

The Role of School Culture in the Formation of Sportsmanship Character through Physical Education: An Ethnographic Qualitative Study

Farkhatun Zaidah^{1✉}

Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Indonesia¹

e-mail: farkhatunzaidah05@gmail.com

INFO ARTIKEL

Accepted:

December 02, 2025

Revised:

December 24, 2025

Approved:

January 20, 2026

Published:

January 29, 2026

Keywords:

school culture, physical education, sportsmanship

ABSTRAK

This study aims to examine the role of school culture in shaping students' sportsmanship through physical education using a qualitative ethnographic approach. The research background is based on the importance of character education amidst the increasing challenges of sportsmanship degradation in the school environment. School culture is understood as a system of values, customs, and social practices that consistently shape the behavior of school members. Physical education is positioned as a strategic medium due to its interactive, applicative, and socially experiential learning characteristics. The study was conducted in educational units selected purposively, involving principals, physical education teachers, support teachers, and students as informants. Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted interactively to uncover cultural patterns, learning practices, and students' interpretations of sportsmanship values. The results show that a consistent school culture, supported by teacher role models and the integration of values in physical education, plays a significant role in shaping sportsmanship. Social interactions, collective habits, and peer group dynamics strengthen the internalization of values on an ongoing basis. This study confirms that the synergy between school culture and physical education is an effective strategy in developing students' sportsmanship character

INTRODUCTION

Education essentially aims not only to develop students' academic abilities but also to shape character, which serves as the foundation for their social behavior. An effective educational process should be able to instill moral values, ethics, and social attitudes in a sustainable manner. Character is a crucial element because it plays a role in determining how individuals act, make decisions, and interact with their surroundings. The challenges of globalization and increasingly complex social developments require the world of education to be more serious about building student character. The phenomenon of increasing dishonest behavior, a lack of responsibility, and a weakening sense of mutual respect indicates a gap in character development in schools. Schools, as formal institutions, have a strategic responsibility to prepare a generation that is not only



intelligent but also possesses strong character. Effective character development requires a systematic approach integrated into all educational activities. This entire process makes character the primary foundation for achieving national education goals (Yuliawan et al., 2025).

Sportsmanship is an important value relevant to students' social lives. Sportsmanship reflects honesty, fairness, respect for rules, and the ability to accept victory and defeat wisely. These values are needed not only in sports activities but also in daily life at school and in the community. The reality on the ground shows that unsportsmanlike behavior still frequently occurs in various student activities. Behaviors such as cheating, breaking rules, and a reluctance to admit mistakes are indicators of weak internalization of sportsmanship values. This condition indicates that the learning of values has not been fully embedded in students' consciousness. Efforts to develop sportsmanship need to be carried out consistently through meaningful real-life experiences. The school environment plays a crucial role in providing a space for learning these values.

Schools serve not only as a place to transfer knowledge but also as a social space where values and norms are built. School culture is formed from habits, unwritten rules, interaction patterns, and the role models demonstrated by all members of the school community. The values embedded in school culture will indirectly influence students' ways of thinking and acting. A school environment that upholds justice, discipline, and respect for others will encourage the development of positive character. A school culture that lacks supervision and role modeling has the potential to foster deviant behavior (Bangsawan, 2025). The process of internalizing values through school culture is ongoing and not always consciously recognized by students. Consistency in school culture is a determining factor in successful character formation. A strong school culture makes it easier to practice sportsmanship in everyday life.

Physical education has distinct learning characteristics compared to other subjects. Physical activities, games, and competitions present real-life situations that require direct interaction between students. This process allows students to learn about rules, cooperation, and self-control in concrete ways. Physical education provides a space for students to directly experience the consequences of both sportsmanlike and unsportsmanlike behavior. The value of sportsmanship is not only conveyed conceptually but also practiced through concrete actions. These experiences have great potential to shape students' attitudes and character. The role of the physical education teacher is crucial as a facilitator and role model of values. The success of physical education in shaping character is greatly influenced by the surrounding school culture.

