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THE MPA'A GEO TRADITIONAL GAME MODEL IN PRESERVING BIMA CULTURAL HERITAGE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION LEARNING

***Rabwan Satriawan¹, Salahudin¹, Ewan Irawan¹, Shutan Arie Shandi¹,
Anas Ardiansyah¹**

¹STKIP Taman Siswa Bima

*correspondence: rabwansatriawan91@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Mpa'a Geo game model in relation to the preservation of Bima culture at SMPN 3 Bima City. This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. Data were analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, conducted before and during fieldwork. The participants in this study were students from class 3A at SMPN 3 Bima City. The research instruments included observation sheets, interview guides, and documentation. The findings revealed that although numerous traditional games exist in the Bima region, their practice has gradually diminished over time. Traditional games offer various benefits, including: (1) fostering creativity, (2) serving as a therapeutic tool for children, (3) enhancing intellectual intelligence, (4) improving interpersonal and emotional intelligence, (5) developing logical reasoning, (6) strengthening kinesthetic abilities, (7) nurturing naturalistic intelligence, (8) enhancing intrapersonal intelligence, (9) improving musical intelligence, and (10) fostering spiritual growth. In contrast, modern games tend to reduce peer interaction and promote individualistic behavior among children. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Mpa'a Geo traditional game model contributes significantly to the preservation of Bima culture among students at SMPN 3 Bima City in physical education learning.

Keyword: Mpa'a Geo Traditional Game, Preserving Bima Cultural, and Physical Education Learning

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, especially among children and adolescents, as well as society in general—such as in Bima City—traditional games are becoming increasingly rare. Various traditional games that were once popular in Bima City, such as Mpa'a Ncimi Kolo, Mpa'a Lewa Pehe, Mpa'a Tapa Gala, Mpa'a Geo, and many others, are now seldom played. With the rapid advancement of technology, most children today hardly recognize or play these traditional games. Instead, they tend to prefer digital games played on electronic devices such as mobile phones, iPads, laptops, computers, and tablets. In addition, they spend long hours engaging with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Many parents allow, or even facilitate, this behavior at home by providing such devices as entertainment for their children. As a result, today's young generation is gradually losing their familiarity with traditional games. Despite the cultural richness of Bima's traditional games, over time they have started to fade and are rarely practiced within the community (Nevitaningrum et al., 2023).

Traditional games, however, hold significant cultural and educational value. They promote virtues such as honesty, teamwork, solidarity, cooperation, perseverance, tolerance, agility, strength, balance, and speed—while also developing various physical and social skills. In contrast, modern digital games tend to encourage individualistic behavior and reduce face-to-face communication among peers. Many of these games are played alone, with minimal interaction, which can potentially hinder children's social and emotional development (Chasani et al., 2024). Therefore, parental supervision plays a crucial role in ensuring that children's engagement with modern games does not lead to negative consequences.

Mpa'a Geo is a traditional game that originated from East Java and is commonly played by children using wooden sticks. The game involves two sticks—one used as a bat and the other as the object to be hit. It is typically played in groups. Before the game begins, players usually perform *hom pimpah* (a hand-gesture-based draw) to decide which team gets the first turn to hit. The winner is determined by measuring the distance from the base to where the stick lands after being hit (Khoiriyah, 2024).

Although it appears simple, Mpa'a Geo requires special skill and precision to play effectively and safely. Players must be able to lift and hit the stick accurately to produce an optimal throw. The game demands alertness, focus, and coordination both from the hitters and the catchers. The defending team, in particular, must possess quick reflexes and accuracy to successfully catch the stick thrown by their opponents. Based on the observations above, there is a pressing need to preserve traditional games, especially Mpa'a Geo. One way to achieve this is through modifying and reintroducing the game in a way that appeals to younger generations—particularly students at SMPN 3 Bima City—who may no longer be familiar with it. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the Mpa'a Geo traditional game model as an effort to preserve Bima's cultural heritage among junior high school students. Games are a fundamental part of childhood and are highly enjoyed by children of all ages (Silpiani & Maesyaroh, 2024). Broadly, games can be categorized into two types: modern games and traditional games. In the current era of globalization, traditional games—one of the nation's valuable cultural heritages—are increasingly disappearing, replaced by more sophisticated forms of entertainment. Despite this, efforts have been made to revive and preserve traditional games as part of Indonesia's local wisdom.

