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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL STICK GAMES OF PAKISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL IN DEVELOPING PHYSICAL FITNESS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS IN STUDENTS

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The role of traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan as an educational tool in developing physical fitness and cultural awareness in students

Abstract. The article investigates the effect of traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan on the student youth, focusing on the cultural impact of these games as well as the physical fitness of the students achieved through these games. These indigenous games have been a part of the cultural heritage of both countries and make up a big portion of cultural celebrations and events where these games are played. The study mentions some of the traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan and highlights how these traditional games contribute to the development of physical fitness, teamwork, strategic thinking and motivation among student youth at high school and university level. In addition, emphasis is also given on the importance of these games in preserving cultural identity, reinforcing national values and encouraging intercultural understanding within educational settings. A quasi-experimental research method is used where 40 students from each country are placed in a control group and an experimental group. Students participated in an 8-week physical education program where these games were described and played. The findings suggest that as students gained the knowledge of these traditional games their engagement and motivation as well as the enjoyment of the P.E lessons increased. Furthermore, incorporating these games in contemporary education improved students' motor skills, coordination, decision making and cultural affinity. Study concludes that these traditional games have great potential as educational tool to promote physical fitness and cultural awareness.

Key words: traditional stick games, educational tool, physical fitness, cultural awareness.

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Роль традиционных игр с палочками в Пакистане и Казахстане как образовательного инструмента в развитии физической формы и культурного сознания у студентов

Аннотация. В статье исследуется влияние традиционных игр с палками в Пакистане и Казахстане на учащуюся молодежь, с акцентом на культурное воздействие этих игр, а также на физическую подготовку учащихся, достигаемую благодаря этим играм. Эти местные игры являются частью культурного наследия обеих стран и занимают важное место в культурных праздниках и мероприятиях, где они проводятся. В исследовании упоминаются некоторые традиционные игры с палками Пакистана и Казахстана и подчеркивается, как эти традиционные игры способствуют развитию физической подготовки, командной работы, стратегического мышления и мотивации среди студенческой молодежи в средней школе и университете. Кроме того, особое внимание уделяется важности этих игр в сохранении культурной идентичности, укреплении национальных ценностей и поощрении межкультурного взаимопонимания в образовательных учреждениях. Используется квазиэкспериментальный метод исследования, при котором 40 студентов из каждой страны распределяются в контрольную и экспериментальную группы. Студенты участвовали в 8-недельной программе физического воспитания, в ходе которой эти игры были описаны и сыграны. Результаты исследования показывают, что по мере приобретения студентами знаний об этих традиционных играх их вовлеченность и мотивация, а также удовольствие от уроков физкультуры увеличивались. Кроме того, включение этих игр в современное образование улучшило моторные навыки, координацию, способность принимать решения и культурную близость студентов. Исследование показывает, что эти традиционные игры имеют большой потенциал как образовательный инструмент для продвижения физической культуры и культурного самосознания.

Ключевые слова: традиционные игры с палками, образовательный инструмент, физическая подготовка, культурное самосознание.

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Пәкістан мен Қазақстанның дәстүрлі таяқ ойындарының студенттердің дене қабілеттері дайындығын және мәдени санасын дамытудағы білім беру құралы ретіндегі рөлі

Аңдатпа. Мақала Пәкістан мен Қазақстанның дәстүрлі таяқ ойындарының студент жастарға әсерін зерттейді. Осы ойындардың мәдени ықпалына және олардың көмегімен студенттердің дене-күш дайындығын арттыруға назар аударады. Бұл ұлттық ойындар екі елдің мәдени мұрасының бір бөлігі болып табылады және мәдени мерекелер мен іс-шаралардың үлкен бөлігін құрайды. Зерттеуде Пәкістан мен Қазақстанның кейбір дәстүрлі таяқ ойындары аталып, осы ойындардың орта мектеп пен университет деңгейіндегі студент жастардың дене дайындығын, командалық жұмысты, стратегиялық ойлауды және мотивацияны дамытуға қалай ықпал ететіні көрсетілген. Сонымен қатар, осы ойындардың мәдени сәйкестілікті сақтауда, ұлттық құндылықтарды нығайтуда және білім беру ортасында мәдениаралық түсіністікті ынталандырудағы маңызына да ерекше назар аударылған. Қос эксперименттік зерттеу әдісі қолданылды, онда әр елден 40 оқушы бақылау және тәжірибелік топтарға бөлінді. Оқушылар осы ойындарды сипаттап, ойнатылған 8 апталық дене шынықтыру бағдарламасына қатысты. Нәтижелер оқушылар осы дәстүрлі ойындар туралы білім алған сайын олардың белсенділігі мен мотивациясы, сондай-ақ дене шынықтыру сабақтарына деген қызығушылығы артқанын көрсетті. Сондай-ақ осы ойындарды қазіргі заманғы білім беру жүйесіне енгізу оқушылардың моторикалық дағдыларын, үйлестігін, шешім қабылдау қабілетін және мәдени жақындығын жақсартты. Зерттеу нәтижесі көрсеткендей, бұл дәстүрлі ойындар дене дайындығы және мәдени сананы арттыруға арналған білім беру құралы ретінде зор әлеуетке ие.

