The Influence Of Traditional Games On The Integrity Character Of Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of traditional games on improving the integrity character of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi. The study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method (pre-experimental design) through a one-group pretest–posttest design. The study population was all 170 seventh-grade students, while the research sample consisted of 34 students selected using a random sampling technique. The research instrument was an integrity character questionnaire consisting of 35 statement items with indicators of honesty, discipline, responsibility, hard work, and communication. Treatment was given through learning traditional games for four weeks which included running blocks, facing (gobak sodor), long clogs, and baseball. Data analysis was carried out using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test and paired sample t-test hypothesis testing. The results showed that the average score of students' integrity character increased from 132.03 in the pretest to 144.56 in the posttest with a difference of 12.53 points. The t-test results showed a significant value (p < 0.001), indicating a significant difference between the scores before and after treatment. Therefore, it can be concluded that traditional games significantly influence the improvement of students' integrity character. These findings suggest that traditional games can be an effective learning strategy to support the strengthening of character education in schools.
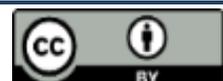
AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

A. Conception and design of the study;
B. Acquisition of data;
C. Analysis and interpretation of data;
D. Manuscript preparation;
E. Obtaining funding

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role not only in developing students' intellectual abilities but also in shaping their character, attitudes, and moral values. The purpose of education is not merely to produce academically capable individuals but also to cultivate responsible citizens who demonstrate ethical behavior and social responsibility in society (Lickona, 2012; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Schools therefore function as important institutions for transmitting moral values, social norms, and ethical behavior to younger generations through structured learning processes and educational environments that promote character development (Nucci et al., 2017; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018).

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In Indonesia, character education has become a strategic priority in the national education system. The Indonesian government has implemented the Strengthening Character Education Program (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK) to reinforce character values among students at all levels of schooling. This program emphasizes the development of five core character values: religiousness, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity (Musyarri, 2020; Kemendikbud, 2018). Among these values, integrity is considered one of the most essential elements because it reflects the consistency between a person's thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with ethical principles and social norms (Schlenker, 2008; Kaptein, 2019).

Integrity is closely related to honesty, responsibility, discipline, and commitment to moral principles. Students who possess integrity tend to demonstrate honest behavior in academic activities, respect school regulations, and show responsibility toward their tasks and obligations (Trevino et al., 2014; Kaptein, 2019). However, various studies indicate that issues related to integrity among students, such as academic dishonesty, lack of discipline, and irresponsible behavior, are still common challenges in educational environments (Anderman & Murdock, 2017; Bretag et al., 2019). These conditions highlight the importance of developing effective strategies to strengthen integrity character among students from an early age. Junior high school students are in an important developmental stage where moral reasoning, identity formation, and social attitudes begin to develop more significantly. During this stage, adolescents are highly influenced by social interaction, peer relationships, and experiential learning processes (Eccles & Roeser, 2016; Steinberg, 2017). Therefore, educational approaches that involve active participation, social engagement, and meaningful experiences are considered more effective in shaping students' character compared to purely theoretical or lecture-based learning methods.

One learning approach that can support character development is the integration of physical activity and play-based learning. Activities that involve cooperation, interaction, and adherence to rules can help students internalize moral values through real experiences (Bailey et al., 2018; Siedentop & Van der Mars, 2022). In this context, traditional games represent a promising educational medium because they combine physical movement, cultural values, and social interaction in a natural and engaging learning environment. Traditional games are part of cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations in many societies. These games contain various educational values that contribute to children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development (Iswinarti, 2017; Sutton-Smith, 2017). Through participation in traditional games, children learn important life skills such as cooperation, sportsmanship, honesty, responsibility, and respect for rules (Cahyani et al., 2023; Ramdani et al., 2025). These values are closely aligned with the principles of integrity character that educational institutions aim to develop. However, in the modern digital era, traditional games are gradually being replaced by digital entertainment such as online games and mobile applications. Although digital games may offer cognitive benefits, excessive use has been associated with reduced physical activity, decreased face-to-face social

interaction, and potential behavioral issues among adolescents (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Hutomo & Kurniawan, 2025). This shift in children's play patterns has raised concerns regarding the decline of social interaction and moral learning opportunities that traditionally occurred through communal play activities. From an educational perspective, the decline in traditional play activities may also reduce opportunities for students to learn values such as fairness, cooperation, and integrity through direct interaction with peers. Social interaction and cooperative play are essential elements for developing moral reasoning, empathy, and ethical behavior among adolescents (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018; Bailey et al., 2018). Therefore, integrating traditional games into school learning activities may offer a strategic approach to simultaneously promote physical activity, cultural preservation, and character education.

