

Traditional Games, Character-Related Meanings, and Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Qualitative Multi-Site Study in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines how traditional games are understood and practiced as locally transmitted cultural knowledge, with particular attention to character-related meanings, educational possibilities, cultural identity, and intergenerational transmission in South Sulawesi.

Design/methodology/approach – A multi-site qualitative design with ethnographic elements was conducted in four contrasting contexts: Makassar City, Gowa Regency, Toraja Regency, and Sabutung Island in Pangkep Regency. Forty-five purposively selected participants comprised community/cultural custodians, parents and elders, children/adolescents, and local educators. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and cultural documentation and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework.

Finding/Results – Four themes were identified: declining youth interest in traditional games; disruption of intergenerational cultural transmission; perceived educational and cultural value; and transformation from everyday practice toward ceremonial performance. The analysis also differentiates four practice categories children's traditional play, traditional games/strategic or physical games, ritualized competition, and ceremonial cultural performance according to participation, ritual status, competitiveness, physical risk, cultural function, and everyday versus ceremonial use.

Originality/Value – The study offers an evidence-sensitive, context-specific framework for distinguishing traditional play from ritualized and ceremonial practices and proposes community-governed principles for possible educational revitalization. The findings support safeguarding and pilot educational use only where age appropriateness, safety, authenticity, and community custodianship are established.

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1. Introduction

Traditional games are part of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage and have historically been transmitted through embodied practice, community interaction, and intergenerational learning. Existing literature describes traditional games as contexts in which children and community members can encounter physical, cognitive, social, and moral learning opportunities (Imawan & Ismail, 2023). At the same time, rapid digitalization, urbanization, and changing patterns of childhood leisure have reduced opportunities for participation in many traditional games (Anggraeni et al., 2025; Widiyanti et al., 2022). The present study therefore treats traditional games not as inherently effective educational interventions, but as culturally situated practices whose educational meanings must be examined through participants' experiences and observations.

The erosion of everyday participation has implications for intangible cultural heritage because games are transmitted not only through written rules but also through embodied practice, social interaction, and local interpretation. When children encounter traditional games less frequently, opportunities for intergenerational transmission may also decline. However, the consequences are not uniform across communities, and traditional practices differ in ritual status, age appropriateness, physical demands, and cultural meaning. These differences require a context-sensitive analysis rather than a single generalized account of traditional games.

South Sulawesi provides a useful setting for such an analysis because the research sites encompass distinct urban, transitional, highland, and island-mainland contexts. The manuscript documents traditional practices in Makassar City, Gowa Regency, Toraja Regency, and Sabutung Island in Pangkep Regency. Rather than assuming that Bugis, Makassar, Toraja, and island communities share one homogeneous value system, this study examines how meanings are attached to practices within particular local contexts.

The significance of the study is consequently centered on cultural transmission, character-related meanings, and culturally responsive education. The study does not empirically examine cultural tourism, visitor experiences, tourism product development, tourism markets, community tourism revenues, or community sustainability indicators. These topics are therefore outside the empirical scope of the revised manuscript. The contribution is instead to clarify how traditional practices are classified, how participants describe their meanings, and what conditions should be considered before educational revitalization is recommended.

The literature identifies traditional games as potentially relevant to culturally responsive education and intangible heritage safeguarding (Luchoro-Parrilla et al., 2024; Utama & Rahayu, 2025). Nevertheless, the present qualitative evidence is better suited to examining perceived educational value and cultural meanings than to demonstrating developmental effectiveness. The revised manuscript therefore distinguishes between perceived or interpreted educational value and measurable developmental outcomes.

A further gap concerns conceptual differentiation. The original manuscript grouped children's play, strategic games, competitive physical activities, ritualized competitions, and ceremonial practices under one label. Such practices do not necessarily have the same pedagogical or safeguarding implications. The revised study therefore introduces a typology based on

primary participants, ritual status, competitiveness, physical risk, cultural function, age appropriateness, and everyday versus ceremonial use.

