



An analysis of students' nationalistic attitudes through the flag ceremony at SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan

Asdini Indah Lestari *, Yakobus Ndonga, Daulat Saragi

Universitas Negeri Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, 20221

*Corresponding Author Email: asdin2711@gmail.com | Received date: 11/09/2025; Accepted date: 11/11/2025

Abstract

The weakening of nationalism among elementary students in the era of globalization highlights the need for effective character education practices in schools. Although flag ceremonies are routinely implemented, many students still perceive them as mere formalities and have not fully internalized nationalist values, indicating a gap between expected character outcomes and the reality in the field. This study aims to analyze how nationalist values are formed through flag ceremonies and positive habituation in the school environment, as well as to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the internalization process. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving students, teachers, and school administrators. The findings show that routine practices such as flag saluting, singing the national anthem, and teacher role modeling effectively strengthen students' discipline, responsibility, and patriotism, although challenges remain in terms of students' varied levels of understanding and engagement. The study concludes that ceremonial school activities can serve as strategic instruments of character education when implemented consistently and supported by teacher exemplification. These results offer a contextual model that can be replicated to enhance nationalism in elementary education.

Keyword: national attitude; flag ceremony; student discipline; elementary school

Abstrak. Menguatnya arus globalisasi berdampak pada melemahnya rasa nasionalisme di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar, sehingga diperlukan pendekatan karakter yang lebih strategis dan kontekstual. Meskipun upacara bendera telah dilaksanakan secara rutin, sebagian siswa masih mengikutinya sebagai formalitas dan belum sepenuhnya memahami nilai-nilai kebangsaan, menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan antara tujuan ideal pendidikan karakter dan realitas pelaksanaannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis proses pembentukan sikap nasionalis siswa melalui upacara bendera serta mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat internalisasi nilai-nilai kebangsaan di lingkungan sekolah. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi untuk memperoleh data dari siswa, guru, dan pihak sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembiasaan positif melalui penghormatan bendera, menyanyikan lagu kebangsaan, dan keteladanan guru berperan langsung dalam memperkuat disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan patriotisme siswa, meskipun masih ditemukan variasi dalam pemahaman dan keterlibatan mereka. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kegiatan seremonial sekolah dapat menjadi instrumen efektif pendidikan karakter apabila dijalankan secara konsisten dan didukung keteladanan guru. Temuan ini menawarkan model kontekstual yang dapat direplikasi untuk memperkuat nasionalisme pada jenjang pendidikan dasar.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological developments and the rapid flow of globalization have had a significant impact on the character formation and sense of nationalism of the younger generation, particularly elementary school students. Elementary education plays a strategic role as the initial foundation for fostering patriotism and national awareness (Annisa et al., 2024). Students at this stage are in the process of character formation, so providing education in national values from an early age is expected to shape behavior and attitudes that respect culture, language, history, and national symbols as part of the nation's identity. Nationalism itself can be understood as the manifestation of love for the homeland born from a public awareness of the need to build, maintain, and safeguard national sovereignty. This awareness forms the basis for unity, cooperation, and a spirit of togetherness in achieving national goals (Betles, 2020).

One concrete manifestation of the internalization of national values in schools is through the implementation of flag ceremonies. This activity is mandatory at all levels of education, both every Monday and on national holidays. It serves as a means of accustoming students to discipline, respecting national symbols, and fostering a love of the homeland from elementary school through high school (Setyaningrum et al., 2020). In its implementation, the flag ceremony is not just a formal ritual, but rather a means of character education that teaches discipline, responsibility, respect for national symbols, and the spirit of nationalism (Agustin, 2024). This activity is expected to form positive character in students, such as compliance with rules, a sense of responsibility, a willingness to contribute for the common good, and the ability to work together (Pujianingsih et al., 2025).

However, several studies, such as those by (DJ & Jumardi, 2022) dan , indicate a gap between the ideal concept and the reality of implementation in the field. Previous research revealed that many students still attend flag ceremonies as mere formalities, lack a clear understanding of the meaning of nationalism, and exhibit undisciplined behavior, such as chatting during the ceremony, standing irregularly, swaying, or even sitting when tired without feeling guilty. This indicates a weak internalization of national values through routine activities that should be an effective means of character education (Audina et al., 2022).

This gap indicates an empirical issue that requires further investigation. Although flag ceremonies are routinely held at SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan, some students have not fully understood or deeply internalized nationalist values. Some students participate in this activity merely as an obligation, do not understand the meaning of national symbols, and find the ceremony boring. In other words, there is a gap between the ideal goals of character education and nationalism through flag ceremonies and the reality of their implementation on the ground (Yasinta et al., 2022). This gap is the primary background of this research.

