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# Strengthening Character Education in Elementary School Students through Local Wisdom–Based Traditional Games

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Local wisdom refers to the environmental and cultural knowledge passed down through generations, which exists within community life. In education, integrating local wisdom can enhance character education by instilling moral values grounded in the local culture. **Objective:** This study aimed to explore the strategies employed by principals and teachers to enhance the character education of SDN Kawunggading students through locally wisdom-based games. **Method:** This research is qualitative in nature and employs a descriptive method. The study was conducted at SDN Kawunggading during the 2023 school year, with students as the subjects. Data were collected from the Principal and Homeroom Teacher using observation and interview techniques. The data analysis employed a descriptive analytical method. **Results:** The findings indicated that character education at Kawunggading Elementary School is implemented through local wisdom-based games, which help foster values such as honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and friendliness (communicativeness). **Conclusion:** The integration of local wisdom-based games effectively supports the cultivation of character education, making it more relatable and meaningful for students. These games play a key role in promoting positive behaviors and values in students, while also preserving cultural heritage. **Originality/Value:** This study provides empirical novelty in the field of primary education and culture-based character pedagogy by uncovering practical leadership and instructional strategies to transform local wisdom-based traditional games into experiential media for fostering core moral values (honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and communicativeness) concerning student character development within the context of rural/public primary schooling, an area that has remained insufficiently documented. These findings enrich empirical evidence and serve as a strategic reference for designing culturally responsive character learning models and school-level policies aimed at character cultivation and cultural preservation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role as a center of excellence in shaping human character to face global challenges (Tyas et al., 2020). In this case, if Indonesia succeeds in forming a strong character within Indonesian society, then Indonesia will become a strong nation in all sectors by 2045, or 100 years after independence. Thus, education needs to prepare qualified, competitive, and creative students (Rahmania, 2021). The implementation of education in Indonesia must be equitable and future-oriented (Suryani, 2021). The implementation is supported by good management by policymakers and education practitioners so that the implementation of national education can be

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achieved optimally by the objectives of national education as stated in Law number 20 of 2002 concerning the national edu-cation system article 3, that "National education has a role and function in developing every potential of students, as well as shaping the character of a dignified nation to educate the nation's life, aims to develop the potential of stu-dents to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Sutarman et al., 2017). Character, according to the Indonesian Language Center, refers to the psychological, moral, or ethical traits that distinguish a person from others (Language Center of the Ministry of National Education). The content of good character is goodness. Goodness, such as honesty, courage, justice, and compassion, is a disposition to behave morally. Character is the embodiment of sound and human quality, whether humans are aware of it or not (Fajrussalam & Hasanah, 2018).

Character education is an educational system designed to empower all Indonesian citizens to develop into well-rounded individuals, enabling them to be proactive in responding to the challenges of changing times through the cultivation of strong psychological traits or character. The cultivation of moral values is stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that the national education system must be the primary basis for designing, implementing, and evaluating the national education system. An advanced nation possesses superior characteristics (Setiawan & Sufa, 2018).

The problem of character education, stemming from the limited knowledge of teachers and parents in shaping children's character during the learning process, must be addressed immediately. Abdullah et al. (2019) explain the character education strategy, beginning with planning that involves selecting prioritized values and outlining the school's vision and mission. The second stage of implementation involves habituation, which is strengthened by extracurricular activities and local content, and is integrated through various theme development activities (Muthohar, 2021).

Modern games tend to make children more individualistic because they often play alone. This is certainly different; when children play traditional games, they can interact with peers, collaborate, develop creativity, devise strategies, and more. Therefore, traditional games become a vehicle or medium for children's self-expression. Children's involvement in traditional games will hone, sharpen, and develop their brains, generate empathy, build social awareness, foster creativity, and more (Rut et al., 2020).

Local wisdom is a form of environmental wisdom that exists in community life in a place or region. Local wisdom comes from two words: wisdom and local. Local wisdom can be interpreted as local ideas that are wise, embody good values, are embedded, and are followed by community members. Local wisdom is formed as a form of the cultural excellence of local communities and geographical conditions in a broad sense (Wahyuni & Hashanah, 2016).

