



## Learning Media Based on Local Wisdom Through Traditional Games: Character Building in Kindergarten

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Keywords:*

Education, early childhood  
Regional songs  
Traditional games  
Local wisdom

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** Character education in early childhood is an essential foundation for forming a generation with noble morals and character. One practical approach to instilling character values is through regional songs and traditional games. Regional songs contain rich cultural values and can stimulate children's emotional and social development. Meanwhile, traditional games teach the values of sportsmanship, cooperation, and discipline, which are very important in children's social lives. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of regional songs and traditional games in developing the character of early childhood.

**Methodology** – This study used a qualitative and quantitative approach. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, and quantitative data were analyzed statistically using SPSS.

**Finding-** The study results showed that using regional songs significantly fostered values of politeness, love of the homeland, and appreciation for cultural diversity. This study concludes that integrating regional songs and traditional games in learning in early childhood education has proven effective in holistically forming children's characters. Regional songs help instill moral and cultural values, while traditional games shape children's social skills and discipline.

**Contribution-** This approach should be developed and applied more widely in the early childhood education curriculum to strengthen cultural identity and moral values in everyday life.

Received 19 March 2025; Received in revised form 18 March 2025; Accepted 18 September 2025

Eduscience Journal (JES) Volume 12 No. 5 (2025)

Available online 30 October 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

The lack of children's language skills is influenced by the need for students' ability to socialize (Meiyanti, 2022). Local wisdom is the community's ideas, values, or life behaviour (Rokhmat, 2024). The importance of character education at an early age lies in the rapid brain development phase, and it forms the foundation of a child's personality. Characters such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and self-confidence develop more optimally because children are actively involved in a fun learning process and by their culture (Sari, 2021). Traditional games are also integrated with character values (Febrianty & Nugrahanta, 2021). Early character education helps children develop positive values, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, which will equip them to interact with their surroundings and face challenges in the future. Character is an item or a person's quality (F. A. Yusuf, 2023). Character education in early childhood is an important foundation for forming a strong personality and integrity.

According to Dewantara (2021), education must be rooted in national culture to shape children's characters who have integrity and love their culture. This opinion aligns with recent research, which shows that education based on local wisdom can increase children's awareness of cultural identity and develop more positive social attitudes. In early childhood education, the application of learning based on regional songs and traditional games not only increases children's understanding of culture but also strengthens their character through fun and meaningful learning experiences. Character education is crucial in shaping children's personalities from an early age. Early childhood is a moral and social development stage that requires guidance to properly embed positive values (Kurniasih & Suryana, 2021). One approach that can be used in character education is regional songs and traditional games. Regional songs serve as entertainment and a learning medium that can instill cultural, social, and moral values in children. Meanwhile, traditional games are a cultural heritage with values like cooperation, honesty, and sportsmanship. By singing songs that have messages about discipline, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility, children indirectly learn to understand and apply these values (Hasanah, 2021).

Local wisdom is the community's ideas, values, or life behaviour (Rokhmat et al., 2024). Modernization brings significant challenges to preserving local culture, especially for young children. The main obstacles are globalization, social change, and a lack of knowledge and motivation. The importance of preserving local culture lies in developing a sense of love for the homeland in children. Preservation efforts include education that introduces local culture from an early age and encourages active involvement in cultural activities. This is crucial to maintaining the identity and noble values of the nation amidst the onslaught of modernization. In addition, (Lenny et al., 2021) emphasised that traditional games are very appropriate for forming children's character, and their implementation can be integrated into Kindergarten learning, which is implemented through fun games. Thus, integrating regional songs and traditional games in local wisdom-based learning media is an effective strategy for strengthening character in early childhood. This approach preserves local culture and forms a young generation with character and culture. This type of basic skill should be trained from an early age (and elementary school age) for children. Likewise, educators must observe students' reasoning in each lesson (Epi Supriyani, 2022). On the one hand, digital reading encourages social connection. While reading practices always entail text circulation among readers, the social element of reading is emphasised in the digital environment, i.e., the creation and consumption of various textual forms are made more convenient via technology-based media (Siregar et al., 2022). In addition to social benefits, traditional games also contribute to children's motor development (Mulyani, 2023).

