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# Cultivating Patriotism in Early Childhood Education: The "Angkasa Berbudaya" Program at Angkasa Adisutjipto Kindergarten

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## Abstract

Fostering patriotism in early childhood is a critical challenge in an era of globalisation, where traditional values risk being overshadowed by modern influences. This study investigates the cultivation of patriotism in early childhood through the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program at Angkasa Adisutjipto Kindergarten in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving 20 students, five educators, and the school principal. The program integrates local culture, science, and technology to foster national identity while introducing global perspectives. Arts-based approaches, including traditional dance, angklung music, and marching bands, instil cultural appreciation, self-discipline, and creativity. Additionally, patriotism is embedded through national ceremonies, storytelling, and wearing traditional attire, promoting values like love for the homeland, discipline, and cooperation. Findings indicate that the program supports cognitive, social, and emotional development, contributing to a well-rounded education that balances tradition and modernity. However, challenges include inadequate facilities, limited parental involvement, and the absence of systematic evaluations to assess the program's long-term impact. Recommendations include improving resources, enhancing parental engagement, and incorporating broader multicultural perspectives to strengthen the program's effectiveness. This study underscores the significant role of culturally integrated education in fostering patriotism and social cohesion, offering a replicable model for early childhood education. By blending local heritage with global insights, the program prepares children to value diversity while maintaining a strong sense of national identity. Future research should focus on longitudinal impacts and scalable strategies for integrating patriotism into early education curricula.

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## Introduction

Patriotism plays a crucial role in strengthening social cohesion and national identity, particularly in the face of challenges posed by globalization and shifting cultural values (L. O. Anhusadar & Wulandari, 2019; Karipayev, 2021). In early childhood education (ECE), fostering patriotism provides children with a foundation for understanding their cultural heritage and developing a sense of national pride. Early childhood, often called the "Golden Age," is a critical period marked by rapid cognitive, emotional, and moral development, requiring environmental stimulation to shape essential values (Fadillah & Yusuf, 2022). Programs integrating cultural and moral values into early education address societal challenges such as cultural erosion and individualism while preparing children to appreciate their nation's legacy in a globalised context (Clayback et al., 2024; Luthfillah & Rachman, 2022). Despite its importance, the integration of patriotism into ECE remains underexplored, particularly in culturally diverse societies like Indonesia.

Research indicates that ECE significantly influences children's moral, social, and cognitive development, forming the foundation for lifelong learning and behaviour (Little & Karaolis, 2024; Ningrum & Pamungkas, 2023). Studies from Turkey and China reveal that moral and patriotic education, even when implemented in socio-political challenges, equips children with a sense of identity and prepares them for positive societal contributions (Tay & Yildiriim, 2009; Yi & Vickers, 2024). Additionally, incorporating play and artistic activities in ECE has been shown to stimulate creativity, emotional intelligence, and a deeper understanding of societal values (L. Anhusadar, 2020; Henny et al., 2023). These approaches align with global trends emphasising child-centred, play-based learning methods that encourage active exploration (Tekman & Yeniasir, 2023). However, integrating patriotism into ECE remains highly context-specific and requires further investigation.

Art-based learning is increasingly recognised as an effective means of fostering creativity, emotional expression, and cultural understanding in early education (Vukašinić, 2023; Žarnauskaitė, 2023). Play-based activities incorporating cultural and artistic elements enhance motivation, reduce anxiety, and strengthen communication skills, especially for young learners (Tekman & Yeniasir, 2023). In Indonesia, the "Independent Learning" curriculum highlights art as a vital component of holistic education, emphasising its role in literacy, science, and social-emotional development (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia, 2020). Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating these cultural and artistic activities, helping children develop confidence, self-expression, and respect for traditions (Anggraeni & Pamungkas, 2023; Kim, 2020). These practices demonstrate the potential for embedding national values, such as patriotism, through arts education.

Cultural and historical education has proven effective in instilling patriotism and fostering emotional connections to national heritage. Research on heritage sites and "dark tourism" destinations highlights their educational value in expanding historical knowledge and shaping patriotic values (Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019). Similarly, heritage-based programs, such as those at Kamehameha Schools in Hawaii, use traditional art and narratives to preserve Indigenous identity while fostering a sense of local patriotism (Watson, 2020). Citizenship education in Europe further illustrates how structured cultural programs promote civic values among diverse populations, encouraging equality and democratic ideals (Delgado-Algarra et al., 2020; Janmaat, 2008). These findings underscore the importance of embedding cultural narratives into educational frameworks to nurture a sense of belonging and national loyalty.