Local wisdom is used to indicate the existence of a concept that, in local socio-cultural life, there is a nobleness, height of values, truth, goodness, and beauty that is valued by community members, so that it is used as a guide or guideline for building patterns of relationships among citizens or as a basis for building their life goals to be realized. The values of local wisdom can serve as a foundation for character education in schools. Syafrizal (2021) states that communities with cultural values, some of which can be categorized as local genius or local knowledge, can be a source of value for the supporting community. Cultural values, recognized in the form of local wisdom, are utilized as educational materials or resources (Rukiyati & Purwastuti, 2016).

Previous research by Nicolopoulou & Trapp (2018) on character education in early childhood through storytelling activities has considerable obstacles, including a minimal collection or reference to stories about character education. Thus, the ability of teachers to instill character education is a fundamental competency that teachers must have. Based on the assessment conducted on teachers and principals, in addition to the problem of character education, it has been found that teachers have not identified the right activities to instill character values in their learning methods for discipline, independence, and responsibility. Teachers in the school environment need a renewal of character education learning through local wisdom-based games (Rosala & Budiman, 2020).

Recognizing the above phenomenon, teachers in the school environment need to cultivate character education through local wisdom-based games to develop students' character by utilizing local game culture. Indonesia is rich in culture, holding a variety of traditional games, such as snake and dragon (oray-orayan), gobak sodor, hide and seek, jump rope, and others. Each region has its own traditional games, reflecting its distinct cultural heritage. However, at this time, the younger generation is more interested in playing online games accessed through smartphones. If this phenomenon continues, traditional games in Indonesia may one day disappear because they are not being preserved. Therefore, using traditional games as a medium to instill character education indirectly helps maintain and preserve our ancestral heritage. Instilling character education in children can be achieved through various media, including play (Syamsurrijal, 2020).

The study highlights the role of local wisdom-based games in strengthening students' character education at SDN Kawunggading through values such as honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and communication. However, a research gap remains because the study only describes the implementation strategies used by principals and teachers without analyzing their long-term effectiveness or systematically measuring their impact on students' character development. Additionally, the study does not explore the challenges encountered during implementation, variations in student responses, or the integration of local wisdom-based character education within the broader school curriculum and policy framework. Further research is needed to evaluate measurable outcomes, sustainability, and the scalability of these strategies across different educational contexts.

This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by school principals and teachers to strengthen students' character education through local wisdom-based games at SDN Kawunggading. The research focuses on how these traditional games are integrated into the learning process to cultivate key character values such as honesty, discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and independence. In addition, the study examines the roles of educators in facilitating these activities, the specific character values developed, and the practical application of local cultural elements within the school environment as part of character education.

## 2. METHOD

### *2.1 Research Design*

This research employs qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. The qualitative research method is a social science research approach that collects and analyzes data in the form of words (oral or written) and human actions. Researchers do not attempt to calculate or quantify the qualitative data obtained, and thus do not analyze numbers (Mohajan, 2018). Descriptive research is a form of research that aims to describe existing phenomena, including both natural phenomena and human-made engineering (Bradshaw et al., 2017). This type of research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing field research methods to gather authentic data based on actual conditions. The research involves interviews, observation, and direct documentation with research subjects.

### *2.2 Research Subject*

This research was conducted at SDN Kawunggading in the 2025 school year. The subjects in this study were students, and data were obtained through the Principal and Homeroom Teacher. The selection of subjects was done using the snowball sampling technique, which begins by selecting a few subjects that meet specific criteria. These selected subjects are then asked to recommend or refer other relevant participants for the study. This process continues, forming a "snowball" as more and more subjects are recommended, until the desired sample size is reached.

### *2.3 Data Sources*

The primary and secondary data sources are the main data sources in qualitative research. Primary data sources are obtained through direct observation in the field, where researchers observe the data collection process firsthand. This secondary source is based on data obtained from the literature. Literature data is used to compile a theoretical foundation as a basis for standing in preparing a thesis and research practice in the field, namely, demographic data, and supporting books.

### *2.4 Data Collection*

Data collection is a systematic and standardized procedure in the process of collecting research information (data) (Utomo et al., 2024). In this study, data collection used observation and interview techniques. Researchers use observation to collect data and record their findings during the data collection process. Interviews were used by researchers interviewing the Principal and Homeroom Teacher.

