



Introducing the Traditional Game of *Patok Lele* as a Medium for Islamic Character Building of Students at Pantai Dalam Guidance Center, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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Accepted: 01-03-2025 Reviewed: 04-04-2025 Accepted: 21-05-2025

Abstract

This research explores the potential of the traditional game *Patok Lele* as a medium for building Islamic character in children at the Pantai Dalam Guidance Center in Kuala Lumpur. This game not only acts as a physical and recreational activity but also instills Islamic values such as honesty, cooperation, patience, and responsibility. The method employed in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data was gathered from direct observation of the game's implementation, interviews with participants and program managers, and documentation of activities. The results indicated that the *Patok Lele* game effectively internalized Islamic values among children. In addition to enhancing social skills, the game strengthens Islamic character by teaching the values of honesty, cooperation, and discipline through authentic experiences. Through this activity, children not only play but also learn in a fun and educational atmosphere, aligning with the principles of Islamic education that emphasize the balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development.

Keywords: Traditional Games, Islamic Character Building, Learning Media.

Introduction

Character education is an integral part of the Islamic education system that aims to shape students' personalities to have noble morals through the values of Islamic teachings. In this context, Islamic character building includes internalizing values such as honesty, responsibility, helping, discipline, patience, and respect for fellow humans (Tri Utami et al., 2022). Ideally, character education is taught theoretically in the classroom and through direct experience in daily life, including educational recreational activities. This expectation aligns with the Islamic education approach that emphasizes the balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, one of which can be

realized through traditional game media (Dian Widiastuti & Sandra Devindriati Kusuma, 2021).

In recent years, there has been a growing concern over the erosion of traditional games and cultural heritage among children, especially in urban areas. Modernization, urbanization, and the dominance of digital media in children's lives have shifted entertainment patterns from physical and social activities towards passive, technology-based activities (Saripaini et al., 2022). This phenomenon has resulted in a decline in the younger generation's interest in traditional games that historically have social, educational, and cultural functions. Research shows that children in urban areas are now more familiar with gadgets and social media than traditional games passed down by their ancestors (Syamsudin et al., 2019). In Malaysia, as in many other countries, traditional games such as *Congkak*, *Gasing*, *Batu Seremban*, and *Patok Lele* are played less and less, and they are even almost extinct in most urban communities.

One traditional game that has been forgotten but is full of educational value is *Patok Lele*. This game originated from the Malay community and is traditionally played by children in a competitive yet fun atmosphere. The game involves physical activity, teamwork, and strategy that can indirectly develop social skills, sportsmanship, and a sense of responsibility. Also, the game's mechanics naturally instill values such as honesty, fairness, and respect for opponents (Lorenza & Prasetya, 2024). Unfortunately, in contemporary Malaysian society, especially in Kuala Lumpur, a metropolitan area, the practice of these games is increasingly rare. Children are often exposed to digital entertainment, while traditional game-based social interactions have drastically decreased.

The gap in research is also evident in the lack of studies that specifically link traditional games as a medium for Islamic character building. Most studies only highlight traditional games from cultural preservation, motor benefits, or social skills, without exploring the Islamic values contained in the game's dynamics. Not many studies also place non-formal institutions, such as guidance studios, as a potential space to revitalize traditional games with an orientation of Islamic character building (Hasanah, 2023). In fact, guidance centers in densely populated areas such as Pantai Dalam, Kuala Lumpur, have great potential for shaping the character of children from underprivileged families. Their approach is more contextual and directly touches their daily lives.

With this background, this research becomes important and urgent to conduct. The main objective of this research is to reintroduce the traditional game of *Patok Lele* as a medium of Islamic character building for children in Pantai Dalam Guidance Center, Kuala Lumpur. This studio is a non-formal education center that serves children from low-income families who need alternative positive activities outside of school. By involving all children and making it fun, *Patok Lele* is expected to be a good way to teach Islamic values such as cooperation (ta'āwun), honesty (ṣidq), patience (ṣabr), and sportsmanship in daily life (Rianto & Yuliananingsih, 2021).