In the context of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning, traditional games can serve as an effective pedagogical strategy. PJOK emphasizes holistic student development, including physical fitness, social interaction, emotional regulation, and character building (Siedentop & Van der Mars, 2022; Bailey et al., 2018). Traditional games such as gobak sodor, block race, long sandals, and rounders involve elements of teamwork, discipline, honesty, and adherence to rules, which are essential components of integrity character development. Therefore, exploring the potential of traditional games as a medium for strengthening students' integrity character is both relevant and necessary within the context of contemporary education.

Recent studies have increasingly emphasized the importance of integrating character education into school curricula through innovative and experiential learning approaches. Research shows that character education programs implemented through active learning strategies can significantly improve students' moral awareness, ethical behavior, and social responsibility (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018). In physical education settings, play-based learning approaches have been widely recognized as effective methods for promoting both physical and social development among students (Bailey et al., 2018; Siedentop & Van der Mars, 2022). Physical activities that involve cooperation, competition, and adherence to rules can foster important character values such as fairness, discipline, teamwork, and respect for others (Dyson et al., 2016; Casey & Goodyear, 2019). Traditional games have also been identified as culturally relevant pedagogical tools that can support children's holistic development. Studies have shown that traditional games contribute to the development of motor skills, social competence, emotional intelligence, and moral values among children (Iswinarti, 2017; Cahyani et al., 2023). These games often emphasize cooperation, honesty, and respect for rules, which align with the goals of character education. Several empirical studies have demonstrated that traditional games can enhance students' social interaction and character development. For example, research by Ramdani et al. (2025) found that traditional game-based learning significantly improved students' cooperation and responsibility during classroom activities. Similarly, Hutomo and Kurniawan (2025) reported that integrating traditional games into physical education programs increased students' participation, motivation, and positive social behavior.

Furthermore, traditional games have also been recognized as important cultural assets that can strengthen students' cultural identity and appreciation of local heritage (Pratiwi et al., 2024). By incorporating traditional games into school activities, educators can simultaneously promote cultural preservation and character education. From the perspective of sport pedagogy, traditional games are considered part of developmentally appropriate physical activity models, which emphasize learning through play, exploration, and social interaction (Bailey et al., 2018; Casey & Goodyear, 2019). Such approaches are particularly effective for adolescents because they create meaningful learning experiences that facilitate the internalization of moral values. Despite these promising findings, the integration of traditional games in formal education remains limited in many schools due to curriculum constraints, lack of teacher training, and the dominance of modern sports-oriented learning models in physical education (Dyson et al., 2016; Casey & Goodyear, 2019).

Although numerous studies have explored the benefits of traditional games for children's physical and social development, relatively few studies have specifically examined their impact on integrity character development among junior high school students. Most existing research focuses on general character education outcomes such as cooperation, teamwork, or motivation in physical education settings (Cahyani et al., 2023; Ramdani et al., 2025). However, integrity as a specific moral construct—encompassing honesty, responsibility, and consistency in behavior—has received limited empirical attention in the context of traditional game-based learning.

Furthermore, previous studies often examine traditional games primarily from the perspectives of motor skill development or cultural preservation, rather than from the perspective of character education and moral development. Consequently, the potential role of traditional games as an educational intervention for strengthening integrity character among adolescents remains insufficiently explored. Another gap lies in the empirical examination of traditional games within formal PJOK learning environments, particularly at the junior high school level. While theoretical frameworks suggest that play-based activities can foster moral development, there is still limited empirical evidence demonstrating how specific traditional games influence students' integrity character in real educational settings. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the influence of traditional games on the development of integrity character among junior high school students through structured learning activities.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of traditional games on the integrity character of junior high school students. Specifically, the study investigates whether the integration of traditional games into learning activities can contribute to improving students' honesty, responsibility, discipline, and adherence to rules. The novelty of this research lies in several aspects. First, this study focuses specifically on integrity character as the primary outcome variable, which has rarely been examined in previous studies on traditional games and character education. Second, this study integrates traditional games into the physical education learning process, providing empirical evidence regarding their pedagogical effectiveness within

formal educational settings. Third, this research contributes to the development of culturally relevant learning strategies by utilizing traditional games as educational tools that combine physical activity, cultural preservation, and character development. Finally, the findings of this study are expected to provide practical implications for educators and policymakers in designing learning models that promote both student character development and cultural sustainability.