Түйін сөздер: дәстүрлі таяқша ойындары, оқу құралы, дене дайындық, мәдени сана.

Introduction. National games are a lively and dynamic way of transmitting cultural heritage and folk traditions. They unite students, help them learn and understand their national history, traditions, customs and values [1]. Traditional games include a variety of physical and creative activities that involve the use of simple equipment that can be found in the surrounding environment, such as bamboo, stones or clay [2]. According to the statement of Kylasov, the origin of these ethno-games lays in history back in the Anglo-Saxon sports, whereby social and cultural differences were omitted and everybody belonging to any nation, ethnicity and races was being motivated to participate in such games during cultural celebrations, universally [3].

Every generation discovers and develops its own ways of recreation and physical exertion and discards many others depending on their peculiar circumstances. The increasing reliance on digital entertainment and structured educational activities has led to a decline in the practice of traditional games [4]. To ensure the survival of traditional games and transform them into lasting behaviors in physical education classes and daily life, it is necessary to reveal their effects on the multifaceted characteristics of children and young people, such as physical fitness, health, and perception of happiness [5].

Within nomadic cultures, sport-like elements often appeared through horseback practices, wrestling, and strength-based competitions. These games were not isolated from everyday life. Instead, they were integrated into seasonal cycles, social gatherings, and communal celebrations [6]. In Indo-Pak these games are deeply intertwined with festivals, rituals, and daily rural life, making them invaluable

expressions of intangible cultural heritage [7]. These traditional games are held in communal gatherings and festivals in both countries and hold similar cultural values of unity, national identity and social cohesion.

The idea of introducing these games in contemporary education can also stem from the fact that most children play the indigenous games growing up, as these are cost effective and readily available to them from their surroundings. For many children, outdoor play is an essential part of their daily lives. It allows them to create their own play environments, select games and materials of interest, and engage in physical activities such as climbing, jumping, and running [4, p. 1]. So, playing these games as high school and university students will automatically revive those memories enhancing engagement and motivation to participate in physical education.

Relevance of the Study. Despite a rich history of playing these traditional games, current education focuses only on modern sports that require high logistics. Very little emphasis is given to the indigenous games which is eventually leading to the disappearance of these games. There is a growing need to conduct empirical research to find the measurable impact of these traditional games on students' physical fitness, motivation and cultural connection. So, this study aims to address this study gap by exploring the traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan and how implementing these games in modern education of student youth can benefit them both in cultural aspects, reviving traditional values and building a bond with national heritage as well as a source of gaining physical competence. These indigenous activities promote a comprehensive ap-

proach to health. Physically, they improve coordination, endurance, agility, flexibility, and balance. Mentally, they foster strategic thinking, concentration, and discipline, while socially they nurture teamwork, community bonding, and leadership [7, p. 126].

Traditional Stick Games of Pakistan.

Gulli Danda. Gulli Danda (called 'TipCat' in English) is an ancient South Asian game, developed over 2000 years ago during the Mauryan Empire. It requires a 2-3-foot-long stick called a danda, and a smaller 3-6-inch stick called a gulli. The rules and distances are decided beforehand, and a circle is marked as the starting point of the game. The gulli is placed half on a stone, half in the air, and it's the responsibility of the person who holds the danda (the batter) to hit the gulli. If they do, they are to run a certain distance while the gulli is in mid-air, and are given out if a member of the opposing team catches it before they complete that distance. If the fielding team fails to catch the gulli, they throw it back to try to hit the danda placed at the edge of the hitting player's circle [8].