The urgency of this research lies in preserving local culture and providing character learning media that is adaptive to the challenges of the times. By presenting

traditional games in the context of Islamic learning, children are not only invited to re-recognize their cultural identity but also directed to internalize Islamic values in their social life.

Literature Review

Traditional games are entertainment for children and an important part of cultural heritage that can be utilized as a means of character and values education. In the history of the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia, scholars have used traditional games to convey the teachings of Islam, especially to children. One of the important figures who used this method was Sunan Giri, a member of the Wali Songo who played a significant role in the Islamization process in Java.

Sriyahan et al., (2022) Sunan Giri was known as a creative educator. He created various forms of children's games and songs that contain moral messages and Islamic values. One example is the song "Cublak-Cublak Suweng," which teaches honesty, cooperation, and mutual trust. Songs like this are made so children can learn while playing without feeling directly or rigidly taught.

Dani et al., (2022) It states that Sunan Giri's approach was very practical. He did not immediately erase the existing local games or culture, but filled them with Islamic messages. This method made the new teachings easier for the community to accept because they were delivered in a way that was already familiar to them.

Alfisyah & Rini, (2021) Additionally, traditional games in various parts of Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and Indonesia, often contain elements of moral and spiritual education. Games such as "Congkak" and "Gasing" teach children to be patient, think clearly, and be sportive. These values are also an important part of Islamic teachings.

Benyamin et al. (2023) mentions that traditional games can strengthen children's cultural and religious identity, especially given the rampant influence of modern culture and digital technology. When children are involved in games with Islamic messages, such as those introduced by Sunan Giri, they not only play but also learn to appreciate values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others.

Based on the explanation above, traditional games are important in education, especially in instilling Islamic character values in children. Sunan Giri has proven that the cultural approach through games is a wise and effective way to convey religious messages. This approach is still very relevant to education today.

Research method

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative method. This research aims to understand in depth how the traditional game *Patok Lele* can be used as a medium in shaping students' Islamic character (Maimun et al., 2025). The researcher will directly observe the game's implementation at Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio, Kuala Lumpur, and conduct interviews with students, teachers, and studio managers. In

addition, documentation in the form of photos of activities, field notes, and game guides will also be collected as supporting data.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to see the implementation process and student involvement in the *Patok Lele* game activities. Interviews aimed to explore students' and teachers' understanding of Islamic character values that emerged during the activity. The data obtained will be analyzed descriptively to describe how this game instills values such as honesty, cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide a real picture of the potential of traditional games as a medium for Islamic character education (Yuana et al., 2025).

Results and Discussion

1. Condition of Islamic Character of Students at Pantai Dalam Guidance Center Before the Introduction of Catfish Stake Game

Before the *Patok Lele* traditional game program was introduced, the condition of the Islamic character of the students at Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio could be said to be less well developed. The children who study at this studio mostly come from families with middle to lower economic conditions. They live in a dense neighborhood in the middle of Kuala Lumpur, where they are familiar with technology and a fast-paced life. The presence of gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and televisions has become part of their lives from an early age. Some students prefer playing games or watching videos alone at home rather than playing with friends.

As a result, the habit of socializing directly and establishing relationships with peers is diminishing. Children tend to be individualistic, less able to work in teams, and have low patience. Some are easily angered, impatient, and selfish when participating in group learning or playing activities. They also have not consistently shown honesty, responsibility, or helpful attitudes. This is undoubtedly a serious concern because Islamic character should begin to be instilled early so that it is formed into daily habits.

Some students, for example, still like to play games just because they do not want to lose. Some are reluctant to share or get angry if another friend takes their turn to play. Even in Quranic activities, there are still those who do not respect the ustaz or their fellow students. Meanwhile, in Islam, courtesy and mutual respect are highly emphasized parts of the adab. This is by the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ (رواه البخاري)

“Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble character.” (HR. Al-Bukhari)

The above Hadith explains that the core of Islamic teachings is to form good morals, including in children, from childhood. Therefore, Pantai Dalam Guidance Center has tried to instill these values through religious lectures, moral guidance,

and daily advice. However, this approach is often boring for children because it is monotonous. Children only listen and are not actively involved.

