



The Socio-Cultural Meaning of Traditional Games on the Motivation and Motor Skills of Elementary School Students

Kamilah Insani¹, Anida Nuraisyah Budiman², Aam Ali Rahman³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Pendidikan Jasmani, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Abstract

The decline in traditional game practices due to the dominance of technology has hindered the cultivation of socio-cultural values and reduced opportunities for developing learning motivation and motor skills among elementary school students. This study aims to explore the socio-cultural meanings of traditional games and their roles in enhancing students' motivation and motor skills using a qualitative method with an intrinsic case study approach. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of the principal, Physical Education teachers, and 28 fourth-grade students relevant to the issue of low traditional game practice. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning, experiences, and student interactions during play activities. The results show that traditional games can enhance enthusiasm, motivation, motor skills, cooperation, honesty, social interaction, and students' character, supported by the role of teachers and schools in providing facilities, supervision, and learning policies. This study emphasizes the importance of traditional games as a local-wisdom-based PE learning strategy to holistically develop students' motor, social, and affective aspects.

Keywords: *Elementary School Students, Learning Motivation, Motor Skills, Socio-Cultural Meaning, Traditional Games*

Correspondence author: Kamilah Insani, Universitas pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia.

Email: kamilahinsani809@gmail.com



Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani (JPJ) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

The shift in children's lifestyles, which are increasingly driven by access to technology and digital games, has resulted in a decline in traditional game practices among elementary school children. Consequently, the natural space for cultivating socio-cultural values such as cooperation, collective rules, and local wisdom has become more limited, potentially weakening the function of traditional games as a medium for cultural preservation and character education. According to Purnama et al. (2024), introducing traditional games in elementary school physical education can strengthen students' understanding of cultural heritage as well as enhance their self-confidence and local identity. In addition, research by Aliriad et al. (2024) shows that the use of traditional games in PE classes significantly increases students' motivation to learn while also improving their basic motor skills.

A number of empirical studies have shown challenges in the development of children's motor skills (fundamental motor skills) and declining levels of physical activity; meanwhile, evidence also indicates that integrating traditional games into learning can enhance students' gross and fine motor skills as well as their physical fitness. However, the implementation of traditional games in the PE curriculum is still inconsistent and not yet optimally utilized Fudin et al. (2025) state that the use of traditional games in learning has been proven effective in improving fundamental motor skills of Phase A elementary students, although its application remains limited to certain contexts. Similarly, Ningsih et al. (2024) emphasize that traditional games are capable of developing elementary students' basic movements, but variations in implementation across schools lead to uneven results. In line with these findings, Shinta et al. (2025) assert that the development of contextual and easily accessible learning media, such as the Belajar Olahraga (BORA) mobile learning application, can increase student engagement and help teachers deliver more varied and engaging lessons. These findings strengthen the urgency of utilizing local culture-based approaches, including traditional games, as both provide interactive and enjoyable activities that facilitate more optimal motor development in students.

Beyond the physical aspect, research also emphasizes that traditional games can enhance students' learning motivation due to elements of enjoyment, social engagement, and cultural relevance. However, the specific relationship between the socio-cultural meanings of games (such as local identity, communal values, and the symbolism of game rules) and students' motivation and motor skills has not yet been mapped in depth. Aliriad et al. (2024) explain that the implementation of traditional games has been proven to increase motivation and fundamental motor skills among elementary school students, although it has not explored in detail the cultural aspects that may act as mediators. This is supported by Komaini et al. (2024), who state that a local traditional-game-based e-module is effective in improving learning interest and motor skills, yet the study does not explicitly examine the cultural values embedded within the games.

To address the decline in traditional game practices and the inconsistency of their implementation, it is necessary to systematically integrate traditional games into the PE curriculum and extracurricular activities at the elementary school level. Sunanto et al. (2024) state that learning models that incorporate traditional games as routine activities can enhance the development of fundamental motor skills when designed in a structured and standardized manner. Therefore, it is recommended that schools develop PE syllabi and lesson plans that include

motor-learning objectives based on traditional games, along with clear assessment instruments (motor skills, cooperation, motivation). In addition, research by Alpen et al. (2024) shows that traditional game based learning models significantly improve elementary students' motor skills while also increasing their participation and interest in sports activities. This implementation should be supported by teacher training modules (workshops) to ensure that teachers are able to modify games according to students' age levels and the facilities available at school.