Implementing patriotic education faces various challenges, often due to contextual and systemic limitations. Studies from Turkey and Kazakhstan reveal that educators frequently struggle to integrate national values into restrictive curricula and resource-constrained environments despite the widespread recognition of their importance (Karipbayev, 2021; Tay & Yildiriim, 2009). In urban areas like China, patriotic programs have elicited mixed reactions, reflecting tensions between traditional values and modern individualism (Naftali, 2021). Parents also play a significant role in supporting value-based education, with studies showing that collaborative efforts between families and schools enhance the effectiveness of patriotism-focused activities (Ploog & Wiktorski, 2024; Tay & Yildiriim, 2009). However, significant gaps remain in designing programs that address these challenges while adapting to the unique needs of young learners.

Although there is growing interest in value-based education, limited research systematically explores the cultivation of patriotism in early childhood. Most studies focus on older students or general moral education, neglecting the unique developmental opportunities presented in early childhood (Fathalizadeh et al., 2024; Naftali, 2018). Moreover, existing frameworks often lack specificity in integrating cultural narratives and arts into patriotic education, particularly in culturally diverse and rapidly modernising societies like Indonesia

(Clayback et al., 2024; Kim, 2020). Educators frequently face challenges in implementing character education programs, such as limited resources and insufficient training in culturally sensitive pedagogy (Luthfillah & Rachman, 2022; Zhang & Yang, 2022). This highlights the need for localised approaches integrating cultural heritage with modern educational practices to foster patriotism.

This study investigates the cultivation of patriotism in early childhood through the "Angkasa Berbudaya" (Cultured Space) program at Angkasa Adisutjipto Kindergarten in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The program instills pride and a sense of national identity in young learners by incorporating cultural arts, traditional attire, and national narratives. This research addresses critical gaps in the literature by providing empirical evidence on culturally specific approaches to character education in early childhood. The findings aim to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and offer practical recommendations for policymakers and educators to develop similar initiatives in diverse contexts. Furthermore, the study underscores the transformative potential of integrating local culture and arts into education to reinforce national values amidst global challenges.

## Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at elucidating the cultivation of patriotism through the "Angkasa Berbudaya" flagship program at Angkasa Adisutjipto Kindergarten, located in Depok District, Sleman Regency. The qualitative approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of social phenomena by describing and analysing participants' perceptions, attitudes, and actions regarding integrating patriotism into art education (Samsu, 2017; Sukmadinata, 2016). The research was conducted during the odd 2022/2023 academic year semester. The subjects included 20 students, 4 class teachers, one extracurricular teacher, and the school principal, all actively involved in implementing or participating in the program. This study investigated how patriotism character traits, such as love for the homeland, discipline, and cooperation, were introduced, reinforced, and internalised through art-learning activities. Special attention was given to how thematic learning activities and traditional dance in extracurricular settings were utilised to instil these values.

Data collection employed multiple methods: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted during art-learning sessions, focusing on intra- and extracurricular activities. Particular emphasis was placed on the extracurricular traditional dance program, which was identified as a medium for instilling patriotic values. Researchers observed student participation, teacher-student interactions, and the methods used to introduce and reinforce patriotism in these settings. Interviews were conducted with school principals, class teachers, and the extracurricular teacher to gain deeper insights into the planning, execution, and perceived outcomes of the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program. The interview questions explored strategies used in teaching patriotism, challenges faced in implementation, and teachers' reflections on the program's effectiveness (Cresswell, 2017) (Creswell, 2014). Documentation was also collected to provide supplementary evidence, including lesson plans, student portfolios, photos of activities, and videos of traditional dance performances. These artifacts offered tangible examples of how patriotism values were integrated into the curriculum and extracurricular activities.

Data analysis followed the interactive model Miles, Huberman, and Saldana proposed, consisting of three main components: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying the vast information obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation. The condensed

data were then systematically displayed in matrices or diagrams to identify patterns and relationships, mainly focusing on how specific teaching strategies and activities contributed to cultivating patriotism. Lastly, conclusions were drawn and verified iteratively to ensure consistency with the research objectives. The steps of this analytical process are depicted in Figure 1.

