



Model of cultivating nationalism attitudes and values among early childhood education through flashcards of nationalism

 Nuruddin Hady¹⁺

 Mohd Hairry Bin Ibrahim²

 Muhammad Mujtaba Habibi³

 M Bintang Hadiansyah Pahlevi⁴

^{1,3,4}The State University of Malang. Semarang Street, 6 Malang City, East Java, Indonesia.

¹Email: nuruddin.hady.fis@um.ac.id

³Email: mujtaba.habibie.fis@um.ac.id

⁴Email: mohammad.bintang.hp.200231@students.um.ac.id

²Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia.

²Email: hairry@fsk.upsi.edu.my



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

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This study aims to find a model for cultivating nationalist attitudes and values. Because many teachers experience difficulties instilling nationalist values and attitudes, especially in early childhood students. The qualitative method was used to analyze this study. The research found that storytelling, role-playing, and singing methods were the methods most widely used by teachers to instill nationalist attitudes and values in students. The research results also found that most early childhood education at the research location provided nationalism material to students regarding national songs, heroes, and historical stories of their struggles, introducing Indonesian customs and culture, introducing the president and vice president, and introducing traditional dance. The research results also found that teachers have great difficulty in teaching nationalist attitudes and values to students because they do not yet have learning media that can be used to guide them in teaching nationalist values and attitudes to students, which are unique and interesting, as well as appropriate learning media used by early childhood education teachers. Practical implications, with flashcards of nationalism, can make it easier for teachers to teach nationalistic values and attitudes in the classroom.

Contribution/Originality: This research contributes to understanding how teachers cultivate nationalist values and attitudes in early childhood education through the use of nationalism flashcards. The study aims to stimulate and habituate positive attitudes among students, fostering a continuous sense of nationalism from an early age.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nationalism is an empirically variegated ideology (Mylonas & Tudor, 2023). However, the end of nationalism had been predicted multiple times because it experienced dynamics and ups and downs in its development (Bieber, 2018). Therefore, it is important to instill nationalist values and attitudes early through formal and informal education. Study results from Stanbridge Mavroudi and Holt show that nationalism is important in children and childhood, so socialization is vital in this period of their lives (Millei & Imre, 2021).

Nationalism is essential to enable Indonesia to survive threats and challenges from within and outside, especially in the global era. Every generation must uphold nationalism within itself, but in reality, currently, it is showing a decline; this can be seen in the occurrence of many cases of student bullying and fights. The younger generation is expected to be the spearhead for Indonesia to determine the fate of the nation in the future. In their study, Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) also conclude that patriotic and nationalistic attitudes entail multiple dimensions. A healthy

spirit of patriotism and Nationalism may be as important to the well-being of a nation as high self-esteem is to the well-being of an individual. [Kosterman and Feshbach \(1989\)](#) even in China, good nationalism and patriotism are pro-environment individual attitudes and behavior ([Hamada, Shimizu, & Ebihara, 2021](#)).

In the context of instilling nationalist values in the younger generation in Indonesia, it is essential, especially from an early age, starting from the early childhood education unit, which is the level of education before entering basic education aimed at children aged 0-6 years. Instilling an attitude of nationalism and character formation in early childhood is very important, especially in the era of globalization. Therefore, cultivating an attitude of nationalism must be instilled early so that children know and understand their nation and country, have a spirit of nationalism, and keep children from immoral behavior.

In Indonesia, quite a lot of research focuses on the importance of instilling nationalist values in early childhood ([Ginting, 2021](#); [Nurpatimah, 2022](#); [Risman, 2023](#)). Early childhood is the golden age period during which children experience cognitive development, think abstractly, and develop rapidly ([Luthfillah & Rachman, 2022](#)).