In summary, character education plays a critical role in shaping students into responsible individuals who possess moral values and ethical behavior. Among various character values emphasized in the Indonesian education system, integrity represents a fundamental moral principle that must be cultivated from an early age. Traditional games offer a unique opportunity to integrate character education into experiential learning activities that involve physical movement, social interaction, and adherence to rules. Despite their potential, the role of traditional games in developing students' integrity character has not been extensively investigated in empirical research. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the influence of traditional games on the integrity character of junior high school students. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of innovative learning strategies that support both character education and cultural preservation in contemporary educational environments.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using an experimental method to examine the influence of traditional games on the integrity character of junior high school students. Quantitative experimental research is widely used in educational studies to investigate causal relationships between interventions and measurable outcomes in learning environments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2019). The experimental approach allows researchers to systematically observe changes in participants' behavior or attitudes following a specific treatment (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In the context of character education, experimental designs are considered effective for evaluating the impact of pedagogical interventions on students' behavioral and moral development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018).

The research design used in this study was the One Group Pretest–Posttest Design, which is commonly applied in educational experiments to determine changes in participants before and after receiving a treatment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this design, students were first given a pretest to measure their initial level of integrity character prior to the intervention. Subsequently, participants received treatment in the form of learning activities based on traditional games integrated into physical education sessions. After the intervention period, students completed a posttest to assess the extent of change in their integrity character. This design allows researchers to identify whether the treatment contributes to measurable improvements in the targeted variables (Fraenkel et al., 2019; Cohen et al., 2018).

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Muaro Jambi, involving students who participated in Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning activities. Junior

high school students were selected because adolescence represents a critical stage for character formation and moral development (Steinberg, 2017). Previous studies suggest that experiential learning activities, including cooperative games and play-based physical activities, can significantly influence students' social behavior and character development during this stage (Bailey et al., 2018; Siedentop & Van der Mars, 2022).

The treatment implemented in this study consisted of several traditional games integrated into PJOK learning, such as gobak sodor, block race, long sandals, and rounders. These games require cooperation, adherence to rules, honesty, discipline, and responsibility among participants. Traditional games have been recognized as culturally relevant learning tools that support both physical activity and character education (Iswinarti, 2017; Cahyani et al., 2023). Furthermore, research indicates that cooperative game-based learning environments can enhance students' social responsibility, ethical awareness, and moral values (Casey & Goodyear, 2019; Dyson et al., 2016).

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' integrity character. The questionnaire was developed based on key indicators of integrity, including honesty, responsibility, discipline, and adherence to rules. Integrity is considered a core moral value that reflects consistency between thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with ethical principles (Kaptein, 2019). Similar instruments have been widely used in character education research to evaluate students' moral attitudes and behavioral tendencies (Trevino et al., 2014; Bretag et al., 2019). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize students' integrity scores obtained from the pretest and posttest, including mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution. Inferential statistical analysis was then conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores following the intervention. Statistical hypothesis testing is commonly used in experimental educational research to determine the effectiveness of learning interventions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Field, 2018). Through this analysis, the study aimed to determine whether the implementation of traditional games significantly influenced the improvement of students' integrity character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result

The results of this study were obtained from measuring students' integrity character before and after the implementation of traditional games in Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) learning activities. The measurements were conducted using a structured integrity questionnaire administered to 34 junior high school students. The research employed a pretest–posttest approach to determine changes in students' integrity character after participating in traditional game-based learning activities. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of mean scores, score differences, and percentage

achievements. The purpose of this analysis was to identify changes in the level of students' integrity character before and after the intervention.

Descriptive Statistics of Integrity Character Scores

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis show that there was an increase in the average score of students' integrity character after the implementation of traditional games. The average pretest score was 132.03, while the average posttest score increased to 144.56. This result indicates that students experienced a positive change in integrity character following the intervention. Table 1 presents a comparison of descriptive statistical results between the pretest and posttest measurements.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of Students' Integrity Character

Measurement	N	Mean	Increase
Pretest	34	132.03	–
Posttest	34	144.56	12.53

Based on Table 1, the results show that the mean score increased by 12.53 points after students participated in learning activities involving traditional games. This improvement indicates that the intervention contributed positively to strengthening students' integrity character.
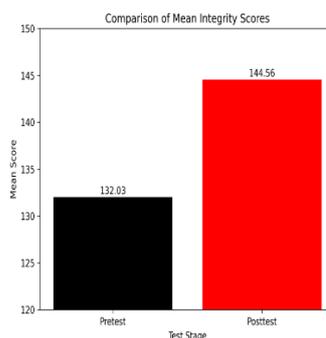
Figure 1.
Presents a visual comparison of the mean scores obtained during the pretest and posttest.