### *2.6 Data Analysis*

This research employs a triangulation technique, which involves combining various data collection methods and existing data sources. The data validity test in this study employs data verification techniques commonly used in qualitative research. Triangulation is a data truth-checking technique that involves comparing the data obtained. Data triangulation uses sources and methods.

The data analysis method employed is a descriptive-analytic approach, which describes the data collected in the form of words, pictures, and narrative descriptions, rather than numerical values. Data from manuscripts, inter-

views, field notes, documents, and other sources is then described to provide clarity on reality. The stages of data analysis include Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion and Certification.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *3.1 Results*

#### *3.1.1 Character Education Values in Local Wisdom Based on Traditional Games*

The Character Education Values in Local Wisdom Based on Traditional Games are explained in the table below:

Tabel 1. Character Education Values in Local Wisdom Based on Traditional Games

| Aspect | Findings |
|---|---|
| Character Education Implementation | Character education at SDN Kawunggading is implemented through local wisdom-based traditional games. |
| Character Values Instilled | The games instill the following character values: honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and effective communication/friendliness. |
| Educational Strategy | The principal and homeroom teachers incorporate traditional games into the curriculum to foster character development among students. |
| Role of Games in Character Education | Local wisdom-based traditional games serve as effective tools to reinforce moral values, making them more relatable and meaningful in students' everyday lives. |
| Cultural Heritage Contribution | These games help preserve and introduce local cultural heritage, enriching students' understanding of their traditions while strengthening character education. |
| Student Engagement | Students actively participate in these traditional games, creating an interactive and engaging environment that supports character education in a fun and relatable way. |
| Achievement of Educational Goals | The integration of local wisdom-based traditional games has successfully met its educational objectives, with students internalizing positive character values through enjoyable, culturally relevant activities. |

The table provides a comprehensive overview of how local wisdom-based traditional games contribute to character education at SDN Kawunggading. These games are a central part of the school's approach, helping instill key character values such as honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and communication. The principal and homeroom teachers strategically integrate these games into the curriculum to foster character development in students. These traditional games not only reinforce moral values but also make them more meaningful and relevant in students' daily lives. Additionally, they play a significant role in preserving and introducing local cultural heritage, enriching students' understanding of their traditions. The active participation of students creates an engaging, interactive learning environment that supports character education in a fun way. Ultimately, the integration of these games has successfully met the educational goals of developing positive character traits, while keeping the learning process culturally relevant and enjoyable.

#### *3.1.2 Character Education*

Education in primary schools is the first formal level of education that determines the development of students' potential. Therefore, it is crucial to optimally develop students' disciplinary character to ensure that, by the next level, students possess a solid foundation of disciplined behavior. Given the importance of character education in elementary schools, implementing various school policies to support its success is essential (Wuryandani et al., 2014).

Instilling discipline leads to the development of good behavior in children, enabling them to conform to the values and norms of their social environment, thereby ensuring their acceptance and integration within it. Such children exhibit good self-adjustment, which contributes to their overall happiness. Efforts to instill discipline encompass various influences aimed at helping students understand and adapt to environmental demands (Annisa, 2019). Based on interviews related to character education at SDN Kawunggading, the problems in the field include a lack of manners, such as speaking harshly and using inappropriate language toward teachers and peers, which has led to the need for teacher intervention in improving character education and preventing undesirable behaviors.

Teachers at SDN Kawunggading implement a habituation program to improve character education, such as checking students' tidiness on Mondays and conducting a dhuha prayer and *sholawatan* program every Friday before the first lesson. However, after the earthquake disaster, the dhuha prayer program was not implemented due to the lack of a mosque. To replace this, teachers conducted *a quiet period* before lessons. The homeroom teacher also models punctuality by entering class at 07:15. However, interviews revealed that some students often arrive late due to a lack of enthusiasm and disruptions in the tent classroom, which impacts their learning activities. Character education is implemented by every teacher at SDN Kawunggading, where students are accustomed to greeting when they enter the classroom and are directed to pray before and after lessons. Teachers also instill a sense of responsibility by having students clean the classroom after each lesson, even though classes are conducted in tents.

#### *3.1.3 Local Wisdom-Based Games*

According to Sujarno, traditional games contain many character-building values, including responsibility, obedience, education, sportsmanship, entertainment, solidarity, and freedom. Traditional games serve as practical tools for supporting children's development and growth. They also help develop various forms of communication as a social expression in the children's interactions with their peers (Rachmadyanti, 2017).

