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Physical and recreational activities for the revitalization of traditional games in Quemado de Güines

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Abstract

The study was developed with the objective of designing a physical-recreational strategy to contribute to the revitalization of traditional games in the second cycle of Primary Education at "José Martí Pérez" Day School in Quemado de Güines. Methodologically, an applied research with a mixed approach and a pedagogical intervention design without a control group was assumed, applying theoretical, empirical (documentary analysis, observation, surveys, specialist criteria, and participatory techniques), and statistical methods. The sample included forty students from and fifth and sixth-grades, eight teachers and directors, and seven specialists. The diagnosis results evidenced limitations in the planning, diversity, and transmission of traditional games, as well as the children's likes and preferences. Based on this, a strategy structured in five components and four phases was

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designed and applied, consisting of seven physical-recreational activities that incorporated games such as el pon, yaquis, la suiza, and marbles. Specialists assessed the proposal as necessary and useful, and after its implementation, active participation increased from 32.5% to 90%, and diversity and planning improved notably. The children expressed satisfaction and joy when participating together with their teachers. It is concluded that the physical-recreational strategy constituted an effective way for the recovery, practice, and appropriation of ludic traditions in the school context, favouring inclusion and the sustainability of these practices.

Keywords: physical-recreational activities 1, traditional games 2, Primary Education 3, cultural revitalization 4.

Introduction

Traditional games have been extensively studied for their educational and sociocultural value. Authors such as Ander-Egg (1992), Alfaro (2003), Villalón (2006), Cañizares (2008), Watson (2008), Mateo (2014), Ramírez, Díaz and Arencibia (2017), Leal et al. (2020), Rodríguez, Rodríguez and Hernández (2021), Ardila-Barragán (2022), Díaz et al. (2023) and Solís, Mallma and Cárdenas (2025), agree that these games develop psychomotor skills, strengthen the cultural identity and are an excellent means for comprehensive development and the positive use of free time.

In Cuba, Alfaro (2003) and Watson (2008) highlight that these practices are transmitted spontaneously from generation to generation. On the other hand, Díaz et al. (2023) and Mateo (2014) emphasize that physical recreation in schools should have an educational purpose that contributes to personality development.

At the José Martí Pérez Semi-Boarding School (La Puya People's Council, Quemado de Güines), a deficit was identified in the revitalization of traditional games: limited presence in planning, low diversity, limited intergenerational transmission, insufficient animation, and a lacking of continuity. Therefore, the general objective was to design a physical-recreational strategy to contribute to the revitalization of traditional games in the second cycle of Primary Education.

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Materials and methods

An applied research study was developed, with a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive-explanatory scope. A pedagogical intervention design without a control group was adopted, with measurements taken before and after the strategy's implementation. The study was carried out between 2025 and 2026 and was organized into three phases:

1. Diagnostic phase: identification of likes, preferences and limitations in physical-recreational activities and in the presence, practice, diversity and transmission of traditional games.

2. Design and assessment phase: designing of the strategy, development of workshops with teachers and directors, and assessment by specialists.

3. Application and evaluation phase: implementation of the activities and comparison of the initial and final results.

The exact dates for each phase must be specified in the project timeline; for the purposes of this article, the overall period covered the 2025-2026 school year.

Population and sample

The initial population was made up by 82 students from the second cycle of the “José Martí Pérez” Semi-Boarding School, of whom 37 were girls and 45 were boys. Using an intentional non-probabilistic sampling, 40 students were selected: 18 girls and 22 boys, representing 48.8% of the second cycle registration. The participants were in the fifth and sixth grades, with ages ranging from 9 to 11 years.

Inclusion criteria: belonging to the second cycle, active registration, with the consent of mother, father, or guardian, student's consent, and participation in scheduled activities. Exclusion criteria: prolonged absence from the center, withdrawal from registration, or refusal to participate.