The interaction between school culture and physical education forms an interconnected character learning ecosystem. The values instilled in physical education will be more easily accepted if they align with the overall school culture. A mismatch between the values taught and the school's cultural practices can lead to confusion among students. Consistency of values across school policies, teacher behavior, and learning activities is key to effective character building. Physical education can serve as a means of actualizing school cultural values. Sports activities and games serve as a medium for reflecting the values that live within the school environment. This process strengthens students' understanding of the meaning of sportsmanship. The integration of school culture and physical education creates contextual and meaningful character learning.

Understanding the process of character formation and sportsmanship cannot be separated from the social reality of schools. Each school has a unique culture influenced

by the social background, institutional values, and customs of its members (Fadhil et al., 2025). The process of character formation occurs naturally through daily interactions within the school environment. A research approach that captures social meanings, symbols, and practices is crucial. Qualitative research provides a space for a deeper and holistic understanding of phenomena. Ethnography allows researchers to directly observe school life on a daily basis. This approach helps uncover how the value of sportsmanship is practiced and interpreted by the school community. The results of this understanding serve as the basis for formulating more contextual character development strategies.

Ethnographic studies position the researcher as the primary instrument in understanding school culture. Participatory observation allows for the collection of authentic data on behavior and social interactions. In-depth interviews provide opportunities for informants to express their perspectives and experiences. Documentation supports understanding of school policies and practices related to character formation. The entire research process focuses on the meanings constructed in everyday school life. Data analysis is conducted interpretively to capture emerging cultural patterns. This approach comprehensively explains the relationship between school culture and the formation of sportsmanship. The research findings are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the world of education.

Based on this description, a study of the role of school culture in the formation of sportsmanship through physical education is relevant. The research focuses on a deeper understanding of cultural practices occurring in schools. Physical education was chosen as the primary medium due to its value-laden learning characteristics. A qualitative ethnographic approach is deemed appropriate for uncovering complex social realities. This research is expected to describe the process of sportsmanship formation contextually. The results can serve as a reference for schools in strengthening a culture that supports character development. Empirical findings can also enrich studies of school culture-based character education. Overall, the research is expected to contribute to improving the quality of education oriented towards building student character.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design, aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the role of school culture in shaping students' sportsmanship through physical education. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the meanings, values, and social practices that exist and develop within the school environment in a naturalistic manner. The research focused on the interactions, habits, and behavioral patterns of school members that reflect the value of sportsmanship in physical education activities.

The research location was purposively determined in educational units that actively provide physical education learning and have a clear school culture in the application of character values. The research subjects included school principals, physical education teachers, class teachers or other relevant subject teachers, and students directly involved in physical education activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account the informants' involvement, experience, and understanding of the school culture and physical education learning practices.

Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Participant observation was used to directly observe physical education activities, interactions between students, and school cultural practices related to sportsmanship values. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants'

views, experiences, and interpretations of sportsmanship character formation. Documentation studies were used to examine school documents such as the school's vision and mission, regulations, character education programs, and physical education learning materials.

The research instruments consisted of observation guidelines, semi-structured interview guidelines, and documentation sheets, compiled based on the research focus. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, directly involved in the data collection and interpretation process. The researcher's sensitivity to social situations was key to capturing the cultural meanings that emerged in daily school activities.

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from various sources were compared and categorized to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts relevant to the development of sportsmanship. The analysis process took place simultaneously from data collection to the end of the study to ensure a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation. Member checking was conducted by confirming findings with informants to ensure accuracy of meaning. Adequate referential data and adequate researcher involvement in the field were used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research results.

The research results are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of school culture in shaping sportsmanship through physical education. The findings are expected to serve as a basis for developing character education strategies based on school culture. This research contribution is expected to enrich the study of physical education and character education in a contextual and applicable manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Manifestation of School Culture in Instilling Sportsmanship Values

School culture is reflected through a set of values, norms, and habits consistently practiced by the entire school community. The value of sportsmanship emerges not only through written rules but also through daily social interactions. The habit of respecting referee decisions, accepting game results, and admitting mistakes are indicators of a vibrant culture within the school environment. This habituation process gradually and sustainably shapes the behavioral framework of students. Field observations indicate that a strong culture can guide student behavior without direct coercion. One teacher stated that

"Children usually follow what they often see, not just what they hear from the teacher."