To ensure that the socio-cultural aspects of traditional games (local identity, communal values) genuinely strengthen motivation and skill transfer, schools and researchers need to implement collaborative strategies: (1) developing learning materials based on local wisdom that explain the cultural values of the games; (2) involving local communities (parents, cultural practitioners, traditional leaders) to facilitate the social context and cultural narratives of the games; and (3) conducting mixed-methods evaluations to examine the mechanisms through which cultural elements influence motivation and skills. According to a systematic review by Mo et al. (2024), game-based PE programs enhance children's enjoyment and motivation when social emotional elements are incorporated into the activity design. Consistent with the findings of Aliriad et al. (2024) and several other review studies, the development of e-modules or teacher guides that include cultural values along with implementation steps can increase student interest and accelerate motor learning while simultaneously preserving local wisdom. Wijaya & Fitri (2023) state that combining traditional games with e-learning methods can improve students' fundamental locomotor movements, indicating that technology can serve as a mediator to broaden the adaptation of traditional games. To support these practices, it is recommended that local governments and education departments provide technical guidelines and resources (training, local teaching materials, inter-school competitions) so that these efforts do not rely solely on individual school initiatives.

Most previous studies have focused on the effectiveness of traditional games in improving students' learning motivation and motor skills through pedagogical approaches and instructional models. However, these studies have not yet examined in depth the socio-cultural meanings of traditional games such as local identity values, togetherness, and the symbolic nature of game rules and how these aspects function as important factors that strengthen motivation and the transfer of motor skills among elementary school students. Earlier research generally used quantitative methods with experimental designs to measure the effects of traditional games on motor skills, whereas this study employs a qualitative approach with a case study

method to explore more deeply the socio-cultural dimensions embedded in traditional games. Therefore, this study fills the gap by examining traditional games not only from a pedagogical perspective but also from the socio-cultural dimensions inherent within them.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to re-actualize traditional games as a learning medium that not only enriches motor skills but also strengthens socio-cultural values that are increasingly eroded by the dominance of digital games. This reinforcement is important so that schools, teachers, and communities recognize that traditional games can serve as an effective means to build learning motivation, develop motor skills, and preserve local cultural identity. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyze in depth the socio-cultural meanings of traditional games and their roles in enhancing elementary students' motivation and motor skills, so that the findings can serve as a reference for developing a PE curriculum based on local wisdom and relevant to contemporary educational needs. Based on this background, the research gap, and the urgency identified, this study focuses on how students and teachers perceive the social meanings embedded in traditional games; how students' appreciation of local cultural values emerges through their implementation in PE learning; how their experiences in playing traditional games influence learning motivation; how traditional game practices contribute to the development of fundamental motor skills while simultaneously preserving local socio-cultural values; and how school policies and the principal's perspectives support the implementation of traditional games as socially and culturally meaningful learning to improve students' motivation and motor skills.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with an intrinsic case study approach. The selection of a qualitative method is based on the research objective, which focuses on understanding the socio-cultural meanings of traditional games in relation to elementary school students' learning motivation and motor skills. The qualitative method is considered appropriate because the research variables are related to experiences, interactions, and meanings that naturally occur in students' daily lives.

An intrinsic case study approach was chosen because this research highlights a unique phenomenon related to the role of traditional games as a medium for instilling socio-cultural values as well as a means of teaching fundamental motor skills in elementary schools. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to explore in depth the dynamics that emerge within the

context of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning, so the data obtained are rich, detailed, and contextual. In addition, the intrinsic case study approach allows the researcher to capture the nuances of students' experiences, social interactions, and naturally occurring meanings within their activities.

This study employs a qualitative approach with purposive sampling, in which participants were selected based on their relevance to the research focus the decline in traditional game practices among elementary school students due to a lifestyle shift toward gadget-based games. The research was conducted at a public elementary school in Linggar Village, Rancaekek District, chosen because its students rarely engage in traditional games, making it representative of the issue. The participants consisted of the school principal, Physical Education teachers aged approximately 35–45 years, and 28 fourth-grade students (boys and girls aged 9–12 years). Participant criteria were determined through preliminary observations supported by information from the principal and PE teachers regarding students' play habits, as well as direct questions to students about their experiences with traditional games both at school and in their home environment. The students were selected because they were known to participate more actively in traditional games in either setting, enabling them to provide insights relevant to the study's aim of understanding the socio-cultural meanings of traditional games, learning motivation, and elementary students' motor skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the thematic analysis of interviews with the Physical Education teacher and the principal, a visualization was produced that illustrates the frequency of key concepts appearing in their narratives, which is presented in the form of a word cloud as shown in the following figure.

