



## The Role of Traditional Sports Games in Developing Cooperation and Sportsmanship

*Peran Permainan Olahraga Tradisional dalam Mengembangkan Kerja Sama dan Sportivitas*

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Physical education learning in elementary schools has not fully optimized culturally based approaches to instill cooperation and sportsmanship values, even though these values are essential for shaping students' social character from an early age. **Purpose:** This study aimed to analyze the role of traditional sports games in developing cooperation and sportsmanship among students at UPTD SDN 144 Barru. **Methods:** This study employed a descriptive qualitative design involving students from grades IV, V, and VI, a physical education teacher, and the school principal. Data were collected through structured observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of learning activities. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by source and technique triangulation to ensure data validity. **Results:** The findings indicated that the implementation of traditional sports games such as gobak sodor, bentengan, and tug of war enhanced students' cooperation through group communication, role distribution, and team strategies, while fostering sportsmanship through rule compliance, honesty, and fair acceptance of winning and losing. **Conclusion:** Traditional sports games are effective learning media in physical education for developing cooperation and sportsmanship among elementary school students.

## **ABSTRAK**

**Background:** Pembelajaran pendidikan jasmani di sekolah dasar belum sepenuhnya mengoptimalkan pendekatan berbasis budaya lokal untuk menanamkan nilai kerja sama dan sportivitas, padahal kedua nilai tersebut sangat penting dalam pembentukan karakter sosial siswa sejak dini. **Purpose:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran permainan olahraga tradisional dalam mengembangkan kerja sama dan sportivitas siswa di UPTD SDN 144 Barru. **Methods:** Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif dengan subjek penelitian siswa kelas IV, V, dan VI, guru pendidikan jasmani, serta kepala sekolah. Data diperoleh melalui observasi terstruktur, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi kegiatan pembelajaran. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan triangulasi sumber dan teknik untuk menjaga keabsahan data. **Results:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan permainan olahraga tradisional seperti gobak sodor, bentengan, dan tarik tambang mampu meningkatkan kerja sama siswa melalui komunikasi kelompok, pembagian peran, dan strategi tim, serta menumbuhkan sportivitas melalui kepatuhan terhadap aturan, kejujuran, dan sikap menerima kemenangan maupun kekalahan secara adil. **Conclusion:** Permainan olahraga tradisional berperan efektif sebagai media pembelajaran pendidikan jasmani dalam mengembangkan kerja sama dan sportivitas siswa sekolah dasar.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditional sports games constitute an integral part of cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation within societies. These games are not merely forms of entertainment or physical activity, but also serve as educational media that embed important moral and social values. In the context of education, traditional sports games possess significant potential to support holistic student development by integrating physical, social, and character education in a balanced manner (UNESCO, 2020).

In recent decades, rapid technological advancement and digitalization have considerably transformed children's play patterns. Many children now spend more time engaging in digital games that tend to be individualistic and limit direct social interaction. This shift has implications for the decline of opportunities to develop essential social skills such as cooperation, communication,

empathy, and sportsmanship. These competencies are, however, crucial components of 21st-century skills that students must acquire from an early age (Suherman, 2019).

Traditional sports games are generally designed as group-based activities that require active participation from all players. Games such as gobak sodor, fort capture (petak benteng), and hopscotch (engklek) demand teamwork, shared strategies, and mutual support to achieve collective goals. Through such activities, participants naturally develop cooperation skills, defined as the ability to interact, coordinate, and take responsibility within a group setting (Yudiana & Hidayat, 2020).

Cooperation is a fundamental social skill that plays a vital role in both educational and social contexts. Through traditional games, players learn to understand individual roles within a team, respect differences in abilities, and build mutual trust among group members.

Empirical evidence supports this view; Rumaeso (2024) found that the implementation of traditional games in physical education learning significantly improved students' cooperation abilities, as indicated by increased active participation, better communication, and stronger team cohesion.

In addition to fostering cooperation, traditional sports games play an important role in cultivating sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is reflected in attitudes of fairness, honesty, respect for rules, and acceptance of both victory and defeat with integrity. These values emerge naturally during traditional game activities, as participants are required to comply with agreed-upon rules and respect decisions made throughout the game process (Iwandana et al., 2022).