The second group consisted of eight teachers and directors with responsibilities in the planning and development of physical-recreational activities: two Recreation teachers from the sports complex, an art instructor, two Physical Education teachers, the Pioneers Base Guide, the head of the second cycle and the director of the center.

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The third group consisted of seven specialists linked to Physical Recreation: A Recreation teacher and Deputy Director of Sports for All at the “Mártires de Quemado” Sports Complex; three PhDs in Physical Culture Sciences, two of them were from Central University “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas and another was from the “Olga Alonso González” Provincial Center for Artistic Education; and two Master's degree holders in Physical Recreation. The selection criteria were: a university degree in Physical Culture, a Master's or Doctoral degree in Physical Recreation, more than 15 years of experience in organizing and developing recreational and physical-recreational activities in schools or in the community, and a willingness to collaborate.

Dimensions and indicators of the diagnosis

Revitalization was understood as a process through which traditional games and other expressions of local tradition regain presence, practice, diversity, intergenerational transmission, appropriation by children and teachers, and institutionalization in school and community life, with the potential to be sustained over time. To avoid an unnecessary multiplication of dimensions, this process was integrated in a concise manner into the diagnostic dimensions, incorporating specific revitalization indicators. The following table summarizes this integration.

Table 1. Integrated dimensions and indicators of diagnosis and revitalization

Dimension	Indicators	Relationship with revitalization
Physical Recreation and Leisure Time	Assessments on Recreation, Physical Recreation and traditional games; characteristics of activities for girls and boys.	Starting conditions for practice and appropriation.
Planning and development	Preparation of the area and resources; teamwork from the design, script and development of the activity.	Condition for systematic practice and institutionalization.
Traditional games and traditions	Games widely used in the country; children's music; oral literature (riddles, tongue twisters, proverbs); presence in documents and programs.	Core of recovery, practice and diversity.

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Diversity	Variety of physical-recreational activities and games; participation of everyone.	Indicator of wealth and vitality of revitalization.
Animation	Age-appropriate vocabulary; terminology associated with games; animation resources.	It promotes ownership and participation.
Multifactorial integration	Integration of the factors of the La Puya People's Council into the activities of the school and the community.	Condition for transmission and sustainability.
Participation and inclusion	Active participation and as a spectator; participation by gender; adaptations for students with disabilities.	It expresses inclusion and ownership; it reduces barriers.
Transmission and appropriation	Students learning a game from family or community; students teaching a game to others; knowledge of rules, preference, and intention to continue.	Central dimensions of the revitalization process.
Institutionalization and sustainability	Presence during schedules, breaks, planning and festivals; continuity without the researcher.	It defines the possibility that the changes will last.

Diagnostic results

Documentary analysis. A review of the Methodological Folder (Cedeño et al., 2016) revealed that the Traditional Games Festival aims to develop the practice of this activity, recover traditions, and preserve cultural roots. The INDER Project (2023) proposes diversifying physical recreation services, while the "Mártires de Quemado" Sports Complex Project (2024) seeks to facilitate age-based participation through monthly festivals. Law 178 (2026) recognizes the right to play and leisure. However, the analysis showed that, although the regulations acknowledge their value, they

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do not establish explicit mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating transmission, or sustainability indicators, which limits their institutional continuity.

Observation. In the seven activities observed, the available free time was rated as Good (100%). Planning and development were rated as Good in three activities (42.8%) and Fair in four (57.1%). The inclusion of traditional games was rated as Good in two (28.5%), Fair in four (57.1%), and Poor in one (14.2%). In Diversity the Fair category was the most prevalent. Animation was rated as Poor in most of the activities (57.1%). Multifactorial integration was rated as Poor in 57.1% of the cases (the community was not involved). Active participation was most common in four activities with 13 children (32.5%), while participation as spectators reached 24 students (60%).

Survey of teachers and directors. Of the 8 respondents, 4 (50%) reported having knowledge of physical recreation activities and traditional games; 3 (37.5%) considered themselves to have some knowledge, and 1 (12.5%) reported having no knowledge. 100% believed that traditional games could be integrated into the school setting.