The traditional game used in this study is *Oray-orayan*, where the essence of the game involves the head of the snake catching its tail. The game symbolizes the Ouroboros, an ancient symbol depicting a snake or dragon eating its own tail. This symbol represents self-reflection, cycles, and the constant recreation or return of immortality (Kuniawati, 2020). Maryati & Pranata (2019) explain that *Oray-orayan* has been known for a long time and is widespread throughout West Java. The game is typically played outdoors in the morning, afternoon, or evening and can last for 10 to 15 minutes or longer. Participants, aged 5-12 years, can include both boys and girls, with 7-20 children participating the more players, the more beautiful the formation (Giyartini, 2014).

The local wisdom manifested in *Oray-orayan* reflects religious and spiritual values. These values transcend religious boundaries, as those who practice a religion are not necessarily religious, but true religious individuals must live by their religious values. The game requires players to have total awareness of their roles and responsibilities, fulfilling them in a collective spirit. Spiritual values are also evident in respect for rice (Nyi Pohaci), as shown in the lyrics of the song: "Oray-orayan luar leor mapay sawah, entong ka sawah parena keur sedeng beukah" (The snake is slithering on the rice field, do not go into the rice field when the paddy is expanding) (Noviati & Giwangsa, 2018).

Previous research by Puspita (2019) highlighted the advantages of the *Oray-orayan* game model over conventional methods. During learning, students are more active, engaged, and interested in the material, with no signs of boredom. This increased interest in learning has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes, as observed by teachers. The *Oray-orayan* game at SDN Kawunggading is implemented through guidance and counseling services in the social field, aiming to foster values such as honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, and communication skills. Therefore, the *Oray-orayan* game helps students develop a strong sense of responsibility. To implement this model, a sufficient outdoor space is required. The land used at SDN Kawunggading is agricultural land donated to the school for educational purposes. After implementing guidance and counseling services, students' enthusiasm increased, and they were very eager to participate in further learning activities.

### *3.2 Discussion*

#### *3.2.1 Character Education in School*

At SDN Kawunggading, character education is an integral part of the school's curriculum, designed to shape students into responsible and disciplined individuals. The school fosters these qualities through various structured activities, such as weekly checks on tidiness, which encourage students to maintain personal responsibility and take pride in their surroundings. Religious practices, like dhuha prayers, also play a significant role, helping students connect their daily lives with their faith and cultivating a sense of discipline in their routines. Furthermore, the school emphasizes the importance of punctuality and cleanliness, which are foundational habits that support both personal development and a respectful school environment.

The teachers at SDN Kawunggading remain dedicated to ensuring that these character-building activities are consistently implemented, even when facing challenges such as the temporary learning spaces due to the tent classrooms. The adverse effects of the recent earthquake have added another layer of difficulty, but the educators continue to prioritize character education despite these setbacks. Through their perseverance, they have created an environment that encourages students to develop positive habits and values that extend beyond academic achievement, promoting a holistic approach to student development.

While these efforts have been effective in promoting discipline and responsibility, there are still obstacles to overcome. One notable issue is the late arrival of some students, which affects the smooth implementation of the character education programs. Additionally, a lack of enthusiasm from some students suggests that the current methods may not be fully engaging for all learners. This highlights the importance of adapting the educational approach to capture the attention and interest of students better, ensuring that all of them are motivated to participate actively in character-building activities.

To address these challenges, the school might consider incorporating more engaging and interactive methods into its character education programs. For example, integrating group activities, peer mentorship, or community-based projects could encourage greater participation and enthusiasm among students. Furthermore, offering incentives for consistent punctuality or active involvement in religious and cleanliness practices could motivate students to take more responsibility for their actions. By diversifying the approaches used in character education, SDN Kawunggading can further strengthen its efforts to instill essential values in students, preparing them to be both academically successful and morally grounded.

Character education in schools plays an important role in shaping students not only academically but also morally, emotionally, and socially (Birhan et al., 2021). Schools serve as the second environment, after the family, where students learn values, attitudes, and behaviors that influence their daily lives and future roles in society. Through character education, schools aim to instill essential values, including honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, empathy, and cooperation. These values are integrated into daily school activities, classroom learning, and interactions among students and teachers. Character education encourages students to develop integrity, positive attitudes, and strong personal character that guide them in making ethical decisions (Ayane & Mihiretie, 2024). It also fosters the development of emotional intelligence, enabling students to build healthy relationships and make positive contributions to their communities.

