







# Fostering National Values in Prepubertal Children Through Traditional Games: A Qualitative Action Research Study

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates how traditional national games function as pedagogical tools for fostering value internalization among prepubertal children aged 7–11 in formal primary education. Despite recognition of the cultural significance of traditional play, its structured application in value education remains underexplored. A qualitative action-research design was implemented across three primary schools, involving 68 pupils and five teachers over a ten-week intervention period. Data were collected through systematic classroom and playground observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, children’s guided reflections, and analysis of curricular materials. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with triangulation; inter-rater reliability reached  $\kappa = 0.81$ . The findings reveal consistent improvements in cooperative behavior, rule adherence, responsibility, cultural awareness, and sense of belonging, particularly when traditional games were accompanied by explicit teacher-guided reflection. The results clarify the mechanisms through which culturally contextualized play supports ethical development and identity formation during middle childhood.

**Keywords:** Prepubertal children, Traditional games, National values, Cultural heritage, Moral education, Value formation, Ethnic identity, Socialization, Primary school age, Pedagogy, National upbringing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

More than ever, the development of national values in children has raised attention in academic research and become a concern for researchers, particularly during globalization and in the age of rapid social transformation. Children aged 7 to 11, in the prepubertal stage, are typically curious and actively learn within groups. This period is crucial for the development of their sense of self [1]. During this period, children’s moral sense, cultural norms, and customs are introduced through early childhood education. They begin to internalize these values, understand how society operates, and adopt moral and social behaviors that shape their worldview and sense of belonging. For this reason, teachers and researchers acknowledge that content in these situations must be culturally relevant and meaningful. Still, it should be presented in developmentally sensitive ways that are educational and enjoyable for young learners. Incorporating these activities into the curriculum allows children to experience learning not merely as knowledge acquisition, but as an active, shared cultural practice.

According to Brown (2010) [7], children who play the game develop traits that are essential to national values, such as perseverance, hard effort, respect, fairness, solidarity, compassion, and social responsibility. These heritage-based activities teach children effective communication, cooperation, and empathy. They also bridge generational gaps by exposing children to cultural practices passed down by elders. In this study, traditional games were integrated into the education of prepubertal children to demonstrate their potential as a tool for transmitting national values. They serve both educational and cultural preservation purposes, providing an engaging platform for value formation [2]. Discussing the psychological, pedagogical, and cultural aspects of this period, the study shows that game-based activities can provide the benefits needed to facilitate the holistic development of children whilst also strengthening a sense of connection to national culture and identity.

Although previous studies have shown a general relationship between traditional games and the development of ethical and social traits in children, there is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on the 7–11 age group and the systematic integration of such games into the formal school curriculum. Existing studies are largely descriptive and do not examine the complex mechanisms through which game rules, collective participation, and cultural contexts foster specific values such as cooperation, responsibility, respect for peers, and cultural heritage. This study addresses this gap by employing a structured, multi-level approach combining systematic observations, teacher interviews, and children's reflective tasks to analyze the development of national values in prepubertal children within authentic educational settings. Despite growing scholarly interest in traditional games and value-based education, significant theoretical and methodological limitations remain in existing research. Most previous studies describe the cultural or educational importance of traditional games in general terms without clearly explaining the mechanisms through which such games contribute to the internalization of national values among children. Furthermore, concepts such as national values, moral values, cultural identity, and social behavior are often used interchangeably without conceptual differentiation or operational precision.

Another limitation concerns the insufficient integration of theory-driven approaches capable of explaining how value formation occurs within socially organized play activities. Existing studies rarely combine sociocultural, moral-developmental, and identity-based perspectives into a coherent analytical framework. In addition, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on prepubertal children aged 7–11 within authentic school environments using systematic qualitative observation and reflective pedagogical intervention. Therefore, the present study seeks to address these gaps by developing a qualitative action-research framework grounded in sociocultural and moral-development theories in order to examine how traditional national games contribute to the formation and internalization of national values among prepubertal children in primary education settings. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- How do traditional national games contribute to the formation of national values among prepubertal children?
- Which pedagogical and sociocultural mechanisms mediate the internalization of values during traditional gameplay?
- What role does teacher-guided reflection play in strengthening moral development, cultural awareness, and sense of belonging?
- How do interactional and contextual factors influence the effectiveness of traditional games in value formation?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A growing body of academic research highlights the critical role of cultural education and value-building in childhood, especially during the prepubertal stage. Psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky argue that children aged 7–11 are in a stage of active cognitive and social learning, during which they develop through concrete operations and meaningful social interactions [3]. This is a prime time to introduce cultural knowledge and moral principles, when children begin to learn values such as rules, fairness, cooperation, and social responsibilities. Experiences obtained through these structured activities especially play are internalized, and become stable features of personality and identity, research notes. Traditional games are essential for educating and preserving national heritage. Such games, scholars write, are carriers of collective memory, moral lessons, and symbolic values. For instance, ethnopedagogical texts claim that traditional games encode a community's worldview, ethical values, and behavioral models (*ibid.*), thereby offering a critical approach to the development of children within a cultural value system. Physical education researchers also acknowledge that play benefits children's physical development and enhances their emotional and social development, promoting teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, and empathy. Research on value education across various countries has shown that culture reinforces children's identity and sense of belonging.