Against this background, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How can the documented traditional practices be differentiated according to their social, cultural, and ritual characteristics? (2) How do participants describe the educational, character-related, and cultural meanings associated with these practices in their local contexts? and (3) What processes contribute to declining participation and disrupted intergenerational transmission, and what evidence-sensitive principles can guide revitalization? The study contributes an ethnographically grounded and context-sensitive interpretation rather than a causal test of character development.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Cultural Transmission, Traditional Games, and Heritage Safeguarding

Traditional games can contribute to cultural continuity because rules, interaction patterns, local terminology, and expectations of fair participation are learned through practice. Existing research identifies social and educational meanings in traditional games, but these meanings should be interpreted in relation to the communities that transmit and practice them (Amar et al., 2023). For analytical purposes, this study defines a traditional game as a culturally transmitted, rule-governed form of play or competition recognized by a local community and learned through participation across generations. Ritual or ceremonial practices are not automatically classified as games simply because competition or play-like elements are present.

Heritage safeguarding in this study is therefore treated as a process of maintaining community-recognized knowledge, participation, meanings, and appropriate contexts. The manuscript does not claim that every documented practice has formal or officially recognized intangible cultural heritage status. Rather, the practices are discussed as forms of locally transmitted cultural knowledge with potential relevance to heritage safeguarding.

2.2 Culturally Responsive Learning and Ethnopedagogical Meaning

Culturally responsive education emphasizes learning that is connected to learners' cultural contexts and community knowledge. Traditional games can be relevant to this perspective because they combine activity, interaction, local terminology, and cultural meaning. However, the present study treats these features as educational opportunities rather than evidence of educational effectiveness. The distinction is important: an activity may create a context in which cooperation or strategic reasoning can be practiced without demonstrating that participation produces lasting changes in behavior or achievement.

Piaget's cognitive-development framework is retained only as a limited interpretive lens for age appropriateness. Game structures involving sequencing, concrete problem solving, symbolic activity, or strategy may be compatible with particular developmental levels (Marinda, 2022), but this study does not test developmental stages or cognitive change.

2.3 Character-Related Meanings and Moral Learning Contexts

Character education involves moral understanding, motivation, and behavioral practice (Najili et al., 2022). Within the present study, the concept is narrowed to character-related meanings that participants attach to particular game structures and interactions. Fair-play

rules, adult guidance, peer interaction, cooperation, negotiation, and responsibility may create contexts in which participants encounter moral expectations. These contexts should not be interpreted as proof of improved moral reasoning or character development.

This distinction also informs the interpretation of local value terms such as *siri'*, *pesse'*, *lempu'*, *awaraningeng*, and *amaccang*. These terms are not treated as uniformly expressed characteristics of all South Sulawesi communities or games. They are relevant only where supported by participant accounts or documented local interpretations.

2.4 Intergenerational Safeguarding and Contextual Differentiation

Intergenerational transmission depends on opportunities for repeated participation, observation, instruction, and local interpretation. When games are no longer practiced regularly, knowledge of rules and meanings may become less secure. Conversely, increased visibility at festivals does not necessarily indicate continuity of everyday participation. The analytical framework therefore distinguishes everyday practice from ceremonial presentation and considers community custodianship, continuity, participation, safety, and authenticity.

The framework used in this study can be summarized as: (1) identify the practice and its local context; (2) classify it using observable social and cultural criteria; (3) interpret participant-described meanings; (4) compare participation and transmission patterns across sites; and (5) derive only conditional, community-governed educational implications.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Epistemological Orientation

The study used a multi-site qualitative design with ethnographic elements. A constructivist orientation guided interpretation of traditional games as socially and culturally situated practices whose meanings emerge through interaction among researchers, participants, and community contexts. Site-based observation, participant accounts, cultural documentation, and attention to local meanings were used to understand practices in context. The term ethnographic is used cautiously because the submitted research record does not provide sufficient documentation of field-immersion duration, observation-session counts, or repeated-contact schedules to substantiate a claim of sustained ethnography in the strongest methodological sense.

The unit of analysis was the traditional practice as situated in its local social context, together with participant accounts concerning its use, meaning, transmission, and change. The design does not seek statistical generalization or causal estimation.

3.2 Research Contexts

The study covered four contexts selected for contrasting social and geographical conditions. Makassar City represents an urban context characterized by dense population, technological access, and changing leisure patterns. Gowa Regency represents a transitional context where proximity to Makassar intersects with locally rooted practices. Toraja Regency represents a highland context in which customary and ceremonial practices remain visible. Sabutung Island in Pangkep Regency provides an island-mainland contrast and includes locally adapted games and activities associated with community celebrations.