This statement emphasizes the role of implicit culture in character formation. Consistency in cultural practices is the primary foundation for instilling the value of sportsmanship. School culture is also built through symbols and rituals that have educational significance. Ceremonies, morning assembly, and extracurricular activities become spaces for the reproduction of values that are continually repeated. Symbols such as slogans promoting fair play and rewards for sportsmanship reinforce the moral message the school wants to convey (Naibaho et al., 2024). Students interpret these

symbols as part of the school's identity. Internalization of values occurs when symbols and practices go hand in hand. The principal stated that

"We try to make the values of sportsmanship visible, not just written on the wall."

These efforts demonstrate institutional awareness of the importance of values visibility. A symbolic and practical school culture creates meaningful learning experiences.

Interaction between teachers and students is the primary medium for transmitting cultural values. Teachers' exemplary behavior in being fair and respecting rules provides a concrete example for students. Teachers' attitudes when dealing with conflict in games serve as a model for behavior to emulate. Observations show that teachers who consistently maintain an objective attitude are able to mitigate potential conflict between students. One student expressed that

"If the teacher is firm but fair, we will be ashamed if we cheat."

This recognition demonstrates the direct influence of role models on moral awareness. Positive interpersonal relationships strengthen the effectiveness of a school culture. This process occurs naturally through repeated interactions.

School culture also shapes the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Students learn to understand the social consequences of unsportsmanlike behavior. Social reprimands from peers are often more effective than formal sanctions. Group dynamics create internal control mechanisms that reinforce the value of sportsmanship. This phenomenon demonstrates that school culture operates as a social system. Physical education teachers convey that

"children remind each other if someone breaks the rules of the game."

This statement emphasizes the role of communities in upholding values. Collective culture encourages conscious adherence. A supportive environment accelerates the internalization of values.

The sustainability of a school's culture is strongly influenced by institutional commitment. School programs integrated with character education reinforce value consistency. School policies aligned with learning practices create a unified message. Students perceive the value of sportsmanship as part of school life, not just a momentary demand. This integration narrows the gap between normative values and actual practice. The principal emphasized that

"character building cannot be left to just one subject."

This statement emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach. A structured school culture supports long-term character development. The entire process demonstrates the strategic role of school culture in fostering sportsmanship.

The Role of Physical Education as a Medium for Internalizing a Culture of Sportsmanship

Physical education provides a learning environment that places students in dynamic social situations. Games and sports activities demand adherence to rules and emotional control. These situations present real opportunities to practice sportsmanship. Students learn through direct experience, not just verbal instruction. Observations show that competitive moments are often the critical point for the emergence of sportsmanship. Physical education teachers report that

"The value of sportsmanship is most visible when children are under pressure to win."

This statement affirms the authentic character of physical education. These experiences shape students' moral reflections. Physical education serves as a social laboratory for values.

Teachers' strategies in managing learning have a significant impact on the internalization of values. Dialogic and reflective approaches help students understand the meaning behind game rules. Teachers who provide constructive feedback foster ethical awareness. The practice of short discussions after games strengthens the reflection process. One teacher explained that

"We always invite the children to discuss their behavior after playing."

This approach positions students as the subjects of value learning. The reflective process deepens understanding of sportsmanship, making learning more meaningful and transformative.

Interactions between students in physical education reflect complex social dynamics. Teamwork requires communication and mutual trust. Conflicts that arise during games provide opportunities for character learning. How students resolve these conflicts demonstrates the level of internalization of sportsmanship values. One student stated that

"We learned to solve problems on our own before the teacher intervened."

This statement demonstrates the growth of moral independence. Physical education facilitates authentic social learning. These experiences strengthen conflict resolution skills.

The value of sportsmanship in physical education does not stand alone but is intertwined with the school culture. Consistency of values between the classroom and the field reinforces the moral message. Students are more likely to accept values when they encounter no contradictions. Another teacher stated that

"What we teach in class must also be seen in the field."