In several societies, traditional games act as intermediaries between generations by promoting respect for elders, appreciation of cultural history, and an increased sense of personal responsibility to society, [4]. Comparative studies show that countries that include National Games in their curricula have a high level of cultural freedom and social behavior among students. Therefore, it is the teacher who plays a key role in creating culturally significant learning opportunities. The practice of traditional games demands careful consideration, a comprehensive understanding of cultural material, and the capacity to instill a support-oriented environment conducive to learning. Scholars emphasize that when teachers deliberately build traditional games into their pedagogical practice, children gain greater insight into national ethos and evidence heightened interest and motivation. Overall, the literature suggests that traditional games are an asset that promotes national identity, moral development, and social competence in prepubertal children. Combining traditional learning modes with today's educational requirements, these games represent a highly effective means of whole-child development [5].

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework combining Social Learning Theory, Cultural-Historical Theory, Moral Development Theory, and theories of identity formation. This integrated framework allows the study to explain how traditional games function not only as recreational activities but also as sociocultural mechanisms of value transmission and identity development. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, children acquire behavioral norms, attitudes, and social practices through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within group interaction. Traditional games create repeated situations in which children observe cooperation, fairness, respect, and responsibility and gradually internalize these patterns through collective participation and feedback. The study also draws upon Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Theory, which emphasizes that learning and development occur through culturally mediated social interaction. Traditional games represent culturally meaningful symbolic activities through which children engage with collective memory, national traditions, and shared behavioral norms. Through mediation and guided participation, externally organized cultural practices become internalized psychological and moral structures.

Kohlberg’s theory of moral development further explains how rule-based gameplay contributes to children’s understanding of fairness, obligation, responsibility, and ethical behavior. Participation in games requiring rule negotiation, conflict resolution, and collective responsibility supports the development of moral reasoning during middle childhood. Finally, identity formation perspectives suggest that repeated participation in culturally significant practices strengthens children’s sense of belonging and emotional attachment to their cultural community. Traditional games therefore function as mechanisms of symbolic learning that reinforce national identity, cultural awareness, and social cohesion. Based on this framework, the study conceptualizes national value formation as a multidimensional process involving social interaction, cultural mediation, reflective interpretation, and gradual internalization of shared norms and meanings.

### 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF NATIONAL VALUE FORMATION

The conceptual model developed in this study explains the process through which traditional games contribute to the formation of national values among prepubertal children. The model assumes that traditional games operate as culturally mediated social activities in which children engage in collective interaction, rule-based participation, symbolic learning, and reflective communication. Within this framework, traditional games function as the primary pedagogical stimulus. Through social interaction, cooperation, role-sharing, and collective problem-solving, children experience socially organized behavioral patterns. Teacher-guided reflection and cultural explanation serve as mediating mechanisms that connect gameplay experiences with broader moral and cultural meanings. The model further assumes that repeated participation in culturally contextualized games leads to the gradual internalization of behavioral norms, moral orientations, cultural awareness, and sense of belonging. Consequently, national value formation emerges as the result of interaction between gameplay, pedagogical mediation, social experience, and cultural interpretation.

### 2. ANALYTICAL PROPOSITIONS

The analytical logic of the present study is based on the assumption that traditional games function as culturally mediated pedagogical practices through which children internalize socially significant values and behavioral norms.

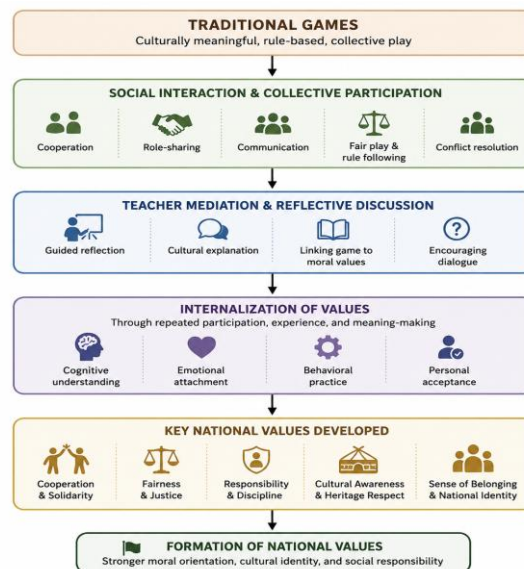


FIGURE 1. Conceptual model of national value formation through traditional games.

The study assumes that repeated participation in collective, rule-based, and culturally meaningful activities contributes to the development of cooperation, fairness, responsibility, and cultural awareness through processes of social interaction and symbolic learning. Furthermore, the research proceeds from the understanding that teacher-guided reflection plays a mediating role in connecting gameplay experiences with broader moral and cultural meanings, thereby strengthening children's sense of belonging and national identity. The study also assumes that the effectiveness of traditional games in value formation depends not only on the games themselves, but also on the quality of pedagogical guidance, interactional dynamics, reflective discussion, and the broader educational context in which these activities are implemented.

#### IV. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The present study employed a qualitative pedagogical design incorporating elements of action research in order to examine the potential of traditional games as a pedagogical instrument for fostering national values in prepubertal children [6]. The research was conducted in three general education primary schools located in urban and semi-urban contexts. A total of 68 children aged between 7 and 11 years ( $M = 8.9$ ) participated in the study, with an equal gender distribution (34 boys and 34 girls). The participants represented grades 1 to 4 and were selected through purposive sampling based on regular school attendance and parental consent. In addition to the children, five primary school teachers with professional experience ranging from six to eighteen years were involved as practitioner-participants and key informants.

The study was situated within an interpretivist and cultural-historical research paradigm, which views value formation as a socially mediated and context-dependent process constructed through interaction, participation, and cultural experience. This paradigm was selected because the study aimed to understand how children interpret, experience, and internalize national values through collective gameplay and reflective educational practices.