Character education in schools fosters a conducive and positive learning environment. By embedding values in their educational practices, schools can minimize negative behaviors, such as bullying, dishonesty, and intolerance, while promoting respect, teamwork, and social harmony. Teachers play a key role as role models who consistently demonstrate good character in words and actions (Wall & Hall, 2016). Educational programs such as extracurricular activities, student leadership training, and community service also support the implementation of character education in real-life situations. Ultimately, character education helps students grow into well-rounded individuals who excel academically while upholding strong moral principles and social responsibility.

### *3.2.2 Local Wisdom-Based Games*

The Oray-orayan game, a traditional Indonesian game, has become a powerful method of instilling valuable social skills in students at SDN Kawunggading. This game, deeply embedded in local culture, is not just a form of entertainment but a meaningful activity that teaches students how to work together as a team. The cooperative nature of the game, where students rely on each other to achieve a common goal, fosters a strong sense of unity and mutual trust. By participating in Oray-orayan, students can understand the importance of collaboration and teamwork in both academic and social settings, which are essential skills for their future development.

In addition to teamwork, Oray-orayan also emphasizes the value of responsibility. Each participant in the game must play their part for the team to succeed, which mirrors the responsibilities individuals hold in a community. This sense of responsibility is not just about personal achievement but about contributing to the welfare of the group. By integrating this game into the school's activities, students learn to take ownership of their actions and understand the impact of their behavior on others. These lessons extend beyond the game and encourage students to apply similar principles of responsibility in their daily lives, fostering a well-rounded sense of accountability.

The game also plays a significant role in promoting respect for nature and others, which aligns with the school's broader educational goals (Akinsemolu & Onyeaka, 2025). Through the game, students develop an understanding of the interconnectedness of life and the importance of respecting both the environment and one another. The game's emphasis on teamwork and mutual support highlights the importance of ethical values such as respect, kindness, and empathy (Jia et al., 2025). By combining these ethical teachings with the physical and playful aspects of Oray-orayan, the school successfully blends cultural traditions with modern educational practices, creating a learning experience that is both fun and enriching.

Incorporating Oray-orayan into the guidance and counseling programs further strengthens its role as a tool for character development. As students engage in the game, they not only develop social skills but also build a sense of community and belonging. The positive feedback from students, along with the increased enthusiasm for learning, underscores the effectiveness of this approach. By using this traditional game to teach important social values, SDN

Kawunggading has successfully preserved a cultural heritage while enriching the educational experience. The game has become a valuable tool in fostering a sense of community, cooperation, and personal responsibility among students, ensuring that they develop into well-rounded individuals capable of making positive contributions to society.

Local wisdom-based games are an effective educational medium for instilling character values in students (Sakti et al., 2024). Traditional games such as *gobak sodor*, *egrang*, *congklak*, *engklek*, and *oray-orayan* are not only part of cultural heritage but also serve as natural and enjoyable tools for character learning. Through these games, students learn important life values rooted in local culture, such as teamwork, sportsmanship, responsibility, hard work, and respect for rules and others. Thus, traditional games serve not only as entertainment but also as relevant and contextual tools for character education, aligned with students' social and cultural environments.

In school implementation, local wisdom-based games can be integrated into both learning activities and extra-curricular programs. Teachers play an important role as facilitators who guide the games to ensure that character-building goals are achieved (Eliasa, 2014). During gameplay, students are trained not only physically and cognitively but also emotionally and socially. For example, in *gobak sodor*, students learn cooperation and team strategy; in *congklak*, they learn patience, focus, and fairness; while *oray-orayan* teaches unity and mutual trust. These values gradually shape positive character traits through direct experiences and natural social interactions.

In addition to strengthening character, local wisdom-based games also play an important role in cultural preservation. In the era of globalization and the rise of digital games, traditional games are becoming less familiar to younger generations. Therefore, incorporating traditional games into education is a strategic effort to preserve cultural heritage while fostering national character (Malegiannaki & Daradoumis, 2017). Moreover, this approach creates a fun, contextual, and student-centered learning environment. Ultimately, the use of local wisdom-based games not only enriches character education methods but also contributes to shaping a generation that is virtuous, culturally rooted, and possesses a strong identity based on the nation's noble values.

