

Research Article

Strengthening the National Identity of Indonesian Children Abroad through an Educational Program on Indonesian Islands and Culture

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Abstract: This study aims to enhance knowledge, foster a sense of patriotism, and strengthen the national identity of Indonesian children living abroad through an educational program introducing Indonesian islands and culture. Children living in foreign environments tend to interact more frequently with foreign cultures, potentially leading to a lack of familiarity with their own national culture. Therefore, this activity was designed as a fun and easily understandable learning experience to ensure children remain connected to their roots. The method used was qualitative descriptive research employing direct observation of 30–40 participants over a two-week period. The program was implemented in several stages: orientation, presentation of materials, video screenings, drawing and coloring activities, and traditional games. The results showed that participants demonstrated increased knowledge of the names of major islands in Indonesia as well as various regional cultures, such as traditional attire, dances, and folk songs. Additionally, the program successfully fostered a sense of pride, boosted self-confidence, and strengthened camaraderie among participants. The children appeared enthusiastic and active in every activity provided. Thus, this educational program proved effective as a means to introduce Indonesian culture while strengthening the national identity of Indonesian children abroad through engaging and enjoyable learning methods.

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1. Introduction

Indonesian children living abroad face unique challenges in understanding their nation's culture and identity. Living in a different environment means they interact more frequently with foreign cultures than with Indonesian culture. This can lead to children becoming less familiar with their own heritage. If left unaddressed, this could diminish their love for their homeland (O'Connor & Faas, 2012). Therefore, concerted efforts are needed to help children continue to recognize and cherish Indonesian culture even while living far from their home country.

In an effort to preserve national identity, the Indonesian government has established several regulations that serve as a foundation for the education and development of the younger generation. This is outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education

System, which states that education aims to develop students' potential so they become individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and love their nation and country (Purwaningsih & Kanukisya, 2023). Additionally, Law No. 24 of 2009 on the National Flag, Language, and Emblem also emphasizes the importance of using the Indonesian language and familiarizing oneself with national symbols as part of national identity. With these regulations in place, activities to introduce culture and national identity to children including those living abroad become crucial to implement.

National identity is a distinctive characteristic possessed by a nation. This identity can take the form of language, culture, customs, and the values embraced by society. For children, the introduction to national identity is vital because it fosters a sense of pride in their country. If children are exposed to Indonesian culture from a young age, they will find it easier to love and preserve that culture in the future (Park & Kyei, 2011).

Indonesia is home to numerous islands and a rich tapestry of cultures. Each region possesses its own unique characteristics, such as traditional attire, dances, cuisine, and local languages. This diversity is a source of pride for the Indonesian people. However, without early exposure, children may remain unaware of this diversity. Therefore, education about Indonesia's islands and cultures must be provided consistently to ensure it remains ingrained in children's minds (Dermawan et al., 2024).

Through an educational program introducing Indonesia's islands and cultures, children can learn in an enjoyable way. These activities can be conducted in various ways, such as looking at maps, watching cultural videos, playing traditional games, and simple practices like drawing or coloring. This approach prevents children from getting bored and makes it easier for them to understand the material presented.

These activities also serve as a form of community service for students. Through these initiatives, students can help Indonesian children living abroad stay connected to their national culture. Additionally, these activities strengthen bonds among Indonesian children and foster a sense of pride in being part of the Indonesian nation (Namaskara et al., 2023).

2. Literature Review

National identity is an important part of children's development, especially for Indonesian children who live abroad. National identity refers to a sense of belonging, pride, and emotional connection to one's country. It includes understanding national symbols, culture, language, and shared values. For children who grow up outside Indonesia, maintaining national identity can be more challenging because daily life is influenced by foreign culture. Education plays a key role in helping children recognize their roots and build a strong sense of identity as Indonesians. Learning about their country helps children feel connected even when they live far from their homeland (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

National identity can be strengthened through structured learning activities that introduce cultural knowledge and national values in a simple and engaging way. Children learn more effectively when they are involved in interactive activities such as storytelling, games, and visual learning. These activities help children understand important elements of identity such as language, traditions, and geography. Active participation allows children to remember information better and feel more connected to the learning content. This type of learning also builds emotional attachment to national identity (Saputra & Wulandari, 2022).

Geographical knowledge about Indonesian islands is an important part of national identity education. Indonesia is known as an archipelagic country with many islands, each having unique characteristics, culture, and traditions. Learning about islands helps children understand the diversity of their country. It also builds awareness that Indonesia is rich in culture and natural resources. When children learn the names of islands, their locations, and their cultural uniqueness, they begin to see Indonesia as a unified yet diverse nation. This understanding supports the development of pride and appreciation toward their homeland (Hidayat et al., 2021).

Learning about Indonesian culture is equally important in strengthening identity. Culture includes traditional clothing, dances, music, food, and local customs. Cultural education helps children recognize values such as respect, cooperation, and unity. Introducing culture through visual media, songs, and creative activities makes learning more enjoyable and easier to understand. Children are more likely to remember cultural knowledge when they are

involved in activities such as drawing traditional houses or learning simple traditional dances. Cultural learning also builds respect for diversity within Indonesia (Lestari & Nugroho, 2022).