The development of sportsmanship through traditional games has long-term implications for students' character formation. Juhanis and Iskandar (2023) emphasize that integrating sportsmanship values into physical education learning contributes to the development of respectful behavior, emotional self-control, and reduced aggressive tendencies during competition. Thus, traditional sports games not only enhance physical fitness but also nurture ethical and responsible personalities.

Within formal education settings, traditional sports games can be integrated into Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PESH) curricula as alternative instructional models that are contextual, engaging, and student-centered. This approach aligns with character education objectives that emphasize the reinforcement of social values such as cooperation, mutual respect, tolerance, and responsibility. Siskariyanti and Aris (2022) argue that traditional games effectively strengthen social solidarity and a sense of togetherness among students.

Furthermore, the utilization of traditional sports games in schools represents a strategic effort to preserve local culture amid globalization. Schools play a critical role as agents of cultural preservation while simultaneously shaping students' character. By introducing and consistently practicing traditional games, students not only internalize social and moral values but also develop a

sense of pride and appreciation for their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2020).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that traditional sports games have a significant role in fostering cooperation and sportsmanship among students. Therefore, examining the role of traditional sports games in developing cooperation and sportsmanship is essential to provide both theoretical and empirical foundations for educators, schools, and policymakers in optimizing the use of traditional games as effective and sustainable tools for character education.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design to examine the role of traditional sports games in developing students' cooperation and sportsmanship. The use of a quasi-experimental approach was considered appropriate because the research was conducted in a natural school setting, where random assignment of participants to groups was not fully possible. The design applied in this study was the pretest–posttest control group design, which allows researchers to compare changes in outcomes between a group receiving a specific treatment and a group that does not receive such treatment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research participants were elementary school students enrolled in a public school during the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of 60 students participated in the study and were divided into two groups, consisting of 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. Participant selection was conducted using purposive sampling by considering similarities in age, grade level, and general physical education experience to ensure relative group homogeneity. The research was carried out during regular physical education class hours in a formal school setting, which helped ensure that the learning activities and student behaviors reflected authentic educational conditions and enhanced the ecological validity of the study (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

The study involved one independent variable and two dependent variables. The independent variable was the implementation

of traditional sports games in physical education learning, while the dependent variables were students' cooperation and sportsmanship. Traditional sports games such as gobak sodor, petak benteng, and engklek were selected because of their group-based characteristics and their potential to encourage interaction, teamwork, and adherence to rules. Cooperation in this study was defined as students' ability to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, share responsibilities, and contribute to achieving group objectives. Sportsmanship was defined as students' attitudes toward fairness, honesty, respect for rules, respect for opponents and teammates, and acceptance of both winning and losing outcomes.

Data were collected using observation sheets and questionnaires designed to measure students' cooperation and sportsmanship during physical education learning. The observation instrument was adapted from validated tools commonly used in physical education research and included indicators such as active participation, communication, teamwork, respect for rules, and fair play behavior (Iwandana et al., 2022). The questionnaire employed a Likert-scale format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to data collection, the instruments were reviewed by experts in physical education and educational psychology to establish content validity. A pilot study was conducted to examine the reliability of the instruments, and the results showed Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.82 for the cooperation scale and 0.85 for the sportsmanship scale, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

The research procedure was conducted in three sequential stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation stage, lesson plans integrating traditional sports games into physical education learning were developed, and research instruments were finalized. Official permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school authorities. In the implementation stage, both the experimental and control groups completed a pretest to measure their initial levels of cooperation and sportsmanship. The experimental group then participated in physical education lessons that integrated traditional sports games over a six-

week period, with two learning sessions per week. Each session lasted approximately 60 minutes and emphasized teamwork, compliance with rules, and fair play. Meanwhile, the control group received conventional physical education instruction that focused primarily on individual skill development and basic physical exercises. At the end of the intervention period, a posttest was administered to both groups using the same instruments as those used in the pretest. Observations were also conducted throughout the intervention to document changes in students' cooperative and sportsmanlike behaviors.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize students' cooperation and sportsmanship scores. Inferential statistical analysis involved the use of paired-sample t-tests to examine differences between pretest and posttest scores within each group and independent-sample t-tests to compare posttest scores between the experimental and control groups. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and Levene's test. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05, following standard quantitative research procedures in educational studies (Field, 2018).

