The development and validation of a character education model through traditional games based on the *Socratic method* in an elementary school

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to build a character education model in an elementary school using traditional games based on the Socratic method. This study used design-based research (DBR), with five experts helping to validate the character education model using a model evaluation instrument and 26 students participating in the model trial. As a result, the developed model comprises six elements: focus, syntax, reaction principles, social system, support system, and application. Meanwhile, the syntax, which consists of four steps: the initial stage, the transition stage, the working stage, and the termination stage, is the core of this model. Experts strongly agree that the model is in the "highly appropriate" category for fostering character development in elementary school students. There is a Socratic method in the developed syntax that encourages students to analyze the characters they encounter in traditional games. The study concludes that the proposed model can help students build character in elementary schools. Furthermore, this model can introduce and revive traditional games in Indonesia as part of the country's cultural heritage.

Keywords: Socratic method, character education, traditional games, national culture

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, character education has recently become a hot topic. This remark is supported by the "President's Nawacita" (Nine Priority Agendas). One of which is dedicated to building a character revolution and focusing on human resource development (see https://kominfo.go.id/index.php/content/detail/5629/NAWACITA%3A+9+Program+Perub ahan+Untuk+Indonesia/0/infografis). *Character education* can be defined as education about moral traits, civic traits, 'performance' traits, intellectual traits, or a combination of all of these, to develop student's abilities to make good and bad decisions, build a moral society, and become conscious effort to continue growing virtue (McGrath et al., 2021). Character education aims to improve the quality of implementation and educational outcomes in schools by forming students' character in a comprehensive, integrated, and balanced manner, according to graduate competency standards (Julaeha, 2019; Suherman, Supriyadi, & Cukarso, 2019).

There has been a value gap between the younger and elder generations in recent years. As a result, young people protest and engage in antisocial activities such as drug use, sexual harassment, and burning down the schools (Amollo & Lilian, 2017; Muhtar et al., 2019; Billano et al., 2021). Furthermore, failing to educate moral and character education during childhood has increased students' disrespect, teenage pregnancy, and adolescent drug use

(Mngarah, 2017). Therefore, providing moral, value, ethical, and character education is a crucial study today (Chowdhury, 2018).

Strengthening character education can be used in Indonesia to address a variety of severe character issues. Some of these problems are disorientation and failure to live up to Pancasila values, the limitations of integrated policy tools in realizing Pancasila values, and shifting ethical values in national and state life. The other issues are decreased awareness of the nation's cultural values, the threat of national disintegration, and the decrease in the nation's independence (Qoyyimah, 2016). That makes the need in strengthening the value of Pancasila in schools (Maulidayani, Muktiarni, & Mupita, 2022).

Character education is strongly intertwined with the Indonesian nation's social and political dynamics, and the decline in morals and character can be a serious threat to a country (Husni, 2020). In addition, the character development program at school, according to Permendikbud No 20 of 2018 is implemented by applying Pancasila values in character education. Those values include religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, nationalism, patriotism, appreciative, communicative, peace-loving, well-read, environmental caring, social caring, and responsible values. Those values are summarized into five main values that include religion, nationalism, independence, *gotong-royong* (mutual assistance), and integrity. Those five main values are expected to be included in the character-building of children at an early age so that character education in school will be realized and the government's goal would be achieved. A culture of violence, corruption, foul language, radicalism and fundamentalism, criminal activities, a lack of respect for state symbols, and a lack of social cohesiveness are examples of these indicators. All the preceding instances are tendencies that demonstrate the phenomena of society's weakening character. As a result, Johansson et al. (2011) recommended that character education begin at a young age and be conducted at various levels in schools.