The four contexts are analytically compared rather than treated as interchangeable. Differences in digital exposure, everyday participation, ceremonial visibility, community interaction, and educational opportunities are considered as contextual patterns in the available qualitative evidence.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

Participants were purposively selected using maximum-variation principles to capture different positions in cultural transmission and educational practice. The available research record identifies 45 participants: 12 community leaders/cultural custodians, 15 parents/community elders, 12 children/adolescents aged 7–18 years, and 6 local educators. Cultural custodians included traditional knowledge keepers, elders, religious leaders, and cultural practitioners; parents and elders contributed retrospective and intergenerational perspectives; children and adolescents contributed contemporary youth perspectives; and educators contributed perspectives on educational relevance and implementation.

The submitted manuscript does not contain reliable site-by-site allocation, gender distribution, recruitment dates, or participant-to-game linkage. These variables are therefore not reconstructed in this revision. The analysis avoids weighting one site or participant category beyond what the available evidence supports. A publication-ready participant table should be completed from the original recruitment records before final submission.

Table 1. Publication-Ready Participant

Participant category	n	Age information available	Primary contribution
Community leaders/cultural custodians	12	40-70 years	Cultural meanings, historical change, local transmission, customary interpretation
Parents/community elders	15	35-65 years	Retrospective childhood experience, intergenerational transmission, changes in practice
Children/adolescents	12	7–18 years	Contemporary participation, preferences, cultural exposure, perceived relevance
Local educators	6	25-55 years	Educational relevance and implementation challenges
Total	45		Multiple perspectives on practice, transmission, and educational meaning

3.4 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 60–120 minutes were conducted using Bahasa Indonesia and local dialects, with translation support where required. Interview topics included participants' experiences with traditional games, cultural meanings, changes in practice, factors affecting preservation or decline, educational possibilities, and revitalization

considerations. Participant observation was conducted during traditional game activities in community settings, educational contexts, and cultural events, with attention to rules, participant interaction, cultural context, value transmission, and the distinction between everyday participation and ceremonial presentation.

Field notes recorded behavioral patterns, verbal and non-verbal interactions, cultural protocols, and community dynamics. Photographic and video documentation, where consent was obtained, supported documentation of game equipment, terminology, settings, and practices. Historical information was obtained through elder interviews and available community records.

The available manuscript does not report the exact fieldwork dates, number and duration of site visits, observation-session counts, approximate observation hours, or researcher roles during participation. Rather than invent these details, the revised manuscript treats them as methodological limitations and avoids using them as evidence for claims about prolonged immersion.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis: familiarization with interview and observation data; initial coding; development of candidate themes; review of themes against the data; definition and naming of themes; and production of the analytical narrative. Initial coding combined codes derived from the research questions with inductive codes emerging from participant accounts and observations. Candidate themes were reviewed against interview material, field notes, and cultural documentation.

The analysis explicitly distinguished participant perceptions, observed practices, and researcher interpretation. Community feedback was used where available to clarify local meanings. The analysis did not treat coding as a numerical reliability exercise, and no claim of independent double-coding or inter-coder agreement is made because the submitted records do not document such procedures.

3.6 Research Quality, Ethics, and Reflexivity

Credibility was supported through engagement with participants and communities, community feedback where conducted, peer discussion, and triangulation across interviews, observation, and cultural documentation. Dependability was supported by documentation of research decisions, data-collection procedures, and analytical discussions. Confirmability was addressed through reflexive attention to the distinction between participant voices and researcher interpretation. Confidentiality and anonymity protections were applied, and cultural sensitivity procedures recognized community ownership of local knowledge. Photographs, videos, and culturally sensitive information were used only with appropriate consent.

Because the submitted research record provides limited information about researcher positionality and the researchers' prior relationships with each community, the revision avoids claims that depend on a fully documented positionality statement. This is an area that should be strengthened from the original field records before final submission.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Empirically Grounded Typology of Traditional Practices

The typology was developed from recurring distinctions in the documented practices: primary participants, ritual status, degree of competitiveness, physical risk, ceremonial embeddedness, everyday use, and cultural function. Borderline cases were classified according to their dominant documented function rather than by the presence of competition alone.