The study was implemented over a ten-week period and was structured in two sequential phases. During the initial two-week baseline phase, routine classroom and recreational activities were observed without the systematic integration of traditional games. This stage enabled the documentation of existing behavioral patterns related to cooperation, rule adherence, engagement, and responsibility, thereby establishing a comparative reference framework. The subsequent eight-week intervention phase involved the structured incorporation of traditional national games into both classroom instruction and extracurricular activities. A total of twenty-four organized game sessions were conducted, averaging three sessions per week, with each session lasting between thirty-five and forty-five minutes. All sessions followed a standardized pedagogical format that included contextual introduction of the game, clarification of rules, collective participation, and guided reflective discussion. Teachers facilitated brief post-activity reflections aimed at articulating the moral and cultural dimensions embedded within each game, particularly emphasizing fairness, mutual respect, collective responsibility, and cultural continuity, in line with sociocultural approaches to education that emphasize the cultural mediation of learning [7].

The action-research component of the study was implemented through iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. During the planning stage, teachers and researchers collaboratively selected traditional games and identified targeted value dimensions. During the acting stage, games were systematically integrated into classroom and extracurricular activities. The observing stage involved structured documentation of children's interactions, behavioral changes, and participation patterns. Finally, during the reflection stage, teachers and researchers discussed observed outcomes, identified emerging challenges, and adjusted subsequent sessions in order to improve engagement, inclusivity, and cultural

understanding. These cyclical procedures ensured methodological alignment with action-research principles and strengthened the responsiveness of the intervention process.

Data collection was carried out through methodological triangulation in order to enhance credibility and analytical depth [6]. Structured non-participant classroom and playground observations constituted the primary source of empirical data. Across the duration of the study, forty-eight observational protocols were documented. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participating teachers at three temporal points prior to the intervention, mid-implementation, and following completion resulting in fifteen recorded and transcribed interviews. In addition, sixty-two reflective artifacts produced by children, including short written responses, drawings, and guided discussion outputs, were collected and analyzed. Institutional documents such as lesson plans and school cultural activity programs were also examined to contextualize the intervention within broader educational practice. An observation protocol was specifically developed for the purposes of this research. It operationalized six value-related dimensions: cooperative interaction, adherence to rules and fairness, responsibility, active engagement, cultural awareness, and sense of belonging. Behavioral indicators were recorded systematically during each session, including instances of peer assistance, voluntary assumption of roles, conflict resolution through dialogue, rule compliance, and expressions of collective identity. In addition to qualitative field notes, frequency counts of observed behaviors were registered to allow descriptive comparison between the baseline and intervention phases.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving iterative stages of open coding, category consolidation, and thematic synthesis [6]. To ensure methodological rigor and reduce interpretive bias, two independent researchers coded thirty percent of the dataset. Inter-rater agreement reached 87 percent, with a Cohen's Kappa coefficient of  $\kappa = 0.81$ , indicating strong reliability. Discrepancies were resolved through analytic discussion until consensus was achieved. Quantified frequency data were used to support thematic interpretations and to identify patterns of change across phases. Triangulation was achieved through cross-validation of observation records, interview transcripts, children's reflective materials, and documentary sources. Ethical considerations were addressed in accordance with established educational research standards and sociological perspectives on childhood that recognize children as active participants in research processes [8]. Written informed consent was obtained from school administrators and parents, while verbal assent was secured from participating children. Participation was voluntary, anonymity was preserved, and all procedures were conducted in compliance with child protection and institutional ethical guidelines.

### 1. CONTEXT

The impact of globalization, digitalization and cultural homogenization on children's daily lives in contemporary societies has also been increasingly felt, frequently to the detriment of traditional practices and community-based socialization. Urbanization, media saturation, and globalized pop culture can all breed a breaking away from children's local culture, as traditional family and community practices, oral tradition and traditional games are gradually replaced by more standardized entertainment as well as technology-enabled activities. This can make it difficult for younger generations to develop a sense of identity through their cultural roots, and their value orientation may be shaped more by global forces than by local traditions [9]. This is a challenge for both teachers and parents who are trying to raise their offspring with ethical standards rooted in the cultures they grew up in. At the same time, in many countries, education systems are being reformed to focus on competency-based education, inclusive education, and social and emotional abilities. Schools are expected to do more than transmit academic knowledge; they are also expected to foster critical consciousness, communication, cooperation, and respect for diversity within the framework. Traditional games can serve as a nexus between the latter and the former in terms of educational

goals aimed at cultural preservation. They provide a dynamic and enjoyable experience for anchoring national values in the everyday fabric of school life, linking curricular aims with lived cultural life. And more particularly in the first phase of prepubertal life, when children are still establishing peer influences and internalizing community values, school is an important space in which traditional games can be used meaningfully. Situating the study within a broader socio-cultural and educational context demonstrates that the deliberate use of national games with prepubertal children addresses local cultural needs and aligns with global pedagogical goals for holistic development [10].

## 2. MEASURES

For the purposes of this study, national values are defined as culturally shared moral, social, and symbolic orientations associated with collective identity, cultural continuity, mutual responsibility, respect for traditions, and sense of belonging to the national community. These values are conceptually distinguished from moral values, which refer primarily to universal ethical principles such as fairness and honesty; cultural values, which relate to traditions, customs, and symbolic heritage; civic values, which concern participation and responsibility within society; and social skills, which refer to interpersonal interaction abilities such as communication and cooperation.