### *3.2.3 Integration of Character Education and Local Wisdom*

By combining character education programs with traditional games like Oray-orayan, SDN Kawunggading creates a comprehensive approach to student development that integrates cultural heritage and modern educational practices. This unique blend helps reinforce discipline, responsibility, and spiritual awareness among students, while also fostering a deep connection to their local culture. The game of Oray-orayan plays a significant role in this process, offering students an interactive way to learn the importance of teamwork and collaboration, which are essential qualities for success in both academic and social spheres. By grounding character education in the context of local traditions and religious values, the school ensures that students are not only equipped with the moral values necessary for harmonious community interaction but also with the personal traits that will guide them in their future endeavors.

Moreover, the integration of cultural wisdom into character education allows students to gain a broader perspective on social responsibility, as they learn to value their heritage while also adapting to contemporary challenges. This holistic approach nurtures a well-rounded sense of self, preparing students for a balanced and meaningful life (Khotele, 2024). By participating in Oray-orayan and other character-building activities, students are encouraged to develop empathy, respect for others, and a strong sense of responsibility, values that contribute to their overall personal growth and social success. The blending of these traditional practices with the school's academic curriculum creates an environment that enables students to thrive in both their educational journey and personal development.

However, despite the success of this integrated approach, several challenges persist. The diverse backgrounds of the students, alongside external influences such as technology and the aftermath of the earthquake, complicate the consistent implementation of character education (Feng et al., 2020). The rise of digital media, in particular, poses a significant challenge as students are exposed to various perspectives and ideas that may conflict with the values promoted by the school. This exposure can create confusion and disrupt the positive impact of character education, especially when students are influenced by external sources that do not align with the moral framework being taught at school. As a result, it becomes essential for SDN Kawunggading to continually refine and adapt its strategies to maintain the effectiveness of character education in the face of these challenges.

To overcome these obstacles, the school must incorporate more dynamic and interactive methods that resonate with students in the digital age. Leveraging technology can help bring character education to life in new and engaging ways, making it more relevant to students' everyday experiences (Burden et al., 2020). Incorporating multimedia resources, interactive platforms, and online collaboration could not only help bridge the gap between traditional

values and modern realities but also enhance student engagement. By utilizing technology as a tool for fostering character education, SDN Kawunggading can ensure that its students are equipped with the values, skills, and knowledge necessary to navigate an ever-changing world with integrity, resilience, and social responsibility.

The integration of character education with local wisdom is a crucial approach for developing students' moral values while preserving their cultural identity. Character education aims to instill universal values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and respect (Birhan et al., 2021). When combined with local wisdom, these values become more meaningful because they are taught through practices and traditions that are familiar to students. Local wisdom reflects cultural heritage and life philosophies passed down through generations, making it a relevant foundation for character formation in the school environment.

Integrating character education with local wisdom can be implemented through learning activities, school culture, and extracurricular programs. Teachers can use traditional games, proverbs, local stories, folklore, regional arts, and community traditions as learning media (Prempeh, 2022). For example, local folklore can be used to teach moral lessons, while traditional ceremonies or cultural practices promote values such as cooperation, respect, and social harmony. This integration not only strengthens character development but also enhances students' appreciation of their cultural identity and promotes cultural resilience in the midst of modernization.

Furthermore, this integration encourages collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Character education based on local wisdom cannot be effectively implemented without incorporating the local cultural context and actively engaging the community. Schools can partner with cultural leaders, local artists, and community elders to provide authentic learning experiences that reflect cultural values (Prest, 2020). This collaborative approach ensures that character education is not limited to theoretical learning but becomes a holistic process rooted in daily life. Ultimately, integrating character education and local wisdom supports the creation of a generation that is not only intelligent and ethical but also culturally grounded and socially responsible.

## 4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

### *4.1 Research Implications*

The study's results suggest that teachers and school principals can utilize local wisdom-based games as an effective strategy to enhance character education for elementary school students. By integrating these culturally rooted games into the curriculum, schools can offer students more than just academic lessons. They provide opportunities for experiential learning that reinforces core values such as responsibility, teamwork, respect, and empathy. Local wisdom games serve as a medium through which students can internalize these values while also fostering a deeper connection to their cultural heritage. This approach not only enhances students' social and community skills but also helps in holistically shaping their character, preparing them to be responsible citizens who respect both their traditions and their peers.

