

Instilling Character Education Values through the Traditional Game of Selodor for Fourth-Grade Students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak

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Abstract

Traditional games remain underutilized in educational settings despite their potential to foster character development through experiential learning and social interaction. This study examines the implementation of the traditional *selodor* game in character education, identifies the character values manifested during play, explores the obstacles encountered by teachers, and analyzes the strategies used to address these challenges. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and fourth-grade students as data sources. The findings reveal that the implementation of *selodor* comprises five stages: planning, preparation, execution, guidance, and evaluation. The game facilitates the expression and reinforcement of cooperation, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, communication, self-confidence, and self-control. Its implementation is constrained by limited instructional time, variations in student characteristics, insufficient character habituation within the family environment, teachers' need for greater competence, and the absence of formal curricular integration. Teachers respond to these challenges through professional training, instructional modules, extracurricular activities, parental education, and institutional support. The study demonstrates that traditional games can serve as contextually relevant media for character education when supported by teacher competence, parental involvement, and systematic school

integration. These findings contribute an implementation-oriented perspective on incorporating local cultural practices into sustainable character education in primary schools.

Keywords: Character Education; Local Wisdom; Primary Education; *Selodor*; Traditional Games

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed children's ways of playing, interacting, and developing social abilities (Khoiriyah, 2024). The widespread availability of gadgets and digital games has made entertainment increasingly accessible through individual and technology-mediated activities. This shift in children's play patterns deserves attention because play is not merely a recreational activity but also an important context in which children learn to communicate, interact, and participate in social relationships (Kurnialoh et al., 2026). Traditional games are particularly relevant in this context because they provide recreational experiences while simultaneously supporting children's physical, social, and interpersonal development (Susilowati et al., 2023). Play activities can also stimulate children's physical, mental, intellectual, and social potential through enjoyable experiences (Cahyani et al., 2023). Therefore, the increasing dominance of digital play needs to be balanced with activities that preserve opportunities for direct social interaction.

The issue is particularly important in education because character development constitutes an essential dimension of children's overall development. Education is not solely concerned with academic achievement but also with developing students' attitudes, behaviors, moral values, and ability to participate constructively in social life (Yustikasari et al., 2024). Character education can be understood as a process of guiding students toward becoming well-rounded individuals in terms of their heart, mind, body, feelings, and actions (Anatasya & Dewi, 2021). Character development also requires habituation, enabling students not only to recognize desirable values but also to internalize and practice them in everyday situations (Fadilah et al., 2021). Consequently, character education requires learning experiences that allow students to encounter and practice moral values directly rather than merely receiving theoretical explanations.

One potentially meaningful approach is the integration of traditional games into educational activities. Traditional games constitute an important part of cultural heritage because they preserve knowledge, social values, and moral messages transmitted across generations (Waldo et al., 2025). Their educational significance extends beyond recreation because they can provide children with opportunities to develop social skills, appropriate behavior, physical abilities, and competencies required for participation in community life (Susilowati et al., 2023). From a character-education perspective, traditional games create situations in which students can experience cooperation, rule-following, problem-solving, and interpersonal interaction in an authentic setting (Nuryanti et al., 2025). Traditional games have therefore been identified as potential media for developing values such as sportsmanship, honesty, responsibility, courage, patience, and cooperation (Cahyani et al., 2023).

Among these games, Selodor represents a particularly relevant cultural and educational practice. Also known in several regions as gobak sodor, galasin, or galah asin, Selodor is a group-based traditional game associated with Indonesian local culture, including the Sasak community (Rizal, 2025). Its team-based structure requires players to communicate, develop strategies, perform assigned roles, and cooperate in pursuing a shared objective. The game also requires participants to follow mutually agreed rules in order to maintain fairness and ensure that the activity proceeds appropriately (Setiawan et al., 2025). These characteristics indicate that Selodor provides a natural context for cultivating character values, particularly cooperation, communication, discipline, sportsmanship, honesty, responsibility, and adherence to rules.