This alignment creates student trust in the school's value system. Value integration enhances the effectiveness of character education. Physical education becomes an extension of the school culture. This synergy strengthens the internalization of values.

The success of physical education as a medium for fostering sportsmanship requires structural support. School facilities, schedules, and policies influence the quality of learning. Managerial support strengthens physical education's position in the curriculum. Teachers feel more free to develop values-based learning. One teacher stated that

“school support makes us dare to emphasize values, not just techniques.”

This statement demonstrates the importance of institutional support. Physical education supported by a school culture can optimally shape character. This process demonstrates the close relationship between educational structure and practice.

Interaction of School Culture, Teacher Role, and Student Response to the Formation of Sportsmanship Character

The interaction between school culture, teacher roles, and student responses forms a complex network of character learning. Teachers act as cultural agents who translate values into concrete actions. Students respond to values based on personal experiences and meanings. This process occurs through repeated social interactions. Observations show that student responses vary according to background and experience. Teachers convey that.

“Not all children immediately understand sportsmanship in the same way.”.

This statement emphasizes the diversity of interpretations of values. The process of character formation is dynamic and contextual. Interaction is the key to internalizing values.

The role of a teacher is not only as an instructor but also as a behavioral model. A teacher's attitude when dealing with conflict becomes a primary reference for students. Consistent teacher behavior strengthens the credibility of the values taught. Students tend to imitate concrete actions rather than verbal advice. One student stated that

“We look at the way the teacher behaves before copying.”

This statement emphasizes the importance of role models. Teachers represent the school's cultural values. This influence is both implicit and ongoing.

Students' responses to sportsmanship values are influenced by their social environment. Peer support accelerates the acceptance of values. Social pressure can also hinder internalization if group culture is not aligned (Anwar, 2025). Observations indicate value negotiation within peer groups. One student stated that

“If friends support you, it's easier to be sporty.”

This statement highlights the role of the peer community. The process of internalizing values occurs through social interaction. The group environment is a determining factor in success.

The challenge of character building arises when cultural values are inconsistent. The discrepancy between teachers' words and actions creates confusion. Students become skeptical of the moral messages conveyed. Teachers acknowledge that

“the biggest challenge is maintaining consistency of attitude.”

This statement demonstrates reflective awareness. These challenges require cultural strengthening strategies. Continuous evaluation is essential. The process of character formation requires a long-term commitment.

The opportunity to strengthen sportsmanship lies in the collaboration of the entire school community. Synergy between teachers, students, and school leaders fosters a positive culture. Active student participation fosters a sense of ownership of values. A dialogic culture creates a space for shared reflection. The principal stated that

“character grows when everyone feels responsible.”

This statement emphasizes the importance of collaboration. Character formation is a collective process. All of these interactions demonstrate the dynamics of continuous and meaningful value learning.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study indicates that school culture plays a fundamental role in shaping students' sportsmanship through physical education. Sportsmanship values are not only learned conceptually but also develop through vibrant and consistent cultural practices within the school environment. Social interactions, collective habits, and the role models of the school community serve as the primary means for internalizing these values. Physical education serves as a concrete experience space that allows students to practice honesty, fairness, and responsibility. The physical activity-based learning process strengthens students' understanding of the meaning of sportsmanship. The role of physical education teachers has proven strategic as both value facilitators and behavioral models. Consistency between taught values and school cultural practices strengthens the effectiveness of character formation. Students' responses to sportsmanship values are influenced by social support and peer group dynamics. A supportive school culture fosters the growth of sustainable moral awareness. Challenges in character formation arise when there is a mismatch between normative values and actual practices. Strengthening sportsmanship requires the collective commitment of the entire school community. Overall, the findings confirm that integrating school culture and physical education is an effective strategy in developing students' character.