Top Dandy. It is a game played between two teams. Each team consists of 8 to 10 players. Two circles are drawn at a distance of one furlong. A stick of wood and a Tennis Ball are used in it. The defending team gets into the circle while the offending team stands outside for catching the Ball or picking it up. The players in the circle have only one chance to hit the ball with the stick and then run fast to reach the other circle. Then another of his team-mate hits the ball and runs to other circle, while he is already running the first member tries to return fast to the circle back again. The players of the opponent team standing outside try to catch the ball. If the ball is caught, the player is out of the game. If not then they try to hit the player with the ball while he is running to the other end. If he is hit while he is outside the circle then he will also be out of the game [9].

Sapatat. This is another game played by girls. It is played with four little sticks of a cane. Two teams of girls, each consisting of two members, play the game. A circle is drawn and four pebbles are taken by each of the four players. The circle is cross lined. The sticks are tossed in the air turn by turn, and when it comes on head it has a certain value of length in inches while the tale has its own value. The team, who completes the whole length of circle, first is considered to be the winner. The winner kicks the straw sticks and run away on one foot and the losers after collecting these scattered straw sticks run after the winners and on catching them, they bring them back to the circle on their back [10].

Traditional Stick Games of Kazakhstan.

Shildek. Shildek is a traditional Kazakh national game played outdoors on an open, flat ground. The game equipment consists of a short wooden piece called the shildek, sharpened at both ends and a wooden stick for each player. A circle with a diameter of about 1.5–2 meters is drawn. A small hole of about 10cm is dug and shildek is placed horizontally over it. A striker tries to flick it in the air and hit it. Then the entire striking team runs towards another circle drawn about 20-50 meters away. If a player from fielding team retrieved the shildek to the circle or accurately throws it back. The players take turns to hit the shildek. The winning team is determined by the number of players reaching the circle and number of players eliminated [11].

Shuqyma. The game Shuqyma is played outdoors on grassy ground. Each player has a stick and are divided into teams. A circle of about 1-2 meters is drawn and 4 small holes are dug along the circumference of the circle. The players outside the circle try to poke their stick in the holes while the players inside the circle try to block. The game ends when an agreed count is reached [11, p. 143].

Magic Stick. In this game, there is no limit to the number of players. Players stand in a circle and a leader is selected to stand in the middle. Each player is assigned a number. The leader holds a stick and calls out a number and drops the stick. The corresponding player must catch the stick before it falls on ground. If the player fails to do that, they have to do a task selected by others [11, p. 113].

The Purpose of the study. The aim is to examine the impact of the traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan on students' educational, motivational, physical, social and cultural outcomes by comparing pre and post-test results of experimental and control groups.

The Objectives of the study:

To examine the impact of traditional stick games on the overall physical fitness of student youth.

To analyze the cultural significance of these games.

To explore how exposure and knowledge of these games impact the motivation and participation to students in PE lessons.

To evaluate the effectiveness of applying these games as a modern educational tool.

Material and Methods. The research method used for this study is Quasi-experimental where 40 students ages 17-19 were purposively selected from high school and university of Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Out of 40 students (all boys), 20 were placed in control group and 20 were placed

in experimental group. Data was collected using researcher's self-developed structure-based survey questionnaire. A total of 12 questions were included under 6 variables i.e. Exposure and knowledge, Enjoyment, Motivation, Physical competence, Teamwork and social, and Cultural Connection. Score were recorded on a 5-point likert-scale ranging from 1(lowest) to 5 (highest). The questionnaire was developed based on existing empirical data on physical education, traditional games and student's participation in these games. The study followed these students for a period of 8 weeks where students in the experimental group were briefed on the history and gameplay rules of the traditional stick games. The students in experimental group participated in playing these traditional stick games while the students in the control group participated in normal physical education classes that did not

include these traditional games. After completion of the program, the same questionnaire was used to collect the data from both control group and experimental group students. Both pre and post datasets were then compared. Statistical processing was conducted using the SPSS version 27 software. Quantitative indicators were presented as mean \pm standard deviation ($M \pm m$). Independent t-test was applied to find statistically significant differences. The p-value indicates if the results are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ means the result is statistically significant) and Cohen's d value indicates how strong the effect is (cohen's $d \geq 0.50$ means medium, noticeable impact, cohen's $d \geq 0.80$ means there's strong, meaningful impact of the intervention)

Results.