The educational potential of Selodor is further associated with its collaborative structure. Because each player performs a role that is connected to the performance of other team members, individual success is closely related to collective effort. Such experiences can help children develop interpersonal relationships and recognize the importance of contributing to group goals (Darmawati & Widyasari, 2022). In addition to cooperation, Selodor can facilitate the development of communication, creativity, courage, group cohesion, accuracy, agility, and patience through its dynamic gameplay (Sholehatun et al., 2023). From the perspective of social character development, direct interaction during traditional games can further encourage tolerance, mutual respect, cooperation, togetherness, and concern for others (Jegalus, 2026).

Conceptually, character development through Selodor can be situated within an educational framework that views character as a moral quality manifested through observable behavior. Character does not merely concern an individual's knowledge of right and wrong but also involves the capacity to develop positive behavioral habits through repeated practice (Efendi & Ningsih, 2023). Values function as guiding principles that help individuals determine which actions are considered appropriate, meaningful, and morally desirable (Safitri et al., 2022). In this study, character values are understood as values that can be observed through students' behaviors during the game, particularly their ability to cooperate, communicate, follow rules, accept outcomes, fulfill responsibilities, and treat other players fairly (L. C. M. Utami, 2024).

Previous studies have provided evidence regarding the potential of traditional games for character development. Nabila (2024), for example, demonstrated that Sasak-based Selodor could contribute to students' social character development through structured preparation and implementation. Similarly, A. Utami et al. (2025) found that traditional games contain several core character values, including cooperation, independence, creativity, and other dimensions of student character, although the representation of these values varies across different games. Fitriani (2025) further demonstrated that the traditional *sunda manda* game could support character development through value internalization, habituation, and teacher modeling. These studies establish the pedagogical potential of traditional games while simultaneously indicating the need for more context-specific investigations into how particular games facilitate character development.

The research gap lies in the limited attention given to the specific process of cultivating educational character values through Selodor among elementary-level madrasah students. Existing studies have primarily examined Selodor in relation to social character development or discussed traditional games more broadly, while the implementation of Selodor as a medium for cultivating educational character values among fourth-grade students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak has not been specifically examined. This gap is important because character education requires the development of behavioral habits through meaningful experiences and concrete actions rather than conceptual understanding alone (Syamsuddin, 2022).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of Selodor as a pedagogical experience for cultivating character values through direct peer interaction. The study

examines the implementation of the game, character values that emerge, teacher challenges, and strategies for addressing them. This approach responds to the need to develop collaboration, cooperation, and social competencies alongside academic abilities (Natulisiya & Alleynisa, 2025). It also positions traditional games as a means of connecting character education with the preservation of local cultural practices.

The empirical context emerged from an observation at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak on July 14, 2026, which showed that students engaged in various play activities during recess, but Selodor had not been systematically used as part of classroom learning or character education. Although teachers recognized the potential of traditional games, their implementation had not been formally organized. This condition highlights the need for contextual and participatory learning experiences that enable students to practice character values directly, as educational values acquire meaning when translated into actual behavior and daily practice (Wahyuni, 2021).

Accordingly, this study focuses on the cultivation of educational character values through Selodor among fourth-grade students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak. It aims to describe the implementation of Selodor, identify the character values developed through the game, examine teacher-related obstacles, and describe strategies for addressing them. The study seeks to demonstrate how traditional games can provide meaningful and socially interactive learning experiences while supporting character development and the preservation of local cultural practices.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to develop an in-depth understanding of character-value cultivation through the traditional game Selodor among fourth-grade students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study examined students' behaviors, attitudes, experiences, and educational processes within their natural setting (Sugiyono, 2021). The descriptive design focused on the implementation of Selodor, character values cultivated through the game, implementation obstacles, and efforts to address them. The research was conducted throughout July 2026 at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak, Jontak Hamlet, Danger Village,

Masbagik District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, covering preparation, data collection, and report preparation.