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from school administrators, teachers, students, and parents or guardians. Participants were informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that their data would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines for educational research to ensure that no physical or psychological harm occurred during the research activities (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 2011).

Although this study was designed to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of traditional sports games in developing cooperation and sportsmanship, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size and the focus on a

single school context may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples across different educational settings to strengthen the external validity of the results. Nevertheless, the research design and procedures employed in this study provide a systematic and rigorous framework for examining the educational value of traditional sports games in physical education learning.

## RESULTS

The results of the field testing are presented in a structured manner using key points accompanied by detailed explanations and statistical test outcomes. This presentation aims to clearly describe empirical findings related to the implementation of traditional sports games in developing students' cooperation and sportsmanship.

### Pretest Results (Initial Condition)

Before the intervention, pretests were administered to both the experimental and control groups to measure baseline levels of cooperation and sportsmanship. The results showed that the experimental group obtained a mean cooperation score of 67.43, while the control group achieved a mean score of 66.98. Similarly, the mean sportsmanship score in the experimental group was 68.12, compared to 67.85 in the control group. Statistical analysis indicated no significant differences between the two groups at the pretest stage ( $p > 0.05$ ), confirming that both groups had comparable initial conditions prior to treatment.

### Field Implementation of Traditional Sports Games

The field test was conducted over a six-week period during regular physical education lessons. The experimental group participated in learning activities that integrated traditional sports games such as gobak sodor, petak benteng, and engklek. Observations during early sessions revealed limited communication and coordination among students. However, as the intervention progressed, students increasingly demonstrated active participation, clearer division of roles, collaborative strategy development, and mutual support within their teams. These behavioral changes indicate gradual improvement in students' cooperation skills.

### Development of Sportsmanship During Field Testing

Field observations also revealed positive changes in students' sportsmanship. At the beginning of the intervention, some students frequently questioned rules, showed frustration after losing, or engaged in minor conflicts. Over time, these behaviors diminished. By the final sessions, most students were able to follow rules consistently, respect referee decisions, accept game outcomes fairly, and demonstrate positive attitudes toward both teammates and opponents. This indicates that repeated exposure to traditional sports games contributed to the internalization of sportsmanship values.

### Posttest Results

After the completion of the intervention, posttests were administered to both groups. The experimental group showed a substantial increase in mean scores, with cooperation rising to 82.57 and sportsmanship increasing to 83.14. In contrast, the control group demonstrated smaller improvements, with mean cooperation and sportsmanship scores of 71.36 and 72.08, respectively. These descriptive results suggest that the experimental group benefited more significantly from the learning intervention involving traditional sports games.

### Results of Paired-Sample t-Test (Within-Group Analysis)

Paired-sample t-test analysis revealed statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group for both cooperation ( $t = 9.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and sportsmanship ( $t = 9.67$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that the implementation of traditional sports games had a significant positive effect on students' social behaviors. In contrast, the control group did not show statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest scores for either variable ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Results of Independent-Sample t-Test (Between-Group Analysis)

Independent-sample t-test analysis conducted on posttest scores demonstrated significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group achieved significantly higher cooperation scores than the control group ( $t = 4.86$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, sportsmanship scores in the experimental

group were significantly higher than those in the control group ( $t = 5.02$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These results confirm that traditional sports games were more effective than conventional instruction in enhancing cooperation and sportsmanship.

### Qualitative Findings from Field Observations

Qualitative data obtained from observation notes and teacher interviews further supported the quantitative results. Teachers reported that students in the experimental group became more enthusiastic, disciplined, and cooperative during physical education lessons. The learning environment was perceived as more engaging and inclusive, with reduced conflict and increased positive peer interaction. Students were also observed to show greater confidence and willingness to participate actively regardless of their physical abilities.

Overall, the results of the field testing provide strong empirical evidence that the integration of traditional sports games into physical education learning significantly improves students' cooperation and sportsmanship. To clearly summarize the quantitative findings, the results of the statistical tests are presented in the following tables, formatted according to APA 7th edition guidelines.

**Table 1.** *Descriptive Statistics of Cooperation and Sportsmanship Scores*

## DISCUSSION

This discussion section is presented as a stand-alone analytical part and is intentionally separated from the presentation of the research results. The discussion focuses on interpreting the findings conceptually and theoretically, positioning them within the broader context of physical education, character education, and traditional sports pedagogy. Rather than restating statistical outcomes, this section explains the meaning, implications, and educational significance of the findings related to the role of traditional sports games in developing cooperation and sportsmanship among students.