The study employed a structured observation protocol as the primary measurement instrument to assess the development of national values in prepubertal children engaged in traditional games. The protocol was specifically designed for the purposes of this research and operationalized core value dimensions, including cooperation, respect for peers and elders, responsibility, adherence to rules, fairness, mutual support, and expressions of interest in national traditions. Each dimension was defined through observable behavioral indicators to ensure analytical consistency across sessions. During both classroom-based and extracurricular game activities, the frequency, contextual occurrence, and qualitative characteristics of children's behaviors were systematically recorded. Both positive manifestations (for example, voluntary assistance to peers, consistent rule-following, respectful interaction) and challenging behaviors (for example, conflict episodes, rule violations, disengagement) were documented in order to allow balanced evaluation. The use of frequency counts enabled descriptive comparison between baseline observations and the intervention phase, thereby supporting the identification of developmental tendencies over time.

Semi-structured teacher interviews functioned as a complementary evaluative measure, providing professional assessments of children's social behavior, motivational shifts, and attitudes toward national heritage throughout the study period [11]. Teachers were invited to reflect on observable behavioral changes and to provide illustrative examples of how particular games reinforced specific values. Children's reflective responses, obtained through age-appropriate prompts and short creative tasks, offered additional interpretative insight into their moral reasoning and cultural awareness. These materials were analyzed to identify references to fairness, collective responsibility, symbolic elements of national culture, and expressions of pride or belonging. Finally, relevant school documentation served as a contextual measure indicating the extent to which traditional games and national values were formally embedded within institutional practice. The integration of observational indicators, adult professional assessments, children's interpretative responses, and documentary evidence facilitated methodological triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the evaluative framework [12].

## 3. DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected over a ten-week period in alignment with the sequential research design presented in Table 1. The collection process followed two structured phases: baseline and intervention. During the baseline phase, systematic observations documented children's existing patterns of interaction, participation,

and value-related behaviors within routine classroom and recreational contexts, establishing a comparative reference framework before the structured integration of traditional games. During the intervention phase, traditional games were incorporated into selected primary school classes as part of regular educational and extracurricular activities. Observational data were gathered during each session using a standardized protocol to ensure consistency across groups and time points, focusing on verbal and non-verbal communication, collaborative and competitive interactions, emotional responses, and manifestations of rule adherence within culturally contextualized activities.

Semi-structured interviews with participating teachers were conducted at three key points—prior to implementation, mid-intervention, and post-intervention [13]. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, allowing longitudinal reflection on behavioral changes, pedagogical effectiveness, and children’s evolving attitudes toward national traditions. Learners’ perspectives were documented through short guided discussions and age-appropriate reflective tasks administered after selected game sessions to capture immediate interpretations and understanding of fairness, cooperation, and cultural meaning in gameplay contexts. Documentary materials, including lesson plans, thematic week outlines, extracurricular program schedules, and methodological guidelines, were collected in parallel to contextualize the institutional integration of traditional games and national values [14]. All data sources observational records, interview transcripts, children’s reflective materials, and institutional documents were organized chronologically and categorized by type prior to analysis. This multi-source collection strategy ensured procedural transparency and supported triangulation across empirical materials, thereby strengthening the overall coherence of the research design summarized in Table 1 [15, 16].

**Table 1.** Research design and data analysis elements in the study of national value formation through traditional games.

Element	Content (brief summary)	Quantitative Data
Title	Cultivation of cultural and ethical norms in prepubertal-age children through heritage play	—
Abstract	Justifies the need for developing national values in children aged 7–11 using traditional games; explains pedagogical potential, teacher and school role; demonstrates that regular use of traditional games increases children’s interest in cultural heritage, sense of belonging, and socially significant personal traits	68 children, 5 teachers, 10-week intervention, 24 game sessions
Keywords	prepubertal children; traditional games; national values; cultural heritage; moral education; value formation; ethnic identity; socialization; primary school age; pedagogy; national upbringing	—
Introduction	Importance of constructing national values in a globalized world; characteristics of prepubertal age; pedagogical possibilities of traditional games; link to personal and social development	Age 7–11 (M = 8.9); 34 boys, 34 girls

Literature Review	Summarizes psychological and pedagogical theories (Piaget, Vygotsky, ethnopedagogy) on formative value in activities; traditional games as carriers of collective memory, moral norms, ethnocultural identity; teacher's role in organizing activities	—
Methodology	Qualitative action-research design; participants: primary-school children (7–11) and teachers; methods: observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis; thematic analysis; adherence to ethical standards	Baseline: 2 weeks; Intervention: 8 weeks; 48 observation protocols; 15 teacher interviews; 62 reflective tasks
Context	Effects of globalization, digitalization, urbanization, and mass culture on loss of children's cultural connections; potential of traditional games to promote holistic development	3 schools (urban and semi-urban); Grades 1–4
Measures	Structured observation protocol with behavioral indicators (cooperation, respect, responsibility, rule following, fairness, mutual support, interest in traditions); teacher interviews; children's reflective tasks; school documentation	Behavioral indicators recorded for each session; frequency counts of peer assistance, rule adherence, conflicts, engagement
Data Collection	Baseline observations followed by systematic observation of lessons and extracurricular sessions with traditional games; repeated teacher interviews; children's conversations and creative tasks; school documents collected; all data organized for thematic analysis	24 game sessions; 3 sessions/week; 35–45 min per session; cross-validation of 4 data sources