Based on Figure 1, it can be observed that the average score for students' integrity character after the treatment was higher than before the treatment. The increase of 12.53 points demonstrates that the integration of traditional games into the learning process contributed to improving students' integrity character.

This improvement can be explained by the nature of traditional games, which require students to demonstrate honesty, cooperation, responsibility, and adherence to rules during gameplay. These behavioral elements are closely related to the indicators used to measure integrity character in this study.

Percentage of Integrity Character Achievement

In addition to analyzing mean scores, the study also examined the percentage of students' integrity character achievement relative to the maximum possible score on the research instrument. This analysis was conducted to provide a clearer interpretation of students' character development levels. The results showed that the percentage

achievement during the pretest was 75.45%, which was categorized as good. After the implementation of traditional games, the posttest percentage increased to 82.61%, which falls into the very good category. Table 2 shows the comparison of percentage achievement levels before and after the treatment.

Table 2.
Percentage of Students' Integrity Character Achievement

Measurement	Percentage	Category
Pretest	75.45%	Good
Posttest	82.61%	Very Good

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the implementation of traditional games not only increased the average integrity score but also improved the overall category of students' integrity character.

A visual comparison of the percentage achievement between the pretest and posttest is presented in Figure 2.
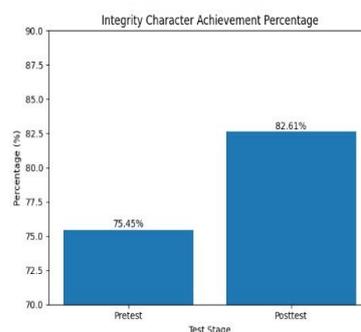
Figure 2.
Integrity Character Achievement Percentage

Figure 2 clearly illustrates that the percentage of students' integrity character increased after participating in traditional game-based learning activities. The shift from 75.45% (good) to 82.61% (very good) suggests that traditional games effectively contributed to strengthening students' integrity character.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of traditional games in physical education lessons positively influenced the integrity character of junior high school students. This improvement is evident from both the increase in mean scores (12.53 points) and the increase in percentage achievement (7.16%).

The results suggest that traditional games can serve as an effective learning strategy to promote character education in schools. By engaging students in cooperative and rule-based play activities, traditional games provide meaningful experiences that encourage the development of honesty, responsibility, discipline, and respect for rules. Therefore, integrating traditional games into physical education learning activities can be considered a practical and culturally relevant approach to strengthening students' character education, particularly in developing integrity among junior high school students.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of traditional games in physical education learning positively influenced the integrity character of junior high school students. This finding is demonstrated by the increase in the average integrity score from 132.03 in the pretest to 144.56 in the posttest, as well as the improvement in the percentage of integrity character achievement from 75.45% to 82.61%. These results suggest that traditional game-based learning activities can provide meaningful experiential learning opportunities that contribute to the development of students' moral and social character. Such findings support the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of integrating character education into active learning environments that combine cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018; Bailey et al., 2018).

Traditional games represent a form of learning activity that integrates physical movement, social interaction, and moral values simultaneously. During gameplay, students must follow agreed-upon rules, cooperate with peers, demonstrate honesty, and take responsibility for their actions. These processes naturally encourage the internalization of ethical values that are closely related to the concept of integrity. According to Iswinarti (2017), traditional games play an important role in children's social development because they foster cooperation, communication skills, and moral awareness. Similarly, recent studies have shown that culturally embedded games can strengthen students' social competence and prosocial behavior (Cahyani et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Integrity is widely recognized as one of the most important values in character education because it reflects the alignment between an individual's beliefs, words, and actions (Kaptein, 2019). Individuals who possess integrity demonstrate honesty, responsibility, discipline, and commitment to ethical principles in their daily behavior (Trevino et al., 2014; Bretag et al., 2019). In educational contexts, integrity is particularly important because it encourages students to behave honestly in academic activities, respect school rules, and fulfill their responsibilities as learners. Therefore, strengthening integrity among students is essential for building ethical learning environments and fostering responsible citizenship (Anderman & Murdock, 2017; Nucci et al., 2017).

The improvement in students' integrity character observed in this study can also be explained through the experiential learning approach, which emphasizes learning through direct experience and active participation. Experiential learning theory suggests that students learn moral values more effectively when they are actively involved in situations that require them to practice ethical decision-making and social responsibility (Kolb, 2015; Lickona, 2012). Traditional games create natural learning environments where students must apply values such as fairness, honesty, and cooperation in real-time interactions with peers. Through repeated participation in such activities, students gradually internalize these values as part of their behavioral patterns (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2018; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014).