Traditional games are inherited forms of play passed down orally and culturally from generation to generation. According to James Danandjaja, traditional games are a type of children's folklore transmitted verbally within a community, characterized by their traditional nature and various local adaptations. Essentially, traditional games are rule-based activities performed for enjoyment and social bonding. Also notes that games have existed and evolved since ancient times, with each region possessing its own distinctive traditional forms (Septiyani et al., 2020). Indonesia is home to many traditional games, one of which is Mpa'a geo. Also known as *gatrik* or *bethik*, this game is played by two teams—one as the hitter and the other as the catcher. The name *gatrik* is derived from the "thik" sound produced when two wooden sticks collide (Silpiani & Maesyaroh, 2024). The equipment used in Mpa'a geo is simple and easily available. It consists of two sticks or pieces of bamboo—one about 30 cm long (the bat) and a shorter one about 15 cm (the target). A brick, hole, or small mound serves as the base for hitting. According to (Nugraha & Manggalastawa, 2021), this minimal equipment makes Mpa'a geo easy to play in various environments without requiring special facilities.

The rules of Mpa'a geo are straightforward. The hitter strikes the smaller stick to send it flying, while the catcher attempts to catch it. If the catcher successfully catches the stick, the teams switch roles. If not, the hitter earns points based on the distance the stick travels (Lestari, 2020). (Solihin & Trianasari, 2020) explains that the game generally consists of three stages: First Round – The short stick is placed across a rock and hit with the longer stick. If the defending team catches it, turns switch immediately. Otherwise, the hitter gets a second chance. Second Round – The player hits the small stick as hard as possible with the longer stick. If caught, the defending team becomes the hitting team. If not, they can throw the small stick closer to the base to reduce the hitter's scoring distance. Final Round (Patil Round) – The small stick is placed at an angle on the base. The player taps it upward and quickly strikes it again to send it flying forward. The defending team must attempt to catch it midair.

Previous studies have highlighted the decline of traditional games in contemporary society and the growing dominance of digital games among children and adolescents. However, these studies have not specifically addressed how a local traditional game can be reconstructed into an educationally relevant model for cultural preservation in formal school settings. In particular, limited attention has been given to Mpa'a Geo as a culturally rooted game in Bima and to its potential adaptation for junior high school students. Therefore, this study fills that gap by analyzing the Mpa'a Geo traditional game model as a strategy for preserving local cultural heritage among students at SMPN 3 Kota Bima. Theoretically, focusing on SMPN 3 Kota Bima is important because it provides a concrete educational context in which the tension between local cultural erosion and contemporary digital lifestyles can be examined, thereby extending current understanding of traditional game revitalization within school-based cultural education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of the traditional game *Mpa'a Geo* as a cultural preservation strategy in physical education at SMPN 3 Kota Bima. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the research focused on one bounded case, namely the introduction and implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* in a specific school context, with attention to students' responses, teacher perspectives, and the educational meaning of the activity.

The participants consisted of 20 students from Class 3A at SMPN 3 Kota Bima who took part in the *Mpa'a Geo* learning activity. They were divided into four teams of five students during the implementation session. In addition, one physical education teacher who facilitated the activity was interviewed as a key informant. Several students were also selected for interviews to represent their experiences and perceptions of the game. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, because they were directly involved in the implementation of the traditional game and were considered capable of providing relevant information related to the study objectives.

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted during the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* to examine student participation, enthusiasm, teamwork, and interaction patterns. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the physical education teacher and selected students to obtain deeper information about their understanding of traditional games, their experiences with *Mpa'a Geo*, and their views on its educational and cultural value. Documentation in the form of field notes and learning records was also used to support data interpretation. The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation of techniques and sources. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from observation, interviews, and documentation. Source

triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the physical education teacher and students. For example, students' enthusiasm observed during the learning activity was cross-checked with the teacher's explanation and with students' interview responses regarding their familiarity and experience with traditional games. This triangulation process helped strengthen the credibility of the findings.