The school is an educational institution that is also accountable for achieving educational objectives, including shaping the character of students (Abdullah & Tabrani, 2018; Isnaini, Hanum, & Prasojo, 2020; Pike et al., 2021; Rusmana et al., 2020; Riyanto et al., 2022; Fahrannisa, Muktiarni, & Mupita, 2022; Ammatulloh et al., 2022). Efforts to develop optimal character must be planned and executed in a systematic and long-term manner. Character education must begin at a young age because, at that age, children enter the world of early formal education for the first time, where they have not been contaminated by various negative aspects of their character (Johansson et al., 2011; Lickona, 2018). Character education must focus on basic education because it is a strategic and crucial level. This statement is in line with previous research, which found that children who learn their society's moral values at a young age have harmonious social interactions throughout their lives, whereas children who have not studied morality, tend to commit juvenile delinquency, lack respect for others, become involved in drug use and violence, drop out of school, and have conflict at school (Amollo & Lilian, 2017).

Many researchers have developed a model of character education in schools, especially in basic education, to encourage building character values in schools, including the development of an integrated character education model in learning each subject in elementary schools (Zuchdi, Prasetya, & Masruri, 2010), the development of a religious humanist learning model in character education in elementary schools (Jumarudin, Gafur, & Suardiman, 2014); the development of character education models through curriculum integration in elementary schools (Amini, Yurnita, & Hasnidar, 2017); Pancasila-based character education in Secondary Level-based Boarding schools (Murdiono, Miftahuddin, & Kuncorowati, 2017); the development of a character education model through the film-based school literacy movement (Nugrahani, 2017); the development of a state defense-based character education model (Irawatie, Iswahyuni, & Setyawati, 2019); character development through the curriculum (Pike et al., 2021). However, although traditional games, which are common in Indonesia, have many benefits, one of which is in developing student character, there has been no research that has developed a character education model

through traditional games that are integrated with the Socratic method as an analytical knife (Dewi et al., 2020).

The Socratic method is an effective teaching approach that employs questions and answers to challenge assumptions, expose contradictions, and lead to knowledge and new wisdom (Freydberg, 2020). The Socratic method has made positive contributions in improving writing skills (Etemadzadeh, Seifi, & Far, 2013), critical thinking skills (Boa, Wattanatorn, & Tagong, 2018), and cognitive behavior (Heiniger, Clark, & Egan, 2018). Besides, the Socratic method also positively contributes to ownership, achievement, and student satisfaction in learning (Fisher & Machirori, 2021), and can be used effectively in all subjects in elementary school (Rusmana, Suryana, & Utama, 2019).

Traditional games are activities that children have done with particular guidelines from ancient times to have fun. Traditional games have values and benefits for those who play them, and they can positively impact everyone who participates in them (Madondo & Tsikira, 2021). Games are seen as one of the most suitable tools to use with elementary school students because children of that age enjoy playing (Rusyani et al., 2021; Rusyani et al., 2022; Lathifah & Maryanti, 2021; Hanna et al., 2021; Albion et al., 2021). The traditional games are thus indirectly introduced to the culture of local wisdom, in which we have to preserve the local wisdom. Various traditional games have recently experienced a decline, particularly among the current generation (Louth & Jamieson-Proctor, 2019; Nur & Asdana, 2020). This initiative also aims to minimize the effects of globalization, particularly on children in elementary school. Furthermore, preserving and being proud of the culture of local wisdom reflects the character of a nation. This remark implies that efforts to build character education models through traditional games are critical if national education goals, notably character and culture, are to be realized. This statement follows the mandate of Republic of Indonesia Law No. 5 of 2017 on the promotion of culture as a serious reaction as a legal basis to preserve cultural values, character, and national identity.

This study focused on developing and validating a character education model in an elementary school using traditional games based on the Socratic method. A design-based research method was used to validate the created character education model as part of this study. The novelties of this study are (1) we created a character education model with four stages/learning syntax, (2) this model is a part of the promotion of traditional Indonesian games to introduce and revive the country's culture, and (3) the use of the Socratic method is designed to stimulate students' critical thinking skills to analyze the characters that appear in traditional games.

