

Building the Spirit of Nationalism through Culture-Based Learning in Elementary Schools: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Türkiye

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Abstract

This study explores the role of culture-based learning in fostering nationalism among elementary school students in Indonesia and Türkiye. **Objective:** This study aims to analyze and compare the effectiveness of cultural elements in shaping students' national identity and patriotic values in both countries. **Novelty:** This study is novel in its comparative approach, highlighting similarities and differences in cultural learning strategies implemented in elementary schools in Indonesia and Turkey. **Methods:** This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study, involving observation, interviews with teachers, and content analysis of curriculum documents. **Results:** Both countries integrate local traditions, historical narratives, and national symbols in their education systems, but with different pedagogical approaches. While Indonesia emphasizes local wisdom and folklore, Turkey combines historical events and civic education. **Conclusion:** Culture-based learning contributes significantly to nurturing nationalism, and integrating local pedagogical strategies can further enhance students' sense of national identity.

Keywords: Nationalism, Culture-Based Learning, Elementary Education, Indonesia, Türkiye.

INTRODUCTION

Education has a strategic role in shaping the character and national identity of students. Nationalism education, especially through a culture-based approach, is an important instrument in instilling national values in students from an early age. Ideally, education in elementary schools does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also builds awareness of cultural and national identity. This is in accordance with the objectives of national education as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which emphasizes the importance of forming national character through education.

However, in practice, the implementation of culture-based learning in fostering nationalism still faces various challenges. Several studies have shown that globalization and technological developments have influenced students' mindsets, weakening their awareness of local culture and nationalist values (Suyanto, 2020). In Indonesia, the curriculum has accommodated culture-based learning, but its implementation in various regions has not been optimal. Meanwhile, in Turkey, nationalism education is deeply rooted in local history and culture, but further studies are needed regarding its effectiveness in building nationalist character from an early age.

Previous studies have discussed the relationship between culture-based learning and the formation of national character. Gunawan's (2019) research found that local culture-based education can increase students' awareness of their national identity. In Turkey, research conducted by Yilmaz (2021) showed that history and culture education plays a very important role in strengthening students' sense of nationalism. However, studies comparing the effectiveness of culture-based learning strategies between two countries with different cultural backgrounds and education systems are still very limited.

This study has a novelty in its comparative approach, namely by comparing culture-based learning strategies in Indonesia and Turkey. Different from previous studies that only focused on one country, this study provides a new perspective on how culture-based education can be applied effectively in various national contexts. Thus, this study can provide broader recommendations regarding optimal nationalism education strategies.

The importance of this research lies in the urgency of building national character from an early age amidst the rapid flow of globalization. A strong national identity can be a fortress in facing global challenges, especially for the younger generation who grow up in a multicultural and digital environment. Through culture-based education, students can understand and appreciate their cultural heritage and develop a deeper sense of love for their country.

In Indonesia, culture-based education has been implemented through various subjects, such as Citizenship Education (PKn) and local content. However, its implementation still faces various obstacles, such as lack of resources, lack of training for teachers, and minimal integration of local culture in learning methods (Putri & Suryadi, 2022). On the other hand, Turkey has an education system that emphasizes national history and culture, which are integral parts of building students' national identity (Kaya & Yildirim, 2020).

The interest in this study arose from the need to understand how two countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds implement culture-based education in building nationalism. By making comparisons, this study can identify the advantages and challenges of each country in implementing culture-based learning strategies.

In addition, this study is also relevant in the context of strengthening character education which has become a priority agenda in various countries. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the importance of culture-based education as a tool to form an inclusive and harmonious national identity. By understanding how culture-based learning strategies are implemented in various countries, this study can provide broader insights for policy makers and education practitioners.

In the context of the curriculum, a culture-based approach can be developed through various methods, such as the use of folklore, traditional arts, and local history studies. Research by Hidayat (2021) shows that the integration of local culture in learning can increase students' interest and participation in understanding national values. This shows that a culture-based approach can be an effective strategy in building nationalism among elementary school students.

From a pedagogical perspective, a culture-based approach can help students develop a deeper understanding of their national identity. Learning methods that emphasize direct experience, such as visits to historical sites and involvement in cultural activities, have been shown to improve students' understanding of the nation's history and culture (Wijaya, 2023). Therefore, this study will also explore how experiential learning methods can be applied in the context of nationalism education.