Among the suggested activities, they selected: Recreational Play (100%), Recreational Festival, Street Games, Swiss Festival, and Kite Flying (75%), and board games (62.5%). They proposed games such as Blind Man's Bluff, Hopscotch, Cuban Balls, Swiss, Yaquis, and Hula Hoop (100%); Tag, Tag, and Cat and Mouse (75%); Guess Who? and Martí's Little House (62.5%); and the Donkey 21 and Tag (37.5%). 62.5% considered that the animation was not developed systematically and that the community participated only sometimes. The schedule they preferred was the morning recess time, the time between 12:40 pm and 2:30 pm, and the Sports for All program (100%); Saturday between 9:00 am and 11:00 am (100%); before the morning program (75%); and after 4:20 pm (50%).

Brainstorming session with children. Their preferences were grouped into five ideas. In the first, they stated interest in ring toss, bowling, sack races, tag, kickball, mini-soccer, ball games, tug-of-war, four corners, Parcheesi, and checkers. In the second, they stated interest in Swiss-style tag, Yaquis (a traditional game), tag, blind man's bluff, hopscotch, hula hoops, hide-and-seek, kite flying, tag, hide-and-seek, and marbles. Among the songs and rounds, they prefered "Alanimo," "Arroz con Leche," "La Pájara Pinta," "El Patio de Mi Casa," and "La Casita de Martí." In the third category, they requested plays, puppet shows, stories, riddles, and tongue twisters. In the fourth and fifth, they

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preferred Monday through Friday, the midday schedule (12:30 pm to 2:30 pm), school break, Saturday mornings, and activities during the Pioneer Camp.

Diagnostic synthesis by dimensions. Recovery was partial (games recognized but not inventoried). Practice was low (only two activities clearly included). Diversity was limited (few options and repeated games). Transmission was weak (no stable intergenerational mechanisms). Appropriation was irregular (children's interest, but lack of knowledge of rules). Inclusion was insufficient (most as spectators). Institutionalization was incipient (no stable presence in schedules or plans). Triangulation of sources corroborated these regularities.

Results and discussion

Strategy design and preparation workshops

Based on the diagnosis, a physical-recreational strategy was developed with five components: strategic objective, strategic foundation, strategic management components, scope, and ways of implementation. Its structure included four phases: diagnostic, planning, execution, and evaluation, with feedback among them.

Two workshops were conducted with teachers and directors. Workshop 1 focused on the selection of physical-recreational activities and traditional games. Workshop 2 focused on the planning and development of these activities. Both workshops employed the explanatory-demonstrative method and fostered collaborative work among the researcher, the physical education teachers from the boarding school, and the recreation teachers from the sports complex.

The strategy explicitly incorporated actions aimed at the dimensions of revitalization: inventory of local games (recovery); weekly frequency during recess and in scheduled activities (practice); inclusion of varied games and rounds, songs, riddles and tongue twisters (diversity); participation of families and community in festivals and workshops (transmission); spaces for children's decision-making and valuation (appropriation); adaptations for students with disabilities (inclusion); and presence in the schedule, during recess and in the planning (institutionalization).

Application and evaluation

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To implement the designed strategy, a physical-recreational activity plan was developed that took into account the identified likes and preferences, as well as the available institutional schedules and spaces. Table 2 presents a detailed outline of this plan, which was implemented during the school year.