METHOD

In this study, the Design-based research (DBR) method was used, which includes four stages: analysis, solution development, iterative testing cycle stage and solution refinement, and the reflection and production stages of design principles (McKenney & Reeves, 2013). A total of five experts were involved in assessing the quality of the character education model through traditional games based on the Socratic method. The expert must have: (a) more than five years of relevant experience; (b) be a physical education practitioner/lecturer/teacher; and (c) be knowledgeable in the following areas: physical education, psychology, character, and traditional games. Meanwhile, the instrument consisted of an evaluation form and guidelines for using the traditional games based on the Socratic technique to assess the suitability of the character education model. The evaluation of the model consists of two parts: (1) the suitability of the model and (2) the suitability of model components. Furthermore, there are two components to the model's application evaluation: (1) the suitability of the learning plan and (2) the suitability of the learning implementation. The evaluation form was created utilizing a five-point Likert rating scale with the following scores: 5 = Highly Appropriate, 4 = Appropriate, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Inappropriate, and 1 = Highly Inappropriate. This instrument was developed based on prior research by Boa, Wattanatorn, and Tagong (2018), which proved to be valid in developing

a learning model. In addition, qualitative data were collected from 26 elementary school students in grades 5, who served as participants and targets for the developed model. They completed student worksheets provided by the teacher as a kind of assessment of learning activities carried out to determine the character values that students had studied. Students' worksheets were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method.

The data was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The data were analyzed using the SPSS version 23 program to obtain the mean, standard deviation, and V Aiken values to determine the validity of the quantitative model. Detailed explanations and information on the use of SPSS are described elsewhere (Afifah, Mudzakir, & Nandiyanto, 2022). We used qualitative analysis to look at the results of student worksheets that revealed answers to Socratic questions that encouraged students to explore character values in a traditional game they had played.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Initially, we developed an educational model framework based on the analysis of problems found in previous studies on character development (Birhan et al., 2021; Pike et al., 2021), traditional games (Fitri, Nur, & Putri, 2020; Nur et al., 2020), the use of the Socratic method in learning (Helterbran & Strahler 2013; Lee & Manning, 2013), and the culture promotion (Pemerintah Indonesia, 2017). These studies produce a character education model framework, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2 presents the components of the character education model through traditional games based on the Socratic method, namely, focus (model objectives), syntax (instructional and process), principles of reaction (teachers' reactions to student responses), social systems (activities), support systems (teaching materials), and applications. The components of this model were developed from the results of earlier research by Boa, Wattanatorn, and Tagong (2018). In line with these results, the compiling of an educational model involves six core components: focus, syntax, reaction principles, social systems, and support systems.
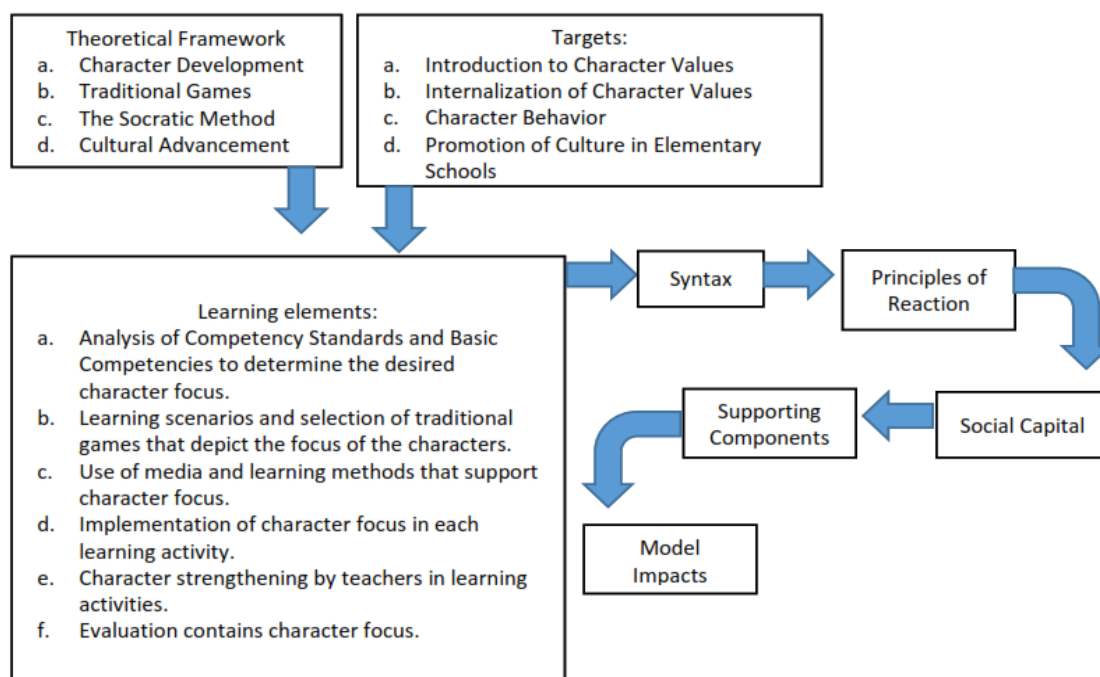