Table 2. This produces four analytical categories.

Category	Classification criteria	Documented practices	Interpretive implication
Children's traditional play	Primarily child/youth participation; usually everyday or recreational; low ritual status; comparatively low physical and ethical risk.	Ma'bayangan; Ma'pio-pio; Ma'dende; Ma'paramisi; Ma'dandan	Potentially relevant to age-appropriate educational activities after cultural and safety review.
Traditional games / strategic or physical games	Rule-governed play involving skill, strategy, coordination, or competition; generally separable from ritual performance.	Ma'raga/Sepak Raga; Ma'longga/Congklak; Maggasing/Gasing; Ma'benteng/Benteng; A'kkaddaro/Kelereng; A'gallaceng/Dakon; Makkasiwang/Galasin; Ma'gallaceng; A'laling	May provide contexts for cooperation, strategy, coordination, and fair participation; suitability depends on age, rules, and local meaning.
Ritualized competition	Competition embedded in a recognized ritual/customary event; meaning extends beyond recreation; may involve animals or customary obligations.	Ma'pasilaga Tedong; A'lomba Padduppa Manu; Sisemba'	Requires specific cultural, ethical, and safety review; not automatically suitable for school replication.
Ceremonial cultural performance	Practice primarily presented for a cultural event or audience rather than maintained as everyday play; performance may replace ordinary participation.	Traditional practices increasingly presented during festivals and formal cultural events	Best approached through community-led documentation and interpretation unless community authorities support another form of engagement.

This typology also clarifies why practices such as Ma'pasilaga Tedong and A'lomba Padduppa Manu should not be educationally equated with children's recreational games. Their ritual and animal-related dimensions require a different ethical and cultural assessment. Sisemba' is similarly treated as a boundary case because physical contact creates safety considerations.

4.2 Cross-Site Comparison**Table 3.** Cross-Site Comparison

Dimension	Makassar City	Gowa Regency	Toraja Regency	Sabutung Island, Pangkep
Context	Urban; strong technology and changing leisure patterns	Transitional; local practices intersect with modernization	Highland; strong customary and ceremonial visibility	Island context; community celebrations and mainland-island contrast
Participation pattern in available evidence	Traditional games and children's play remain documented, but digital entertainment competes for attention	Reduced cultural introduction is evident in at least one adolescent account; practices also show adaptation and continuity	Everyday children's games coexist with ritualized and physically demanding practices	Everyday games coexist with activities linked to celebrations; mobile gaming becomes more attractive when technology is available
Transmission issue	Digital leisure and changing routines	Limited introduction at home/school in the available account	Boundary between everyday play and ceremonial practice complicates transmission	Technology access and changing leisure interact with community-based transmission
Ceremonialization	Less central in the documented material	Adaptation/continuity is more prominent	Highly visible boundary between everyday games and customary/ritual practices	Community celebrations provide settings where play and ceremonial activity intersect
Educational implication	Prioritize low-risk, age-appropriate games with clear objectives	Emphasize local introduction and contextual adaptation	Separate ritual/physical-risk practices from routine school replication	Use community-led adaptation and preserve local meanings and settings

The comparison indicates that the four sites should not be interpreted as a single homogeneous field. Makassar provides the clearest account of digital competition for children's leisure, while Gowa illustrates a transitional pattern involving limited cultural introduction and adaptation. Toraja makes the distinction between everyday play and customary or ritual practice particularly important, whereas Sabutung Island shows the interaction of community celebration, everyday play, and changing access to digital leisure. These contrasts justify the multi-site design and caution against a single explanation of cultural decline.

4.3 Four Cross-Cutting Themes

Theme 1: Declining Interest in Traditional Games Among Youth

Participants described reduced youth participation and stronger attraction to digital entertainment. A child participant in Makassar, Rosliati, described digital games as "more exciting and modern." The account illustrates how digital entertainment may compete with traditional play, but it does not quantify the magnitude of decline. Observation on Sabutung Island similarly indicated increased attraction to mobile gaming when technology became available.