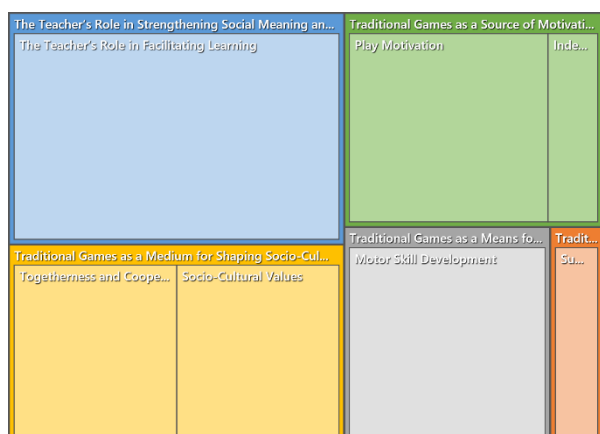


Figure 3. Hierarchy of the PE Teacher Interview

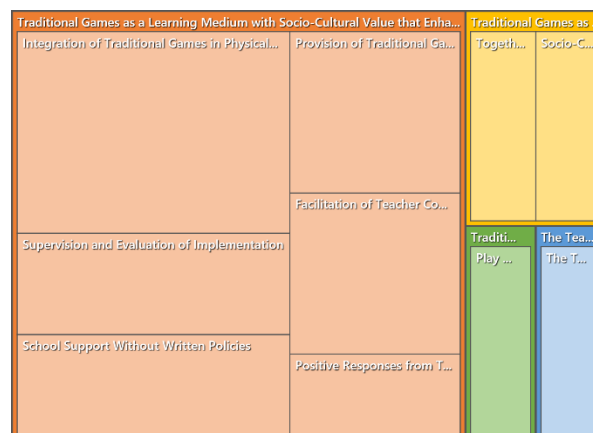


Figure 4. Hierarchy of the School Principal Interview

The hierarchy results from the interviews with the PE teacher and the school principal show that both share a similar perception of the importance of traditional games in PJOK learning, reflected in their focus on socio-cultural values and the benefits for student development. This is evident in the principal’s hierarchy, which emphasizes the integration of traditional games as part of the learning process, the provision of supporting facilities, character strengthening, continuous supervision, and evaluation aimed at ensuring that these games truly function as educational media. On the other hand, the PE teacher’s hierarchy presents a practical perspective on how traditional games are implemented in learning activities, including the teacher’s role in facilitating instruction, providing student motivation, instilling values of togetherness and cooperation, and improving physical skills such as coordination, agility, and fundamental movements. Furthermore, both hierarchies demonstrate that traditional games are not merely recreational activities but pedagogical tools that combine motor learning with character development. Overall, the hierarchies below illustrate how traditional games carry socio-cultural meanings, enhance learning motivation, and contribute holistically to the development of students’ motor skills.

Furthermore, the interview results from the Physical Education teacher and the principal were analyzed comparatively to identify similarities and differences in their focus, experiences, and emphasis of meaning that emerged from the data, as presented in the following figure.

