

Revitalization of Sumenep Regency's Traditional Games as Cultural Heritage and Their Relevance to Character Education in Schools

Moh. Lutfi

STAI Miftahul Ulum Tarate Pandian Sumenep, Indonesia; mohammadlutfimypd55@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Traditional games are a part of cultural heritage that contain noble values and can serve as an effective medium for character education. This article aims to identify the development, character values, and revitalization strategies of traditional games in Sumenep Regency, as well as their relevance to character education in schools. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review approach, utilizing various sources such as books, journals, and scientific articles as the primary objects. The results show that traditional games are facing challenges from technological advancements, which are gradually shifting their role. Sumenep's traditional games contain values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), honesty, sportsmanship, leadership, and creativity, which are relevant to the character building of the younger generation. There are several strategies for revitalizing traditional games, including the processes of internalization, socialization, enculturation, and inheritance. The complexity of character education values found in traditional games is highly relevant to educational goals.

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Corresponding Author:

Moh. Lutfi

STAI Miftahul Ulum Tarate Pandian Sumenep, Indonesia; mohammadlutfimypd55@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is depicted with immense grandeur in the song "Kolam Susu" by Koes Plus. The lyrics portray the extraordinary fertility of the Indonesian soil, suggesting that anything planted will flourish. The term "heavenly land" (tanah surga) used in the song is arguably not an exaggeration, given the nation's abundant wealth. This richness extends beyond mineral and marine resources; its cultural diversity also evokes profound admiration from those who witness it.

Comprised of seventeen thousand islands, over one thousand three hundred ethnic groups, and eight hundred forty languages, Indonesia stands as a concrete testament to its reputation as a "fragment of paradise." This vast ethnic diversity has implications for the various cultural manifestations within its society. Traditional games represent one such cultural heritage, passed down through generations via customs, oral traditions, and written records.

The traditional games played by children in Sumenep Regency constitute a noble cultural landscape of the nation, as they embody intrinsic values of virtue. For instance, in games such as

bentengan, *petak umpet* (hide and seek), and *rap-karapan sape*, traits of discipline, responsibility, and independence are commonly found. These characters are unconsciously instilled in children through the repetitive nature of play.

Unfortunately, this commonality is currently being confronted by modernization, which is gradually eroding traditional games. Gadgets have become an addiction that displaces the enjoyment of traditional games typically played by children after school. This shift consequently impacts the character of the nation's future generation, moving from a spirit of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) toward a more individualistic nature. Furthermore, other issues have emerged, creating a continuous distress for individuals who lack self-control due to the unrestricted access provided by gadgets and the internet.

Meanwhile, looking forward to the centenary in 2045, this nation envisions a "Golden Generation" characterized by strong integrity, superior and competitive knowledge, and advancement in various fields. Whether the nation can achieve this ideal remains a significant challenge today. Therefore, based on the aforementioned context, this paper aims to explore in depth the contribution of traditional games from Sumenep Regency in realizing the 2045 Golden Generation, specifically through the lens of character education embedded within these games in the school environment.

2. METHOD

The research method employed in this article is descriptive qualitative, utilizing a literature review technique. The data for this study were obtained from books and articles retrieved from the Google Scholar database. The selection of sources was conducted by considering the relevance, availability, and redundancy of the articles in relation to the research topic. The literature included in this study consists of works published within the last ten years. Data analysis was carried out through several stages, beginning with data reduction by coding the required information. Following the analysis, the researcher presented the data in a narrative form based on the reduced results. Finally, the author drew conclusions from the data that had been reduced and presented.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Decline of Traditional Games Among the Younger Generation

There is a common expression that describes Indonesia as a "fragment of paradise." Explicitly, this phrase highlights Indonesia's extraordinary natural beauty and wealth. However, upon closer examination, the meaning of this expression is far broader. The "fragment of paradise" inherent in this nation can also be seen through the cultural richness inherited from its ancestors. This wealth is evident in the vast number of ethnicities, races, religions, languages, and cultures present in every region across Indonesia.