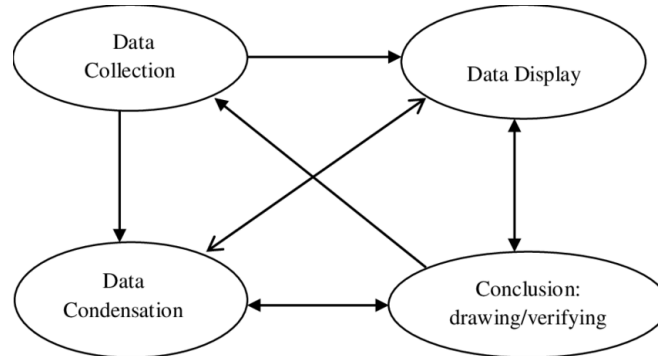


Figure 1. Data Analysis Interactive Model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana

Triangulation was applied to ensure reliability and validity by cross-verifying data from the three sources, allowing for a more robust and credible interpretation of findings. Additionally, member-checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary results with the teachers and school principal to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. This process minimised potential researcher bias and enhanced the credibility of the study.

## Result

This study aimed to analyse the influence of self-regulation on early childhood education (PAUD) teachers' readiness for curriculum change. A quantitative approach with simple linear regression analysis was employed. The sample consisted of 113 PAUD teachers selected through stratified random sampling across three regions of Indonesia (Western, Central, and Eastern). Inclusion criteria included active PAUD teachers holding bachelor's degrees, participating in independent curriculum training, and being registered users of the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) platform.

### "Angkasa Berbudaya" Program

Based on interviews with class teachers and the principal of TK Angkasa Adisutjipto, one of the school's flagship initiatives is the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program. This initiative is designed to integrate the development of local culture with science and technology-based learning while introducing global dimensions. Teachers explained that the program aims to provide a holistic learning experience for children, fostering an appreciation of cultural diversity and bridging multicultural understanding.

*"TK Angkasa Adisutjipto offers ten flagship programs, including 'Angkasa Berbudaya,' which is closely tied to the Indonesian Air Force environment where the school is situated."*

This program instils values rooted in local culture and introduces students to regional traditions through art, history, and cultural exploration from various areas, including global cultures. Aligned with the vision of the Ardhya Garini Foundation, the program aspires to cultivate a generation proficient in science and technology, deeply understanding the values of cultural diversity, and capable of thriving in a global society.

The program's implementation emphasizes local wisdom as its cornerstone. Children are introduced to regional cultures through traditional attire, folk songs, and traditional games,

alongside exposure to international cultures via global art and folktales. This approach creates engaging and relevant learning experiences for young children.

Each school, including TK Angkasa Adisutjipto, operates based on its vision, mission, and goals that underpin its educational activities. The principal highlighted this aspect: *"One of TK Angkasa Adisutjipto's missions is to provide education with a national perspective, aiming to nurture graduates who love their homeland, cherish the environment, care for others, and value themselves."*

The "Angkasa Berbudaya" program integrates values of love for the nation, the environment, and fellow human beings into thematic national learning topics. For instance, it introduces the history of the country's struggle through themes of heroes and independence. Environmental values are reinforced through reforestation activities and education on local ecosystems. To build social values, children participate in collaborative projects emphasising tolerance, empathy, and responsibility.

The program also connects children with their national identity through symbols of the nation. Collaborations with the Indonesian Air Force at the Adisutjipto Airbase provide unique activities such as making paper aeroplanes, learning about military professions, and fostering a sense of patriotism.

### Arts Education

Art is a primary approach within the program to instilling character values. It not only introduces children to local culture but also helps them understand the richness of global diversity. Teachers emphasised that art allows children to experiment, discover their interests, and develop self-discipline.

*"Art activities aim not to train children to become artists but to provide them with opportunities to discover themselves and build self-discipline" (Manokore et al., 2023).*

In the "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum implemented at TK Angkasa, art is integral to learning in curricular and extracurricular activities. Within the curriculum, art is woven into themes that instil patriotism, such as drawing on topics of heroes or independence, singing national songs, and narrating stories of historical figures. Extracurricular programs include creative dance, angklung music, and marching band activities.

Creative dance, such as the "Tari Lilin" (Candle Dance), is simplified for easy engagement, ensuring children can comfortably follow the movements and music.