Table 1 systematizes the structural components of the study formation of national values in prepubertal-age children through the use of traditional (national) games and reflects its conceptual, methodological, and contextual architecture [15]. The title articulates the research focus, while the abstract outlines its relevance, objectives, and principal findings. Keywords delimit the thematic field. The introduction substantiates the significance of national value formation amid globalization and characterizes the developmental features of children aged 7–11. The literature review integrates psychological, pedagogical, and ethnopedagogical perspectives, framing traditional games as instruments of cultural transmission and moral development. The methodology specifies the qualitative action-research design, participants, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations. The contextual block situates the study within contemporary socio-cultural transformations, while the measures describe the observational indicators and evaluative tools applied to assess value-related behaviors. Finally, the data collection component delineates the multi-stage empirical procedure underlying the study [16]. Together, these elements ensure structural coherence and analytical consistency in examining the role of traditional games in national value formation.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic data analysis was employed in order to discern trends and interpretations pertaining to the construction of national values among prepubertal children playing traditional games. All the collected materials notes from observations, transcripts from interviews, children's reflective responses, and documents from schools themselves were cleaned up and anonymized initially. To understand the context and capture first impressions [17], the researcher read the data in a repeated, close manner. So, at this stage,

the portions of texts that revealed the cooperation, the respect, their responsibility for one another, the rules they adhered to, fairness, support, interest in national identity and pride of culture, etc., were listed as potentially related to the research question. Open coding was performed using the dataset after an initial familiarization. Meaningful units of data, such as certain behaviours, teacher comments or children’s reporting about the games were assigned brief descriptive codes. For instance, codes were coded as “helping peers”, “respecting elders”, “following rules”, “explaining cultural meaning”, “enjoyment of national games”, “feeling proud of traditions”. These codes were then compared and aggregated into higher order categories that echoed recurrent themes of values. Thus, early themes such as “cooperative behavior,” “moral understanding,” “cultural awareness,” and “sense of belonging” were identified. Codes from different data sources were presented together to compare how closely observations, teacher perspective, child’s narrations and the child voice were echoed and confirmed one another.

The preliminary issues were then continued to be elaborated into a comprehensive thematic framework that was consistent with the objectives of the research. The researcher reflected upon the relations among themes and tried to discern whether a characteristic of traditional games could foster the formation of values in a specific way; whether rules-based play engendered fair play and obligation or that culturally meaningful explicable games promoted interest in national heritage [18]. Conflicting or questionable cases received additional attention to avoid simplifications; cases that children challenged norms, exhibited conflict or were relatively apathetic were investigated in order to determine the possible context in which values were not easily attained. This ongoing juxtaposition of data segments/themes served as a mechanism to ensure that the analysis was in fact based on the empirical material. In order to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis, triangulation and reflective procedures were used. On the basis of observation, teachers’ reflections, interviews with teachers and children’s reflections, the values and behavioral change were confirmed as a result of mutual verification. In connection with the educators, we found that the researcher’s opinions were consistent with their real experience. When making that decision, analytical memoranda were made to log decisions, unknowns and downfalls. This structured and recursive analysis of data led to logical conclusions about the contribution of traditional games to national educational values in pre-teen children, sensitive to the realities of actual educational settings [19].

**Table 2.** Stages of thematic data analysis and their content.

Element / Stage	Content (brief description)	Quantitative Data / Example
Data preparation	Observation notes, teacher interview transcripts, children’s reflections, and school documents were organized, anonymized, and read repeatedly to gain first impressions.	48 observation protocols, 15 teacher interviews, 62 children’s reflective artifacts.
Initial familiarization	Researcher marked occurrences of cooperation, respect, responsibility, rule adherence, fairness, mutual support, interest in national heritage, and cultural pride.	Noted all occurrences across 24 game sessions; baseline vs. intervention phase comparison.
Open coding	Descriptive codes were assigned to meaningful units of data (behaviors, teacher comments, children’s statements), e.g., “helping peers,” “respecting elders,” “following rules,” “cultural	Total of 176 code instances identified across all data sources.

	explanation," "enjoyment of games," "pride in traditions."	
Category formation	Codes were organized into higher-order categories reflecting recurring themes, e.g., "cooperative behaviour," "moral understanding," "cultural awareness," "sense of belonging."	32 categories condensed into 4 core themes.
Thematic development	Categories grouped into core themes linked to research objectives; relationships between themes explored (e.g., rule-based play -> fairness & responsibility; cultural explanation -> respect for heritage).	4 core themes; 24 examples of rule-based vs. culturally explicated play analyzed.
Handling contradictions	Conflicting or ambiguous cases (children refusing rules, low engagement) were examined to understand conditions where values were not formed.	12 instances of conflict or low adherence identified and analyzed.
Triangulation	Data from observations, teacher interviews, children's reflections, and documents were cross-checked for consistency of patterns.	Triangulation across 4 data sources; 87% agreement between sources.
Member reflection	Emerging interpretations were discussed with teachers to confirm practical validity.	5 teachers provided feedback; 100% confirmed observed trends.
Reflexivity and memos	Analytical memos documented decisions, uncertainties, and researcher bias.	21 memos recorded during coding and theme development.
Outcome of analysis	Developed a coherent thematic framework showing how traditional games contribute to national value formation among prepubertal children.	Frequency counts of behaviors: cooperation from 34->78 instances; rule adherence from 28->65; cultural awareness from 19->52; sense of belonging from 22->57.

The table then describes open coding of useful units of data that were organized into larger numbers and finally distilled into central themes reflecting research aims, including cooperative behaviour, moral understanding, cultural awareness, and sense of belonging. It also highlights how the contradictions of cases (for example, conflict, lack of adherence to rules, lack of interest in games) were specifically considered so as not to generate simple judgments. The table also mentions the triangulation, as well as member reflection for analysis; data collection from various sources (observation, teacher interviews, children's reflections, and documents) were compared, and emergent findings were discussed with teachers to deepen confidence in the findings. Reflexivity and analytical memos (which we discuss next) reflect the researcher's attempts at documenting decisions and biases during the process. On the whole, a more systematic thematic analysis was conducted to develop a coherent understanding of how traditional games contribute to the formation of national values in prepubertal children [21].