Culture represents the power of the mind and spirit in the form of creation and intent (*cipta dan karsa*). This definition suggests that culture is the result of a long learning process that produces something and becomes the "way of life" within a society. This culture then evolves and is taught across generations. Because it is a product of learning, Lubis emphasizes that human culture is not an innate biological trait or hereditary instinct, as is the case with animals (Lubis, 2021).

One cultural product that persists today is traditional games. These games are cultural heritages unique to each region, reflecting diverse patterns based on local creativity. For instance, in Sumenep Regency—where Madurese culture is deeply rooted in traditions like bull racing (*karapan sapi*)—there are traditional games synonymous with that culture, such as *rap-kerrapan sape* and *pesapean pappa*.

According to (Budhisantoso dkk., 1991), traditional games hold a significant place in culture and represent a substantial human resource. Beyond being a form of physical activity often associated with recreational needs, games can also be used to instill understanding and foster specific attitudes and skills in community members. Thus, traditional games indirectly possess character education values that can be imparted to children.

Traditional games are regional cultural legacies that support and play a vital role in the national culture. However, it is deeply regrettable that over the last decade, the development of traditional games has increasingly faltered. Reflecting on the era of the early 2000s and prior—when technology had not yet advanced as rapidly as it has today—traditional games were the primary source of entertainment and experienced their heyday. Children rarely spent their leisure time without playing. For example, after the afternoon (*Asr*) prayer, children would gather to play marbles, hide-and-seek, *bentengan*, fly kites, and engage in various other traditional activities.

What, then, has caused the declining interest in traditional games, or even their erasure from memory? Modernization and globalization are the primary factors triggering the abandonment of traditional games. These forces are characterized by rapid technological advancements. The emergence of telecommunication devices, such as mobile phones—which are no longer used merely for calls and SMS but for various other interests—adds to the burden of developing traditional games.

In truth, no culture remains static; culture is inherently dynamic and evolves alongside advancements in technology and information, including traditional games (Ismail & Endayani, 2022). Looking back, traditional games in Sumenep Regency, such as *pesapean pappa*, *rap-kerrabhan sape*, *lar-olar kolarjhang*, *penteng*, *banteng*, and *bal budhi*, are now rarely found. Technology has shifted preferences from traditional games toward those perceived as more modern, such as PlayStation, *Mobile Legends*, *Hago*, and *PUBG*. Technology has also altered children's lifestyles, giving rise to the term *jadul* (old-fashioned) to describe children who still play traditional games.

The displacement of traditional games poses a significant challenge for anyone wishing for local culture to remain extant. Modern games do not only shift children's play patterns but also displace the values embedded within traditional games. The values of cooperation, cohesion, and organization found in children's play are now being replaced by the individualism fostered by modern games. Similarly, the social conditions of the surrounding community are affected, with kinship ties drifting further from character values as a result of fading attention toward children's games in certain regions (Ridwan & Mas'odi, 2017).

Traditional games in Sumenep Regency are the legacy of ancestors who held firmly to their respective cultural and philosophical traditions. Therefore, "revitalizing" (*meruwat*) the traditional games of Sumenep Regency is equivalent to fighting for two critical goals: maintaining the existence of regional culture as part of the national identity and passing down noble virtues through traditional games to the current generation in Sumenep Regency.

Types of Traditional Games in Sumenep Regency

Play can serve as an enjoyable and effective method to enhance skills in language development, cognition, creativity, and role-sharing (Smith & Pellegrini, 2023). Through play, children can choose games they enjoy, allowing them to immerse themselves in the activity and unlock their potential skills. The selected games can be traditional ones that are rich in positive character values.

There is a diverse array of traditional games in Sumenep Regency that children can choose from, such as *pesapean pappa*, *rap-kerrabhan sape*, *lar-olar kolarjhang*, *penteng*, *banteng*, and *bal budhi*. *Pesapean Pappa* refers to a toy cow for young children in Madura, crafted from banana fronds. From an early age, Madurese children are familiar with these toy cows. This game is often accompanied by singing as a sign of the cheers and joy characteristic of childhood (Ridwan & Mas'odi, 2017).

