*International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7 (3.25) (2018) 291-294

International Journal of Engineering & Technology

*Website: www.sciencepubco.com/index.php/IJET*

***Research paper***

# Strengthening National Identity Through Civic Education for Young Children: a Case Study of Indonesia

**Fanny Rizkiyani[1]***

[1] *Universitas Islam Nusantara, Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences, 40286. Bandung. Indonesia*
**Corresponding author E-mail: fanny.wahidin@gmail.com*

**Abstract**

In the globalization era, individuals from one culture can easily access or be exposed to other cultures, or interact with people from different cultures, resulting in cultural exchanges. These interactions may also change the individuals' identity, including their social identities such as national identity. Therefore, globalization is often seen as the cause of national identity crisis. The author proposes that a good civic education, as early as in the early childhood education, is one of the alternatives in countering the unwanted outcome of globalization, specifically with regards to the construction of national identity. In this article, the author describes how the civic education is incorporated in the early childhood education curriculum in Indonesia. The author also discusses how the civic education curriculum may be improved by using the internet that is once deemed as a threat to the national identity, as the instructional media.

***Keywords***: *Citizanship; Civic Education; Early Childhood; National Identity*

## 1. Introduction

Globalization causes a huge impact on individuals' daily life. It increases interconnections between individuals on a global scale by means of education, tourism, internet use, business contacts, and migration [1]. It facilitates rapid cultural exchanges. The main driving force of globalization is the development of information and communication technology [2]. By utilizing the satellite and fiber optic technologies, the internet allows individuals across the globe to access the same news, music, entertainment, and knowledge at the same time. Geographical and cultural differences are no longer barriers for the individuals to interact and communicate with each other.

Despite its role in broadening our horizons and facilitating communication and cooperation in a global settings, globalization is often seen as a hazard to national identity [2-5]. As a result of global interactions and the internalization of what being presented on the globalized media, individuals may have been alienated from their roots. By means of the globalized media, individuals across the globe are shaped to wear similar type of clothes, eat similar type of food, enjoy similar type of music/entertainment, speak similar language, and living a similar way of life. Accordingly, individuals may start to abandon their culture and replace it with the global culture, if we may call it. It has become urgent then for nations to generate strategy that allows them to fully benefitted from the globalization, yet, at the same time, keep their national identity strong.

[3] suggested that one of the alternatives to strengthen national identity in the globalization era is by enriching the content of civic education that encourage not only cultural exchanges but also cultural integration of different (ethnic) groups. The implementation of this strategy certainly will be different from one nation to another, considering the fact that each nation has its own unique culture and varied ethnic groups. Additionally, each nation also has its own core values that may bring all their ethnic groups living together in harmony.

Civic education or also called citizenship education, nowadays, is deemed as a tool of social cohesion, by which children are educated to become not only active but also responsible citizens [6]. Civic education educates children on the importance of a set of shared values (e.g., human rights, social justice, democracy, diversity, and solidarity) and how they can practice them in their daily life. More importantly, through civic education, children are expected to develop the attitudes and abilities that inspire them to actively participate within the society. This act of civic engagement, in turn, may strengthen the children sense of belonging or identification to the nation.

Civic education can be already taught to children even in their earliest years and it is crucial for their identity formation [7]. Young children can already be seen as citizens because they are capable to express ideas and to be part of the decision-making that affects them [8]. They are competent learners and can understand their rights and duties in ways that are profound to their daily behaviour [9]. Even though civic education has been considered important to be given to young children in several countries [7-10], there is still not much discussion on this in Indonesia. Moreover, civic education as has been mentioned earlier, may be an alternative mode to strengthen a country's national identity in the globalized world. Therefore, in this article, the author will further discuss the implementation of civic education in early childhood education in Indonesia as a part of an effort to strengthen Indonesia's national identity and how to improve it in order to strengthen Indonesia's national identity.

**Copyright © 2018 Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.**

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. National Identity in the Globalized World

National identity is one form of basic social identities [11,12] which is, at the present time, has become more and more important. Social identity is defined as individual's awareness of his membership in a group and his psychological sense of attachment to the group [13]. As for national identity, it can be defined as individual's subjective sense of belonging to a nation [14].

National identity can also be defined based on its function and content. Deyong, as cited [3], explained national identity's functional aspect refers to individual's identification with the nation he belongs to and the nation's distinct characteristics. Since national identity according to this definition means identification of national distinctiveness, it becomes a power for legality and cohesion in national existence. As for the definition based on content, national identity consists of a dual structure: [1] the cultural level (individual's cultural recognition and sense of belonging with regard to land, sovereignty, cultural traditions, etc.), and [2] the political level (individual's identification with state power, the ruling philosophy, the nation's political system, etc.).

