



## **Narrative harmony: Empowering students through the national anthem in social studies education**

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### **Abstract**

*This study explores the integration of the national anthem into social studies education. It is essential, considering that the coverage of IPS material is related to the fighting spirit of citizens. The article describes the relevance of the national anthem and the material in social studies learning. The report was prepared by utilizing 20 pieces of literature. The literature is devoted to studies relevant to the national anthem used in learning. The research results show that social studies education's relevance in integrating the National Anthem plants the seeds of lifelong civic responsibility. This study argues that once used only in classrooms, national anthems now serve as a guiding force, empowering students to actively contribute to their nation's ongoing narrative. The Indonesian national song "Dari Sabang to Merauke" examines its geographic and nationalist meaning. Using this song as a resource will increase meaningful social studies learning, including aspects of Indonesia's geography, history, and cultural*

*diversity. This study identifies the impact of integrating the national anthem on student engagement, emphasizing the instillation of civic responsibility.*

**Keywords:** *National anthem; interdisciplinary relations; social studies.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In social sciences education, the power of narrative is more than just telling a story—narrative becomes a dynamic force that shapes perspectives, instills values, and fosters a deep understanding of the construction of society (Gilboa & Bodner, 2009). As we investigate the intersection of education and national identity, this exploration reveals a compelling narrative that resonates with the essence of a nation—the National Anthem. This study summarizes the essence of the journey beyond conventional boundaries in teaching and learning.

In this discourse, we begin our efforts to reveal the symbiotic relationship between education, identity, and the national anthem that echoes throughout the corridors of time. The National Anthem, a sonic tapestry woven with threads of history, cultural motifs, and aspirations, emerges as a unique vehicle for empowering students (Bridges, 2016). The National Anthem is more than just a melodic composition; it is the living embodiment of a nation's collective ethos. It carries the weight of history, encapsulating the struggles, triumphs, and shared values that define a society (Knoester et al., 2021). By introducing students to the deep narrative in this national anthem, we provide them with a unique lens through which they can examine the evolution of their nation and understand the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future (Winstone & Witherspoon, 2016).

The existence of the national anthem provides harmony that connects students with national heritage so that students have a sense of belonging and responsibility as citizens (Knoester et al., 2021). Referring to the research results of Muttaqin, Raharjo, and Masturi (2018), national songs can provide meaningful character values for students (Muttaqin et al., 2018). Therefore, integrating the national anthem into learning is an exciting thing. The existence of the national anthem, echoed textually and contextually in social studies learning, influences identity formation and citizenship cultivation.

Other research reveals that through the national anthem, students can understand how the national spirit appears in everyday life (Knoester et al., 2021). Exploring national songs in learning is not the first thing to do. The research results presented by this are based on the enthusiasm expressed through a series of song lyrics. Strengthening is also provided by the results of Surjowati's (2021) research that the Indonesian national anthem, seen from a linguistic perspective, provides interpersonal meaning. For those who sing it, the spirit of togetherness is the core of building a prosperous Indonesia (Surjowati, 2021).

This study fills the literature gap regarding how to reveal nationalism through the national anthem, which has been rarely studied by scholars, especially in the context of learning

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materials. Thus, this study focuses on conveying the relevance of the national anthem and the material in social studies learning. Therefore, this narrative study is not only simply an academic endeavor but also a call to realize the potential of our national anthem as an educational tool. Integrating this powerful symbol into social studies education aims to inspire a new generation of informed and engaged citizens (Bridges, 2016; Gilboa & Bodner, 2009). In this context, teachers can stimulate active and inspiring social studies learning.

### **METHOD**

Literature study is another term for literature review, literature review, theory review, theoretical basis, literature review, and theory review (Snyder, 2019). Literature studies require high levels of perseverance so that the data, data analysis, and conclusions align with the expected objectives. This article was prepared by utilizing 20 pieces of literature. The literature is devoted to studies relevant to the national anthem used in learning. Of course, providing analysis is not limited to social studies learning but also other subjects. The search engines include Academia, Researchgate, and Google Scholar (Gustiani, 2019). In literature study research, researchers analyze the content of each article. This way, researchers get comprehensive conclusions about what they seek (Sanusi, 2013).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Integrating the National Anthem into Social Studies Education reveals unexpected yet enriching interdisciplinary connections. In addition to history and civics, the national anthem is a bridge between subjects, forging connections that enhance the educational experience (Zembylas, 2015). For example, a collaborative project between the music and social sciences departments allows students to study the musical composition of the national anthem, exploring its rhythm, melody, and historical evolution. This interdisciplinary approach deepens their understanding of the national anthem and fosters a holistic perspective, demonstrating the interconnectedness of various disciplines (Knoester et al., 2021).

Additionally, students who participate in interdisciplinary projects demonstrate increased creativity and critical thinking skills. Songs become canvases for expression, encouraging students to compose alternative verses, create visual representations, or even stage performances that reinterpret their meaning. Combining artistic expression and academic inquiry increases engagement and fosters a sense of ownership of cultural narratives. In Indonesia, there are thirty national songs. At least two songs are often sung during flag ceremonies and other formal activities. The songs are *Indonesia Raya* and *Mengheningkan Cipta*. Both songs are sung to provide space for pride as Indonesian citizens.