Table 2. Physical-recreational activity plan for the revitalization of traditional games

Activity	Traditional games and objective	Participants and responsibles	Frequency and place	Assessment
Recreational festival, rescuing traditions	Swiss Game in variations: four corners, handkerchief, rescue, cat and mouse, chain. Encourage participation in activities with traditional games.	Children from the second cycle, teachers, administrators, Pioneers' Base Guide and community. Physical Education and Recreation teachers.	Annually or on relevant dates; areas of the semi-boarding school.	Inductive sentence completion; observation.
Let's play recreationally, jump, laugh and play	Kangaroo hop, sack races, rescue, handkerchief game, and tug-of-war. Encourage participation.	Children, teachers, administrators, and the community. Physical Education and Recreation teachers.	November; patio or sports area.	Inductive sentence completion; observation.
Festival of pon and swiss	Individual and group games of pon	Children, teachers,	December; downtown areas.	Inductive sentence

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	and Swiss. Encourage participation in preferred games.	administrators, and the community. Physical Education and Recreation teachers.		completion; observation.
Traditional Games Festival	Sack race, bowling, tug-of-war, hoop rolling, stilts, jacks, blind man's bluff, and cat and mouse. Develop traditional games and instill values.	Children, teachers, administrators, art instructors, and community members. Physical Education and Recreation teachers.	April; downtown areas.	Inductive sentence completion; observation by areas.
Between games, riddles and tongue twisters at the Pioneer Camp	Kite flying, riddles, and tongue twisters. Engage in physical and recreational activities during camping.	Children, teachers, administrators, and the community. Recreation teacher.	April; open areas of the center.	Inductive sentence completion; observation.
Street plan	Ring toss and other community games. Encourage participation in preferred games.	Children, teachers, administrators, and the community. Physical	March; community and surrounding areas.	Inductive sentence completion; observation.

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		Education and Recreation teachers.		
Enlivening the school break: through games and songs	Parcheesi, checkers, Yaquis, blind man's bluff, the young lady, cheer up, the spotted bird, I have a doll, my backyard, and rice pudding. Develop participation during recess.	Children, teachers, administrators, Pioneer Base Guides, and art instructors. Physical Education teachers and Pioneer Base Guides.	Weekly, Wednesday; hallways, central plaza and classrooms.	Inductive sentence completion; observation.

Specialists Assessment

The seven specialists assessed the strategy using seven indicators. Six specialists (85.7%) considered the strategy necessary and useful, assessing it as Very Suitable, and one (14.2%) assesses it as Suitable. Five specialists (57.1%) assess the design of the workshops and activities as Very Suitable, and two (28.5%) assessed it as Suitable. 100% considered the activities to be appropriate for the likes and preferences of the children. Regarding diversity, four specialists (57.1%) assessed it as Suitable and three (42.8%) as Very Suitable. Regarding participation, five (71.4%) assessed it as Very Suitable and two (28.5%) as Suitable. 100% considered the facilitation to be Very Suitable. Regarding the integration of community factors, five (71.4%) assessed it as Suitable and three (42.6%) as Very Suitable.

The specialists agreed that the proposal does not require large resources, favors the participation of everyone and can be integrated into the Recreational Project of the "Martyrs of Quemado" Sports Complex.

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Application and evaluation

The activities were implemented in the schedule suggested by the girls, boys and professionals: Monday through Friday, between 12:45 pm and 2:00 pm, after 4:20 pm, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. In April, during Victory Week, activities were held on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 10:00 am; the days of the Pioneer Camp were also used. All seven activities were implemented, with attendance varying depending on the activity and schedule.

After implementing the activities, the final results showed significant improvement: the presence of traditional games improved from Fair to Good (from 28.5% to 85.7%); diversity was the dimension with the greatest improvement, eliminating the Bad rating (from 28.5% to 0%); and active participation increased from 32.5% to 90%. The children expressed feeling happiness and joyful while playing with their teachers. The school break was established as a weekly activity, and the activities were incorporated into the school's lesson plans.

Table 3. Comparison of initial and final results

Dimension	Initial assessment	Final evaluation	Main change
Leisure	Good	Good	It remained stable.
Planning	Fair	Good	The Good increased from 42.8% to 71.4%.
Traditional games	Fair	Good	The Good increased from 28.5% to 85.7%.
Diversity	Fair	Good	Good increased from 14.2% to 85.7%; Bad from 28.5% to 0%.
Animation	Bad	Regular	Bad decreased from 57.1% to 0%; Fair 57.1%.
Multifactorial integration	Bad	Regular	Regular increased from 28.5% to 71.4%; Bad remained at 14.2%.
Active participation	Fair	Good	It increased from 32.5% to 90%; as viewers from 60% to 12.5%.