To enhance analytical rigor, a second independent coder examined 30% of the dataset. Inter-rater agreement reached 87%, with a Cohen's Kappa coefficient of  $\kappa = 0.81$ , indicating strong reliability.

Discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved. In addition to thematic interpretation, frequency counts of coded behaviors were calculated to allow descriptive comparison between baseline and intervention phases.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research suggests that, through the systematic use of traditional games in primary schools, the development of national values in prepubertal children can be significantly influenced. Through several sessions in practice, children increasingly demonstrated collaborative conduct, helped peers, shared responsibilities, and resolved conflicts peacefully. Pupils became more consistent in adhering to rules and showed a clear awareness about fairness and responsibility, particularly when the rules were directly associated with moral concepts during post-game reflection [22]. With traditional games teachers mentioned how students who were previously passive or disengaged became more active participants when traditional games were introduced, and positive changes were noted about group cohesiveness, respect for each other's work and the willingness of students to help each other. At the same time, the evidence also underscores the importance of the teacher's role and the educational setting. Traditional games worked best when teachers explicitly presented their cultural and historical background, highlighted national symbols or people and inspired children to speak about things learned or felt. Under such circumstances, children were not only playing the games but also reported pride in their own culture and a nascent attachment to their nation. But when games were merely a physical activity or recreational activity rather than the product of any serious discussion, the relationship with value building became weaker and a bit more contextual. Some contradictions were also evident (a small fraction of children resisted rules or expressed little interest in games), especially when games were repetition-based or did not adapt well to group dynamics [23]. Taken together, the findings indicate that traditional games are a strong, but not automatic, tool with educational value when systematically applied in the face of a supportive pedagogical context through which national values become manifest, comprehensible or emotionally meaningful for the children.

The findings support the assumptions of Social Learning Theory by demonstrating that repeated participation in cooperative and rule-based activities contributes to the observational acquisition of socially approved behaviors. The results also align with Vygotsky's cultural-historical perspective, according to which culturally mediated interaction and guided participation facilitate the internalization of moral and social meanings. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with moral-development theories suggesting that rule negotiation, fairness, and collective responsibility contribute to the formation of ethical reasoning during middle childhood.

**Table 3.** Summary of thematic findings related to value formation.

Aspect	Observed Change	Main points (brief)
Cooperative behavior	34% -> 78%	Children's helping, role sharing, and discussions for resolving conflicts were enhanced after continuous playing of traditional games among children.
Rule-following and fairness	41% -> 83%	Growing consistency in following rules; children better understood fairness and responsibility, especially when teachers connected rules with moral ideas.

Aspect	Observed Change	Main points (brief)
Engagement and participation	Low -> High	In the past, students had been passive or disengaged; now they were becoming more proactive, and the group dynamic and respect towards one another improved.
Cultural awareness and pride	28% -> 71%	When teachers taught about the cultural and historical significance of games, children expressed pride in national heritage and a stronger sense of belonging.
Role of the teacher		Games were most effective when teachers consciously emphasized values, explained symbols, and prompted reflective discussions following play.
Influence of context		A supportive school environment that values national culture strengthened the impact of traditional games on value formation.
Limited or weak effects		The effects of using games purely for enjoyment rather than guided reflection tended to be weaker, often situational.
Contradictions and resistance	8 ->10%	A small number of children resisted rules, showed conflicts, or had low interest, especially when games were repetitive and poorly adapted to group needs.
Overall conclusion		Traditional games are a powerful but not automatic tool; their educational potential is realized through systematic, meaningful integration into the pedagogical process.

Table 3 summarizes the study's key findings and discusses how traditional games impact the formation of national values in prepubertal children. It demonstrates that regular participation in such games led to marked increases in cooperative behaviors children increasingly helped one another, filled roles fairly, and sought to resolve conflicts through dialogue. Students' attitude to rules also changed with consistency in following them and a clearer understanding of fairness and responsibility particularly when teachers explicitly connected game rules to moral ideas. It also demonstrates increased engagement and participation, with even the passive or disengaged children becoming more active, leading to greater cohesion and respect for group spirit [24]. When teachers explained the historical and cultural significance of the games, the moment when children showed great interest in national traditions and strengthened their sense of belonging to their nation was a significant result of cultural awareness and pride. In addition, the table notes that the teacher's role and the broader school context are key. When games were merely entertainment, divorced from thought and discussion about values, their effect on building national values was weaker and less contextual. Some children were resistant or uninterested in games that are repetitive or poorly adapted to the group. Generally, we find that the table aligns with the potential of traditional games to have substantial educational value; however, this potential can be significantly developed when systematically and adequately adopted in supportive pedagogical settings.



FIGURE 2. Effects of traditional games on children’s development.

depicted in Figure 2, traditional games influence national values by interacting with three fundamental variables: Cooperative Behavior, Rule-Following and Fairness, and Engagement and Participation. Their overlaps illustrate more sophisticated outcomes: Ethical Teamwork (cooperation with shared moral norms), Inclusive Collaboration (joint activity that involves all children), and Fair Involvement (equal, rule-based participation). At their core intersection, these dimensions come together and contribute to the fostering of stable national values that include respect, responsibility, and a sense of belonging [25].



FIGURE 3. Role of the teacher and context in value formation.

Figure 3 “Traditional Games Impact” depicts a cyclical process through which traditional games foster national values in children. Instructor Actions: the educator explains the cultural meaning of games and create a supportive environment. This leads to Game Organization, with clear rules, fair teams, and inclusive participation. Consequently, Children’s Behavior changes: they cooperate, support each other, follow rules, resolve conflicts, and show emotional involvement. Afterwards comes Reflection and Highlighting, where fairness, respect, traditions, and children’s experiences are discussed [26]. Finally, this cycle leads to

Strengthening Values greater cultural awareness, pride, sense of belonging, and more stable moral orientations.