Moreover, the reality of our children's lives today is very concerning, especially in the digital era. Young children are often preoccupied with playing games, using smartphones, and engaging with gadgets, which allows them easy access to internet content or YouTube, not all of which is appropriate for their age. Additionally, they are more familiar with film and cartoon characters such as Spiderman, Batman, Iron Man, and other fictional figures, compared to Indonesian heroes like Prince Diponegoro, Cut Nyak Dien, and other figures who fought for Indonesia's independence. Therefore, a model for instilling attitudes and values of nationalism is needed for early childhood students (PAUD) through card games, enabling them to memorize and recognize both historical figures and their roles, as well as various symbols or attributes of the country and regional culture of the archipelago. With these game cards, it is hoped that PAUD teachers will find it easier to provide understanding and instill nationalist values in students, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable. This is the reason why this research was conducted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *The Significance of Nationalism*

Nationalism is commonly discussed in political science and sociology as a political doctrine or ideology ([Kohn, 1965](#); [Smith, 1983](#)). Therefore, nationalism markedly influences individuals' everyday activities and actions ([Ayub & Jehn, 2006](#)). In some cases, especially in Indonesia, nationalism is important to preserve a nation's cohesion. Indonesia consists of many ethnicities, languages, tribes, and religions. This diverse community has numerous reasons for being divided into smaller countries. Indonesia's government may have realized that its country was a fragile nation-state with noticeably high diversity. Hammond stated that nationalist policies may aim to protect and strengthen fragile nation-states, but some can escalate into violent, militaristic ultra-nationalism, as seen during the imperialist era. This is one aspect that should be considered and about which one should be aware [Hammond \(2016\)](#).

Friction and conflicts between ethnicities in the 20th century that led to armed conflicts and divisions in a country have been shown in Sudan. South Sudan, which gained independence in 2011, was born after the Sudanese civil war. Sudan was highly diverse, consisting of Arabs in the north and native African ethnic groups in the south. Zambakari mentions that Sudan was geographically as wide as Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, with various clans and sub-clans as the population compositions. Also, Sudan had three large communities of religion, such as a Muslim majority in the northern area and a Christian with an Indigenous Animist majority in the south ([Zambakari, 2015](#)).

Indonesia has conditions similar to Sudan's regarding ethnic and religious diversity. National identity and nationalism values that course this diversity are among the core aspects maintaining unity in Indonesia. However, Indonesia may face the same problem as Sudan if the values of tolerance and respect for diversity are not maintained and cared for properly. Malaysia was also a diverse country of Melayu, Chinese, Indian, and Arabic ethnicities.

However, with better economic rates and a more advanced education system, Malaysia is more likely to prevent its country and states from separating.

Also, as Mylonas and Tudor stated, nationalism has played a key role in major movements for freedom and justice since the late eighteenth century, including self-determination efforts that overthrew absolute monarchies after the American and French Revolutions and those that toppled racially and economically exploitative colonial regimes (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021).

2.2. Methods of Cultivating Nationalism Value

Various methods of instilling nationalist values and their forms have been carried out in several countries. In China, socialist values are instilled through sports. Xiaoling Xu's research results show that the higher the level of football skills, the higher the indicators of "self-confidence," "strength," "respect," "responsibility," "law-abiding," and "patriotism" (Xu, 2023). Even Xi's research results consider it important to cultivate the socialist core values of college students in the new era. This is significant in cultivating socialist builders and successors with the all-around development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, beauty, and labor (Xi, 2019). Relevant teaching institutions should integrate ideological and political education into the corresponding model by analyzing the existing teaching mode and encouraging relevant teachers to actively adopt this model to improve the role of ideological and political education in higher vocational teaching (Zhang & Kwong, 2024). The teacher's method allows teachers to use videos, texts, pictures, etc., and by employing these methods that students prefer, it will have a better effect in cultivating socialist core values (Zhang & Kwong, 2024). Therefore, schools should also improve the processes of college students' patriotism education according to the actual requirements, enrich the contents of their patriotism education, actively guide students to deepen their understanding, form rational patriotism consciousness, and urge them to do so (Yan, 2019). In Vietnam, education on moral values for students should teach new moral values while inheriting traditional moral values such as truth, honesty, and perfection. Educating students to love and respect people for forming and developing their personalities includes fostering a goodwill attitude (Nguyen, 2021). Meanwhile, Malaysia instills Nationalism through broader national unity and identity dialogue and internalizing the National Principles Among Students (Othman et al., 2023). Apart from that, the approach to strengthening patriotism in Malaysia is based on patriotism courses instilled from elementary school to university, aiming to improve the feeling of love for the country (Samsu et al., 2021).