Educational programs designed for children abroad need to consider their learning environment and experiences. Children living outside Indonesia may have limited exposure to Indonesian culture and geography. As a result, educational programs must be simple, interesting, and interactive. Learning materials should use visuals, maps, videos, and hands-on activities to help children understand better. Programs that combine knowledge and practice are more effective because children can see and experience what they learn. This helps them build stronger connections with Indonesian identity (Putra et al., 2023).

Interactive learning methods play a major role in helping children understand national identity. Methods such as group discussion, games, and project-based learning allow children to be active participants. These methods encourage children to ask questions, share ideas, and express their understanding. Learning becomes more meaningful when children are involved directly. Interaction between teachers and students also builds confidence and improves communication skills. Active learning supports both knowledge and emotional development related to national identity (Wibowo & Santoso, 2022).

Visual and media-based learning is very effective for children, especially at the elementary level. Pictures, maps, videos, and animations help children understand abstract concepts more easily. For example, maps of Indonesian islands help children see the location and size of each island. Videos of cultural performances help children understand traditions in a real way. Visual learning makes information clearer and more interesting. It also helps children remember what they learn for a longer time (Sari & Handayani, 2023).

Community-based education also supports the strengthening of national identity among children abroad. Learning activities organized by Indonesian communities, schools, or cultural centers provide opportunities for children to connect with their culture. These activities may include cultural festivals, language classes, and art workshops. Social interaction with other Indonesian children helps build a sense of belonging. Children feel that they are part of a larger community that shares the same identity. This experience strengthens emotional ties to Indonesia (Prasetyo et al., 2024).

Teacher support is very important in the success of educational programs. Teachers need to present materials in a simple and engaging way so that children can easily understand. Guidance, motivation, and encouragement from teachers help children stay interested in learning. Teachers also play a role in creating a positive learning environment where children feel comfortable to express ideas. Good communication between teacher and students makes learning more effective and enjoyable (Utami & Kurniawan, 2022).

The integration of geography and cultural education is an effective way to strengthen national identity. When children learn about Indonesian islands together with their cultural uniqueness, they gain a complete understanding of their country. This integration helps children connect knowledge with real life meaning. They not only know facts but also understand the value behind them. Learning becomes more meaningful because it combines knowledge, feelings, and experience. This type of education supports the development of identity in a balanced way (Setiawan et al., 2025).

Educational programs that combine knowledge of Indonesian islands and culture can significantly strengthen national identity among children abroad. These programs help children understand their country, appreciate cultural diversity, and feel proud of being Indonesian. Learning that involves participation, creativity, and interaction makes the process more effective. Children not only gain knowledge but also develop emotional attachment to their identity. This shows that education has a strong role in maintaining national identity even when children live outside their home country.

3. Proposed Method

This activity was carried out in several stages, namely socialization, material delivery, and hands-on practice. The program was conducted with Indonesian children living abroad over a two-week period.

The method used is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques involving direct observation during the activity. The subjects of the activity are approximately 30–40 Indonesian children.

The stages of the activity include: (1) Introduction to the map of Indonesia and the names of major islands. (2) Explanation of regional cultures, such as traditional dances and attire. (3) Screening of videos on Indonesian culture. (4) Simple activities such as drawing maps and coloring traditional clothing. (5) Traditional Indonesian games. With this method, children not only listen to explanations but also actively participate in the activities.

4. Results and Discussion

The educational program introducing the islands and cultures of Indonesia is a highly beneficial activity for Indonesian children living abroad. This activity serves as a means for children to rediscover the richness of the Indonesian nation, which encompasses various islands, customs, and regional cultures. This introduction is conducted in an engaging manner so that children can easily understand the material and do not get bored. Additionally, this activity helps children to remain mindful of their roots as part of the Indonesian nation.

Learning about Indonesia's islands and culture is not merely about providing information but also about fostering children's love and appreciation for their country. Through this activity, children learn that Indonesia consists of many large islands such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. Furthermore, they are introduced to various cultural elements, including traditional attire, regional dances, local songs, and signature dishes from each region (Loretha et al., 2023).

This educational activity was conducted through various methods, such as presenting materials, showing videos, playing games, and hands-on practice. The children appeared very enthusiastic about participating in every activity provided. They actively asked questions and tried to answer the questions posed by the facilitators. This indicates that the activity was successful and had a positive impact on the children.

The objectives of this training program are to: (1) Enhance children's knowledge, participants are expected to become familiar with the various islands in Indonesia and learn the names of the regions within them. (2) Foster a sense of patriotism, through this activity, the children are expected to feel a sense of pride in Indonesia even though they live abroad. (3) Boost self-confidence, children are encouraged to speak up and answer questions during the activity. (4) Building a sense of community, activities are conducted together to foster good relationships among participants. (5) Introducing Indonesian culture, children can learn about various aspects of culture, such as traditional clothing, dances, and regional songs. (6) Providing a fun learning experience, children gain new and enjoyable experiences while participating in this activity (Lin, 2013).