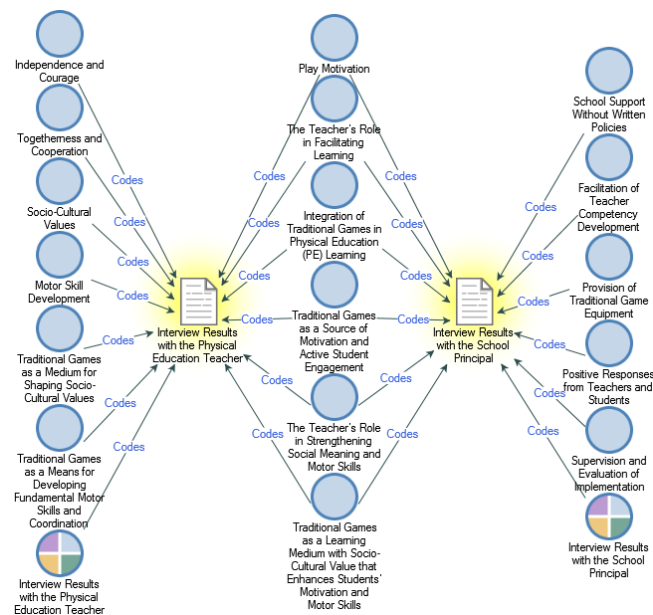


Figure 5. Results of the Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of the interview results with the PE teacher and the school principal shows that both hold different yet mutually complementary perspectives in interpreting the role of traditional games in elementary schools. The PE teacher places greater emphasis on their role within the learning process, including how traditional games can enhance student motivation, develop motor skills, support the smooth implementation of instruction, and strengthen direct interaction between teachers and students during activities. In contrast, the school principal adopts a more structural perspective, emphasizing the importance of learning facilities, implementation supervision, reinforcement of socio-cultural values, and support for enhancing students' motivation and motor skills. The principal also plays a role in policy implementation, facility provision, integrating traditional games into the curriculum, teacher competency development, and strengthening institutional responses. Meanwhile, the PE teacher contributes by creating meaningful direct learning experiences for students and enhancing instructional effectiveness efforts that are further supported by the principal's policies and facilities. Thus, the two perspectives complement one another and collectively support the optimal implementation of traditional game-based learning.

Finally, the results of the observation of traditional game learning were visualized in the form of a bar chart to illustrate the patterns of student behaviour and engagement during the activity, as shown in the following figure.