Figure 1. The Framework for Developing Character Education Models through Traditional Games Based on the Socratic Method
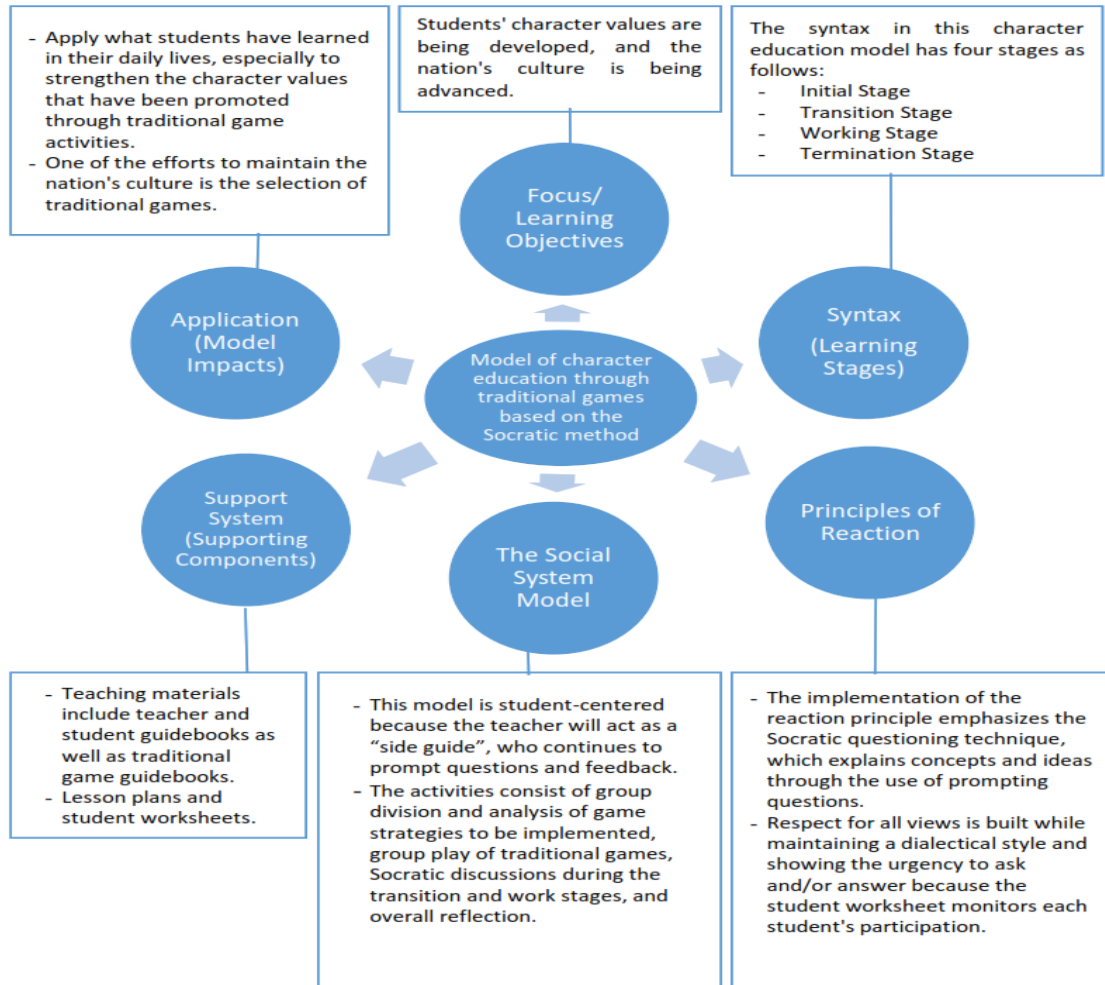
Figure 2. Character Education Model through Traditional Games based on the Socratic Method
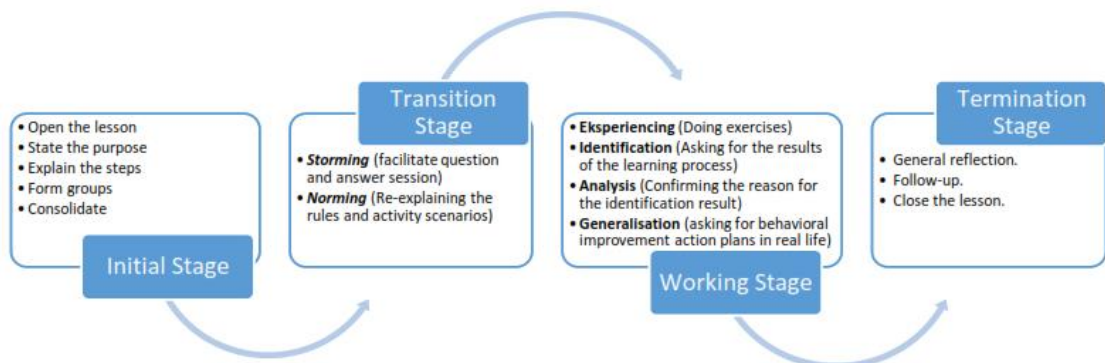