Empirical studies on the internalization of nationalism through routine school activities, particularly flag ceremonies at the public elementary school level, are still rarely examined contextually. This indicates a lack of research examining how real practices in elementary schools can effectively foster national values systematically. This study is presented to address this need by focusing on the local context of SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan, thus having the novelty of a contextual study of the internalization of nationalist values through routine school activities that has so far been underexplored (Harahap, 2025).

Based on this background, the research problem can be formulated as follows: how does the implementation of the flag ceremony at SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan shape students' nationalistic attitudes, and what factors support or hinder the process of internalizing national values through this activity.

This study aims to analyze the forms of nationalist attitudes of students through the implementation of flag ceremonies at SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan. In addition, this study seeks to determine the extent to which flag ceremonies play a role in instilling national values in students, including discipline, responsibility, respect for national symbols, and love of the homeland. This study also aims to identify obstacles faced by schools in fostering student nationalism through flag ceremonies, as well as finding effective strategies or efforts to internalize national values more optimally at the elementary school level.

This research has two benefits: academically contributing to the literature on character education and nationalism, and practically serving as a reference for teachers, principals, and educational policymakers in designing and implementing routine activities that can foster nationalism and character in students more effectively. Thus, this research is expected to not only explain the theory but also provide

practical guidance for schools in facing the challenges of character education in the era of globalization and technological advancement.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, aiming to understand phenomena naturally in the field. This approach was chosen because the research is in-depth and oriented towards real-world conditions, so it cannot be conducted in a laboratory, but rather in the environment where the events occur. Through this method, the researcher sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of internalizing national values in elementary school students through the implementation of flag ceremonies.

The qualitative descriptive method was deemed appropriate because it allowed the researcher to clearly describe the research subjects, student behavior, and the social and cultural backgrounds that influence their attitudes. The research subjects consisted of students of SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan, teachers, the principal, and other relevant school officials, with the number of informants adjusted based on the principle of purposive sampling. Data were collected through direct observation of the flag ceremony, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and documentation in the form of school reports, photographs, and activity notes.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, the researcher focused on information relevant to the formation of students' nationalist attitudes, filtering and categorizing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Next, in the data presentation stage, the reduced information is organized into narratives, tables, and flowcharts to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships between variables. The final stage, drawing conclusions, is conducted by interpreting the presented data to gain a deeper understanding of the internalization of national values through flag ceremonies.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation by comparing information from students, teachers, and school documents, and validated findings through member checking. Overall, the research procedure was systematically designed to enable readers to understand the research steps, from data collection to analysis, including the relationships between the stages used to reach accurate and reliable conclusions (see Figure 1).

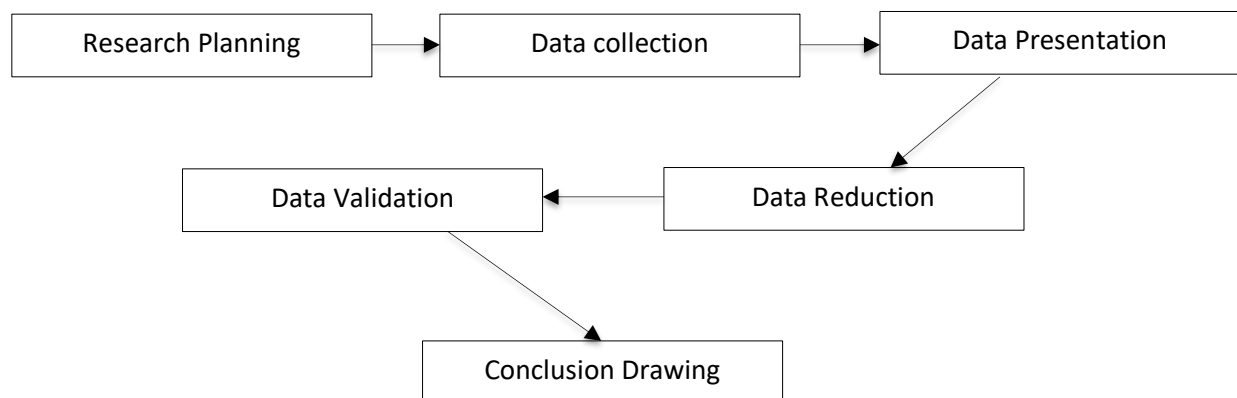


Figure 1 Research Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nationalism is an attitude that demonstrates awareness and love for one's nation and state, as well as a desire to defend, advance, and preserve its interests. Nationalism can be manifested in various forms of behavior, one of which is patriotism, reflected through concern for the environment, for example, maintaining cleanliness at home, in the classroom, and at school. This simple activity demonstrates students' awareness of contributing to the common good while fostering a love for their country. Instilling

patriotism is the initial stage in the process of internalizing nationalist values, which then leads to the formation of an awareness of the importance of national identity (Nutfah, 2024).