2.3. In the Absence of Nationalism, What Possibly Goes Wrong?

The emergence of separatism is one of the main ideas that could affect a nation that lacks nationalism. This problem could bring another catastrophic issue: horizontal conflicts that could divide a nation. The loss of national identity, the extinction of distinct cultures, and a humanity crisis could occur further. The country would be vulnerable internally, and foreign powers and influences could affect its stability. Indonesia encountered that problem previously in 1999. Some districts in Timor decided to separate themselves from Indonesia and declared their independence, currently known as Timor Leste. Luckily, the process did not involve military conflict. However, this is still a loss for Indonesia, making it more geopolitically vulnerable since Australia was also interested (Weatherbee, 2014). Another problem is the possibility of the extinction of indigenous local culture. Nowadays, the young generation of Indonesia prefers to be enthusiastic about foreign pop culture rather than their own. Smith stated that one of the goals of nationalism is the attainment and maintenance of cultural identity (Smith, 1998). If Indonesia's cultural identity cannot be maintained, the value of nationalism in Indonesia would be questioned.

2.4. Challenge of Nationalism Values in the Current Global Era

Nationalism encompasses the process of formation and growth of a nation, a sentiment of belonging, languages, symbolism, social and political movements, as well as doctrines and ideologies (Leung, 2018). The era of globalization

has brought another challenge to the preservation of nationalist values. While citizens can easily access the conditions of other countries, they tend to compare their own conditions with those of foreigners. This could result in a bias that possibly makes their views of other nations or countries more favorable than their own.

The crisis of Indonesian government policy is also the main reason for Nationalism's declining value. Similar to how anarchist ideology arises, disbelief in the government's ability to maintain the country's stability also affects citizens' perception of Nationalism. Today, the figure promoting Nationalism should also be aware of it. Mylonas and Tudor state that not all forms of Nationalism promote prosocial behavior. The rise of leaders like Trump, Modi, Orbán, and Xi has sparked widespread concern because they use a specific type of Nationalism to gain and hold power (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021).

While all nationalisms distinguish between a country's obligations to its citizens versus noncitizens, many of these emerging nationalisms also justify internal racial, religious, and ethnic hierarchies among citizens. Donald Trump subtly promoted white nationalism that relegates nonwhites to second-class status (Bonikowski & Zhang, 2023). And Narendra Modi championed Hindu Nationalism that marginalizes Muslims as second-class citizens. (Tudor, 2018) and Xi advanced Han nationalism that subordinates Tibetans, Mongols, and Uighurs (Zhao, 2004).

3. METHODS

3.1. Design and Data Collection

This research is qualitative and uses a case study approach. To compile a narrative, the principal of an early childhood education school was interviewed (Cropley, 2022) and data were collected via direct observation of teachers teaching nationalism material in class. Mackiewicz (2018) and Cropley (2022). The study population comprised the principals of early childhood education. At the same time, the sample consisted of 20 principals from 20 early childhood education institutions in Malang City. To collect data, one focus group discussion involved 20 teachers and two lecturers from the Faculty of Education of Malang State University. The teachers were selected purposively. The teacher representatives for each school PAUD were chosen as respondents for the study. The focus group discussion lasted for 4 hours. The authors of the study moderated all the group discussions.

3.2. Data Analysis

This research focuses on the model of cultivating nationalist attitudes and values in early childhood education in Malang City. The substance of this research is divided into several indicators: (1) methods of instilling nationalist attitudes and values in early childhood; (2) material on instilling nationalism attitudes in early childhood; (3) obstacles faced by teachers in instilling nationalist attitudes and values; and (4) an attractive and appropriate model of instilling nationalism attitudes and values for early childhood education. The authors focused on analyzing qualitative data in ways that enhance the reliability and validity of analyses. Cropley (2022), after transcription, the data was analyzed thematically following the five-step approach recommended by scholars, Mackiewicz (2018), for qualitative data analysis. First, organize and prepare the data for analysis. In the second step, the authors read through the transcribed interview results and identified meaningful data. In the third step, the authors start coding all of the data. The data is used as material to be discussed in focus group discussions. In the fourth step, use the coding process to describe the setting as categories or themes for analysis. Finally, in the fifth step, the authors' descriptions and themes are represented in the qualitative narrative, which is tailored to the research question.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

Conceptually, the cultivation of nationalism is highly regarded as an "indispensable virtue" in most countries (Leung, 2018). The research results in 20 early childhood education schools found that the methods and strategies used to instill nationalist values in early childhood varied greatly: lecture methods, storytelling, playing, and singing.