The available evidence also includes a negative case: traditional games were described by some youth as "old-fashioned" or "uncool." This counter-evidence is important because it prevents an advocacy-only interpretation in which young people are assumed to value traditional games automatically. The decline theme is therefore interpreted as a perceived and context-dependent reduction in participation rather than a uniform disappearance.

Theme 2: Intergenerational Cultural Transmission Disruption

Parents and elders described changes in the transmission of rules, meanings, and opportunities for participation. Some recalled their own childhood participation but reported difficulty remembering particular rules or meanings. An adolescent participant in Gowa, Ramin, reported never receiving instruction in traditional games at home or school. This account illustrates a break in cultural introduction but cannot establish that all families or schools have the same experience.

Participants and educators also described limited incorporation of traditional games into formal educational settings. Contemporary time constraints, changing family routines, and fewer opportunities for extended-family or neighborhood interaction were identified as contextual conditions that may reduce everyday transmission. These explanations are treated as participant-reported conditions, not statistically established determinants.

Theme 3: Perceived Educational and Cultural Value

Participants and observations associated different practices with opportunities for cooperation, strategic thinking, physical activity, fair participation, moral learning, and cultural connection. Team games such as Ma'benteng/Benteng and A'laling provide structures for communication, coordination, and rule negotiation. Strategic games such as Ma'longga/Congklak and Ma'gallaceng involve counting, sequencing, planning, and decision-making. Ma'bayangan provides a context for imaginative representation and storytelling.

These are interpreted as learning contexts or opportunities rather than demonstrated outcomes. Likewise, references to honesty, respect, responsibility, cooperation, or cultural pride represent character-related meanings and participant interpretations, not validated

measures of character change. The evidence therefore supports culturally situated educational possibilities, but not claims of developmental effectiveness.

Theme 4: Functional Transformation from Everyday Practice to Ceremonial Performance

Participants and observations indicated greater visibility of some traditional practices in festivals, independence-day events, and formal cultural programs. The analysis interprets this as a possible functional shift from everyday participation toward ceremonial presentation. Visibility, however, is not equivalent to transmission: formal performances may place emphasis on display for an audience rather than repeated participation by children and community members.

This theme also contains a safeguarding implication. Where practices are detached from the contexts in which they are learned and interpreted, opportunities for spontaneous learning and intergenerational interaction may decrease. Community custodians therefore remain important not merely as symbolic guests but as interpreters and transmitters of local meaning.

Table 4. Evidence trail from data to themes

Evidence available in the submitted record	Initial code	Subtheme	Theme	Participant/site
Rosliati: digital games described as “more exciting and modern”	Preference for digital games	Digital entertainment competes with traditional play	Declining youth interest	Child, Makassar
Ramin reported never receiving instruction in traditional games at home or school	Limited cultural introduction	Reduced opportunities for transmission	Declining youth interest / transmission disruption	Adolescent, Gowa
Observation: mobile gaming became more attractive when technology was available	Technology-mediated leisure	Changing leisure environment	Declining youth interest	Children, Sabutung Island
Parents/elders reported remembering childhood play but forgetting some rules or meanings	Loss of retained knowledge	Collective memory erosion	Intergenerational transmission disruption	Parents/elders, multiple sites
Some youth characterized traditional games as “old-fashioned” or “uncool”	Negative peer valuation	Social stigma around traditional play	Declining youth interest	Youth, multiple sites

Traditional practices increasingly presented in festivals/formal events	Ceremonialization	Performance replaces everyday participation	Functional transformation	Multiple sites
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The evidence trail is intentionally limited to quotations and observation summaries that are actually present in the submitted manuscript. Additional verbatim quotations from parents/elders and field-note excerpts should be added from the original transcripts and field records before final submission; none are reconstructed in this revision.

4.4 Community-Governed Educational and Revitalization Implications

The findings support a conditional approach to educational revitalization. Selected low-risk children's games and separable strategic or physical games may be considered for pilot educational activities when their age appropriateness, safety, cultural meaning, and local rules are clear. The purpose of such activities should be explicitly defined—for example, cooperation, strategic reasoning, coordination, storytelling, or cultural learning—rather than assuming that character or academic outcomes will automatically follow.

Ritualized competitions, practices involving animals, and physically demanding activities should not be transferred directly into routine school activities merely because they are culturally significant. Documentation, interpretation, heritage education, or community-led cultural learning may be more appropriate. Where a community and relevant ethical authorities support adaptation, the adaptation should preserve local meanings and acknowledge community custodianship.