Figure 2. Documentation of Activities: Dance Art Activities

Documentation of creative dance activities at TK Angkasa reflects the enthusiasm and excitement of children in exploring local culture. Through dances like "Tari Lilin," traditional culture is introduced using simple movements accompanied by familiar conventional music. These activities are entertaining and serve as a medium to instil a love for culture and patriotism from an early age.

Extracurricular programs extend artistic learning through initiatives such as creative dance, angklung music, and marching band performances. Creative dance introduces children to simple traditional movements designed for accessibility, paired with music that resonates with young learners. Playing angklung and participating in marching band activities, children learn about traditional musical instruments, collaborate in groups, and express themselves through musical art.

These artistic engagements are vital as a source of entertainment and tools for developing motor, social, and emotional skills. They simultaneously enhance cognitive abilities while reinforcing values of nationalism and teamwork, ensuring children grow holistically with a deep sense of cultural appreciation.

### Fostering Patriotism

Patriotism is instilled through various project-based activities and daily routines, emphasising cultural values, nationalism, and teamwork. One critical implementation is through the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)*, designed to introduce children to the values of love for their country practically and enjoyably. These activities embed noble principles and provide meaningful learning experiences for children from an early age.

Activities under P5 include collaborations with the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU), such as making paper aeroplanes together, which helps children understand the military's roles and duties in protecting the nation. Additionally, wearing traditional attire has become a regular part of the school routine—for example, wearing *batik* every Tuesday and Yogyakarta's signature *lurik* every *Kamis Pahing*. These traditions are designed to familiarise children consistently with their cultural identity.

National holidays are another crucial moment for fostering nationalism. Children participate in simple ceremonies, sing national songs, and hear stories about Indonesian heroes. These activities introduce national symbols while teaching children to appreciate the struggles of their nation's heroes. Collectively, these efforts serve as practical tools for building patriotic character in young learners.

*"Through intramural activities, we can monitor children's development per the day's learning theme."*

Art plays a pivotal role in fostering patriotism among children. Through activities like regional dances, children are introduced to local cultures, particularly those of Yogyakarta, promoting pride in their nation. Beyond dance, music and other cultural symbols help children deeply internalise the values of love for their homeland. These artistic endeavours support the development of nationalistic character in children from an early age.

However, interviews with teachers and the principal revealed several program implementation challenges. A significant obstacle is the lack of adequate facilities, such as insufficient traditional musical instruments for all students, which limits full participation. Additionally, parental involvement remains limited, with many parents not actively supporting arts and cultural activities at home. This gap highlights the need for more significant support to strengthen the alignment between school-based learning and home environments.

Although structured activities are in place, systematic program evaluations have not been conducted, leaving the program's impact on character development unmeasured. To address this, several developmental steps are needed to enhance the program's effectiveness. These

include program evaluations through parental satisfaction surveys, student progress observations, and analysis of the activities' impact on character formation. Improved facilities, such as additional traditional musical instruments and culturally integrated learning materials, are also essential to ensure that all students can fully participate in artistic activities.

Parental engagement must also be strengthened through art projects at home involving families, creating harmony between school learning and home support. Expanding multicultural integration within learning is necessary so children can understand local culture and appreciate national and international cultural diversity. This broader perspective aims to instil tolerance and acceptance of differences from a young age.

With these developments, the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program can potentially become a holistic learning model that supports cognitive, motor, and social development while shaping a creative, strongly characterised, and profoundly patriotic generation.

## Discussion

The "Angkasa Berbudaya" program at Angkasa Kindergarten represents an innovative approach to early childhood education by integrating cultural and art-based learning to cultivate patriotism and creativity. This flagship program reflects broader educational trends emphasizing the importance of embedding local wisdom and cultural heritage into early education to nurture national pride (Pornpimon et al., 2014). By engaging children with folk songs, traditional clothing, and cultural arts, the program fosters a connection to Indonesia's rich cultural diversity. These activities align with findings that culturally grounded pedagogy builds a strong foundation for character development (Hua & Yang, 2024; Umi Rofiqoh & Muthmainnah, 2024). The emphasis on art and cultural activities enhances cognitive and emotional growth and supports the development of patriotic identity, contributing to holistic child development.