Thus, new methods are needed that are more interactive, fun, and educational. Traditional games such as *Patok Lele* are a very suitable medium because they can combine elements of play, cooperation, and character learning in one whole and fun activity. Through direct experience while playing, students are expected to more easily understand and practice Islamic values daily.

2. Implementation Process of *Patok Lele* Game as Learning Media at Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The *Patok Lele* game as a learning medium at Pantai Dalam Guidance Center is implemented with a fun, educational approach. This game aims to form an Islamic character naturally. It is not just a physical activity but is designed to be a means of character education that instills Islamic values directly through interaction and experience.

This activity began with careful planning by the studio managers, including teachers, facilitators, and accompanying volunteers. They set the implementation schedule, organized the number of participants in each session (around 20-25 children), chose a safe and spacious location around the studio, and prepared game tools such as two wooden sticks (short and long stakes) according to the *Patok Lele* game tradition.

The first step in each session was to introduce the participants to the origins of the *Patok Lele* game, a Malay cultural heritage full of social and educational meanings. The children were told that this game is not only for fun but also aims to shape good attitudes such as honesty, patience, and cooperation. The teacher inserted Islamic messages in simple language: "*When we wait for our turn, we are learning patience as taught by the Prophet Muhammad.*"

The game started with high spirits from the participants. The children were divided into two large groups: attackers and guards. They played the roles alternately, following the rules that had been explained. During the game, teachers and facilitators not only observed the game but also gave positive feedback. For example, when a child honestly admits a mistake, they are praised and set an example for the others. The good attitudes that emerge are directly linked to Islamic teachings.

The reflection session after the game is an important aspect of this implementation process. The children are invited to sit together and share their experiences, and the teacher asks what they learned from the game that day. This reflective activity revealed that many children began to realize the meaning of helping each other, being patient when losing, and being honest, even when it is not profitable.

This process provides a fun play experience and contextual and down-to-earth character education. Children learn through lectures and real events they

experience with their friends. That way, everyday life makes Islamic values easier to understand and benefit from.

3. Islamic Character Values that can be Instilled Through the Traditional Game of *Patok Lele* at Pantai Dalam Guidance Center, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The *Patok Lele* game, a traditional game typical of village children, has tremendous potential as a character education tool, especially Islamic character education. Amid the rampant use of gadgets and digital games, games like this provide fresh air because they invite children to move actively, interact directly, and learn from the real experiences they face in a cheerful and natural atmosphere.

The *Patok Lele* game at Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio is used for entertainment and as a medium to instill important values through Islamic teachings. Teachers and facilitators at the studio carefully guide the children to realize the meaning behind each of their actions in the game and relate them to religious values. With this method, children not only play but also learn in a fun way.

The Islamic character values instilled through the *Patok Lele* game, namely:

a. Honesty

Honesty is the primary key to keeping the playing atmosphere fair and fun in the game of *Patok Lele*. For example, when a log hits a player, goes out of bounds, or commits a rule violation, he must admit his mistake honestly. At the beginning of the game, a few children tried to hide their mistakes or pretend they had not been hit. However, teachers and facilitators guide them gently, reminding them that honesty is a noble trait highly upheld in Islam.

The teachers conveyed Prophetic traditions such as:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ. ” (رواه البخاري ومسلم)

"Speak the truth, for truthfulness leads to goodness and goodness leads to Paradise." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim)

With this habit, children begin to learn that honesty is not just a game, but also part of the noble character that will make them loved by Allah and humans.

b. Cooperation

The *Patok Lele* game is played in teams, so each child is required to work together. They cannot win alone. It requires strategy, communication, and support between friends. Children learn to trust, forgive, and strengthen each other during this process. When one team member makes a mistake, the others do not reproach but encourage.