The research indicators covered Selodor implementation, including planning, preparation, procedures, instructions, game implementation, time management, teacher roles, student participation and interaction, and character formation. Character-development indicators included cooperation, discipline, responsibility, communication, engagement, social interaction, sportsmanship, leadership, self-confidence, and self-control. These indicators guided the observation and analysis of the learning activity. The use of traditional games as an educational medium was theoretically grounded in their potential to develop social skills, cooperation, and competencies associated with community life (Susilowati et al., 2023).

Participants included the principal, fourth-grade classroom teacher, Physical Education teacher, and students involved in the Selodor activity. They were selected based on their direct involvement and relevant knowledge of school policies, learning processes, and student experiences. Data consisted of primary data obtained from participants and secondary data from school documents, records, reports, official archives, and other relevant materials (Haifa et al., 2025).

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation examined the learning environment, student readiness and activities, Selodor implementation, interpersonal interactions, and character values. Interviews were conducted using guidelines while allowing follow-up questions to explore emerging information (Sugiyono, 2021). Documentation complemented these data through school profiles, organizational structures, teacher records, and fourth-grade student data. The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by observation and interview guidelines (Ridwan et al., 2026). Data credibility was established through technical triangulation by comparing interview findings with observations and documentation (Susanto et al., 2023). The study also addressed transferability, dependability, and confirmability to support the trustworthiness of the findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, in which analysis takes place throughout and after data collection (Sugiyono, 2021). Interview, observation, and documentary data were selected, condensed, and categorized according to the research focus (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). The reduced data were organized into descriptive

narratives and tables to identify patterns and relationships (Nurrisa & Hermina, 2025). Conclusions were then drawn and continuously verified against consistent evidence from different data-collection techniques. This process supported credible findings regarding Selodor implementation, character-value cultivation, implementation challenges, and strategies for addressing them.

RESULTS

The study on character education through the traditional Selodor game among fourth-grade students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak was conducted in July 2026 using observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that Selodor can function as a learning medium that integrates physical activity with character development. The findings cover four main aspects: the implementation of Selodor, character values emerging during the game, implementation obstacles, and strategies to address these obstacles.

The implementation of Selodor transformed an informal recreational activity into a structured learning activity with specific educational objectives. An interview with the Physical Education teacher on 16 July 2026 revealed that the teacher had been familiar with Selodor since childhood, which facilitated the explanation of its rules and procedures. The game consists of two teams, namely the guarding and attacking teams, with five players each. The attacking team attempts to cross the opponent's defensive lines, reach the final line, and return to the starting line without being touched. Team roles are determined through a coin toss before the game begins.

Although familiar with Selodor, the teacher had never previously incorporated it into classroom instruction. Students generally played the game spontaneously during recess. In the research implementation, the activity began with random team formation through the Domikado game, followed by field organization, safety checks, warm-up activities, rule explanation, game implementation, and teacher supervision. When students violated the rules, the teacher temporarily stopped the game and provided corrective guidance.

The teacher therefore served not only as an instructor but also as a facilitator, supervisor, and behavioral guide. The activity was designed to develop physical abilities such as agility and leg strength while encouraging cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and other positive character values. Preparation also included checking the field, preparing a whistle,

ensuring appropriate sportswear, explaining the rules, conducting warm-ups, and organizing teams fairly. The Physical Education setting was considered appropriate because Selodor requires active movement and sufficient space.

The principal confirmed that character education is an important component of student development at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak. The school supports traditional games and provides a spacious and safe field, although Selodor has not yet been formally incorporated into the curriculum. This indicates that institutional support is available, while the systematic use of traditional games for character education remains at an early stage.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Traditional Selodor Game

Figure 1. Implementation of the Traditional Selodor Game shows that the implementation of Selodor involves a sequence of activities consisting of preparation, team formation, warm-up, explanation of the rules, game implementation, teacher supervision, and behavioral evaluation. This sequence illustrates how a traditional game can be transformed into a structured learning experience rather than remaining merely a recreational activity during students' free time.