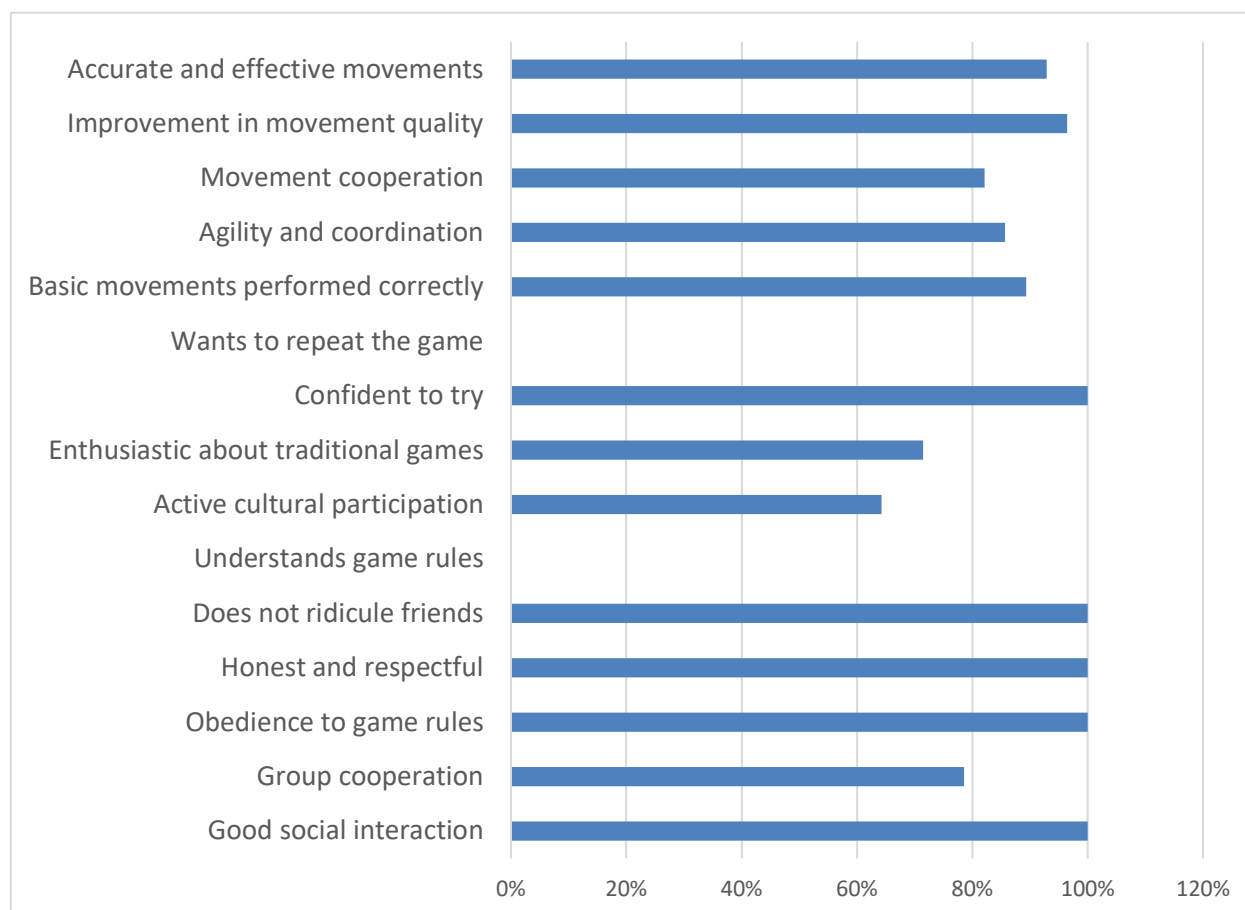


Figure 6. Observation Results Diagram

The observation results of traditional game-based learning show the presence of socio-cultural aspects, indicated by positive social interactions among students, their ability to work cooperatively in groups, adherence to game rules, demonstration of honesty and mutual respect, and the absence of mocking or demeaning behavior toward peers. In addition, the aspects of understanding and participation are reflected in students' comprehension of traditional game rules, their active participation in culturally based activities, and their enthusiasm and motivation to engage in the games. Regarding learning motivation, students demonstrated confidence in trying various activities and showed a high level of interest. Furthermore, in terms of motor skills, students' fundamental movements aligned with the activity demands, their agility and coordination improved, group movement cooperation increased, movement quality showed noticeable progress, and their actions became more accurate and effective. Therefore, it can be concluded that traditional games positively impact socio-cultural values, support active participation, enhance motivation, significantly develop motor skills, and effectively contribute to the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains of student learning.

Discussion

Based on interviews with the PE teacher and the school principal, as well as classroom observations, it is evident that students and teachers share a strong understanding of the social meanings embedded in traditional games. The PE teacher views these games as a medium for fostering cooperation, mutual assistance, honesty, discipline, and positive peer interaction, which is reflected in students' behaviors during learning, as they work together, respect one another, follow rules, and show good social interaction. Observations also indicate that group-based play encourages students to communicate, help peers, and complete activities with sportsmanship, aligning with Widayanti et al. (2023), who highlight the role of traditional games in enhancing children's social-emotional skills. Additionally, the social elements of traditional games are integrated with motor aspects, as shown by Hambali et al. (2022), who found that games like *engklek* improve balance, coordination, and body control while requiring interaction, turn-taking, and rule adherence. Overall, students' and teachers' understanding of the social meaning of traditional games is evident not only in their attitudes and behaviors but also in the games' contribution to the simultaneous development of motor and social abilities, making them a holistic learning medium.

Students' appreciation of local cultural values emerges strongly through the implementation of traditional games in PE learning, as reflected in their sense of pride when learning about the origins of these games and understanding that they represent part of their regional cultural identity. This pride is evident in their enthusiasm, active participation, and even their habit of continuing to play traditional games outside of school, indicating that these activities function not only as physical exercises but also as meaningful media for cultural internalization. Students' cultural appreciation is further reinforced by the teacher's explanations about the history of the games and by enjoyable, contextual learning experiences, aligning with Maulana & Suryana (2023), who emphasize that continuous teacher training enhances the ability to integrate local cultural values into instruction. Additionally, school support in providing facilities such as *bakiak* strengthens students' cultural appreciation, consistent with Syarifuddin et al. (2024), who state that adequate learning facilities and a positive learning environment can increase students' motivation and engagement. Thus, students' appreciation of local culture is cultivated not only through the act of playing but also through the role of teachers, school facility support, and learning experiences that position cultural values as an essential part of regional identity and pride.