LITERATURE

- Anwar, N. I. A. (2025). *Sports education and athlete character building: Theoretical and practical perspectives*. Journal Physical Health Recreation, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.55081/jphr.v6i1.5230>
- Arifin, S. (2025). *Internasionalisasi nilai sportivitas melalui pembelajaran pendidikan jasmani di sekolah dasar*. Sosio Religi: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Umum, 15(2), 8834. <https://doi.org/10.17509/sosioreligi.v15i2.8834>
- Baharuddin, S. H., Satrio, S., Permana, G., & Carsiwan. (2024). *Pendidikan karakter dalam pembelajaran pendidikan jasmani sekolah dasar: Sistematis review*. Gelanggang Olahraga: Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani dan Olahraga, 8(1), 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.31539/jpjo.v8i1.10606>
- Elfarita, N., Suparto, A., & Basri, M. H. (2025). *Penerapan pendidikan jasmani berbasis karakter melalui permainan Gobak Sodor dan Bentengan pada siswa kelas V di*

- SDN Pangarangan III Sumenep. *SPRINTER: Jurnal Ilmu Olahraga*, 6(2), 233–240. <https://doi.org/10.46838/spr.v6i2.722>
- Fajar Siddik, F., Putri, A. D. A., Sania Putri, A., Fakhrany, I., & Putri, M. (2024). *Pengaruh pendidikan jasmani bagi anak sekolah dasar untuk pembentukan karakter di era modern*. *Bhinneka: Jurnal Bintang Pendidikan dan Bahasa*, 2(4), 236–250. <https://doi.org/10.59024/bhinneka.v2i4.1034>
- Gulo, F. R., Waruwu, A. M. S., Saragi, R. F., Alfatah, H., & Nurkadri. (2024). *Pendidikan jasmani berbasis nilai: Membentuk karakter melalui aktivitas fisik pada siswa*. *El-Mujtama: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 4(5), 2066–. <https://doi.org/10.47467/elmujtama.v4i5.3064>
- Idris, F., Haqim Lubay, L., & Anira, A. (2024). *The crucial role of sportsmanship in fostering positive values and building an inclusive sports community*. *Media Ilmu Keolahragaan Indonesia*, 14(2), Article 271. <https://doi.org/10.15294/miki.v14i2.271>
- Naibaho, G. I., Ginting, F. X. M., Sinaga, D. S. T., Berutu, H. R., & Syahrohni, M. R. (2024). *Evaluasi strategi guru PJOK dalam mengembangkan nilai sportivitas siswa di SMP dan SMA Budi Agung Medan*. *Journal Physical Health Recreation*, 5(3), 20–29. <https://doi.org/10.55081/jphr.v5i3.4668>
- Nurkadri, N., Siregar, Y. I., Mahmuddin, M., Salsabila, S., Andreani, P. N., Manihuruk, H. T., & Haloho, D. S. (2024). *Pemahaman dan pembentukan karakter dalam pendidikan jasmani dan olahraga melalui perspektif sosiologi*. *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(3), 16338–16345. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i3.12531>
- Salahudin, S., Nurgufriani, A., & Muhammad, M. (2024). *Fostering exemplary character through physical activities in physical education learning*. *Champions: Education Journal of Sport, Health, and Recreation*, 2(3), 275. <https://doi.org/10.59923/champions.v2i3.275>
- Salahudin, S., Satriawan, R., & Muhammad, M. (2025). *Membangun karakter positif melalui pendidikan jasmani di sekolah: Sinergi antara fisik dan moral*. *Discourse of Physical*
- Sari, W. A., Warni, H., & Arifin, S. (2024). *The role of physical education sports and health in building character*. *Indonesian Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science*, 4(2), 204–211. <https://doi.org/10.52188/ijpess.v4i2.731>
- Setiati, V. D., Suyoto, S., Widayati, L., & Zuhri, M. S. (2024). *Peran budaya sekolah dalam pembentukan karakter peserta didik SDN Tambakrejo 01 Semarang*. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 8(1), 12183–12195. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v8i1.14236>
- Sumantri, A., & Hermansyah, H. (2023). *Character values in physical education at MIS Nurul Ulum in Talang Pauh Village, Central Bengkulu*. *Sinar Sport Journal*, 3(2), 39–46. <https://doi.org/10.53697/ssj.v3i2.1584> .