This is in accordance with the words of Allah SWT:

يُؤَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (المائدة/5: 2)

Help yourselves in (doing) righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and enmity. Fear Allah, surely Allah is very severe in His punishment. (Q.S. (Al-Maidah: 2)

The cooperation in this game directly reflects the spirit of cooperation in Islam. Children get used to thinking about the common good, not just their interests.

c. Patience and Self-Control

Not all children can consistently win games. Sometimes they must wait their turn, lose, or not play because the other team won first. In situations like this, they learn to be patient. The teacher explains that in Islam, the strongest person is not the one who wins a fight but can control his emotions.

Children who used to get angry or cry when they lost slowly change. They learn to accept defeat gracefully and make defeat a motivation to learn better next time. This is a critical emotional education in Islamic character building.

d. Responsibility

In the *Patok Lele* game, each child is assigned a specific task or role, such as guarding the line, throwing wood, or blocking the opponent. The task must be carried out seriously because it affects the outcome of the whole team's game. If one child is negligent, the whole team can lose.

This experience teaches children that every task must be completed well. The teacher explains that in Islamic teachings, everyone is held accountable for what has been entrusted to them. From this, children learn that responsibility is not a burden but a sign that others believe in us.

e. Discipline

The *Patok Lele* game has rules that must be followed, such as playing time, playing turn, field boundaries, and throwing techniques. Children who break the rules are asked to acknowledge and accept the consequences. However, the approach is educational, not punishing, but inviting children to understand why rules are made.

By playing regularly, children get used to being on time, respecting their turn, and not being arbitrary. They learn that discipline is not just about following the rules but also about respecting others and creating a fair atmosphere. This value is significant in Islam, emphasizing the importance of order and obedience.

f. Ukhuwah Islamiyah

This game opens a vast space of interaction between children. Those who did not know each other before became close, and those who fought before became respectful of each other. In the game, they laugh, struggle, and sometimes are disappointed. All that builds a bridge of ukhuwah or true brotherhood.

Teachers teach children to greet each other with greetings, help friends who fall, and apologize when they make mistakes. Children also learn not to hold grudges and repair relationships if they have had a dispute. This is the real form of ukhuwah Islamiyah.

g. *Tawakal and Patient*

In every game, there are winners and losers. After trying their best, children are invited to accept the results sincerely. They are taught that humans can only try, while the result is in the hands of God. This attitude is called tawakal.

Children are encouraged not to be arrogant when they win and not to be overly disappointed when they lose. Instead, they are motivated to learn from defeat and improve themselves. With this approach, children realize that life is not always what we want, but we still must be grateful and keep trying.

All the values above show that the *Patok Lele* game can be an excellent way to teach Islamic character to children. Children can more easily understand the meaning of honesty, cooperation, patience, responsibility, discipline, brotherhood, and tawakal by playing directly. They do not just hear explanations but also experience living these values in real situations.

At Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio, this game is not only an effort to preserve traditional Malay cultural heritage but also a means to shape children who have good morals, are strong in facing challenges, and have compassion for others and love for their religion. So, *Patok Lele* is not just an ordinary game but can be a place for children to learn a fun and meaningful Islamic character.

Conclusion

Before introducing the *Patok Lele* game, students at Pantai Dalam Guidance Studio showed weak Islamic characters, such as a lack of honesty, cooperation, and patience. They are more accustomed to gadgets and individual activities, so Islamic values are not firmly embedded in their daily behavior.

Good planning and an educational approach are used to implement the *Patok Lele* game in Sanggar. Through this game, teachers and facilitators insert Islamic values in a direct and fun way and hold reflection sessions so that children can understand the meaning of their play experience.

The *Patok Lele* game effectively instills Islamic character values such as honesty, cooperation, patience, responsibility, discipline, ukhuwah, and tawakal. Children learn from real experience, not just theory, so they more easily understand and practice these values daily.

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