This section includes the empirical findings of the study.

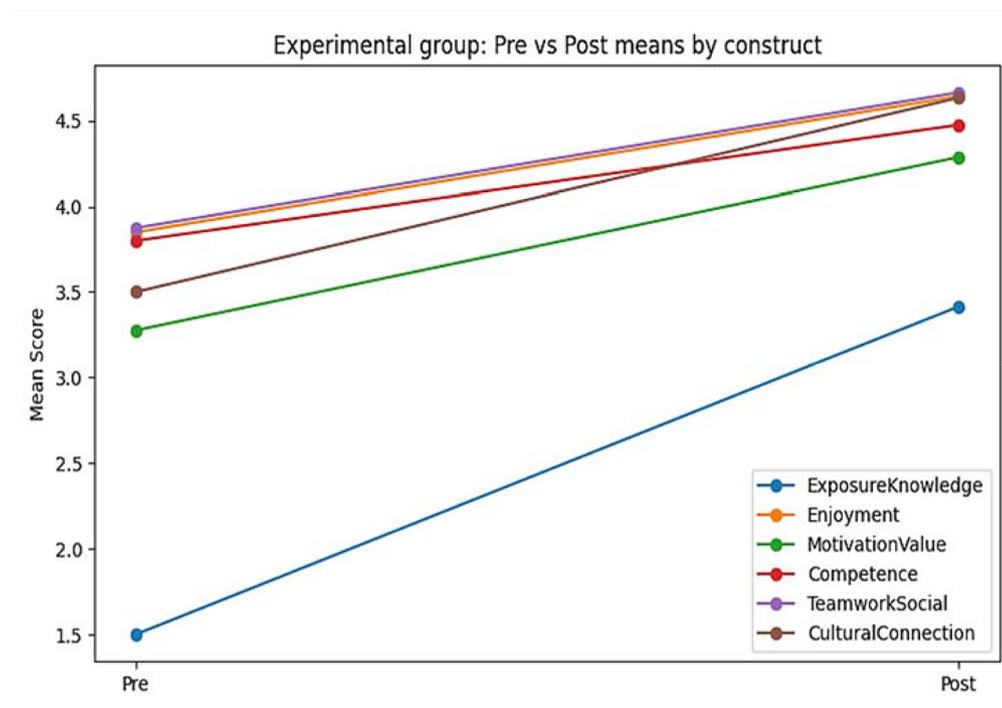


Figure 1 – Comparison of mean scores of pre and post-test data of the Experimental group of Pakistan students (compiled by the authors based on experimental data)

Figure 1 shows general positive trends in all of the studied variables in Experimental group of Pakistan students. Particularly higher scores were noticed in Exposure and knowledge. Other variables like Teamwork and social, and cultural connection also showed a prominent positive curve suggesting the development of cooperative behavior, teamwork

dynamics, social integration and cultural awareness and engagement. A positive change is observed in mean values of Enjoyment and Motivation. There was also a meaningful positive change in physical competence.

Overall, the results of experimental group show effective multi-dimensional positive impact on the participating students.