Table 1 shows that all schools use storytelling, playing, and singing methods. Meanwhile, 15 schools used the field trip method, 14 schools used the lecture method, 10 schools used the habituation method, eight schools used the collaboration method with parents, and five schools used the discussion method.

Table 1. Methods of instilling nationalist attitudes and values in early childhood.

Methods	Number of schools	Percentage (%)
Lecture	14	70
Discussion	5	25
Tell a story	20	100
Role-playing	20	100
Sing	20	100
Excursion	15	75
Habituation	10	50
Collaboration with parents	8	40

In this research, it was also found that the method of instilling and understanding nationalist values used by teachers combined lecture methods, storytelling, games, and displaying pictures via game cards simultaneously. With various techniques used by teachers with a habituation and exemplary approach, it is hoped that young children will become more active, creative, and disciplined. However, teachers have not used tools that support nationalist material and make it easier for teachers to transfer knowledge, skills, and values to PAUD students so that what is taught has meaning for themselves, their families, and their environment. As seen in Table 1 above, music or singing is one method that instills nationalistic values and attitudes in students. Even in Japan, the government fines or fires music teachers for not teaching students the national anthem in schools (Herbert, 2016). The cultivation of literature, drama, poetry, art, and music (including dance and folk songs) in school education can help to build a sense of belonging and nationalistic feeling for one's country (Leung, 2018).

Regarding nationalism material taught in Early Childhood education units, the research results provide information on at least eight materials, namely: (1) an introduction to the name of the hero and the story or story of his struggle; (2) national songs; (3) folk songs; (4) basic introduction to countries and state attributes, such as flags, languages, and national anthems; (5) traditional clothes; (6) traditional dance; (7) traditional games; and (8) introduction and practice of making traditional snacks. These eight materials are taught to students through elementary things that they have seen and experienced in everyday life, as well as through habituation according to the schedule prepared by the school.

Table 2. Material on instilling nationalist attitudes in early childhood.

No.	Nationalism material	Number of schools
1.	National anthem	20
2.	Stories of heroic struggle	20
3.	Introducing Adat (Traditional houses and clothes) and Indonesian culture	20
4.	Introducing religion in Indonesia	10
5.	Traditional game	10
6.	Introduction to traditional food	15
7.	Introducing the president and vice president	20
8.	Introducing traditional dance	20

Childhood can be used as a method for theorizing and researching everyday nationalism and discussing the variegated appearances of everyday nationalism as it pertains or can pertain to children's everyday lives (Millei & Imre, 2021). Table 2 above provides information that most early childhood education units teach students nationalism material, such as national songs, historical stories of the heroes' struggles, Indonesian customs, and culture, the president and vice president, and traditional dance. Meanwhile, fewer schools teach Indonesian religions and introduce traditional games. The above materials are expected to strengthen cultural identity and national identity.

Developing a learning model to strengthen ethnic identity is significant, especially for countries with multicultural populations such as Indonesia. Moreover, Indonesia has many national songs which are often also known as struggle songs because each lyric contains a meaning that reflects various important historical events for the independence of the Indonesian nation, which of course need to be introduced to students from an early age, as well as regional songs, which are numerous and varied from various regions in the archipelago. According to Eyerman's model of culture, music, and visual arts function as political mediators, facilitating connections and shaping collective identities, memories, and actions (Leung, 2018). Therefore, the extent and quality of teachers' meanings and understandings are important to what, why, and how teachers teach. Teachers are key players in the implementation of citizenship education in schools (Leticia Pérez-Rodríguez, Sánchez-Escobedo, & Hollingworth, 2013; Man Chong, 2013).

Related to the obstacles teachers face in instilling nationalist attitudes and values in students, namely: (1) the difficulty of bringing children's understanding to the struggles of heroes; (2) the difficulty of providing an understanding of the concept of the word Nationalism to children; (3) an unsupportive environment, especially parents; (4) understanding the meaning of the principles in Pancasila; (5) the teacher has difficulty singing regional songs whose pronunciation of the lyrics is unfamiliar to the children's ears; (6) lack of teacher ability techniques in telling engaging stories; (7) disconnection of the learning process at school and home; (8) a lack of interesting videos about struggles that align with current developments; (9) a lack of children's knowledge about traditional children's games; (10) children are more interested in games on gadgets; and (11) lack of engaging media that can be used by teachers whose content is appropriate to the child's age.