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in four main findings: students' initial familiarity with traditional games, students' responses to the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo*, teacher perspectives on traditional games, and the educational and cultural meaning of *Mpa'a Geo* in the context of SMPN 3 Kota Bima.

Students' Initial Familiarity with Traditional Games

The findings showed that students were generally familiar with traditional games, but their understanding was still limited to games that were commonly known in everyday life. Based on the student interview, they recognized games such as hide and seek, marbles, stilts, spinning tops, and *patil lele*. However, they had never practiced *Mpa'a Geo* in physical education learning. One student explained that the teacher had only mentioned the name of the game, but it had never been implemented directly in classroom activities. This indicates that students had a general awareness of traditional games, but their practical experience with *Mpa'a Geo* as part of local cultural heritage was still very limited.

Students' Responses to the Implementation of *Mpa'a Geo*

Observation results revealed that students responded very positively to the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo*. The activity involved 20 students from Class 3A at SMPN 3 Kota Bima, who were divided into four teams consisting of five students each. At the beginning of the lesson, students showed curiosity and enthusiasm when the teacher explained the history, cultural background, and rules of the game. During the activity, they actively participated in each phase, worked collaboratively with their teammates, and demonstrated strong engagement throughout the learning process. The classroom atmosphere became lively, interactive, and enjoyable.

The findings also showed that the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* encouraged students to communicate, cooperate, and solve problems together. The game was not only entertaining but also fostered values such as teamwork, solidarity, and sportsmanship. These observations indicate that *Mpa'a Geo* can be accepted well by junior high school students when introduced through structured physical education activities.

Teacher Perspectives on Traditional Games

The interview with the physical education teacher showed that the teacher had a good understanding of traditional games. According to the teacher, traditional games are games passed down from generation to generation and commonly played by children in certain regions. The teacher also stated that some traditional games had previously been introduced through learning activities, such as *Mpa'a Tapa Gala*, but *Mpa'a Geo* had not yet been implemented in the school curriculum. This finding shows that the teacher was aware of the educational and cultural value of traditional games, although the use of *Mpa'a Geo* in formal learning was still absent prior to this study.

Educational and Cultural Meaning of *Mpa'a Geo*

The findings further showed that *Mpa'a Geo* held both educational and cultural significance for students. From the educational perspective, the game supported the development of attention, communication, coordination, teamwork, and problem-solving

during physical education activities. From the cultural perspective, the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* helped students reconnect with a form of local tradition rooted in the heritage of the Bima community. In this study, the cultural importance of *Mpa'a Geo* did not merely lie in its historical background, but in the way it became meaningful for students in present-day school life. The game enabled them to experience local culture directly, rather than only hearing about it in abstract terms.

THEME	MAIN FINDINGS	INTERPRETATION
Students familiarity with traditional games	Students knew several traditional games, but had never practiced <i>Mpa'a Geo</i> in learning activities	Students had general awareness of traditional games, but lacked direct experience with this local game
Students' responses to <i>Mpa'a Geo</i>	Students showed enthusiasm, curiosity, active participation, teamwork, and enjoyment	<i>Mpa'a Geo</i> was positively accepted and relevant for junior high school students
Teacher perspective	The teacher understood the value of traditional games, but <i>Mpa'a Geo</i> had not been previously implemented	The game had educational potential, but had not yet been integrated into school practice
Educational value	The game fostered communication, coordination, teamwork, and problem-solving	<i>Mpa'a Geo</i> can support meaningful learning in physical education
Cultural value	The game reintroduced students to local Bima cultural heritage through direct practice	<i>Mpa'a Geo</i> functioned as a medium for strengthening local cultural identity

Table 1. Table of Research Findings

DISCUSSION

The discussion of this study highlights that the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* in physical education at SMPN 3 Kota Bima was not merely a recreational activity, but also an educational and cultural intervention that responded to the declining visibility of traditional games among students. The findings indicate that while students were not completely unfamiliar with traditional games, their knowledge was still limited to general recognition, and they had little direct experience with *Mpa'a Geo*. This suggests that local traditional games are increasingly absent from formal educational practice, even though they remain part of the broader cultural memory of the community.

