formal education units.

Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning Cultural Advancement states that preservation and development of traditional games as cultural objects must be implemented by government alongside communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), artists, and cultural practitioners. Based on these regulations, traditional games as part of traditions and culture born in society should be developed as educational media for cultural heritage and character education in the globalization era. However, amid globalization and technological advancement, traditional games existence is increasingly marginalized, replaced by modern digital-based games. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the role of traditional games, especially after the emergence of the cultural advancement law.

## **Literature Review**

### **Culture**

Culture represents systems of ideas, actions, and human creations in community life that belong to humans as part of learning results related to human reason and intelligence (Koentjaraningrat, 1975). This is reinforced by Kristianto's statement in his research declaring that culture is human creation in their society formed as a result of their interaction, so there is no culture without humans within it and no humans without culture they produce (Kistanto, 2017). Culture always relates to identity and becomes a nation's wealth originating from civilizational development that is constructive toward universal values development (Liliwari, 2019). It is clear that culture originates from human interaction; therefore, we should make culture a heritage for future generations (Halimah, Hafsa & Rahmat, 2024). Contemporary research emphasizes the integration of sustainable development goals with cultural heritage education, highlighting the importance of preserving cultural traditions while adapting to modern educational approaches (Lin et al., 2024). Sisweda in his research states that tradition is a habit applied continuously that becomes tradition in society and should naturally be preserved so noble values contained in that tradition can continue living in society (Sisweda et al., 2020). Based on this opinion, tradition has continuity characteristics to be practiced in cultural adherent community groups.

### **Traditional Games**

Traditional games represent reflections of values identity coloring community life and reflecting human creative works carrying cultural elements, never separated from natural interaction and always challenging reason and creativity of their practitioners (Mulyana & Lengkana, 2019). Traditional games have very humane educational roles for individual learning processes, especially children related to motor, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual development and values/norms (Nugrahastuti et al., 2016). Playing games represents one type of physical activity that can help children's growth and development (Anggita, 2019). Traditional games constitute part of community culture, most influenced by environmental nature, always attractive, entertaining according to community conditions (Yoga et al., 2021).

Modern approaches to cultural heritage education emphasize integrating gamification strategies with immersive technologies, creating engaging experiences that balance education and entertainment while ensuring cultural sensitivity (Liu & Zhao, 2024). Many positive values from traditional games become added value for implementing and executing them in school learning processes. This serves not only to preserve culture but also to develop students' competencies themselves.

## Methodology

The research method employed is literature study analyzing various sources related to traditional games and their relevance to character education. John W. Creswell (1998) defines literature study as systematic summaries of various journal articles, books, and other documents. This summary functions to describe relevant theory and information, both historical and contemporary, organizing them into structured topics (Masluh & Rahmat, 2022). Sources for literature study used in this research include scientific journal publications with guaranteed research quality and validity, books and academic manuscripts, papers in proceedings and scientific conferences, and online news sources with accountable reputation and truth.

## Results and Discussion

The number of traditional games in Indonesia is enormous with various characteristics. However, currently traditional games are beginning to be eroded by times development. Technological advancement, especially related to online games, begins eroding traditional games existence that some people, especially children today, consider as old-fashioned and unattractive games. Several factors underlying traditional games abandonment include:

1. Lack of socialization or campaigns about traditional games, causing society to be unfamiliar with traditional games from rule, technical, and excitement aspects of playing traditional games.
2. Availability of places or facilities for playing traditional games in current rapid development era.
3. Easy access to online games in the technological advancement era.
4. Technology literacy gaps where everything online-based is considered advanced and attractive although reality is not entirely the same.
5. Government role in cultural advancement that must be continuously improved and accompanied by real actions to preserve traditional games.