Meanwhile, the ideal method and strategy for instilling nationalist values and attitudes carried out by early childhood education teachers combines five learning methods at once: lecture methods, storytelling, role-playing, singing, and putting up posters or pictures. By combining these five methods, it is hoped that teachers can provide understanding and instill nationalist attitudes in students. Still, on the other hand, young children can also be stimulated to be more creative in telling stories, singing, and playing roles in understanding and building a nationalist attitude guided by the Nationalism Flashcard props more freely.

4.2. Discussion

Education is a planned effort in the guidance process and learning for individuals to grow into human beings who are independent, responsible, creative, knowledgeable, healthy, and noble, as seen from both physical and spiritual aspects (Dirwan, 2018). Table 1 shows that storytelling, role-playing, and singing are the methods most widely used by teachers to instill nationalist attitudes and values in students. The storytelling method is often used by teachers because it can stimulate students to imagine. While the role-playing method can stimulate students to live their roles in everyday life. Cultural and musical education nurtures people's efforts to find their roots and identities (Leung, 2018). When compared with the results of Aam Nurpatimah's research, the appropriate methods, based on the character of children in instilling nationalist attitudes and values, are: (1) Singing method; (2) Storytelling method; (3) Conducting excursions; and (4) Image method (Nurpatimah, 2022). Meanwhile, Risman's research results relate to instilling nationalism and patriotism values in early childhood through singing, habituation, lectures, and field trips (Risman, 2023). In this study, the role of teachers is very important in instilling attitudes and values of nationalism in students. As Bryan Wee's research indicates, teachers need to shift their role in science education from being solely knowledge providers to becoming social developers (Wee, 2011).

The storytelling method based on research results, most widely used to instill nationalism values in students, is stories containing messages of moral values, especially Nationalism. Teachers use this method to instill values, messages, and attitudes of Nationalism in students through stories of heroes by introducing images of heroes and stories of their struggle by playing struggle videos from YouTube. To facilitate the story's message conveyed to students, teachers use teaching aids so that students can easily accept the story's content and be more enjoyable for children. These props are in the form of pictures and videos. Through the storytelling method, it is hoped that

students, as stated by Dewey, equate education with experience and life which emphasizes experiences that do not occur in a vacuum. On the other hand, sources outside the individual give rise to experiences and merge with what already exists within the person (Craig, Williams III, & Hill-Jackson, 2025).

Teachers use the play method to train students to appreciate their roles better. Prasetyoningsih said that play is an activity children choose because it is fun, not because of gifts or praise. Through play, all aspects of a child's development can be improved. Play's functions for children include imitating, acting, establishing relationships, channeling feelings, rejecting unacceptable things, doing flashbacks, and solving problems (Prasetyoningsih & Mujiyana, 2022). The benefits of play include developing children's physical, motor, and fine motor skills, social, emotional, and personality development, cognitive skills, sharpening sensory acuity, and developing sports skills (Amiran, 2016). Drew Polly also used the play method to develop more advanced mathematics skills. He even compared games and pictorial flashcards for improving mathematical skills in fourth-grade students in a southeastern state in the United States (Polly, Reinke, Colonnese, & Blackwelder, 2025).

Even the results of Risman's research on the importance of role-play reveal that role-playing activities for early childhood are one of the models of social interaction activities that provide opportunities for children to actively carry out activities in a personal form. The teacher conveys the rules of the game in role-playing activities. Some play the president or vice president, and some play the public and ordinary people. The singing method is teachers' most widely used method in instilling nationalist values and attitudes in early childhood children (Risman, 2023). Through this method, the verses in short and simple songs will be more straightforward for students to memorize and instill the spirit of nationalism, especially in national songs with struggling lyrics.