Involvement of all stakeholders plays a role in shaping children's development. This is because children experience both positive and negative through interaction. A child's good or bad development depends on the fulfillment of the needs of others, including parents, family, and teachers. This support ultimately affects the child's cognitive abilities (Rizki, 2022). One of the main challenges in character education today is the decreasing involvement of children in activities based on local culture. Technological advances and globalization have caused many children to be more interested in digital games than traditional games.

Regional songs rich in cultural values are also increasingly rarely introduced to young children, resulting in a lack of understanding of the nation's cultural heritage. If this continues, the next generation risks losing their cultural identity and character values that should be instilled early. To solve these problems, this study proposes using regional songs and traditional games as local wisdom-based learning media to strengthen character education in early childhood. Children can understand cultural values through engaging and memorable songs by integrating regional songs into learning. Meanwhile, traditional games can be an interactive method involving children learning while playing.

In learning and teaching, no approach or learning technique is ordained as the most effective approach (Supartini & Weismann, 2020). This approach is in line with Suhartono's (2022), which states that local culture-based learning can increase children's involvement in learning and help them understand moral concepts through direct experience. In addition, recent research from Rahmawati & Hidayat (2023) shows that children who engage in traditional games tend to have higher levels of empathy and social skills than children who only play individually through digital devices. Therefore, integrating regional songs and traditional games in the early childhood education curriculum is a strategic step in strengthening character education and preserving the nation's culture.

Several studies have shown that the use of regional songs and traditional games positively supports early childhood character education. (Wati & Setiawan, 2022) Found that regional songs can be an effective learning medium in instilling moral values such as discipline, cooperation, and love of the homeland. Their study showed that children who often sang regional songs understood social norms better than children who only received conventional learning. In addition, research conducted by Nugroho et al. (2022) discussed the impact of traditional games on the formation of early childhood character, where it was found that games such as hopscotch, congklak, and hide-and-seek contributed to improving children's social skills, sportsmanship, and sense of responsibility. Children who actively play traditional games show increased empathy and tolerance towards peers, which is one indicator of the success of character education.

Furthermore, research conducted by Priyono (2019) highlights the importance of local wisdom-based education in early childhood curriculum. The results of their study show that a culture-based approach (Sunarti & Wahyuni, 2021) not only helps children understand their cultural heritage but also increases their involvement in the learning process. Regional songs and traditional games have proven to be more interesting and compelling in building positive character in children compared to learning methods that are only based on theory or lectures (Hidayat, 2020). Various findings from these studies show that integrating local culture in early childhood education is an important solution in facing the challenges of modernization that can erode the character values of the younger generation.

Based on the study, this study aims to analyze the role of regional songs as a learning medium based on local wisdom in strengthening the character of early childhood. In addition, this study also seeks to identify the influence of traditional games on the formation of children's character, especially in social, moral, and cultural aspects. Furthermore, this study will examine the effectiveness of integrating regional songs and traditional games in the early childhood education curriculum as an innovative approach to improving character education. Thus, this study is expected to provide applicable recommendations for educators and education practitioners in developing more contextual and culture-based learning methods for early childhood education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative and quantitative approach. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, and quantitative data were analyzed statistically using SPSS. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the use of regional songs and traditional games as local wisdom-based learning media to strengthen early childhood's character. Qualitative methods allow for in-depth exploration

of experiences, perceptions, and implementation of culture-based learning strategies applied by educators in the context of early childhood education.

### **Participant**

The subjects of this study were teachers and children aged 5-6 years in Kindergartens (TK) Immanuel Kids, TK AL-Fauzi, and TK Ar-Raihan in Medan Amplas, North Sumatra, which implement learning based on regional songs and traditional games. Teachers were chosen as participants because they have a direct role in implementing learning methods. In contrast, children were chosen as subjects to observe the impact of these methods on their character formation. Participants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which allows for the deliberate selection of subjects based on criteria relevant to the research objectives.