Figure 3. The Syntax of the Character Education Model through Traditional Games Based on the Socratic Method

Several components are Component 1: Focus (Objectives of the Model). The fundamental goal of this model is to develop character values in students and to advance the nation's culture. Component 2: Syntax (Instructional Process). The essence of a model is the steps of learning or syntax. In this case, the syntax of the developed model includes four stages, namely the initial stage, the transition stage, the work stage, and the termination stage, as shown in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 3, the stages are the *Initial Stage*. There are five main activities at this stage, including 1) opening learning, 2) stating goals, 3) explaining the game steps, 4) forming groups,

and 5) consolidating. At this stage, students are urged to carry out consolidation activities such as formulating strategies, learning how to work together to win, and investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the created groups and parts of them. This method can promote active learning and encourage students to interact with the activity material (Boa, Wattanatorn, & Tagong, 2018). *Transition Stage.* The transition stage consists of storming and norming activities. In this model, storming activities focus on the teacher's activities in facilitating student question and answer activities related to the games to be played, and the challenges students will confront. While in the norming activity, the teacher re-explained the game's rules and created a work contract by asking questions like "Check, group 1 ready? Group 2 ready?"

Working Stage. The working stage reflects the application of the Socratic method, which consists of four steps of core activities, namely 1) experiential, in which students carry out learning activities to play traditional games; 2) identification, in which the teacher facilitates and asks the results of the learning process; 3) analysis, in which the teacher facilitates students in discussing the results of the identification obtained and guides students to be on the path of discussion; at the same time, students participate in discussions through prompting questions to explore students' understanding regarding any character values which can be applied when playing such a game; 4) generalization, in which students are asked to develop improvement plans for their inadequacies. The improvement plans might be implemented in another game or the next lesson. *Termination Stage.* The termination stage consists of three main activities, namely general reflection, follow-up, and lesson closure. For example, the teacher prompts questions related to what values are contained in the traditional games that have been played and tried to explore whether the students have applied them.

Component 3: Principles of Reaction (Teacher's Reaction to Students' Responses). In this component, the teacher is expected to keep the manner of dialogical interaction between students and emphasize the character values learned through the traditional games played. Student worksheets are essential for tracking and assessing whether the character values provided in the discussion activities match the findings they documented on the student worksheets. Furthermore, students' ideas/opinions must be treated with respect at all times. Component 4: The Social System (Activities). This character education model is centered on students through traditional games based on the Socratic method. The teacher will operate as an "activity guide," entrusted with keeping learning activities on track. This effort is accomplished by asking students prompting questions to encourage them to explore or express their ideas about what character values have evolved or been implemented during the learning process. In addition, the teacher provides students with feedback.