National identity ties citizenry closer to the state precisely in times when individuals' sense of belonging to the nation deteriorates because of the globalization [11]. Globalization incites not only rapid transformation of traditional ideas and citizens' ways of life, but also changes on the nation state's internal/external settings, structure and functions that strengthen or weaken citizens' national identity [3]. Globalization also urges individuals to be global citizens in order to have global networks and survive [15].

However, [3] noted that "Since national identity is the most important prerequisite for the legitimacy and construction of the nation state, identity crises stemming from globalization pose great challenges. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that such challenges will not really lead to deconstruction of the state unless they go hand in hand with governance failure." They also added that the 'future' of nation states, at the end of the day, does not rest on the globalization itself, but on the competence of nation states to construct effective strategies to improve nation-building and democratics governance.

[3] proposed that the national identity construction in the globalization era should be undertaken within a fourfold framework, namely institutions, interests, culture, and community. In practice, the aforesaid notion entails the followings: [1] democratizing the political system; [2] promoting economic development that ensures justice and fairness; [3] promoting and strengthening national cultural and historical traditions; and [4] recognizing various levels of community development and promoting community integration in national identity. One of the methods that practitioners from the education field can contribute in the construction of national identity is to make a comprehensive civic education that fosters cultural exchanges and cultural integration among various ethnic groups[3].

### 2.2. Civic Education for Young Children

Civic education or also called citizenship education may be defined as instructional strategies that fosters democratic thinking that encourages informed and active citizenship (16). Furthermore, there are at least three forms of civic education, namely, character education programmes, political simulations, and service-learning programmes (17). Each of the forms involves certain instructional practices which may be suitable for certain grade levels of students. Lin (17) explained the three form of civic education as the followings.

Character education programmes focuses on promoting ethical values (e.g. honesty and trustworthiness) and are usually taught in the elementary grades. Character education programmes educate children core values that are necessary for them in becoming responsible citizens. Furthermore, through this programmes, children also learn that communities promote a certain set of core values [e.g. 9,18,19].

Political Stimulations focus on helping students to become active/participatory citizens, and are particularly suitable for students at the secondary level. Students learn to think critically about social issues and to find solutions to various social problems.

Service-learning programmes, similar to political simulations, focuses on helping students to become active/participatory citizens, and are more appropriate for older students because they are more independent from their parents to participate in community services. Through this programmes, students are assigned to diverse service projects addressing community needs.

### 2.3. Civic Education in Indonesia's Early Childhood Education

Starting from the academic term of 2014/2015, Indonesia implements Kurikulum 2013 Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (The 2013 Curriculum of Early Childhood Education). The curriculum aims to foster the students optimum development thus they can be Indonesian citizens that have life skills not only as an individual but also as a citizen that is religious, productive, creative, innovative, affective, and can contribute to the communities, nation, and the world [20],

Learning contents for early childhood education have to be in agreement with the students' development in six developmental aspects, namely, religion and moral, physic-motor, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and art [20]. The learning process itself emphasizes more towards forming attitudes, ethics, and children's love towards the nation [20].

Instructions in Indonesia early childhood education are designed using thematic approach [21]. By using thematic approach, young children are expected to understand concepts and knowledge more easily. Additionally, teachers may also teach the concepts and knowledge in a concrete fashion. Therefore, the learning objective can be achieved.

There are four principles that have to be considered in choosing a theme, i.e., proximity, simplicity, stimulating, and incidentalness [21]. The principles can be explained as the followings. Proximity means the theme is closely related to children's daily life. Simplicity means the theme is something familiar to children. Stimulating implies that the theme can trigger children's curiosity. Incidentalness means that the themes for an academic year are not absolutely fixed, but may be changed if there are incidental and important incidences throughout the year.

Considering the aforementioned four principles, there are ten theme the government used as examples, i.e., Myself, My Family, Animals, Natural Environment, Social Environment, Things Around Us, Culture, Religious Important Day, My Nation/Country, and Occupation [21]. Teachers can develop/use a new theme or modify the earlier ten themes as long as they still take into consideration the four principles mentioned earlier.

Civic education in Indonesia early childhood education are not included in The 2013 Curriculum of Early Childhood Education as a specific subject or topics but it is integrated in the learning contents or activities constructed in the learning plan within certain themes. For example, Gotong Royong (community self-help/mutual cooperation), one of Indonesia's important core value, may become a subtheme under the theme of Social Environment [21]. In reality, civic education can be integrated in all of the themes considering the fact that the learning process in the Indonesia's early childhood education put the emphasis on shaping attitudes, ethics, and children's love towards the nation [20], as have been mentioned earlier.