Observation revealed several character values, including cooperation, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, communication, self-confidence, and self-control. Cooperation was demonstrated when students coordinated movements and assisted teammates in achieving the team's objectives. Communication emerged through directions and strategy discussions, while discipline was reflected in following rules, maintaining orderly lines, and carrying out assigned roles. Sportsmanship was evident in students' responses to

winning and losing, although several students were still reluctant to accept defeat after being touched by an opponent.

Student interviews supported these findings. Students stated that Selodor encouraged responsibility, honesty, teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. They also emphasized the importance of helping teammates when facing opponents. These responses indicate that Selodor provided direct opportunities for students to experience and practice character values through social and physical interaction. However, the consistency of these values varied among students.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings on the Implementation of the Traditional Selodor Game for Character Education

Finding Aspect	Research Findings
Selodor implementation	Preparation, team formation, warm-up, rule explanation, game implementation, teacher guidance, and evaluation
Teacher's role	Planner, instructor, facilitator, supervisor, and behavioral guide
Character values	Cooperation, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, communication, self-confidence, and self-control
Obstacles	Limited instructional time, diverse student characteristics, inconsistent character habituation at home, and limited teacher skills
Planned responses	Teacher training, instructional module development, extracurricular activities, parent education, and class meeting activities

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings on the Implementation of the Traditional Selodor Game for Character Education shows that Selodor functions not only as a physical activity but also as a context for character learning through direct experience. However, its effectiveness is influenced by teacher preparedness, student characteristics, instructional time, and the continuity of character habituation between school and home.

Several obstacles were identified, including limited Physical Education instructional time, differences in student characteristics, inconsistent character habituation at home, and limited teacher experience in using traditional games as structured learning media. Some students required repeated explanations of the rules, while others were still inconsistent in following the rules and accepting defeat. Some students also felt uncomfortable when participating in mixed-gender groups.

The teacher's limited experience was also related to the absence of specific instructional content on Selodor. The principal noted that limited teacher guidance was a challenge because the game had not been specifically integrated into existing instructional

content. Thus, the educational use of traditional games requires both knowledge of the game and pedagogical preparation to connect the activity with learning and character-development objectives.

To address these challenges, the teacher proposed several strategies, including traditional-game-based teacher training and the development of an instructional module for systematic implementation. Limited instructional time could be addressed through extracurricular activities or class meeting programs. The school also planned to provide parents with guidance on the character values developed through Selodor so that these behaviors could be reinforced at home.

Overall, the findings indicate that Selodor provides a meaningful context for integrating physical activity, social interaction, and character development. However, its implementation requires stronger instructional planning, teacher competence, continuous habituation, and family support so that the character values practiced during the game can be transferred to students' everyday lives.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the traditional selodor game can function as a character-education medium when embedded within a structured learning process and supported by continuous teacher guidance. The sequence of planning, preparation, implementation, supervision, and evaluation shows that character values become educationally meaningful when teachers intentionally connect game activities with specific character objectives. Prior to the study, selodor was primarily a recreational activity during break time and had not been incorporated into Physical Education instruction. By establishing objectives related to physical abilities as well as cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and discipline, the teacher transformed informal play into a purposeful learning experience.. This finding is consistent with Anatasya & Dewi (2021), who emphasize character education as a process of developing moral conduct, and Fadilah et al. (2021), who highlight the importance of habituation in character development.

The teacher's role was central to the character-development process. Beyond explaining the rules, the teacher used situations arising during the game as opportunities for behavioral learning. When students violated rules or were reluctant to accept defeat, the teacher stopped the activity, clarified the relevant rule, and guided students to correct their

behavior. This indicates that character education through play involves guidance, reflection, and behavioral correction rather than punishment alone. The game provides an authentic social context for practicing character values, while the teacher helps students understand the consequences of their actions. This supports Hasibuan et al. (2024), who argue that character education requires habituation for values to become observable behavior.