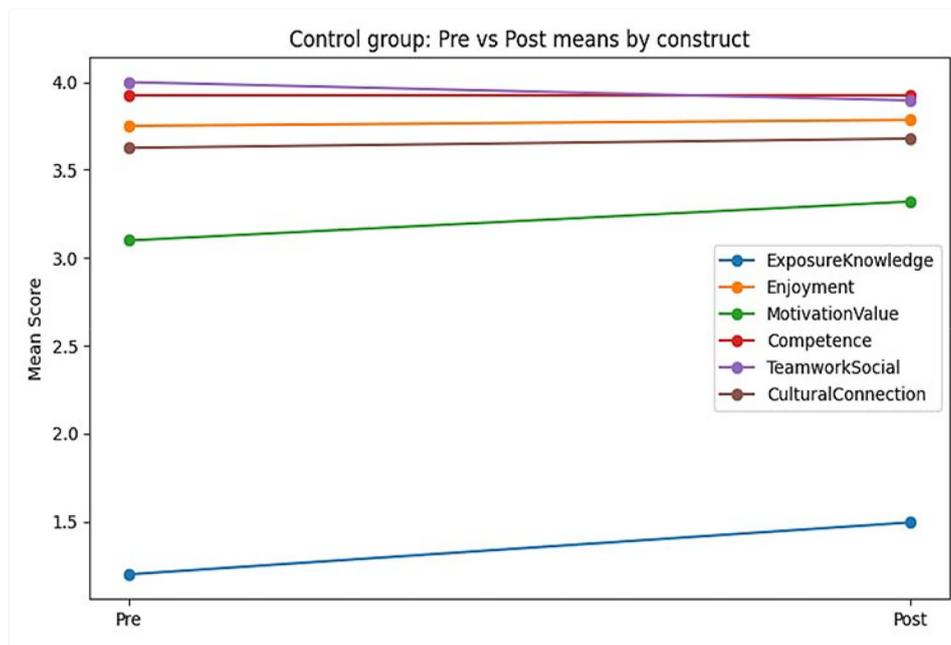


Figure 2 – Comparison of mean scores of pre and post-test data of the Control group of Pakistan students (compiled by the authors based on experimental data)

Figure 2 shows that the Control group of Pakistan students showed minimal changes in measurements of pre-test post-test data. Slight positive changes were recorded in Exposure and Knowledge, and Motivation factors but these were minor in comparison to the Experimental group. Other variables like Cultural

connection, Competence and Enjoyment were almost unchanged meaning the participation in routine physical education classes without the structured integration of traditional stick games did not produce considerable changes in students’ engagement, social involvement and cultural awareness.

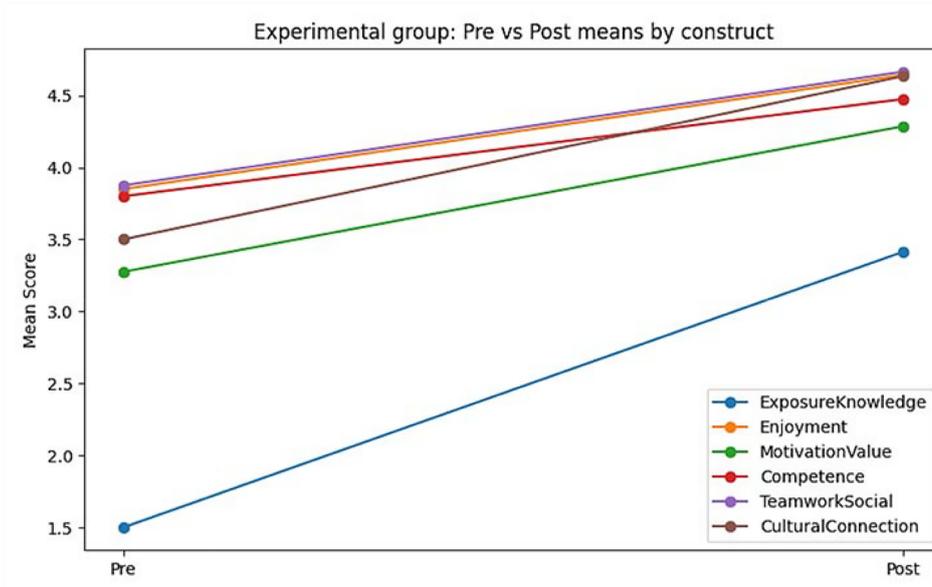


Figure 3 – Comparison of mean scores of pre and post-test data of the Experimental group of Kazakhstan students (compiled by the authors based on experimental data)

Figure 3 shows the Pre and Post test mean values of the Experimental Group of Kazakhstan students. The findings of this data set showed similar positive drift in all of the studied variables especially Exposure and Knowledge and Cultural connection. This indicates that introducing students

to traditional stick games to students showed significant increase in valuing national heritage and cultural interconnection. Other variables i.e. Physical competence, Teamwork, and Motivation all showed similar improvements as seen in students in Pakistan.