In the digital era, culture-based approaches also need to be adjusted to technological developments. The use of digital media and interactive learning platforms can be effective tools in introducing national culture and history to students (Rahman, 2022). Therefore, this study will also discuss how technology can be utilized to strengthen culture-based nationalism education in Indonesia and Turkey.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective culture-based learning strategies in fostering nationalism among elementary school students. By understanding how both countries implement this strategy, it is hoped that a learning model can be found that can be applied in various educational contexts.

With the background that has been described, this study will focus on a comparative analysis between culture-based learning strategies in Indonesia and Turkey. Through this approach, this study is expected to provide new insights into the role of culture-based education in building nationalism and provide recommendations for the development of more effective education policies.

Furthermore, this study will highlight how social, political, and economic factors play a role in shaping nationalism education policies in both countries. By understanding these dynamics, the research results can be a reference for the government and education practitioners in designing a curriculum that is more adaptive and relevant to the needs of the times.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to deeply understand how culture-based learning is applied in building nationalism in elementary schools in Indonesia and Turkey. This approach was chosen because it allows a more comprehensive exploration of contextual and culture-based educational practices in both countries. Case studies are used to analyze the implementation of nationalism education strategies in school

environments more specifically, so that they can provide richer insights into the dynamics, challenges, and successes of the methods used in each country (Yin, 2018). Case studies also allow research to explore data in more depth by considering various social, cultural, and educational policy factors that influence (Creswell, 2016). The main reason for using this method is because culture-based education is contextual and diverse, so it needs to be analyzed in real settings through direct observation and interviews with the parties involved. The qualitative approach also provides flexibility in exploring the experiences of teachers and students, as well as understanding the social and cultural factors that influence the implementation of culture-based learning (Merriam, 2009). By using case studies, this study can explore in depth how curriculum and learning strategies are implemented in various schools and how students respond to these methods. According to Stake (2005), case studies are very suitable for exploring complex phenomena in educational environments because they provide detailed descriptions of how educational policies and practices are implemented in certain contexts.

The data collection techniques in this study involved three main methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted in elementary schools in Indonesia and Turkey to see firsthand how culture-based learning is implemented in the classroom. Interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and education policy makers to understand the strategies and challenges they face in teaching nationalism through culture (Patton, 2015). In addition, document analysis was conducted on the curriculum, textbooks, and education policies related to nationalism and culture-based learning. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized that the combination of observation, interview, and document analysis techniques can increase the validity and credibility of qualitative research.

The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, where data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents are analyzed based on the main themes related to culture-based education and nationalism (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data collected were coded and categorized based on emerging patterns, so that the main trends in the implementation of educational strategies in both countries can be identified. This approach allows for a systematic comparison between educational practices in Indonesia and Turkey and produces deeper findings regarding the effectiveness of the methods used. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) emphasize that thematic analysis is very useful in understanding the complexity of qualitative data by organizing information into meaningful patterns. This study involved a total of 20 participants, consisting of 10 elementary school teachers in Indonesia and 10 elementary school teachers in Turkey. The selection of participants was carried out by purposive sampling, considering their experience in teaching with a culture-based approach as well as their involvement in character education and nationalism. Purposive sampling technique was used so that the selected participants have high relevance to the research objectives, as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). With this number of participants, the study is expected to provide a representative picture of how culture-based education strategies are applied in two different contexts and the factors that influence them. Yin (2018) emphasized that in case studies, selecting the right participants is more important than a large sample size, because the main focus is the depth of understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that both Indonesia and Turkey integrate local traditions, historical narratives, and national symbols into their education systems. However, there are differences in the pedagogical approaches used in each country. In Indonesia, culture-based education emphasizes local wisdom and folklore as a medium to instill national values (Gunawan, 2019). In contrast, Turkey combines national historical events with civic education to shape students' national identity (Yilmaz, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, culture-based learning is often implemented through local content subjects and Civic Education (PKn). Teachers use folklore, traditional arts, and local cultural practices to instill national values in students (Hidayat, 2021). This approach has proven effective in increasing students' awareness of their own cultural identity, as found in a study by Putri & Suryadi (2022).