Students' experiences in playing traditional games have been shown to significantly enhance their learning motivation in PE classes. The PE teacher emphasized that traditional games create a learning atmosphere that is more enjoyable, challenging, and not monotonous, which encourages students to be more willing to try new things. This aligns with classroom observations showing that fourth-grade students demonstrated very high engagement during activities, where most appeared happy, actively moving, easily interacting, cooperating, helping peers, following game rules, and displaying increased self-confidence. These behavioral patterns indicate that traditional games not only foster enthusiasm but also strengthen social aspects such as teamwork, honesty, and empathy among peers. This finding is consistent with Sudaryanti et al. (2024), who state that traditional games enhance children's motor and socio-emotional abilities through movement, cooperation, and direct interaction among players. Ariyanti (2023) also supports this by explaining that traditional games such as *bakiak* help develop coordination and balance while also fostering solidarity, leadership, and empathy qualities clearly observed in students' engagement during learning. The observations are further reinforced by the principal's remarks, noting that students respond very positively to traditional games because teachers successfully create a learning environment that is enjoyable, collaborative, and encourages active participation. Thus, students' experiences in playing traditional games play an important role in shaping their learning motivation, as these activities provide rich physical, social, and emotional experiences that simultaneously support motor, affective, and character development, consistent with motor development theories that emphasize the importance of movement and social interaction in fostering children's holistic growth.

Traditional game practices in PE learning have been shown to make an important contribution to the development of fundamental motor skills while simultaneously preserving local socio-cultural values. The PE teacher explained that games such as *engrang* and *gobak sodor* directly train locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative movements, as well as improve students' balance, agility, and body coordination. This statement is supported by classroom observations indicating improvements in the quality and effectiveness of students' movements during play, as reflected in their more stable, responsive, and well-coordinated motor performance. These findings align with Ismoko (2023), who stated that traditional games are effective in developing basic motor skills through repetitive movement patterns and physical activities that require full-body coordination. In addition, socio-cultural values such as cooperation, togetherness, and mutual support are continuously fostered during play, as students must follow rules, interact, and work in teams. This is reinforced by Siregar (2023), who emphasized that

traditional games serve as an essential medium for cultural preservation because social values, solidarity, and collective norms are transmitted to children through play activities. Thus, the practice of traditional games not only strengthens students' fundamental motor skills but also sustains local socio-cultural values within the context of modern learning.

The school principal's policies and perspectives play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of traditional games as socio-culturally meaningful learning activities that enhance students' motivation and motor skills. The principal demonstrates support through the provision of traditional game facilities, strengthening teacher capacity through training, continuous instructional supervision, and the integration of traditional games into the PE program, even though it has not yet been formalized in written policy. This structural support creates a conducive learning environment and encourages teachers to be more innovative, resulting in increased student motivation, engagement, and character development during learning activities. This perspective aligns with Kholili & Fajaruddin (2020), who assert that school leadership is a key determinant of successful program implementation, as principals are responsible for providing resources, guiding teachers, and fostering a learning climate that supports innovation. Additionally, Susanto et al. (2025) emphasize that the effectiveness of culturally based learning is strongly influenced by the principal's managerial support, including consistent academic supervision and the cultivation of a school culture that values local wisdom. Thus, the principal's support serves as the foundation for ensuring that traditional games function not only as a medium for developing fundamental motor skills but also as a means of preserving socio-cultural values and strengthening students' learning motivation.

Thus, the findings from the teacher, the principal, and student observations indicate that traditional games function as a comprehensive learning medium. Traditional games are able to strengthen social values, revitalize local culture, enhance learning motivation, and develop fundamental motor skills, and their implementation is institutionally supported through the provision of facilities, training, and supervision from the school.

CONCLUSION

Traditional games carry socio-cultural meanings that play an important role in enhancing learning motivation and fundamental motor skills among elementary school students, as evidenced by a 96.42% improvement in movement quality and 92.85% accurate movements. Values such as togetherness, discipline, and social interaction serve as factors that strengthen

student engagement throughout learning activities, reflected by perfect scores (100%) in social interaction, obedience to rules, and confidence. These findings affirm that traditional games are highly appropriate to be integrated into PE lessons as an effective strategy for developing both motor and affective aspects while simultaneously supporting the preservation of local culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their appreciation to the school and all participants who provided support and permission throughout the data collection process, enabling this research to be carried out smoothly.