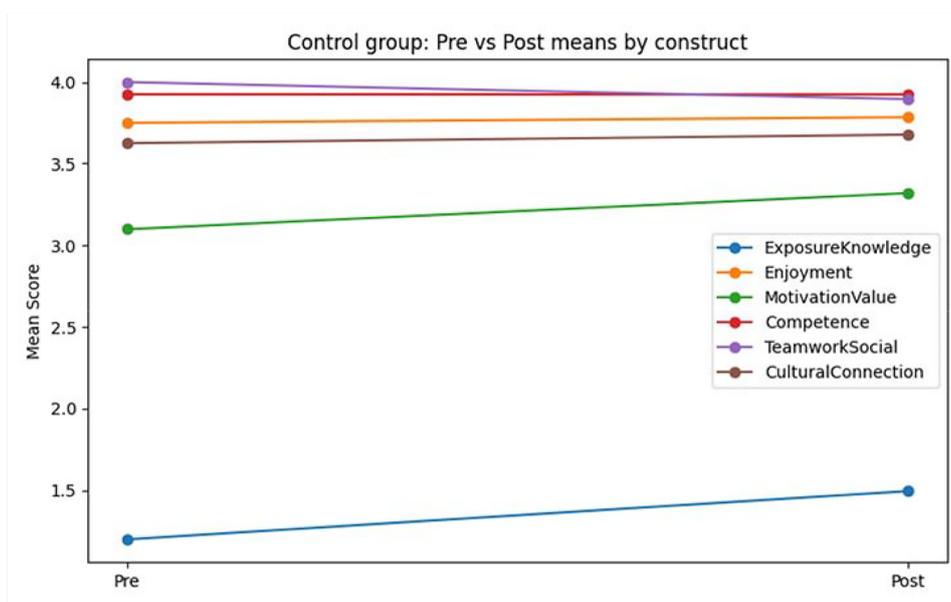


Figure 4 – Comparison of mean scores of pre and post-test data of the Control group of Kazakhstan students (compiled by the authors based on experimental data)

Figure 4 shows the Control group of Kazakhstan students. The findings indicate very minimal to no changes in the mean scores of the all variables

strengthening the fact that the positive changes seen in students from both countries were due to the participation in traditional stick games.

Table 1 – Changes in Variable Means, p-Values, and Cohen's d for Experimental and Control Groups (data collected by the authors)

Variable	Group	Pre Mean	Pre SD	Post Mean	Post SD	p-value	Cohen's d
Exposure Knowledge	E	1.50	0.73	3.41	0.48	0.000	2.48
Exposure Knowledge	C	1.20	0.41	1.50	0.44	0.040	0.49
Enjoyment	E	3.85	1.06	4.64	0.36	0.002	0.81
Enjoyment	C	3.75	1.14	3.78	0.56	0.882	0.03
Motivation Value	E	3.27	1.12	4.29	0.34	0.002	0.80
Motivation Value	C	3.10	1.34	3.32	0.51	0.518	0.15
Competence	E	3.80	1.08	4.47	0.42	0.017	0.58
Competence	C	3.92	1.16	3.92	0.45	0.996	-0.00
Teamwork Social	E	3.88	1.05	4.66	0.34	0.004	0.74
Teamwork Social	C	4.00	0.90	3.90	0.37	0.616	-0.11
Cultural Connection	E	3.50	1.04	4.63	0.36	0.000	1.21
Cultural Connection	C	3.62	1.28	3.68	0.59	0.871	0.04

Table 1 shows the numerical changes in mean scores of variables in both Experimental and Control groups with p-values and Cohen's d values (compiled by the authors based on experimental data). Independent t-test was applied. Findings suggest there's significant positive change in Experimental groups variables. Exposure and Knowledge was the most prominent with increase in mean score from 1.50 ± 0.73 to 3.41 ± 0.48 ($p < 0.01$; Cohen's $d = 2.48$), whereas in control group there's a minor change from $(1.20 \pm 0.41$ to 1.50 ± 0.44 ; $p < 0.05$; $d = 0.49$). Enjoyment also significantly enhanced in Experimental group (3.85 ± 1.06 to 4.64 ± 0.36 ; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.81$), while there was minimal change in control group 3.75 ± 1.14 to 3.78 ± 0.56 ; $p > 0.05$. Similar trend was seen in Motivation values in Experimental groups (3.27 ± 1.12 to 4.29 ± 0.34 ; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.80$), and the changes in control groups were statistically insignificant $p > 0.05$. Perceived competence also significantly increased in Experimental group (3.80 ± 1.08 to 4.47 ± 0.42 ; $p < 0.05$; $d = 0.58$), whereas the control group showed no significant change $p > 0.05$.