Cooperation was the most prominent character value because selodor requires interdependence among team members. Team success depends on coordination, communication, role distribution, and collective strategy. Students assisted teammates, communicated strategies, and adjusted their actions according to group need. This finding supports Sholehatun et al. (2023), who identified cooperation, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and sportsmanship as values embedded in the traditional gobak sodor or selodor game. The present study further indicates that selodor can provide opportunities to develop communication, confidence, and emotional self-regulation.

The findings on discipline, honesty, and sportsmanship demonstrate that character development was not yet consistent among all students. Although students generally understood the rules and the importance of accepting defeat, some still violated boundaries or hesitated to acknowledge being touched by opponents. This shows that understanding rules does not automatically result in consistent behavior. Traditional games therefore provide opportunities for character practice, but repeated implementation and habituation are needed. This interpretation corresponds with Efendi & Ningsih (2023), who conceptualize character as moral behavior that must be manifested through action rather than merely understood intellectually.

The identified barriers show that the effectiveness of traditional games is influenced by the educational context. Limited instructional time, differences in student characteristics, suboptimal interaction between male and female students, inconsistent character habituation at home, and limited teacher experience affected implementation. These findings correspond with Nabila (2024), who identified time constraints, teachers' understanding of traditional games, diverse student characteristics, and environmental support as challenges in implementing traditional games for educational purposes. Thus, successful character education through play requires alignment among instructional strategies, teacher competence, school culture, and family involvement.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates that selodor can serve as an experiential context for character development by simultaneously engaging cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Students interpret rules, make decisions, communicate, cooperate, regulate emotions, and perform physical actions within the same activity. This interpretation is consistent with Susilowati et al. (2023) and Waldo et al. (2025), who position traditional games as contexts for social interaction and value transmission. Practically, selodor may be integrated into Physical Education, extracurricular activities, or school events when supported by explicit character indicators and teacher guidance. Teacher training and instructional modules can further strengthen systematic implementation and reduce dependence on individual teacher experience.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The qualitative descriptive approach provided an in-depth understanding of implementation and student behavior but did not quantify the magnitude of character change. Because selodor was newly introduced as a learning medium, the study also cannot establish its long-term effects or determine whether the observed behaviors would persist. In addition, the study was conducted in a single madrasah and fourth-grade context, limiting the direct applicability of the findings to other educational settings. Future research could examine sustained implementation across multiple schools and develop or evaluate structured instructional modules for traditional-game-based character education.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the educational significance of selodor lies not simply in the character values inherent in the game, but in how the game is intentionally planned, facilitated, monitored, and reflected upon. Selodor can therefore serve as a supporting medium for character education while connecting local cultural preservation with students' educational needs. Its implementation requires sustained practice, teacher competence, institutional support, and continuity between character habituation at school and at home.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the traditional selodor game can serve as a meaningful supporting medium for character education among fourth-grade students at MI Al-Ijtihad Jontak when implemented through a structured and teacher-guided learning process. Its implementation involved instructional planning, preparation of facilities and student groups,

game activities, teacher facilitation, and evaluation. These findings address the first research focus by demonstrating that the educational value of selodor is shaped not only by the nature of the game itself but also by the teacher's capacity to transform play into a purposeful learning experience. The study further indicates that selodor provides students with opportunities to practice cooperation, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, responsibility, communication, self-confidence, and self-control. Nevertheless, the development of these values was not yet fully consistent among all students, while the game had not been formally integrated into the school curriculum.

The principal contribution of this study lies in its empirical account of how traditional play can connect direct learning experiences with character development within a madrasah ibtidaiyah context. The findings highlight the pedagogical potential of traditional games as an approach that simultaneously supports character education and the preservation of local cultural practices. In practical terms, the study provides a basis for teachers and schools to consider selodor as part of physical education, extracurricular activities, or other relevant school programs. Sustainable implementation requires appropriate teacher preparation, structured learning resources, institutional support, and continuity between school-based and family-based character habituation. Future research should examine the implementation of selodor over a longer period, involve more diverse educational settings, and develop or evaluate structured learning materials based on traditional games. Such research would provide stronger evidence concerning the sustained contribution of traditional games to students' character development.

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