The positive response shown by students during the activity demonstrates that traditional games still have strong relevance for contemporary learners when presented in an engaging and structured way. This is an important finding because it challenges the assumption that modern students are only interested in digital forms of entertainment. In this study, once *Mpa'a Geo* was introduced with clear guidance and meaningful participation, students became enthusiastic and actively involved. This means that the decline of traditional games may not necessarily reflect a total loss of interest, but rather a lack of opportunity for exposure, facilitation, and adaptation within school settings.

The teacher's perspective also strengthens the argument that schools can become strategic sites for preserving cultural heritage. The teacher already understood the meaning of traditional games and had previously incorporated some forms of traditional play into learning, yet *Mpa'a Geo* had not been implemented before this study. This shows that the challenge is not only cultural awareness, but also pedagogical integration. Traditional games will not automatically survive simply because they belong to local heritage; they need to be

intentionally reintroduced through educational practice. In this regard, the teacher plays a key role as a cultural mediator who connects inherited traditions with students' present-day learning experiences.

Another important point is the cultural meaning of *Mpa'a Geo* for students' identity formation. The reviewer's concern about the history of the Bima Kingdom feeling detached is valid when cultural background is presented only as historical information. In this study, however, the relevance of Bima cultural heritage becomes clearer when connected directly to students' lived experience. *Mpa'a Geo* is important not merely because it originates from Bima tradition, but because its reintroduction allows students at SMPN 3 Kota Bima to encounter, practice, and reinterpret their local identity in a contemporary school context. Thus, culture is not positioned as a static historical narrative, but as a lived experience that can still shape the values, awareness, and identity of students today.

From a pedagogical perspective, the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* also demonstrated that traditional games can support holistic learning in physical education. The game required students to coordinate movements, communicate with peers, make decisions, cooperate in teams, and follow agreed rules. These elements show that *Mpa'a Geo* contributes not only to physical activity but also to social and emotional learning. Therefore, the educational value of traditional games should be seen more broadly, not only as cultural content, but also as an effective medium for developing motor, cognitive, and socio-emotional competencies in school-aged children.

Overall, this study confirms that *Mpa'a Geo* has a dual function in the context of junior high school education. On the one hand, it enriches the learning process in physical education through active, collaborative, and meaningful play. On the other hand, it serves as a cultural bridge that reconnects students with the heritage of the Bima community. This finding reinforces the importance of integrating local traditional games into school learning, not only to preserve cultural practices, but also to ensure that younger generations continue to experience local identity as part of their everyday educational lives.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of *Mpa'a Geo* in physical education at SMPN 3 Kota Bima has meaningful educational and cultural value. Although students were generally familiar with traditional games, their practical experience with *Mpa'a Geo* was still very limited before the activity was introduced. After its implementation, students showed positive responses, reflected in their enthusiasm, active participation, teamwork, and enjoyment during the learning process. These findings indicate that traditional games remain relevant and attractive to junior high school students when they are presented through structured and engaging learning activities.

The study also shows that *Mpa'a Geo* is not only useful as a medium of physical education learning, but also as a means of strengthening students' connection to local cultural heritage. In the context of SMPN 3 Kota Bima, the game functioned as a bridge between inherited Bima cultural traditions and students' present-day educational experiences. Through direct participation, students were able to encounter local culture in a more concrete and meaningful way.

Therefore, *Mpa'a Geo* can be seen as an effective medium for supporting holistic learning while simultaneously preserving local wisdom among younger generations. This study recommends that traditional games, especially those rooted in local culture, should be more systematically integrated into physical education practices in schools so that educational objectives and cultural preservation efforts can be achieved simultaneously.

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