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Results of the PNI. The PNI applied to directors and teachers reflected the positive aspects of the workshop for exchanging experiences, the explanation of the manifestations of Physical Recreation, and the teamwork among Physical Education and Recreation teachers. As negative aspects, they pointed to the still-limited integration of community stakeholders and the attendance of teachers from Second cycle. They highlighted the children’s motivation, the games, and the music as being interesting.

Discussion

The results of this research align with and support the ideas of Villalón (2006), who attributes a crucial role to traditional games in schools viewing them as an opportunity to perpetuate culture. When children engage in these games, they connect with the culture of their society, learn about the lives of their parents and grandparents, and create opportunities for family interaction. In this study, the incorporation of traditional games into festivals, school breaks, and community activities proved to be an effective means of perpetuating for such perpetuation, although it is acknowledged that intergenerational transmission still requires more precise measurement.

Likewise, we agree with Ramírez et al. (2017), who points out that, before beginning the game, the teacher should create a favorable psychological environment, ensuring that the games are simple, cheerful, dynamic, and short in duration, while following the methodological steps for teaching them. In the present study, preparing teachers through workshops was key to improving planning and avoiding improvisation, which was reflected in the improvement in the quality of planning from -"Fair" to "Good" -following the intervention.

These findings also align with the perspective of Solís et al. (2025), who argues for the urgent implementation of pedagogical strategies that promote emotional stability, self-regulation, and psychosocial well-being, highlighting traditional games emerging as a pedagogical tool of significant formative value. Furthermore, this aligns with the views of Rodríguez, Rodríguez, and Hernández (2021), who consider physical-recreational activities to be ideal participatory spaces for children to engage in traditional games, both within the school environment and in the community, as evidenced by the increase in active participation from 32.5% to 90%.

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Furthermore, the proposal aligns with Díaz et al. (2023), who emphasize the value of traditional games in relation to the values of Cuban identity incorporating musical themes from the Cuban and Latin American musical repertoire of childhood and adolescence, this perspective was taken into account when designing the cycle games and songs included in the activities.

Regarding the revitalization process, the results indicate a favorable trend across several dimensions: play based practices increased, greater diversity, active participation improved, traditional games were integrated into activity planning and recess periods, and the children demonstrated high levels of engagement and satisfaction. These findings are consistent with the operational definition adopted for the study. However, the animation and multifactorial integration remained at a Fair level, indicating that, although there was substantial improvement in play-based activities, challenges persist regarding the systematization of animation and the strengthening ties with all community stakeholders, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the proposal.

Conclusions

1. The analysis of the theoretical-methodological foundations provided a basis for the revitalization of traditional games, framing it as a multidimensional process encompassing practical recovery, diversity, transmission, appropriation, inclusion and institutionalization.
2. The diagnostic assessment identified limitations in planning, diversity, activities, and participation, confirming that the problem extended well beyond the mere absence of games. Clear preferences were identified for games such as hopscotch, jacks, Swiss tag, and handkerchief tag, among others, as well as for riddles and tongue twisters.
3. A physical-recreational strategy was developed consisting of five components and four phases, it integrated seven contextualized activities that incorporated explicit actions for each dimension of revitalization (inventory, weekly frequency, community participation, inclusion and sustainability).
4. The specialists assessed the strategy as necessary and useful, with a predominance of the "Very Suitable" and "Suitable" categories, confirming its relevance to improve the planning and development of physical-recreational activities.
5. Following its implementation, active participation increased (from 32.5% to 90%), planning and diversity improved, and the children expressed satisfaction and interest in continued participa-

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tion. These results indicate a positive contribution toward revitalizing of recreational traditions within the school setting.

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