Component 5: The Support System (Teaching Materials). This model's support system includes teaching materials such as teacher and student guidebooks, traditional game guidebooks, lesson plans that serve as a teaching guide, and student worksheets as a part of learning evaluation. Component 6: Application. This Socratic method-based model of character education using traditional games was created for elementary school students, particularly higher-grade students. However, it does not rule out the idea of applying it to higher education levels. This model has been found to promote students' character qualities while conserving the nation's culture. Several traditional games are almost forgotten due to the influence of today's modern games.

In the expert validation of the model, Table 1 shows the assessment results. Five experts evaluated the character education model using traditional games based on the Socratic method. Data, as given in Table 1, showed that the total character education model received an average score of 4.27 with an SD of 0.42 and an achievement percentage of 85.41%. Furthermore, we applied the V Aiken analysis test with 5 rating categories and five raters to see whether the model is feasible to apply. Based on V Aiken's minimum standard for validity testing, this model has a value of 0.80 with a probability of 0.40. The Aiken V Test calculation for evaluating the character education model for elementary school students based on the Socratic method using traditional games yielded a score of 0.82. The evaluation of the model user guide has a value of 0.95, indicating that the model is valid for usage based on expert judgment.

Table 1. Experts'assessment results

	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Mean
Mean	4.24	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.24	4.27
Standard Deviation	0.56	0.47	0.47	0.47	1.03	0.42
Achievement Percentage	84.71%	85.88%	85.88%	85.88%	84.71%	85.41%
V Aiken Values of Evaluation Model						0.82
V Aiken Values of the Implementation Model Evaluation						0.95

The practicality of the designed concept received positive feedback from the five experts. "This model is a breakthrough where the Socratic method, thick with the concept of increasing critical thinking, is tried to be combined with traditional games that can develop students' character," experts said. In addition to the statement mentioned earlier, "this can be used as an effort to preserve Indonesian culture through learning activities in schools." Another expert suggested that this concept may be tested at a higher level of education in the future, rather than just in elementary school, to ensure that its use is felt more widely.

The qualitative data analysis of the students' worksheets from 26 participants revealed that the student's character was developing positively. Students can demonstrate the values contained in traditional games through identifying exercises at the work stage. Students can give reasons why a behavior or character values in traditional games can occur or do not occur in the analysis activity. They also discussed why they can win or lose in a game. During generalization activities, students can establish strategies for addressing their weaknesses to behave better in the next game or in daily life.

Discussion

The following is a description of the results of the research conducted. The model is deemed valid after assessing an overall achievement percentage of 85.41% and an average evaluation result of 4.27 in the initial testing process (validation). According to Boa, Wattanatorn, and Tagong (2018), the results of the expert evaluation with the average score were classified in the "Highly Appropriate" category, indicating that the model was feasible to be applied. Another important finding in this study is that some of the 26 students who participated in the field trial had not displayed or used the existing positive attitude character values such as honesty. According to the observations, this situation arose because of students' competitive spirit, who wanted to win but ignored the game's rules, causing the youngster to turn around even though they had not yet reached the game's turning point. For these students, this situation becomes a separate lesson and one of the interesting discussions during the working and termination stages. However, most of the students have demonstrated character values such as tolerance, hard work, discipline, responsibility, and others that were present in the games played.

Furthermore, students can assess what character they have applied and comment on students who have not applied the character of honesty in the student worksheets provided by the teacher. The following student answer worksheet asks students to respond to the following question: "Have you ever applied the character values in a sack race game? Which values do you believe you have not put into practice?" One student said:

> *"Some have, while others have not. Certain students in their implementation did not use character values. Some students should not have crossed the line but did not do so for their team to win. This fact indicates that the students had cheated and broken the regulations, as well as being dishonest."*

This situation means that, in addition to developing the character values inherent in traditional games, the Socratic method stimulates children to think critically about their experiences. This statement is consistent with Brown & Gunderman (2020), stating that the Socratic method involves both an inquiry into the truth and the character.