The next traditional game found in Sumenep Regency is *rap-kerrabhan sape*. *Rap-kerrabhan sape* is a Madurese children's game, specifically in Sumenep, featuring a miniature *kaleles* (plow-like sled) made of bamboo and wheels crafted from sandals, wood, or rubber-coated bamboo (Admin, 2024). This game functions much like the actual *karapan sapi* (bull racing), where speed is contested. The *pesapean* that reaches the finish line first is declared the winner.

The *lar-olar kolarjhang* game is a "snake-like" game accompanied by the song "Lar-Olar Kolarjhang." This game bears a resemblance to *ular naga*. According to (Rahman dkk., 2024), this game is typically played in large groups (approximately seven or more people). Two children stand facing each other, joining hands to form a "gate," while the other children form a line and walk

orderly around them while singing the song. At the end of the song, the two children forming the gate "lock" or capture the child passing through by lowering their extended arms. Whoever is caught is considered out of the game.

Bal budhi, when translated literally into Indonesian, means "back ball," which broadly refers to a game where a ball is struck with the hand in a backward direction (Budhisantoso dkk., 1991). The traditional game of *bal budhi* is usually played by children in the afternoon after the *Asr* prayer. It is a group game involving a total of eighteen players.

Penteng is a traditional game played by children with a maximum of six players. This game utilizes only two pieces of straight wood or bamboo, roughly the thickness of an adult's thumb. The materials for this game are easily obtained from the surrounding environment (Budhisantoso et al., 1991). Finally, another traditional game in Sumenep Regency is *banteng* (also known as *bentengan*). *Benteng* is a game divided into two teams, each consisting of 4 to 8 members. The objective is to seize the opponent's "fortress" by capturing opposing players through physical touch (Sholehatus dkk., 2023).

Character Values in the Traditional Games of Sumenep Regency

Traditional games possess inherent character values that are indirectly internalized by the children who play them. However, children are often unaware that the traits acquired during play become ingrained in their personalities and are carried into their daily lives. In line with this, (Suryawan, 2018) states that traditional games can provide character education and positive moral values essential for a child's growth. Furthermore, these games serve as a learning medium to develop a child's Emotional Quotient (EQ).

Similar to traditional games in general, those found in Sumenep Regency are embedded with significant character values. According to (Budhisantoso dkk., 1991), traditional folk games play a crucial role in social life; they serve not only as a cultural treasury for entertainment and leisure but also as a vehicle for socializing the cultural values of the supporting community.

Traditional games in Sumenep Regency—such as *pe-sapean pappa*, *rap-kerrabhan sape*, *penteng*, *banteng*, and *lar-olar kolarjhang*—incorporate values of discipline, independence, solidarity, sportsmanship, responsibility, and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). These character values are implicitly internalized within the child. Meanwhile, explicitly, children experience joy, happiness, and physical well-being while participating in these traditional activities.

Revitalization Strategies for Sumenep Regency's Traditional Games

Traditional games, as a cultural heritage of Sumenep Regency, cannot be left neglected without proper attention. Allowing these games to be eroded by cultural shifts and technological advancements is tantamount to jeopardizing the nation's cultural wealth and local wisdom in favor of modern games that do not originate from our national identity. This compromise also risks the character values inherent in traditional games—such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and creativity—against modern games that tend to promote sedentary and individualistic behavior.

The revitalization of games to restore them to the prominence they enjoyed decades ago is an alternative that must be pursued. This revitalization requires a strategic approach to ensure precision in execution and alignment with the intended goals. Such strategies include the process of cultural learning or discovery (internalization), the socialization process, the enculturation process, and cultural transmission (Lubis, 2021).

a. Internalization Process

The internalization process is the journey of learning about a particular culture. This learning process is lifelong, spanning from an individual's birth to the end of their life. Internalization can occur individually, where a person actively seeks out various cultural sources to study. It can also be facilitated by others, wherein an individual who already understands specific cultural elements internalizes that knowledge into the person who is the subject of the learning process.