## 3. Discussion

As more and more individuals start to identify themselves as the world citizen due to the globalization, there is a concern that identity in the national level (i.e., national identity) may become weakened. This is surely an undesirable condition for the nation since national identity can be deemed as a social cohesion by which varied ethnic groups bind together under one nation. Without this bond, the existence of a nation might be endangered.

To counter the negative impact of globalization, following of the suggestion of Zhuojun and Hualing [3], the author propose the inclusion of a richer civic education in the curriculum, starting from the early childhood education. Up to the present time, Indonesia has included civic education in the education curricula, be it as a subject, a topic or integrated in the learning content. For example, from the elementary school to the college/university, we have a compulsory subject called Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (Citizenship Education) while in the early childhood education, civic education is integrated in the learning content.

Learning content in Indonesia's early childhood education is constructed in a thematic approach. Under a theme, teachers may choose several subthemes, and formulate learning activities accordingly. Civic education can be included in most if not all themes not only because it has a very broad range of subjects, but also because it is in accordance with the main notion of early childhood education which is to shape the children's attitudes, ethics, and their love to the nation [20]. Therefore, civic education in Indonesia's early childhood education is in the form of character education programmes based on Lin's three form of civic education [17]. How can civic education in Indonesia's early childhood education be enriched then?

Changes or improvements in civic education in Indonesia's early childhood education can be made through several factors, such as, the teachers, learning methods, and instructional media. To enhance civic education teacher professionalism, we can use collaborative inquiry-based curriculum development as used by [22]. They found that after participating in a collaborative inquiry-based curriculum development, teachers may be able to understanding civic education better and become more aware to their own teaching strategies. They also suggest that more effort should be made to develop the concepts of moral work of teaching as early as during the teacher training.

Regarding learning method, there are a few methods that are proposed in the literature. One of the method that can be used is story telling, as suggested by [23]. [23] discussed social justice issues with young children through stories. She used stories "to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship though social action." Other learning method that also can be used by civic education teachers is narrative inquiry [24]. [24] Sees civic education as process of forming students' identity as citizens. Through narrative inquiry concerning who the students are as individuals and what their relation are with other people around them, we are helping students to position themselves as both active agents and citizens [24].

Improvement in the instructional media of civic education may involve the use of the internet or other technology advancement. One of the creative use of internet is the use of internet photobook technology by [25] in enhancing children's identity as scientist. The use of internet photobook, in the author's opinion may also be use in enhancing children's identity as citizens. Using the kind of similar media in their learning, [26] use the term of Digital Narratives. They argued that Digital Narrative can be used to meet various needs and goals of individual classrooms. It is also important to note that even though the internet can be incorporated in diverse subjects in the education settings, when it comes to young children, the internet use have to be structured in a way that in agreement with the children's developmental level and needs as well as under the supervision of teacher or adult [27].

## 4. Conclusion

An alternative that the author proposes to encounter the undesirable impact of globalization to the construction of a nation's national identity is to improve civic education as early as in the early childhood education level. The improvement may be made through changes or improvement in terms of the professionalism of the teachers, the use of new learning method as well as the use of internet or other technology advancement as the instructional media.

## References


[1] Hermans HJM, Dimaggio G. Self, identity, and globalization in times of uncertainty: A dialogical analysis. Review of Ge Author,"Title of the Paper", Journal name, Vol.X, No.X, (200X), pp.XX-XX, available online: http://xxx, last visit:28.02.2013

[2] Author,"Title of the Paper", Proceedings of the conference name, Vol.X, No.X, (200X), pp:XX-YY, http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MMM.2013.2248651

[3] Author, Title of the Book, Publisher, (200X), pp:XXX-YYY.

[4] Cho JH, Chang SA, Kwon HS, Choi YH, KoSH, Moon SD, Yoo SJ, Song KH, Son HS, Kim HS, Lee WC, Cha BY, Son HY & Yoon KH (2006), Long-term effect of the internet-based glucose monitoring system on HbA1c Reduction and glucose stability: a 30-month follow-up study for diabetes management with a ubiquitous medical care system. Diabetes Care 29, 2625–2631.

[5] Fauci AS, Braunwald E, Kasper DL & Hauser SL (2008), Principles of Harrison's Internal Medicine, Vol. 9, 17thedn. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, pp.2275–2304.

[6] Kim HS & Jeong HS (2007), A nurse short message service by cellular phone in type-2 diabetic patients for six months. Journal of Clinical Nursing 16, 1082–1087.