Table 5. Documentation, interpretation, heritage education, or community-led cultural learning may be more appropriate

Principle	Application	Community role	Risk to manage
Age appropriateness	Select children's play and lower-risk games according to developmental level.	Custodians advise on culturally appropriate versions and terminology.	Mismatch between activity demands and age.
Learning-objective alignment	Specify whether the activity is intended for cooperation, strategy, coordination, storytelling, or cultural learning.	Educators and custodians jointly define culturally meaningful objectives.	Assuming character development without outcome evidence.
Safety and ethics	Review physical contact, equipment, environment, and animal involvement before implementation.	Community and relevant ethical authorities participate in decisions.	Injury, inappropriate adaptation, or ethical concerns.
Authenticity and context	Preserve local rules, meanings, and appropriate contexts rather than	Cultural custodians retain interpretive authority.	Staged authenticity and decontextualization.

	reducing games to symbolic performances.		
Intergenerational transmission	Create opportunities for elders, practitioners, teachers, and youth to learn together.	Custodians are active transmitters rather than symbolic guests.	Tokenistic participation.
Monitoring and evaluation	If educational effectiveness is claimed in future work, use validated pre/post or comparative measures.	Community participates in defining acceptable outcomes.	Turning qualitative perceptions into causal claims.

The framework positions educational integration as a testable possibility rather than a proven intervention. Any pilot should include baseline documentation, clear learning objectives, safety assessment, community approval, and subsequent evaluation. This approach is more consistent with the qualitative evidence than a recommendation for automatic or systematic curriculum integration.

5. Conclusion

The study addressed three questions. First, the documented practices can be differentiated into children's traditional play, traditional games/strategic or physical games, ritualized competition, and ceremonial cultural performance. The distinction is based on primary participants, ritual status, competitiveness, physical risk, ceremonial embeddedness, everyday use, and cultural function. Second, participants and observed practices associated selected games with educational and character-related meanings involving cooperation, strategy, coordination, fair participation, moral learning, storytelling, and cultural connection. These meanings are interpreted as opportunities or contexts for learning rather than demonstrated developmental outcomes. Third, the evidence indicates that declining youth interest, changing digital leisure, limited cultural introduction, changing family and community routines, and movement from everyday practice toward ceremonial presentation can complicate intergenerational transmission.

The theoretical contribution lies in connecting cultural transmission and safeguarding with a cautious account of culturally responsive learning and character-related meaning. The typology also demonstrates why traditional practices should not be treated as educationally interchangeable. The practical implication is a community-governed approach in which suitable low-risk practices may be piloted for educational purposes only after age, safety, authenticity, learning-objective, and custodianship requirements have been addressed.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has four principal limitations. First, the evidence is qualitative and derived from four contexts; transferability to other communities should therefore be assessed contextually rather than assumed. Second, the study examines participant perceptions, observations, and cultural interpretations rather than measured changes in character, cognitive performance, physical development, cultural identity, or learning outcomes. Third, the submitted research record does not provide complete site-level participant allocation, gender distribution,

recruitment dates, observation-session counts, field-immersion duration, researcher positionality, or a full quotation trail for every theme. These reporting gaps should be resolved from the original field records before final submission. Fourth, cultural meanings cannot be assumed to be homogeneous across the communities represented.

Future research should combine ethnographic or qualitative inquiry with validated outcome measures when the objective is to test educational effectiveness. Longitudinal, mixed-method, intervention, or quasi-experimental designs could examine character-related outcomes, cultural identity, physical activity, cooperation, or learning performance across age groups and educational settings. Future ethnographic work should also document how communities govern the representation, adaptation, and transmission of particular practices, especially when activities are ritualized, physically risky, involve animals, or carry significant customary obligations.

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Declaration of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process (if author[s] utilize AI)

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted language tools solely to improve the English language, grammar, readability, and overall clarity of the manuscript. The AI-assisted technologies were not used to generate scientific content, interpret data, perform analyses, or draw conclusions. All intellectual content, research design, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final editorial decisions remain the sole responsibility of the authors. The authors have carefully reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and take full responsibility for its content.

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