The study's findings reveal that "Angkasa Berbudaya" effectively instils patriotic values through art-centred curricular and extracurricular activities. Activities such as traditional dance, angklung music, and national ceremonies provide experiential learning that deepens children's appreciation for cultural heritage. The use of these artistic mediums helps children internalize values such as leadership, discipline, and courage, which are central to the concept of patriotism (Luthfillah & Rachman, 2022; Rianti et al., 2022). Intracurricular programs, like "Freedom to Learn, Freedom to Play," support creative exploration, while extracurricular activities foster skill-building and teamwork. However, challenges such as limited resources and parental involvement highlight areas where additional support could enhance the program's effectiveness.

The results are consistent with prior research that underscores the transformative potential of art and cultural education in developing patriotism and national identity. For example, Watson (2020) observed that integrating cultural narratives in education fosters a strong sense of local and national pride. Similarly, studies in Turkey show that value-based education, including patriotism, thrives when embedded in meaningful cultural activities (Yıldırım, 2009). However, the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program stands out by incorporating global cultural elements alongside local traditions, addressing the dual needs of preserving heritage and preparing children for global citizenship (Karipbayev, 2021). This dual focus enhances the program's relevance in a rapidly globalising world.

The program's emphasis on art learning reflects broader pedagogical trends linking creative education to character building. Activities like dance and angklung are practical tools

for fostering collaboration, discipline, and emotional expression, which are critical for instilling patriotic values (Saleem et al., 2024; Untari, 2018). Dance activities, for instance, enhance memory and cognitive skills through repetitive movements and songs while introducing cultural narratives that resonate with children (Hasnawati et al., 2022; Immel et al., 2022). These findings support the view that integrating cultural arts into education preserves traditions and equips children with the skills and values needed for personal and social development.

In addition to art activities, the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program addresses Twenty-First Century Learning goals by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving in young learners. Teachers are pivotal in creating inclusive, stimulating environments encouraging exploration and imagination (Dere, 2019). Incorporating culturally relevant materials and practices ensures that learning experiences are meaningful and developmentally appropriate. However, as Spielberger et al. (2024) note, early childhood educators require adequate training and resources to deliver such programs effectively. Enhancing teacher preparation through specialised training modules and ongoing support is critical for sustaining the program's success.

The challenges faced by the program, such as resource limitations and varying levels of parental involvement, underscore the need for systemic interventions. Providing additional facilities, such as traditional musical instruments, and fostering more vital collaboration with parents through home-based cultural projects could significantly enhance outcomes (Hua & Yang, 2024). Furthermore, systematically evaluating the program's impact on children's patriotism and character development is essential for scaling its implementation. Such evaluations would also help identify best practices for integrating art and cultural education into early childhood curricula, ensuring the program remains relevant and practical across diverse settings.

The "Angkasa Berbudaya" program has significant implications for early childhood education, particularly in fostering national identity and social cohesion. Combining local cultural practices with global perspectives offers a replicable model for other institutions seeking to balance tradition and modernity in their curricula. The program's success highlights the potential of culturally integrated education to build resilient and inclusive societies (Delgado-Algarra et al., 2020; Janmaat, 2008). Policymakers and educators are encouraged to adopt similar approaches, recognizing the importance of early education in shaping future generations' values and identities. Fostering patriotism through art and culture in early childhood lays the groundwork for a generation that values heritage while embracing diversity.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the cultivation of patriotism in early childhood through the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program at Angkasa Adisutjipto Kindergarten in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The findings reveal that the program successfully integrates local culture, science, and technology to nurture a sense of national identity while introducing children to global perspectives. The program fosters cultural appreciation, self-discipline, and creativity by employing arts-based approaches such as traditional dance, angklung music, and marching bands. National ceremonies, storytelling, and traditional attire also embed patriotic values. These findings underscore the program's significant contribution to early childhood cognitive, social, and emotional development and its potential as a replicable model for other institutions aiming to balance tradition and modernity in education. Despite its success, limitations such as



inadequate facilities, limited parental involvement, and the absence of systematic program evaluations were identified, highlighting the need for improvements through better resource allocation, enhanced parental engagement, and comprehensive program assessments. Future research should explore the program's long-term impact on children's character development and expand its multicultural dimensions to promote more excellent global citizenship and cross-cultural understanding. Ultimately, the "Angkasa Berbudaya" program demonstrates the transformative role of culturally integrated education in fostering patriotism, cultural appreciation, and inclusivity, offering valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to nurture a generation that values heritage while embracing diversity.

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