In the context of traditional games, the internalization process follows a similar pattern. Children can independently discover and learn about these games. Furthermore, internalization can be facilitated by parents, teachers at school, or the community by introducing, teaching, and practicing traditional games with children.

b. Socialization Process

Socialization is the process through which an individual gets to know others and integrates into their environment. This process helps children recognize what exists around them. According to (Lubis, 2021), during this process, an individual learns patterns of action through interaction with various individuals in their surroundings who hold diverse social roles in daily life. Initially, learning occurs within the family environment with parents, followed by interactions with the extended family, the school environment, society at large, and so forth.

During this stage, children become aware of the types of games available in their environment. This process can be utilized to introduce traditional games to children. Socialization can be carried out formally through planned activities involving experts or naturally by introducing traditional games and their benefits to children in everyday contexts.

c. Enculturation Process

Once children become familiar with these games, they will naturally attempt to play them. Their inherent curiosity motivates them to engage in the activity. When a child tries a game repeatedly until it becomes a continuous practice, the process of cultural enculturation occurs. As emphasized by (Lubis, 2021), in this process, individuals repeatedly adjust and imitate the mindsets and attitudes found within the customs, norms, and regulations of their culture. Through consistent imitation, these actions evolve into stable patterns and norms that align with the culture.

d. Cultural Transmission (Inheritance)

Another method to ensure that traditional games do not fade or disappear is by transmitting them to the next generation. This inheritance can be achieved through various means, such as direct instruction to children, documenting them in books for future generations to read, and recording them in video format to be uploaded to social media. Additionally, creating online games based on local wisdom serves as a modern form of preservation. This transmission can also be strengthened by forming communities to facilitate the inheritance process more effectively.

Relevance of Sumenep Regency's Traditional Games to Character Education in Schools

Traditional games, which are rich in intrinsic values, can be utilized to enhance children's character development. This utilization can be implemented by anyone and in any setting, such as by parents at home or teachers in schools. Within the school environment, the inculcation of positive character values through traditional games can be integrated into the curriculum. This statement aligns with research conducted by (Astuti & Thohir, 2024), which demonstrates that the integration of traditional games into the elementary school curriculum has a positive impact on character education. Traditional games serve as effective tools to support students' character building while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of local culture.

Furthermore, research by (Sari, 2024) indicates that through traditional games, students gain more freedom to interact and play with their peers at school. Playing becomes a mechanism for them to alleviate stress and boredom after spending half a day studying. Traditional games facilitate positive behavioral changes in students and sharpen their social skills. Moreover, students begin to express their feelings more effectively. According to a literature study by (Khairunnisa dkk., 2025), traditional games contribute significantly to shaping the character of children aged 4–6 years. These characters are formed naturally and subconsciously. Traditional games indirectly influence character development as these activities typically involve at least two people and are frequently played in groups. Through interactions within these group games, valuable moral messages are conveyed.

The aforementioned research findings demonstrate that traditional games have significant relevance in instilling character values in students at school. This research also highlights the profound cultural richness inherited from the nation's ancestors. Therefore, introducing traditional games to children—whether at home, school, or in the community—does not mean teaching them to be "old-fashioned" (*jadul*). Rather, it is an effort to teach children to preserve the cultural wealth and local wisdom of their nation.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the background and discussion presented, it can be concluded that the traditional games of Sumenep Regency contribute significantly to the realization of the 2045 Indonesian Golden Generation. These traditional games are not merely a form of entertainment; they embody noble values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), honesty, sportsmanship, leadership, and creativity, all of which are highly relevant to the character formation of the younger generation.

Through participation in traditional games, children and adolescents learn to interact, collaborate, respect differences, and develop their personal potential. Furthermore, these games instill a sense of patriotism and pride in one's own culture. Consequently, traditional games serve as an effective and enjoyable medium for character education.

However, the preservation and development of Sumenep's traditional games pose a considerable challenge. It requires a synergistic collaboration among various stakeholders, including local governments, the community, schools, families, and the mass media. Local governments should consider integrating traditional games into the school curriculum and providing financial support for cultural preservation initiatives. The community must play an active role in organizing traditional game activities within their neighborhoods and transmitting these traditions to the youth. Schools should integrate these games into extracurricular activities and the learning process, while families ought to introduce traditional games to children from an early age. Lastly, the mass media should promote traditional games across various platforms to ensure their continued relevance.

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