Recent studies demonstrate that traditional games, combined with metacognitive strategies, enhance not only academic and social aspects but also develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving (Checa-Romero & Giménez-Lozano, 2025). Traditional games have important roles in children's development, especially students in school environments. Experts have described that traditional games have positive values, especially in student character strengthening. Traditional games encourage student development in various aspects: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

### Cognitive Aspect (Knowledge)

Games related to cognitive aspect development include several important parts in students:

- a. **Literacy** Students can understand and observe game rules. In this part, student literacy competency can be well trained. In engklek games with certain rules, students must have literacy abilities to play well.
- b. **Numeracy** Numeracy competency strengthening through playing without students feeling direct learning represents part of traditional games. One example is congklak games. Student numeracy abilities are very necessary to be sharpened in this game.
- c. **Creativity** When playing gobak sodor, students need their creativity to break opponent defensive strategies to avoid being easily touched by opponents.

### Affective Aspect (Attitude)

The affective aspect represents aspects that greatly differentiate traditional games from online games. Traditional games are rich in attitude values because most games are played involving others, so student attitude competencies can be well developed. Honesty becomes the main value emerging in traditional games, how students can acknowledge defeat without cheating, because in traditional games, right and wrong, winning and losing can be clearly seen.

Immersive technologies in cultural heritage preservation demonstrate significant potential for enhancing engagement and interaction, providing new insights into how technology can reshape heritage experiences (Yang et al., 2025). Sportsmanship becomes attitude developed very well in traditional games, where students must dare acknowledge defeat when losing and not blame others, and win competitions without bringing down or mocking others. Students need to organize their teams when conducting traditional games, requiring team leaders and members, thus fostering leadership attitudes and cooperation very necessary in real life.

An equally important part of traditional games is social interaction. Traditional games require opponents to play and are rarely played alone, so interaction skills are very developed in all traditional games. This interaction ability cannot be found in online games because students only fight computers in online games.

### **Psychomotor Aspect (Skills)**

Psychomotor abilities are very developed in traditional games because traditional games involve all senses for playing. Agility and dexterity are very necessary in traditional games. Basic movement activities like standing, moving, walking, and running cannot be separated. This greatly enables students to remain healthy and active in their lives.

All parties' roles are very important in traditional games preservation efforts as cultural heritage that must be preserved. Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning Cultural Advancement states that preservation and development of traditional games as cultural objects must be implemented by government alongside communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), artists, and cultural practitioners. However, this role is still not optimal, as seen from conditions before and after this regulation's emergence – cultural preservation including traditional games still stagnates.

Contemporary research in cultural heritage education emphasizes the importance of pedagogical methods, especially game-based learning and gamification, combined with emerging technologies like virtual and augmented reality (López-Belmonte et al., 2022). Real actions involving comprehensive parties are needed to support cultural advancement, especially traditional games. Active roles from all parties supporting cultural preservation are very important for culture to remain sustainable, utilized, and impactful for future generations. Traditional games are not just stories but require practice to continue existing and not lose to times advancement. Real campaigns about traditional games, emergence of traditional games activist communities, or utilizing traditional games as learning media become important. It is very possible for traditional games to be acculturated with technological advancement so their roles don't disappear and remain beneficial.

### **Conclusion**

Culture and tradition cannot be separated in Indonesian community life. Traditional games as part of cultural heritage are very beneficial for student character formation in current globalization era. Traditional games in Indonesia face significant challenges due to technological advancement, especially online games. However, traditional games have crucial roles in student holistic development, covering three main aspects: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills).

Therefore, traditional games preservation as cultural heritage becomes all parties' responsibility, from government, communities, to activist communities. Real actions are needed, not just discourse, to ensure these games remain alive, relevant, and beneficial for future generations. Combining traditional games with technology can also be one way to preserve them.

The integration of traditional games into educational curricula represents a sustainable approach to cultural preservation while meeting contemporary educational needs. Research demonstrates that serious games focusing on cultural heritage significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes, particularly when designed with proper pedagogical frameworks (Bozhanova et al., 2024). Future research should explore innovative ways to blend traditional games with modern educational technologies while maintaining their cultural authenticity and educational value.

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