The results of this study, when compared with the research above, found that teachers use more learning methods. There are even exemplary methods and collaboration methods between teachers and parents in learning Nationalism in schools, so it is expected that the learning carried out by teachers in schools will be habituated in their respective homes carried out by their parents. The involvement of parents in instilling nationalist values and attitudes through habituation at home is important because the interaction between students and their parents is longer and more intense compared to the interaction between students and teachers at school. Even the results of Ozgur Taskin's research regarding the attitudes of Environmental Attitudes of Turkish Senior High School Students show that the educational background of mothers plays an important role in influencing the students' environmental attitudes (Taskin, 2009). Exemplary methods are important in instilling nationalism in early childhood. Children tend to use parents or teachers as models of behavior. Every behavior of people who are used as models for children will be observed and imitated over time in children's daily behavior. This aligns with the views of Eka Sapti, who affirms that habituation attitudes are very effective in coaching because they will help train good habits in early childhood (Cahyaningrum & Nurtantio, 2017).

Table 2 shows that all schools that were research locations provided nationalism material to students, such as national songs, historical stories of the struggles of heroes, Indonesian customs and culture, introducing the president and vice president, and introducing traditional dances and traditional games. Therefore, this is not much different from the research results of Risman (2023), Nurpatimah (2022), and Luthfillah and Rachman (2022), namely: (i). introduction to state symbols and emblems; (ii). introduction of the President and Vice President; (iii). introduction of national anthems; (iv). introduction to the history of heroes in rupiah currency; and (v). introduction to local, regional wisdom, such as regional songs, dances, and the languages of each region.

The research identified obstacles teachers face in instilling nationalist attitudes and values in students: (1) the difficulty of helping children understand the struggles of heroes; (2) the challenge of explaining the concept of nationalism to children; (3) teachers' difficulty in singing regional songs with unfamiliar pronunciation of lyrics; (4) the lack of teacher techniques for telling engaging stories; (5) the absence of interesting videos about struggles that align with current developments; (6) children's limited knowledge of traditional children's games; and (7) the scarcity of engaging media suitable for children's age. Compared to Dinars' research, which found that obstacles for teachers

in fostering nationalism in young children include limited vocabulary, lack of facilities and infrastructure, and teachers' need to improve their storytelling voice techniques, these issues highlight the multifaceted challenges in promoting nationalist attitudes among young learners (Dinar, Yanzi, & Halim, 2019).

Of the several obstacles faced by teachers in instilling nationalist attitudes and values in students, in general, they can be grouped into four categories: (1) difficulties in preparing nationalist learning media that are appropriate and suitable for children's ages, especially videos of heroes' struggles which teachers often access on YouTube; (2) challenges in conveying nationalism material due to teachers' storytelling and singing techniques or abilities; (3) lack of support from parents and the surrounding environment; and (4) a deficiency of engaging learning media that can be used by teachers, with content appropriate for early childhood education in teaching nationalism.

In this research, the ideal model for instilling nationalistic values and attitudes in young children combines five learning methods simultaneously: lecture, storytelling, games, singing, and guessing pictures. By integrating these five methods, it is hoped that teachers can more effectively provide understanding and foster nationalist attitudes in students. Additionally, young children can be stimulated and encouraged to be more creative in storytelling, singing, and role-playing activities aimed at understanding and developing attitudes toward nationalism. These activities are guided by the Nationalism Flashcard props, which were designed with 45 cards adapted to the year of Indonesian independence, 1945. The cards are divided into five categories: (1) President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia; (2) National attributes and the national anthem of the Republic of Indonesia; (3) National heroes; (4) The national anthem; and (5) Folk songs.

5. CONCLUSION

It is crucial to instill nationalism's values and attitudes from an early age, from early childhood education to university. Why is it important to maintain the continuity of a country, the emergence of a feeling of love for one's country, and a sense of unity within the country amidst the current globalization, which is fading national culture and is prone to eroding the sense of nationalism? The findings in this research show that teachers' methods and strategies for instilling nationalistic attitudes and values in early childhood are challenging. In 20 early childhood education studies, a combination of storytelling, role-playing, and singing is the method most widely used by teachers to instill nationalist attitudes and values in students. Meanwhile, the field trip method and the collaboration method with parents are the least implemented by schools. Through the Nationalism Flashcard props, teachers are given the freedom to use learning methods and strategies with nationalism material that has been designed to contain the names of Presidents who have served in Indonesia, state attributes, names, and history of the struggle of national heroes, national songs, and regional songs that can be equipped with Barcode. Through the nationalist game cards that have been designed, it is hoped that they can guide teachers in teaching students by guessing pictures, telling stories, and watching videos just by accessing the Barcode on the card.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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