REFERENCES

- Aliriad, H., Adi, S., Manullang, J. G., Endrawan, I. B., & Satria, M. H. (2024). Improvement of motor skills and motivation to learn physical education through the use of traditional games. *Physical Education Theory and Methodology*, 24(1), 32–40.
- Alpen, J., Apriani, L., Azmi, M., & Hanema, V. (2024). Traditional game-based basic movement learning model for elementary school children. *Indonesian Journal of Sport Management*, 4(2).
- Fudin, M. S., Rifa'i, N. A., Febrianto, N., Sulendro, S., & Mamajonov, D. (2025). Effectiveness of implementing traditional games on basic motor skills in students of phase A at SDN 2 Buluagung. *Indonesian Journal of Pedagogy and Teacher Education*, 3(1), 34–40.
- Hambali, H., Tularsih, S., & Mursinah, M. (2022). Upaya Meningkatkan keterampilan gerak lokomotor melalui permainan tradisional engklek pada anak usia 4-5 tahun di KB. MNU. 10 taman pintar grenggeng tahun pelajaran 2021/2022. *CERMIN: Jurnal Penelitian*, 6(2), 594–608.
- Ismoko, A. P. (2023). Pengaruh permainan tradisional terhadap perkembangan motorik anak. *Jemani (Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani)*, 7(01).
- Kholili, A. N., & Fajaruddin, S. (2020). Manajemen strategik peningkatan mutu lembaga pendidikan Muhammadiyah di Kabupaten Gunungkidul. *Jurnal Akuntabilitas Manajemen Pendidikan*, 8(1), 53–69.
- Komaini, A., Inarta, G. U., Kiram, P. Y., & Handayani, S. G. (2024). Integrating traditional games in learning for students' interests and motor skills. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 57(3), 573–584.

- Maulana, A. D., & Suryana, S. (2023). Supervisi akademik kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran guru. *Dirasah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 93–103.
- Mo, W., Saibon, J. Bin, Li, Y., Li, J., & He, Y. (2024). Effects of game-based physical education program on enjoyment in children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 24(1), 517.
- Ningsih, Y. F., Khotimah, K., Sugeng, I., Winarno, M. E., & Safirah, A. D. (2024). Traditional games on basic movement abilities of elementary school students. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan*, 8(2), 374–382.
- Purnama, M. N., Semarayasa, I. K., Lesmana, K. Y. P., Artanayasa, I. W., Ariani, L. P. T., & Sudiana, I. K. (2024). The influence of traditional games and learning motivation to improve physical fitness learning outcome. *Cuestiones de Fisioterapia*, 53(03), 1406–1425.
- Shinta, T. D., Kurniawan, C., Wicaksono, L., & Siswoyo, J. (2025). The development of mobile learning media in physical education, sports, and health (PJOK) learning for the second semester of seventh grade in Junior High School. *Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani (JPJ)*, 6(2), 248–262.
- Siregar, L. N. (2023). Implementasi metode pembelajaran berbasis permainan tradisional kayu malele untuk meningkatkan keterampilan motorik kasar melempar di TK Bahtera Harapan Papua, MII. *Strategi IKM &*, 178.
- Sudaryanti, S., Prayitno, P., Arifiyanti, N., & Maharani, O. (2024). Pengembangan kemampuan motorik dan sosial emosional anak usia dini menggunakan permainan tradisional. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 13(1), 114–125.
- Sunanto, S., Tuasikal, A. R. S., Indahwati, N., Suryanti, S., Himawan, A., & Purwoto, S. P. (2024). Models of traditional games in physical education and sports: its effect on increasing the motor development of elementary school students. *Retos: Nuevas Tendencias En Educación Física, Deporte y Recreación*, 61, 722–727.
- Susanto, E., Juhri, A. M., & Badrun, M. (2025). Pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan dan budaya kerja terhadap kinerja guru SDN Kecamatan Gadingrejo Kabupaten Pringsewu. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*, 5(1), 130–143.
- Syarifuddin, S., Nufus, M. S., Sasoko, W. H., Zukhruf, A., Ramdan, F., Rosnani, R., & Kurnia, A. (2024). Analisis tingkat keterampilan guru sekolah dasar di Kota Bima dalam pengembangan pembelajaran berbasis media interaktif. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 4(1), 35–48.

- Widayanti, M. D., Hasibuan, R., Rakhmawati, N. I. S., & Saroinsong, W. P. (2023). Peningkatan kemampuan motorik kasar melalui permainan tradisional pada AUD di SIKL. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(6), 7053–7059.
- Wijaya, R. G., & Fitri, E. S. M. (2023). Traditional game based on e-learning method to improve the basic locomotor movements. *Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani Indonesia*, 19(1), 14–21.