The training session ran smoothly with approximately 30–40 children participating. The participants appeared very enthusiastic from start to finish. They followed each session with full attention and a high level of curiosity. This was evident in their active participation when answering questions and during the hands-on activities.

During the activity, the children did not merely receive information in a conventional manner but were also encouraged to learn through fun and easily understandable methods. The facilitator used a map of Indonesia so the children could directly observe the shapes and locations of the islands. By viewing the map, the children found it easier to remember because they were learning through both sight and sound. In addition, the children were also shown images of traditional clothing and regional dances from various parts of Indonesia. This made the learning atmosphere more likely and engaging. The explanations were given in simple language so that the children could follow the activities well.

After the initial introduction, participants are given a step-by-step explanation of the following key points: (1) The names of the major islands in Indonesia and their locations, the children are introduced to major islands such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. The instructor explains their locations in simple terms, for example, noting that some islands are located in the western, central, and eastern parts of Indonesia. In this way, the children begin to understand that Indonesia consists of many islands spread across a vast area. (2) Examples of culture from each region, such as traditional clothing and dances, children are shown various pictures of traditional clothing and regional dances. They are told that each region has its own distinct characteristics. This helps children become familiar with the cultural diversity found in Indonesia. (3) Regional songs commonly sung in various parts of Indonesia, children are introduced to several easy-to-remember regional songs. During this

activity, they are also encouraged to sing along to make the atmosphere more enjoyable and help them remember the songs more easily. (4) Traditional foods from several regions in Indonesia, the presenter also explained various traditional foods from several regions. The children learned that each region has different and unique foods.

After the presentation, the children were invited to participate in hands on activities so they could try out what they had learned for themselves.

1) Materials used in the activity

The materials used in this activity included:

- a. Drawing paper
- b. Pencils
- c. Colored pencils or crayons
- d. A simple map of Indonesia

All of these materials are easy to use, so the children can participate in the activity effectively.

2) How to conduct the hands-on activity

In this activity, children are asked to draw a simple map of Indonesia by looking at the example provided. After finishing the drawing, they color each island with a different color to make it more attractive and easier to distinguish. Additionally, children are also asked to draw traditional clothing from regions they are familiar with. Throughout the activity, the facilitator provides direct guidance so that children feel supported and remain enthusiastic while completing their tasks.

3) Benefits of the Activity

This activity offers many benefits for the children, including:

- a. Providing children with new knowledge about Indonesia, particularly regarding its islands and cultures.
- b. Boosting children's self confidence when presenting their work.
- c. Fostering a sense of pride in Indonesia's diverse culture.
- d. Improving children's drawing and coloring skills.
- e. Fostering a sense of community as children help one another.
- f. Providing an enjoyable learning experience so that children do not get bored easily.

4) Activity Outcomes

The outcomes achieved in this activity include children beginning to recognize the names of major islands in Indonesia. They can also name several regional cultures, such as traditional clothing and dances. Additionally, there is a noticeable increase in the children's confidence when speaking, for example, when answering questions or describing their drawings.

Throughout the activity, the children also demonstrated development in their thinking. They began to understand that each island has a distinct culture. For instance, they could explain that the culture in one region differs from that of another. This indicates that the children are starting to grasp the diversity present in Indonesia.

Additionally, this activity helps improve the children's social skills. They learn to collaborate with their peers during practical activities. The children help one another, share materials, and engage in simple discussions. This creates a more friendly and enjoyable atmosphere for the activity.

This activity also has a positive impact on the children's emotional development. They feel happy when their drawings receive praise from the instructor. This sense of pride makes them more confident and more enthusiastic about learning.

The educational content provided to the students includes:

- 1) Practicing how to draw a map of Indonesia and identifying the major islands.



Figure 1. Observation

- 2) Teaching material about Indonesian culture, such as traditional clothing and regional dances.



Figure 2. Application of the Materia

- 3) The results of the activities in the form of maps and depictions of Indonesian culture created by the children.



Figure 3. Activity Results

5. Conclusions

From the activities conducted, it can be concluded that the educational program on introducing Indonesian islands and culture is effective in helping Indonesian children abroad understand their national identity. Through these activities, the children gained a better understanding of the names of major islands, regional cultures, songs, and traditional Indonesian foods. They also expressed joy and pride in Indonesia after participating in the activities. The learning process, which involved looking at pictures, listening to explanations,

and engaging in hands on activities, made it easier for the children to understand the material presented.

Additionally, this activity provides a fun learning experience for the children. They not only learn but also play, draw, and interact with their friends. This helps boost the children's self confidence, especially when they dare to speak up and showcase their work. A sense of camaraderie among the participants was also evident as they helped and shared with one another. Therefore, activities like this are highly beneficial to continue so that Indonesian children abroad can continue to know, like, and love their homeland.

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