From the perspective of physical education pedagogy, games have long been recognized as effective instructional tools for promoting holistic student development.

Physical education not only aims to improve physical fitness but also seeks to develop social skills, emotional regulation, and moral character (Bailey et al., 2018; Siedentop & Van der Mars, 2022). Game-based learning encourages students to engage in teamwork, problem-solving, and fair competition, which are important components of character development. Research in sport pedagogy has demonstrated that cooperative games and team-based activities can enhance students' social responsibility, sportsmanship, and respect for rules (Dyson et al., 2016; Casey & Goodyear, 2019).

Furthermore, traditional games have unique advantages compared to modern sports or digital entertainment because they emphasize collective participation and cultural values. Many traditional games require players to coordinate movements, strategize together, and communicate effectively with teammates. Such interactions strengthen social bonds among students and encourage mutual respect and cooperation (Hutomo & Kurniawan, 2025; Ramdani et al., 2025). In addition, traditional games often incorporate moral lessons that have been embedded in cultural traditions for generations, making them powerful tools for transmitting social values to younger generations (Sutton-Smith, 2017; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous empirical research indicating that traditional games can contribute to character education in school environments. Several studies have reported that integrating traditional games into learning activities can improve students' discipline, cooperation, and responsibility (Cahyani et al., 2023; Ramdani et al., 2025). Similarly, research by Hutomo and Kurniawan (2025) found that traditional game-based physical education programs significantly enhanced students' social interaction and moral behavior. These findings highlight the potential of traditional games as pedagogical tools that combine physical activity with character development.

Another important implication of this study relates to the preservation of cultural heritage within educational contexts. In the digital era, many traditional play activities are gradually being replaced by digital games that often limit direct social interaction among children (Pratiwi et al., 2024). This shift may reduce opportunities for students to develop social and moral skills through face-to-face interactions. By reintegrating traditional games into school learning activities, educators can simultaneously promote character education and cultural preservation. Such efforts are particularly important in maintaining local cultural identities while supporting students' holistic development (Iswinarti, 2017; Sutton-Smith, 2017).

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that traditional games can serve as effective learning strategies for strengthening students' integrity character. Through play activities that involve rules, cooperation, and social interaction, students are encouraged to practice values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline in real-life situations. These experiences enable students to internalize moral values more effectively than through theoretical instruction alone. Therefore, integrating traditional games into physical education learning can be considered a practical and culturally relevant approach to supporting character education in schools.

In conclusion, the findings confirm that traditional game-based learning has a significant potential to enhance students' integrity character. By providing interactive and meaningful learning experiences, traditional games create opportunities for students to develop ethical behavior and social responsibility. Consequently, educators and curriculum developers should consider incorporating traditional games into physical education programs as part of broader efforts to strengthen character education in the school environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of traditional games in physical education learning has a positive effect on improving the integrity character of junior high school students at SMPN 1 Muaro Jambi. The findings demonstrate a measurable improvement in students' integrity character after participating in traditional game-based learning activities. This improvement is reflected in the increase in the average integrity score, which rose from 132.03 in the pretest to 144.56 in the posttest, indicating a gain of 12.53 points. In addition, the percentage of students' integrity character achievement increased from 75.45% to 82.61%, showing an improvement of 7.16% after the implementation of the traditional games intervention.

These results indicate that traditional games can serve as an effective educational medium for strengthening character education among students. Traditional games provide learning experiences that combine physical activity, social interaction, and adherence to rules, which naturally encourage students to practice values related to integrity. During gameplay, students are required to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and respect for rules, all of which are key indicators of integrity character. Through these interactive activities, students are not only exposed to character values theoretically but also experience them directly in real-life situations within the learning environment.

Conceptually, the findings of this study support the idea that character education becomes more effective when implemented through experiential and participatory learning approaches. Traditional games create meaningful contexts where students can internalize moral values through social interaction and collaborative play. Empirically, the increase in both the mean integrity score and the achievement percentage confirms that integrating traditional games into physical education learning can significantly contribute to students' character development.

Therefore, traditional games can be considered a practical and culturally relevant learning strategy to support the strengthening of character education in schools. Educators are encouraged to incorporate traditional games into learning activities as an innovative approach to fostering integrity values among students while simultaneously promoting physical activity and preserving cultural heritage.

Acknowledgements

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