Awareness of national identity can be realized through the preservation of culture and customs in daily life. One application of this is through the 5S behavior (smile, greet, be polite, and be courteous) at school, in the family, and in the community. This practice helps students learn civilized living from an early age, while fostering a sense of national identity and a cultured spirit (Absyari et al., 2024).

The next stage of nationalism education is instilling a sense of national advancement. This can be achieved through students' active participation in the learning process, where a passion for learning and contributing to school activities foster a love of country. These values are believed to positively contribute to the future progress of the nation and state. Furthermore, a more concrete form of nationalism is national defense, which can be implemented through mutual respect, avoiding conflict, maintaining harmony, and fostering a sense of security within the classroom. This attitude equips students with the skills to maintain unity and apply principles of peace, which in turn contribute to national awareness as they mature (Hariandi et al., 2023).

Research at SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan shows that flag ceremonies are an effective means of internalizing nationalist values in students. This activity is carried out routinely and solemnly, not only to commemorate the services of the heroes who died for Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, but also to instill a sense of patriotism, discipline, and responsibility (Belang et al., 2025). The flag ceremony was first held on August 17, 1945, at Ikada Field, Jakarta, and has since become an important tradition in formal education and government institutions as a form of respect for the nation's history of struggle (Sholeh, 2022).

The flag ceremony activity has clear objectives, including creating an orderly and solemn atmosphere, fostering a spirit of patriotism, strengthening national identity, building national awareness, strengthening unity, increasing nationalism, and instilling discipline and order (Satyadharma, 2025). The results of interviews and field observations showed that most students participated in the ceremony enthusiastically, but there were still some who saw it as a mere formality, did not understand the national values contained therein, or showed undisciplined behavior, such as speaking, standing untidily, or sitting during the ceremony (Diana & Chotimah, 2023).

Field data analysis indicates a gap between theory and practice: while flag ceremonies theoretically serve as a medium for character building and nationalism, their implementation in practice has not been fully effective. This aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's view on character education, which emphasizes the importance of habituation (*ing ngarsa sung tulada*) and teacher role models as the foundation for shaping students' morals and personalities. Teachers play a crucial role as role models, as students tend to imitate the attitudes, behaviors, and habits they observe at school (Saskia, 2023). Character building through routine practices, such as flag ceremonies, supports the development of students' morals, ethics, discipline, and social awareness, in accordance with Kohlberg's moral theory, where the initial stage of moral formation begins with the internalization of values that are consistently observed and practiced (Anshari et al., 2023).

Comparisons with previous research also strengthen these findings. A study by (Annisa et al., 2024) emphasized that collective activities in schools, such as flag ceremonies, are effective in instilling discipline and a sense of nationalism. Research by (Pujianingsih et al., 2025) showed that repeating routine activities accompanied by moral guidance from teachers can increase the internalization of Pancasila values. Meanwhile, research by (Betles, 2020) emphasized that nationalism is reflected in concrete behaviors such as respecting national symbols, working together, and contributing to the common good. The results of this study are consistent with these findings but provide a new contribution by describing the specific context of SDN 104181 Sunggal Kanan, which demonstrates the dynamics of the direct implementation of national values in daily activities.

This research enriches the study of character education and nationalism in elementary schools. The results show that familiarization through flag ceremonies not only instills moral values and discipline, but also shapes students' social awareness, national spirit, and sense of responsibility. These findings can serve as a basis for teachers and schools to develop more contextual and effective strategies for internalizing national values, for example through the integration of character education into extracurricular activities

and classroom teaching and learning processes. Thus, flag ceremonies are not merely a symbol of formality, but also an educational tool capable of fostering a generation with character, ethics, and a national spirit (Kalkautsar, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation of flag ceremonies and character building in elementary schools, it can be concluded that instilling a sense of nationalism plays a crucial role in producing a generation that excels not only academically but also possesses a strong moral and ethical foundation. This research shows that through flag ceremonies, teachers can provide concrete examples of desired character values, such as religiosity, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, discipline, and social awareness. The practical impact of this research is evident in students' ability to understand and practice national values and character in their daily lives. Integrating a sense of nationalism into the learning process creates a school environment conducive to character development, which not only shapes individual personalities but also contributes to the formation of a more civilized and dignified society. A limitation of this research lies in the limited scope of the study, which encompassed only one elementary school, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research is recommended to test the effectiveness of flag ceremonies on other dimensions of character, such as social responsibility, leadership, and empathy, and to conduct it in various schools to strengthen the validity of the findings. Thus, collaboration between teachers, students, and parents remains a key factor in optimally realizing the goals of character education, while ensuring that the internalization of nationalist values takes place consistently and has long-term impacts.

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