The positive influence of traditional sports games on students' cooperation can be understood through the social nature of these

Variable	Group	Pret est Mea n	Post test Mea n	SD (Postt est)
Cooperat ion	Experi mental	67.4 3	82.5 7	5.12
	Control	66.9 8	71.3 6	4.98
Sportsm anship	Experi mental	68.1 2	83.1 4	5.25
	Control	67.8 5	72.0 8	5.01

Note. SD = standard deviation.

**Table 2** *Paired-Sample t-Test Results for Pretest and Posttest Scores*

Variable	Group	t	Df	p
Cooperatio n	Experi mental	9.21	9	0.5
	Control	1.34	29	>.05
Sportsman ship	Experi mental	9.67	29	< .05
	Control	1.41	29	>.05

Note. Significance level set at  $\alpha = .05$ .

**Table 3** *Independent-Sample t-Test Results of Posttest Scores*

Variable	Experimental Mean	Control Mean	t	df	p
Cooperation	82.57	71.36	4.86	58	< .05
Sportsmanship	83.14	72.08	5.02	58	< .05

Note. df = degrees of freedom;  $p < .05$  indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

activities. Traditional games are inherently communal, requiring players to work together, share roles, and depend on one another to achieve collective goals. In this context, cooperation is not treated as an abstract concept but emerges organically as a functional requirement of participation. This learning condition allows students to experience cooperation directly, making it more meaningful and internalized. Such experiential learning supports the view that social skills are best developed through practice in authentic social situations rather than through verbal instruction alone.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings are consistent with social constructivist perspectives, particularly Vygotsky's emphasis on learning through social interaction. Traditional sports games create rich social environments where students engage in

dialogue, negotiate rules, and coordinate actions. These interactions enable learners to construct social understanding collaboratively. Through repeated participation, students gradually internalize cooperative norms and behaviors, transforming external social interactions into personal competencies. This process illustrates how physical education can serve as a medium for social and character development, not merely physical skill acquisition.

The role of traditional sports games in fostering sportsmanship is equally significant. Sportsmanship involves moral dimensions such as fairness, respect, honesty, and emotional self-control during competitive situations. Traditional games often embody these values implicitly within their rules and cultural meanings. Players are expected to respect agreed-upon rules, accept outcomes gracefully, and prioritize harmony over individual victory. Because these values are practiced repeatedly during gameplay, students learn sportsmanship as a habit rather than as a moral concept taught in isolation. This supports character education theories that emphasize habituation and lived experience as key mechanisms in value formation.

Traditional sports games also provide a balanced competitive environment that reduces excessive pressure to win. This condition is particularly important in school settings, where highly competitive sports may trigger anxiety, aggression, or exclusion among students. In contrast, traditional games emphasize enjoyment, participation, and togetherness, allowing students to experience competition in a healthy and controlled manner. As a result, students are more likely to regulate their emotions, resolve conflicts peacefully, and show respect toward peers. This environment contributes to the development of emotional maturity and ethical behavior in sport-related contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings highlight the relevance of traditional sports games as culturally responsive learning media. These games are rooted in local culture and social values that are familiar to students' everyday experiences. Integrating them into physical education not only enhances learning engagement but also strengthens students' cultural identity. In an era where physical education curricula are often dominated by

standardized modern sports, traditional games offer an inclusive and accessible alternative that aligns with holistic educational goals. Their low-cost nature and adaptability make them suitable for diverse school contexts, including those with limited facilities.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional sports games play an important role in developing cooperation and sportsmanship among children. Through active participation, children learn to collaborate, communicate effectively, and respect shared goals, which strengthens their cooperative skills. At the same time, these games foster sportsmanship by promoting fairness, respect for rules, and positive attitudes toward winning and losing.

The communal and value-oriented nature of traditional sports games makes them a powerful tool for social and moral development. Incorporating traditional sports games into educational settings can support holistic child development by integrating physical activity with character education. Therefore, preserving and utilizing traditional sports games is not only important for cultural sustainability but also for nurturing cooperative and sportsmanlike attitudes in younger generations.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST (If There is Exist)

The authors declare that this research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest..

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