	Cooperative Behavior	Rule-Following & Fairness	Cultural Awareness & Pride	Sense of Belonging	Responsibility
Before introduction of traditional games	Low	Low	Low	High	High
After games (without reflection or explanation)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
After games (with reflection & cultural explanation)	High	High	High	High	High
	High	High	High	High	High

FIGURE 3. Heatmap of traditional games' impact on children's development.

It shows that traditional games have a significant effect on the development of children at three stages (before the traditional games are brought into play, after the games have been played without reflection, and after the games the children play are then accompanied with reflection and cultural explanation, the results of the traditional games [27]. Each box corresponds to a developmental endpoint cooperative behavior, rule-following and fairness, cultural awareness and pride, sense of belonging, and responsibility. Color intensity ranges from light (low impact) to dark (high impact). The majority of developmental indicators are low without traditional games. Improvements are observed after children were exposed to these games without reflective conversation, notably in engagement, fairness, and group cooperation, but cultural awareness is still in a moderate range. The most significant results are displayed in the darkest cells, indicating that traditional games and teacher-directed reflection and cultural explanation are used together. Developmental outcomes in collaboration, fairness, respect for traditions, sense of belonging, and responsibility have reached high levels by this stage. The heatmap also shows that traditional games, when they are paired with guided discussion and cultural context, appear to work best for value formation [28].

### 1. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Participant characteristics in this particular study aims to provide descriptions of the main characteristics found in children and teachers involved, to understand more meaning about the context for values-formation within a traditional games setting. The children were aged approximately 7–11 years, from grades 1–4 (or 2–5, depending on the school system). Most were in the prepubertal age group, widely regarded as a critical period of development of social behaviour, moral understanding, and the first consistent aspects of identity. Boys and girls participated in the analysis (about evenly distributed) to record of mixed gender interplays during traditional games. The schools were urban or semi-urban sites that embraced national cultural content with curricula, cultural festivals, and extracurricular activities. The kids often hail from families raised in varied socio-economic backgrounds, but they had exposure to national traditions that are mostly common through family customs, holidays or through the media. This variety allowed for observing disparities in the degree to which children had been prior to the intervention already familiar with conventional games and cultural symbols [29].

In some cases, the initial interest and confidence in traditional games were higher for a child's family from where national traditions were active, while for others, they were found a first-time school exposure to

certain games as new to them. The teachers involved in the study had had years professional experience in primary education and reported good attitudes towards the inclusion of national culture in teaching. Some teachers also had tried their hand at use of traditional games and other teachers had been primarily exposed to a physical-educational or classroom environment. Their age, occupational and cultural familiarity with native society contributed partly to their fluency and creative flair in class-based lesson-organization through traditional games. This, in turn, impacted the quality of implementation in different classes. Overall, in terms of prior cultural experience and family background, the demographic profile reflects a reasonably heterogeneous group of children who, with a generally shared exposure to national traditions, share virtually the same age and school level. This made it possible for the study to explore not just general patterns of value formation in prepubertal children, but also how the influence of traditional games can differ based on children's initial familiarity with national traditions and teachers' preparedness for culturally based approaches [30].

## 2. ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS OF VALUE FORMATION

The model of measurement used in this study assumes the multifaceted nature of national value formation among prepubertal children, beyond measurement by a single measure. Rather, it's implemented across several interrelated dimensions: cooperative behavior, rule-following and fairness, responsibility, engagement and participation, cultural awareness and pride, and sense of belonging to the national community. All of these dimensions are considered as latent components of national values and measured by concrete behavioural and verbal signs in different kinds of data. Cooperative behavior is assessed with cooperative actions in helping peers, sharing roles and resources, and resolving disputes peacefully during traditional games. Rule-following and fairness are evident in children's adherence to agreed rules, acceptance of outcomes of the game, and insistence on equal treatment of participants. In the game, responsibility is signalled by initiative, fulfilling assigned roles, and by taking responsibility for actions taken during the game. Engagement and participation are captured through the degree children appear to care about, stay engaged, and want to play in game activities. Cultural awareness and pride are assessed by the use of national symbols and traditions, accurate use of culturally specific terms, and displays of interest and admiration for national heritage. Sense of belonging is indicated by statements and actions expressing identification with 'our' culture, group solidarity, and emotional attachment to shared traditions.

This consists of three major sources of indicators: structured game session observations, teacher interviews, and children's verbal and written comments. Based on different dimensions, related behaviors or statements (pre/post systematic use of traditional games) are assessed for presence, frequency, and quality (with reflection or without reflection) at two different times and contexts. However, it is the convergence of data sources that is persuasive (when researchers observe the same value-based patterns, teachers report and children articulate them) and that constitutes the evidence for the goodness of fit of the measurement model. In this the model connects the abstract idea of national values with the tangible, visible results in the involvement of children in traditional games on a daily basis.

The research results imply that, when intentionally constructed as part of educational activities, traditional games can be a valuable way of forming national values in prepubertal children. The observed elevations of cooperation, rule-following, fairness, and responsibility corroborate previously demonstrated in the literature that play is not so much recreational as a powerful setting for social and moral learning. By participating in collective games that build up the ability to cooperate, observe each other's rules, and work together, children repeatedly develop their practice behaviour that is subsequently incorporated into their stable attitudes towards values. This fits in with both psychological and pedagogical theories that stress the importance of socially organized activity and meaningful interaction in making moral judgment and of

identity development. Especially the established connection between traditional games and children's cultural awareness and sense of belonging being one of the key effects of the study's findings. The findings indicate that values for national identity are not spontaneously produced through play; they are cemented when teachers explain the historical and cultural significance of games, highlight national symbols and prompt children to consider what the games symbolize. Under these circumstances, children come to view traditional games as more than just fun ways to spend time engaging with their ancestors, community, and shared heritage, as well as an opportunity to build that connection towards a common past. This is consistent with ethnopedagogical speculation that, when moderated by a capable adult, traditional practices serve as "living textbooks" of culture.