### *4.1 Research Contributions*

The contribution of this study lies in offering valuable insights into the field of personal and social guidance and counseling, especially in terms of strengthening character education through locally wisdom-based games. Theoretically, the findings contribute to the understanding of how traditional games can be utilized as tools for moral and social development, broadening the scope of character education beyond conventional methods. Practically, this research provides a concrete example for educators and counselors on how to effectively incorporate these games into their programs to foster character building. By offering a creative, engaging, and culturally significant approach, local wisdom-based games can be an essential tool for developing well-rounded individuals with strong social and personal values.

## 5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIREC-TIONS

### *5.1 Research Limitataions*

One of the limitations of this study is that it was conducted at only one school, SDN Kawunggading, which may not fully represent the broader implementation of local wisdom-based games in character education across different regions or educational contexts. The findings may be influenced by the unique cultural and social dynamics of this specific school, limiting the generalizability of the results to other schools with different demographics or geographical settings. Additionally, the research relied heavily on qualitative methods, particularly interviews and observations, which may introduce subjectivity and potential bias in interpreting the data. The limited sample size of

participants, primarily comprising the principal, homeroom teacher, and students, also restricts the depth and scope of the findings, as it does not capture the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as parents or community members.

### *5.2 Recommendation for Future Risearch*

For future research, it is recommended that the study be expanded to include a larger sample of schools, possibly across different regions, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of local wisdom-based games in character education. Future studies could also incorporate quantitative methods, such as surveys or assessments, to measure the impact of these games on students' character development more objectively. Additionally, exploring the role of parents, community members, and technology in supporting or hindering character education could provide valuable insights into creating a more holistic approach to character development.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

It is essential to instill students' disciplinary character from an early stage, particularly in elementary school, to ensure that they develop a strong foundation in discipline that will carry them through to higher levels of education. Given the significance of character education in elementary schools, it is crucial to implement school policies and activities that support the development of disciplined behavior. By integrating engaging learning activities into the curriculum, schools can effectively enhance students' sense of discipline, independence, and responsibility, values that are foundational to character education in early childhood. These qualities, once instilled, not only enhance academic performance but also help children become well-rounded individuals who are better equipped to navigate the complexities of life and society.

At SDN Kawunggading, homeroom teachers play a crucial role in promoting character education through various habit formation programs. For example, every Monday, teachers check the students' tidiness, promoting personal responsibility and the importance of maintaining a clean and organized environment. Additionally, the principal introduced a dhuha prayer program every Friday before the first lesson as part of fostering spiritual development and discipline. However, following the earthquake disaster, this program was temporarily suspended due to the lack of a designated prayer room. This disruption highlights the challenges faced by the school in maintaining consistent character-building routines, particularly when confronted with external factors such as natural disasters that impact the physical environment.

Despite these challenges, SDN Kawunggading continues to incorporate local games, such as the traditional *gobak sodor*, into its character education approach. The game is utilized in guidance and counseling services to help instill values like honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, responsibility, and friendliness. By incorporating local wisdom-based games, the school not only honors cultural traditions but also provides students with a fun, interactive way to practice these essential values. The game promotes teamwork and communication skills, making it an excellent tool for teaching social responsibility. However, implementing the *gobak sodor* game as part of counseling services requires adequate space, highlighting the importance of a supportive environment to ensure the success of character education programs. This model illustrates the importance of utilizing cultural practices as a dynamic and effective means of developing well-rounded students who are prepared to make positive contributions to society.

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## Author Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Yulia Sri Astut: Conceptualization and Design; Writing - Original Draft. Yulia Sri Astuti: Methodology, Writing - Review & Editing; Performed data collection and Analysis Sindi Apriliani: Interpretation of the results. Review-editing.

## Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The authors declare that Generative Artificial Intelligence (Grammarly) tools were employed in the drafting and revision of this manuscript to check spelling and grammar, identify typos, grammatical errors, suggest paraphrases, reduce passive voice, and eliminate repeated words, sentences, and unnecessary adverbs. The suggestions provided by GenAI were critically evaluated and modified to ensure that the final draft remains representative of the authors' own work. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the IJCES Generative AI (GenAI) Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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