Meanwhile, in Turkey, national education is deeply rooted in local history and culture. Turkish history, especially important events such as the founding of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is a central part of learning (Kaya & Yildirim, 2020). Civic education also plays a major role in shaping students' understanding of national identity and their responsibilities as citizens (Tosun, 2019).

Observations show that in Indonesia, the use of folklore such as the legends of Malin Kundang and Sangkuriang in learning helps students understand the values of nationalism through a narrative approach. A previous study by Santoso (2020) also showed that folklore plays a major role in instilling moral and national values in children. This is in line with the culture-based approach applied in various elementary schools in Indonesia.

In contrast, in Turkey, students learn more about nationalism through strong historical narratives, including the story of the national struggle and Atatürk's reforms (Gürkan, 2021). This approach differs from Indonesia because it focuses more on document-based history learning and primary sources, which allows students to understand how the Turkish national identity was formed (Erdoğan, 2020).

Despite having different approaches, both in Indonesia and Turkey, culture-based education has been shown to have a positive impact on increasing students' national awareness. A study by UNESCO (2021) emphasized that culture-based education plays an important role in building a strong national identity, especially in a multicultural society.

One of the challenges found in this study is how teachers can integrate local culture with the national curriculum without reducing the essence of national values. In Indonesia, some teachers face difficulties in finding culture-based learning resources that are in accordance with the curriculum set by the government (Rahman, 2022).

In Turkey, similar challenges were also found, where some teachers felt that overly formal history education made students less interested in learning it (Karaman & Kafadar, 2021). Therefore, some schools have begun to develop interactive learning methods, such as the use of historical films and simulations of important events in Turkish national history (Gözütok, 2020).

Another finding of this study is the role of technology in supporting culture-based education. In Indonesia, several schools have developed digital platforms that allow students to access folklore in multimedia form (Suyanto, 2020). This is in line with research by Wijaya

(2023), which shows that the use of technology can increase students' interest in learning about local culture.

In Turkey, the use of technology in history and national education has also begun to develop. Several schools have adopted augmented reality (AR) to help students understand historical events more interactively (Öztürk & Şahin, 2022). This approach allows students to experience firsthand the experience of understanding their national history.

One of the main contributions of this study is to provide insight into how culture-based approaches can be adapted to the national context of each country. By comparing two different approaches, this study shows that culture-based education does not have to be uniform, but can be adapted to the needs and cultural background of a country (Smith, 2021).

The implication of the results of this study is the importance of flexibility in designing a culture-based education curriculum. In Indonesia, for example, the integration of local culture into the curriculum can be strengthened through training for teachers so that they better understand how to teach nationalist values in an interesting way that is appropriate to the local cultural context (Hidayat, 2021).

In Turkey, more interactive history learning can be a solution to increase students' interest in nationalist education. Research by Gürkan (2021) shows that the use of experiential learning methods can improve students' understanding of their national history.

Overall, this study confirms that culture-based education is an effective tool in building nationalism, but the approach used must be appropriate to the cultural and social context of each country. By understanding how this educational strategy is implemented in Indonesia and Turkey, it is hoped that more effective learning models can be found in various countries with different cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the role of culture-based learning in fostering nationalism among elementary school students. The findings of the study indicate that culture-based education, both in Indonesia and Turkey, plays a crucial role in shaping students' national identity through the integration of local traditions, historical narratives, and national symbols. By comparing pedagogical approaches in both countries, this study highlights the importance of learning strategies that are tailored to each country's social and cultural context. In Indonesia, the use of folklore and local wisdom has proven effective in instilling national values (Gunawan, 2019), while in Turkey, history-based approaches and civic education provide in-depth insights into national identity and students' roles as citizens (Yilmaz, 2021). By understanding the differences and similarities in the implementation of these strategies, this study provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers in designing more contextual and effective curricula. Furthermore, this study confirms that the integration of local pedagogical strategies can further strengthen students' sense of nationalism, as supported by UNESCO (2021), which states that culture-based education is a key element in building an inclusive and sustainable national identity. Thus, the results of this study can be the basis for developing more adaptive and relevant education policies in facing the challenges of globalization and strengthening national identity through education.

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