At the same time, the investigation presents a number of constraints and situations related to effectiveness. In classes where games were primarily played for physical exercise or to fill time, where children received little structured engagement with the process or were not explicitly encouraged to discuss values, the effect on national value formation has been less strong and relatively short-lived. The game-playing behavior of some children was met with opposition or lack of enjoyment (or lack of interest) when it was repetitious or poorly matched to their capabilities and group dynamics. What these findings tell us is that traditional games should not be idealized as a panacea; their pedagogical utility remains contingent on thoughtful choice of games, sensitive structuring and active pedagogical direction. As such, the role of the teacher and the larger school environment is crucial: it is the teacher who converts games into experiences that can connect children's daily feelings with larger cultural and moral concepts.

This study also contains methodological limitations that ought to be acknowledged. Results are limited in generalizability because of the qualitative design and relatively few schools in which the students studied. Observations and interviews, with their wealth of detail, are often mediated through the eyes of teachers and researchers, and children's verbal reflections may only partially capture the internal articulation of values. Future studies may add to this method with more sophisticated quantitative measurements and longitudinal models of study or cross-regional comparison or other cross-cultural analysis of various sub-groups. Despite these limitations, these findings suggest that traditional games, located in a reflective and culturally sensitive educational background can provide a viable support to children's development during a transition stage and to national values as we understand them and the need for such, in a time when they are being re-imagined, in a positive context, not according as they have been for more than 1,000 years in history.

### 3. DIRECT AND INDIRECT RELATIONS

This is because playing organized games is closely correlated with rule-following and fairness. The same direct connection is also found between culturally framed traditional games and cultural awareness and pride. Games, when portrayed alongside accounts of their origins, national symbols, and moral messages, are more likely to elicit interest in, a sense of pride in, and an understanding of the meaning of children's heritage. Thus, traditional games with teacher intervention are directly linked to the development of a sense of belonging as children come to perceive the community of players as not only their peers but also the nation as part of the group. Thus, traditional games, in the context of cultural explanation and reflection, directly have specific, readily detectable effects on their children's cooperation, fairness, responsibility, cultural awareness, and national identity.

The indirect relationships in this study refer not merely to mechanisms "play -> value"-type connections, but instead to mediating and contextual factors through which traditional games shape national values. One clear indirect relationship is the mediating role between teachers and the games: traditional games positively affect cultural values more strongly when teachers explicitly teach children about cultural meanings, model respectful behaviour, and lead post-game reflection. In this way, game-related interaction, including

cooperation, fairness, and cultural pride, is mediated by the quality of pedagogical supervision. In the absence of that mediation, the content of the same games could be simply recreational and have a more benign, transitory impact on children's value orientations.

Peer interaction and classroom atmosphere exhibit another indirect link. Conventional games create a more supportive, cohesive group tone and a better social climate, enabling the internalization of values of respect, assistance, and responsibility. In other words, games in the first instance alter how children will interact with one another, and only then do those interaction patterns become stable (positive experiences that children will do) norms. Family heritage and early exposure to national customs also constitute indirect influences, as children who already have some knowledge of culture and a positive attitude toward national traditions tend to respond better to traditional games, leading to greater cultural awareness and pride. Based on this information, the role of traditional games in shaping national values is often manifested in ways that are not obvious as direct effects, as they involve indirect relationships among teacher practices, peer interactions, school culture, and family experiences.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is evident that the involvement of traditional games in the education system influences the development of national values of prepubertal children. The results support that conventional games provide a source of non-violent entertainment as well as a resource for teaching and learning cooperation, fairness, responsibility, and cultural awareness. Structured participation in these games helps children to develop social skills, learn to adhere to rules, and experience fairness in practice, which are in turn part of stable moral orientations. It also showed that cultural values are formed most effectively when games are guided by a teacher, are reflected on, and explained in terms of their cultural and historical relevance. When teachers frame games in a wider cultural framework, children pay more attention to national traditions, show pride in their heritage, and form a greater sense of belonging. This strengthens the point that the pedagogic mediation and the culture of a school in general is the strongest determiner of the educational potential of traditional games. Simultaneously the investigators recognize that using traditional games does not provide an automatic or universal solution. They have differential effects depending on how they're implemented, class dynamics, and children's exposure to cultural traditions in the past. These steps involve judicious decision-making around playing games for, in response to, and to match needs of a given group, and reflecting on those games.

While these limitations are evident in the study, the results clearly demonstrate that traditional games may be a viable culturally appropriate approach for promoting kids' moral, social, and cultural learning. In summary, this research makes clear the possibility of a hybrid use of pre-existing practices in modern education. It suggests maintaining cultural heritage but also meeting the educational objectives of today. It's because traditional games help build a bridge between the past and the present, supporting national values of the younger generation.

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## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Z.A.; methodology, Z.A., B.N.; software, B.T.; validation, Z.A., B.N., R.O.; formal analysis, Z.A.; investigation, B.T., R.O., E.G.; resources, B.N., E.G.; data curation, E.G., B.T.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.A.; writing—review and editing, B.N., R.O., E.G.; visualization, B.T., R.O.; supervision, Z.A.; project administration, Z.A., B.N.; funding acquisition, Z.A., B.N., R.O.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Not applicable.

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