### **Data collection**

Data in this study were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to observe children's interactions while participating in learning based on regional songs and traditional games, as well as to assess the character aspects that were developing. Interviews were conducted with teachers and educators to understand their experiences in implementing this method. Documentation was used to collect supporting materials used in the teaching process. Document techniques are carried out by analysing documents related to this topic, like textbooks and other reference books.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instruments comprised observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation lists. The observation guidelines were designed to record children's activities during the learning process, especially their involvement in regional songs and traditional games, and the character development shown. The interview guidelines contained open-ended questions that explored teachers' experiences implementing this method, including its challenges and benefits (Hartono, 2020). Meanwhile, the documentation list included all materials and supporting evidence relevant to the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data obtained through various instruments is analyzed using a qualitative and quantitative approach. A qualitative approach is used to analyze data in the needs analysis phase by describing some findings from observation and literature review, and a quantitative approach using the SPSS program.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Analysis of Development Test Results**

The development test results showed that the use of regional songs and traditional games as learning media based on local wisdom positively impacted the character of early childhood. The development test was carried out through a series of stages, including expert validation, small group trials, and field trials on early childhood in the school environment.

### **Expert Validation**

Before being applied in the field trial, early childhood education experts and local cultural experts validated the learning design based on regional songs and traditional games. The main difference between educationalists and cultural experts lies in the focus of their expertise. Educationalists generally focus on teaching methods, curriculum, and educational psychology, while cultural experts have in-depth knowledge of the local community's values, traditions, and cultural context. Based on the validation results, the average score of the feasibility of the learning media reached 4.5 out of 5.0, indicating that this method is in the category of "very feasible" to be implemented. Some aspects evaluated in expert validation include:

**Table 1.** Validation Result

Aspect	Validation result
Suitability of material to the child's development stage	4,7
Suitability of regional songs and traditional games with character values	4,6
Ease of implementation for teachers	4,4
Children's interest and involvement in learning	4,5
Average	45,5

### Small Group Trial Results

A small group trial was conducted on 10 children aged 5-6 years as the sample in one of the kindergartens as an initial stage to observe the children's initial reactions to the developed learning media. The observation results showed that 80% of children showed increased enthusiasm and active participation in learning. In addition, teachers involved in this trial provided positive feedback regarding the ease of implementing this method in the classroom.

The behavioural changes were observed after the learning method was implemented based on regional songs and traditional small-group games. This data is obtained from the observation as long as it is in that Kindergarten. The researcher conducts research. The data are shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Small Group Trial Results

Character Aspects	Before Intervention (Mean $\pm$ SD)	After Intervention (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Increase (%)
Discipline	2.3 $\pm$ 0.5	4.2 $\pm$ 0.4	82.6%
Cooperation	2.4 $\pm$ 0.6	4.5 $\pm$ 0.3	87.5%
Responsibility	2.1 $\pm$ 0.5	4.3 $\pm$ 0.5	85.7%
Confidence	2.2 $\pm$ 0.6	4.4 $\pm$ 0.3	90.0%

### Field Trial Results

The field trial was conducted on 30 children aged 5-6 years with the involvement of 3 Kindergarten teachers in the school environment. They are from Kindergartens (TK) Immanuel Kids, TK AL-Fauzi, and TK Ar-Raihan in Medan Amplas, North Sumatra. This trial aims to observe the impact of local wisdom-based learning methods on strengthening children's character more broadly. Data was collected through observation sheets, teacher interviews, and documentation of children's activities during learning. The results of the data analysis show that this method significantly improves aspects of children's character compared to conventional learning methods. These improvements can be seen in Table 2 below:

**Table 3.** Field Trial Results

Character Aspects	Before Intervention (Mean $\pm$ SD)	After Intervention (Mean $\pm$ SD)	p-Value
Discipline	2.1 $\pm$ 0.5	4.3 $\pm$ 0.4	< 0.001
Cooperation	2.5 $\pm$ 0.6	4.5 $\pm$ 0.3	< 0.001
Responsibility	2.2 $\pm$ 0.4	4.2 $\pm$ 0.5	< 0.001
Confidence	2.3 $\pm$ 0.5	4.4 $\pm$ 0.3	< 0.001

These results show a significant increase in all aspects of children's character after local wisdom-based learning methods are implemented. A p-value < 0.001 indicates that the difference before and after the intervention is statistically significant. The results of expert validation tests, small group trials, and field trials showed a significant increase in children's discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and self-confidence after the intervention was implemented. Thus, this method can be used as an alternative to strengthen the character of early childhood that is more enjoyable, contextual, and based on local culture.