Teachers and parents instill character values such as honesty, compassion, loyalty, respect, trust, and responsibility in children throughout childhood (Mei-Ju, Chen-Hsin, & Pin-Chen, 2014). Although peers impact a child's character development, parents are a more powerful source of influence (Palma et al., 2021; Cabanatuan & Ahmad, 2022), and parent-child connections are at the heart of character development (Nur et al., 2020; Termini & Golden, 2007). Thus, parents must provide a positive example for their children to foster prosocial behavior (Pandya, 2017). Furthermore, moral and character education is how society passes value systems to future generations, and families and schools are critical institutions in this regard (Birhan, Shiferaw, Amsalu, Tamiru, & Tiruye, 2021). According to VisikoKnox-Johnson (2016), learning is a socially mediated process in which parents and society play critical roles in helping children learn moral and character education. Childhood is when parents instill in their children a strong sense of good and wrong behavior (Dababneh, Ihmeideh, & Al-Omari, 2010). In addition to parents, teachers must serve as role models for the formation of children's character and morals through participating in positive moral activities (Lapsley & Woodbury, 2016). Character education and value systems are not autonomous obligations, according to the findings of prior studies. Families, peers, teachers, the media, and society are collectively responsible (Lickona, 2018; Mngarah, 2017; Pike et al., 2021).

Previous studies on the development of children's character found that children in Africa can be taught original moral teachings and values by reading stories to children. These values are in the form of preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennialism, and holisticism. Furthermore, these stories are deductive (Banda & Morgan, 2013). Stories, fairy tales, and play are all part of teaching children moral and character education. These stories help children build their character by allowing them to recognize good and bad character behaviors (Birhan et al., 2021). We hoped to encourage the return of traditional Indonesian games as a form of the game that can instill the values of the nation's cultural characters through this study, supporting the findings of previous studies that encourage the strengthening of character education through fairy tales. We created the syntax, which is the basis of the model, which consists of four stages: the initial stage, the transition stage, the working stage, and the termination stage, using a character education model with conventional games based on the developed the Socratic method. We applied the Socratic method in this model to encourage students' cognitive exploration of the values of the characters in the traditional games they play. After playing the game, the process of discussing and delivering stories or students' perspectives becomes the focal focus for extracting the characters collected by students. Students are required to be able to adapt the teachings of character values learned in school to be implemented in real life and play traditional Indonesian games that are fun. Furthermore, we hope to use this model to contribute to the preservation of Indonesian culture, which is increasingly threatened by the influence of modern games on the younger generation (Lancaster et al., 2020).

Many previous studies have demonstrated the usefulness of the Socratic method, as demonstrated by Redhana (2012) who found that the problem-based learning model and Socratic questions are more helpful in improving students' critical thinking skills than the direct learning model. Furthermore, Redhana (2014) discovered that students who study using the Socratic seminar learning model and students who study using the direct learning model had significantly different learning results. Those who study in a Socratic seminar learning model have better learning results than students who study in a direct learning model. This statement indicates that the results back up earlier findings since the character is a part of student learning outcomes. The attitude category and study findings demonstrate that using the Socratic method in traditional games can help students improve their character.

CONCLUSION

This type of character education based on traditional games and the Socratic method is suited for use in elementary schools to help kids build their character. Quantitatively, the average result of the expert's assessment is 4.27, which falls into the highly appropriate category. Furthermore, the qualitative assessment shows that students can develop the character values in

the games played, such as tolerance, hard work, and responsibility that appear dominantly. However, in some students, the value of honesty has not appeared because they were overly enthusiastic and had a strong desire to win, so they ignored the established rules. Experimentation, identification, analysis, and generalization are the four stages of this model's implementation. Students are urged to think critically about their playing experience through the Socratic method, allowing them to explore, realize, and eventually commit to behaving better based on the character values they have gained. In addition to being able to develop character, this approach also indirectly contributes to the progress of Indonesian culture. This approach was built primarily for elementary school students in higher grades, but it might also be adapted to higher education levels. As a result, more research is required to determine its impact.

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