Similar trend continued in Teamwork and social with positive impact in Experimental group (3.88 ± 1.05 to 4.66 ± 0.34 ; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.74$), while the control group showed no significant change $p > 0.05$. There was strong positive increment in Cultural connection in Experimental group (3.50 ± 1.04 to 4.63 ± 0.36 ; $p < 0.01$; $d = 1.21$), and the findings of the control group were insignificant $p > 0.05$.

Discussion. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of the traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan on students' educational, motivational, physical, social and cultural outcomes. The results of the study show that there is statistically significant improvement across all measured variables in experimental groups while control group showed little to no meaningful changes. Hence, the result confirms the initial hypothesis that integrating stick games in contemporary education leads to holistic development of student youth.

Highest impact was seen in Exposure and Knowledge highlighting the fact that introducing the history, rules and cultural background of these games raised understanding and awareness in students. Significant increase in Cultural Connection further solidifies the impact of these games in enhancing cultural identity and national belonging. The increase in Perceived Competence reflects improvements in physical skills like reaction time, agility and coordination. Furthermore, positive increase in Motivation, Enjoyment, Teamwork and Social indicates that these games not only improve

physical skills and cultural awareness but also serve as a multi-directional pedagogical tool.

The results of this study are consistent with pre-existing research work. The findings of previous studies like Karatas et al. [1, p. 351], suggested that indigenous games fostered cultural identity in educational settings. This study provides measurable improvements in motivation and cultural awareness in student youth. Saefullah et al. [2, p. 39] highlighted that traditional games positively impacted motor skills development in children. Current study also improved physical competence of students aged 17-19, hence expanding the age scope of previous study. Macar and Ziyagil [5, p. 453] stated that traditional games in education improved physical fitness and happiness level in secondary school students. This study also provides empirical evidence of that and additionally, including students from 2 countries Pakistan and Kazakhstan demonstrate that despite differences in education system, similar positive outcomes were achieved. This cross-country quasi experimental study provides novel contribution, as prior studies have focused on single country.

These results indicate that this study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study provides evidence that traditional games can be used as a modern educational tool for holistic development of the students, where physical fitness in combined with cultural awareness and socio-emotional development. Practically, the integration of these games in contemporary education is cost-effective as these games don't require lavish infrastructure or equipment. Easy implementation of these games enhances student's participation, motivation and teamwork skills. Moreover, positive outcomes from both countries provide basis for cross-cultural physical education policies.

The limitations of this study include small sample size. Participation of only boys in this study limited gender equal opportunities. Different education system of both countries contributed to the fact that students of same age were studying college in Pakistan and university in Kazakhstan. So, it is suggested for future studies to include larger sample sizes for generalization purposes. Ensure equal participation of both genders to better impose these games in education systems. It is also suggested to make sure that the students are selected either on the age basis or education level basis to better compare the findings when comparing 2 countries. It is also suggested to study long term impact of these games to examine whether the impact of these games go beyond the intervention period.

Conclusion. The findings of the study provide empirical confirmation of the importance of traditional stick games of Pakistan and Kazakhstan as an educational tool.

1. Statistically significant increase in Physical Competence in experimental group of Pakistan students ($p < 0.05$) shows improvements in physical fitness of students, including coordination, agility and reaction time.

2. Substantial increase in Cultural Connection in Pakistan experimental group ($p < 0.01$) shows large effect size meaning structured participation in traditional stick games strengthens students' awareness of cultural identity and national heritage.

3. Positive changes in Enjoyment and Motivation ($p < 0.01$) indicates students' enhanced engage-

ment and participation in physical education. Statistically significant improvements in Teamwork and Social ($p < 0.05$) represents socio-emotional development of students.

Similar results is Kazakhstan's students' experimental group were observed with statistically significant improvements ($p < 0.05$) across all measured variables solidifying the invaluable gains achieved through traditional games.

4. These consistent statistically significant improvements across all measured variables in both countries serve as conclusive evidence that traditional stick games benefit students' physical fitness while raising cultural awareness in them. Hence, these games are an effective, multi-dimensional pedagogical tool suitable for contemporary educational systems.

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Date of submission of the article: 05.02.2026

Date accepted for publication: 09.03.2026