Factors Affecting Development Success

From the results of the development test, several factors were found that influence the effectiveness of implementing this method in learning:

Table 4. Factors Affecting Development Success

Factors	Explanation
Teacher Readiness	Teachers with the understanding and skills to use regional songs and traditional games in learning tend to be more successful in developing children's character.
Facility Support	The availability of teaching aids and a playing environment that supports the implementation of traditional games increases the effectiveness of this method.
Role of Parents	Children who receive parental support in implementing local wisdom-based learning at home show more significant character improvements.
Suitability of Material to Child Development Stage	The regional songs and traditional games chosen must be appropriate to the child's developmental stage to be more effective in improving character.

Based on the results of the development test, it can be concluded that applying regional songs and traditional games as learning media based on local wisdom effectively improves the character of early childhood.

DISCUSSION

Local wisdom-based learning through regional songs and traditional games has been proven to significantly contribute to shaping early childhood's character. This approach improves children's understanding of cultural values and builds a more interactive and contextual learning atmosphere. Regional songs are important in strengthening children's character because they contain moral and social values that can be easily absorbed in everyday life. In addition, regional songs help improve children's language skills and memory because they are repetitive and easy to remember. The role of teachers in guiding children to understand the meaning of the songs they sing is vital so that songs are not only entertainment, but also become a meaningful learning tool. In addition to regional songs, traditional games also shape early childhood's character. Several main factors, including the role of teachers, school support, and parental involvement, influence the success of this local wisdom-based learning method. Teachers developing this method can create a more interesting and compelling learning atmosphere. The teacher's ability to adapt regional songs and traditional games according to the needs of children greatly determines the effectiveness of learning (M. Yusuf & Amelia, 2021). In addition, support from the school in providing supporting facilities, such as playrooms and local culture-based teaching aids, also plays a role in the success of this method. The role of parents is no less important because their involvement in introducing regional songs and traditional games at home can strengthen the values taught in school and provide a more meaningful learning experience for children (Widodo, 2023).

The positive impact of implementing this local wisdom-based learning method can be seen from various aspects of child development. From a cognitive aspect, children find it easier to understand and remember the material because this method is fun and contextual (Fitriani & Lestari, 2021). From an affective aspect, children are more enthusiastic and show positive emotions during learning. Meanwhile, from a psychomotor aspect, traditional games help improve children's motor coordination and motor skills. With the various benefits mentioned, it can be concluded that learning based on regional songs and traditional games is an effective strategy in shaping the character of early childhood. This method is relevant to current educational needs and plays a role in preserving local culture, making it the right solution in early childhood education.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that local wisdom-based learning through regional songs and traditional games has a significant role in shaping the character of early childhood. This method improves children's understanding of cultural values and helps develop various aspects of character, such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and self-confidence. Regional songs are an effective means of instilling moral and social values through easy-to-remember lyrics. At the same time, traditional games provide learning experiences that train children's social interaction, sportsmanship, and motor and cognitive skills.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deepest gratitude to all parties who have contributed to completing this research. Thank you to the educators and education personnel who have provided support, shared experiences, and valuable insights in implementing local wisdom-based learning. I would also like to express my appreciation to the parents and students who participated in this research, thus providing data and findings that support the research results.

I would also like to thank the educational institutions and related parties who have provided permission and facilities in this research process. Not to forget, the highest appreciation is given to family, friends, and colleagues for their moral support and endless motivation in completing this research. Hopefully, this study's results can benefit the world of education and become a real contribution in strengthening the character of early childhood through local wisdom-based learning.

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