[7] Lee JR, Kim SA, Yoo JW & Kang YK (2007), The present status of diabetes education and the role recognition as a diabetes educator of nurses in korea. Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice 77, 199–204.

[8] McMahon GT, Gomes HE, Hohne SH, Hu TM, Levine BA & Conlin PR (2005), Web-based care management in patients with poorly controlled diabetes. Diabetes Care 28, 1624–1629.

[9] Thakurdesai PA, Kole PL & Pareek RP (2004), Evaluation of the quality and contents of diabetes mellitus patient education on Internet. Patient Education and Counseling 53, 309–313.

[10] neral Psychology. 2007;11(1):31-61.

[11] Dons E. Nigeria and the crisis of cultural identity in the era of globalization. Journal of African Studies and Development. 2014;6(8):140-7.

[12] Zhuojun W, Hualing H. National Identity in the Era of Globalization: Crisis and Reconstruction. Social Sciences in China. 2014;35(2):139-54.

[13] Babran S. Media, Globalization of Culture, and Identity Crisis in Developing Countries. Intercultural Communication Studies. 2008;17(2):212-21.

[14] Kaul V. Globalisation and Crisis of Cultural Identity. Journal of Research in International Business and Management. 2012;2(13):341-9.

[15] Dumitriu C, Dumitru G. Achieving Citizenship Education. A Theoretical and Experimental Approach. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. 2014;149:307-11.

[16] Ben-Arieh A, Boyer T. Citizenship and childhood: The state of affairs in Israel. Childhood. 2005;12(1):33-53.

[17] Nutbrown C, Clough P. Citizenship and Inclusion in the Early Years: Understanding and Responding to Children's Perspectives on 'Belonging". International Journal of Early Years Education. 2009;17(3):191-206.

[18] Covell K, Howe BR, McNeil JK. 'If there's a dead rat, don t leave it'. Young children's understanding of their citizenship rights and responsibilities. Cambridge Journal of Education. 2008;38(2):321-39.

[19] Guerra E. Citizenship Knows No Age: Children's Participation in the Governance and Municipal Budget of Barra Mansa, Brazil. Environment & Urbanization. 2002;14(2):71-84.

[20] Bechhofer F, McCrone D. National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change. In: Bechhofer F, McCrone D, editors. National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change. London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2009. p. 1-25.

[21] Theiss-Morse E. Who counts as an American? The boundaries of national identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2009. 240 p.
[22] Huddy L, Khatib N. American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement. American Journal of Political Sciences. 2007;51(1):63-77.
[23] Huddy L. From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory. Political Psychology. 2001;22(127-156).
[24] İnaç H, Ünal F. The construction of national identity in modern times: Theoretical perspectives. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 2013;3(11):223-32.
[25] Hoge JD. Character education, citizenship education, and the social studies. The Social Studies. 2010;2002(3):103-8.
[26] Lin A. Citizenship education in American schools and its role in developing civic engagement: A review of the research. Educational Review. 2015;67(1):35-63.
[27] Stasiulis D. The Active Child Citizen: Lessons from Canadian Policy and the Children's Movement. Citizenship Studies. 2002;6(4):507-38.
[28] Phillips LG. Social justice storytelling and young children's active citizenship. Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education. 2010;31(3):363-76.
[29] 20. Kemendikbud. Kerangka Dasar dan Struktur Kurikulum 2013 Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. In: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini N, dan Informal, editor. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia; 2014.
[30] Kemendikbud. Pedoman Pengembangan Tema Pembelajaran Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. In: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini N, dan Informal, editor. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia; 2014.
[31] Willemse TM, ten Dam G, Geijsel F, van Wessum L, Volman M. Fostering teachers' professional development for citizenship education. Teaching and Teacher Education. 2015;49:118-27.
[32] Phillips LG. Young Children's Active Citizenship: Storytelling, Stories, and Social Actions [Dissertation]. Queensland: Queensland University of Technology; 2010.
[33] Kim B-G. A Narrative Inquiry into Children's Experiences of Composing their Identities as Citizens [Dissertation]. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta; 2011.
[34] Katz P. A Case Study of the Use of Internet Photobook Technology to Enhance Early Childhood “Scientist” Identity. Journal of Science Education and Technology. 2011;20:525-36.
[35] Fenty NS, Anderson E. Creating Digital Narratives: Guideline for Early Childhood Educators. Childhood Education. 2016;92(1):58-63.
[36] Nir-Gal O, Nur T. Learning in an Internet Environment during Early Childhood. Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood. 2003;4(2):172-87.