As a research finding that wants to be explored, it focuses on excerpts from the Indonesian national song "*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*" by R. Soerardjo in 1946. This song describes the geographical conditions of Indonesia, which is a sizeable archipelagic country. The lyrics of this song use two main keywords, "Sabang" and "Merauke." The meaning of *Sabang* refers

to the westernmost city in Indonesia, which is located in Aceh Province. At the same time, *Merauke* is the easternmost city in Indonesia, located in Papua Province. Judging from the harmony of the meaning of the song lyrics in general, there are two primary meanings, namely: First, geographical meaning: The lyrics of the song "*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*" describe the length of Indonesia's territory, which stretches from Sabang to Merauke. West end to Merauke at the east end. Indonesia is a vast country with many islands. Second, the meaning of nationalism: The lyrics of the song "*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*" also contain the meaning of nationalism. The song invites all Indonesian people to unite and uphold their homeland. It is essential because Indonesia is rich in geography, culture, and ethnic diversity.

Using the national anthem, "*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*," in social studies learning is an effort to strengthen meaningful learning. It is because teachers can explore the meaning of geography and nationalism. In terms of exploring the geographical sense, this song describes the geographical conditions of Indonesia, which is an archipelagic country, in the first verse. The lyrics "*Berjajar pulau-pulau* (Lined with islands)" show that Indonesia has many islands lined up from Sabang to Merauke. The lyrics "*Sambung menyambung menjadi satu* (connects to become one)" show that the islands form one unified territory called Indonesia. This statement firmly states that Indonesia is a unitary archipelagic country. Indonesia's vast territory is not used as a barrier to unity but is instead a strength that makes it a solid archipelagic country.

Furthermore, the meaning of nationalism in the second stanza invites all Indonesian people to unite and uphold their homeland. The lyrics "*Indonesia Tanah Airku* (My homeland Indonesia)" show that Indonesia is a homeland that must be loved and protected by all its people. The lyrics "*Aku Berjanji Padamu* (I promise to you)" show that the Indonesian people promise always to uphold their homeland. The song From Sabang to Merauke is essential for all Indonesian people to learn. This song teaches us to love our homeland and maintain national unity and integrity.

The broad and deep meaning of the song "*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*" can be used as a social studies learning resource because it has a wide and deep meaning. This song can be used to educate students about various aspects of national and state life, which are specifically described as follows:

1) Geographical Conditions of Indonesia

This song describes Indonesia's geographical condition, an archipelagic country stretching from Sabang in the west to Merauke in the east. It shows that Indonesia is a vast country with many islands.

2) History of the Struggle of the Indonesian Nation

The lyrics of this song contain the spirit of nationalism, which can encourage students to love their homeland and uphold national unity and integrity. It is essential because Indonesia is a country that is rich in diversity in terms of geography, culture, and ethnicity.

3) Cultural diversity in Indonesia

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The lyrics of this song mention various ethnic groups living in Indonesia, such as Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, and Papuan. I can help students understand that Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity.

Based on the identification of specific meanings above and the implications of discussing our findings, discuss the existence of the national anthem on student involvement in learning. In a learning context, integrating the national anthem into social studies education sows the seeds of lifelong civic responsibility (Mutiani et al., 2021; Risinger, 2013). The existence of freedom of meaning is in line with the Merdeka curriculum, which expresses an ongoing relationship with their national identity and active involvement in community affairs. Many stated that the national anthem embedded in their formative education was a reminder of their role as contributors to the welfare of society (Abbas, 2018; Foulcher, 2000).

Practically, the relevant learning model for combining the song “*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*” with social studies learning is a learning model that prioritizes student-centered strategies (Azeharie & Gabriela, 2021). This learning model provides opportunities for students to learn and construct their knowledge actively. One of these models is the problem-based learning model (Gilboa & Bodner, 2009). The problem-based learning model can teach students about the cultural diversity in Indonesia (Günay et al., 2022). Teachers can give problems to students, such as "How can we maintain the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia?". Students are then asked to work together to solve the problem. The location of Sabang to Merauke can be seen on the map as follows:



Figure 1. Distance map from Sabang to Merauke

Source: <https://id.quora.com/Berbuat-jarak-antara-Sabang-dan-Merauke>

Based on the map above, we can see how the distance stretches between Sabang and Merauke. The distance between Sabang and Merauke is 5,245 km. Through this fact, at the core of learning, social studies teachers can give assignments to connect songs with the learning material being studied (Alammary et al., 2014; Formen, 2011). For example, the teacher is teaching material about the geographical conditions of Indonesia. In this case, the teacher can ask students to observe a map of Indonesia and say the names of the islands in the song. By

combining the song “*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*” with social studies learning, teachers can make learning more meaningful and enjoyable for students (Kamza et al., 2021).

Moreover, the ripple effects of this approach are visible in events involving the wider community (Bridges, 2016). Students can take the initiative to echo the national spirit through national songs. Thus creating a space for collective reflection on the nation's journey (Hummel, 2017). Not only does it strengthen social ties, but it also establishes the national anthem as a living symbol that develops dynamically in line with the collective aspirations of the people. Results and discussion of the impact of integrating the National Anthem into Social Sciences Education. Beyond its role as a historical artifact, the anthem catalyzes interdisciplinary exploration, fostering creativity and critical thinking (Muttaqin et al., 2018). More importantly, it lays the foundation for lifelong civic engagement, positioning students as active contributors to the ongoing narrative of their nation. Once only used in classrooms, this song is a guiding force in forming responsible and engaged citizens.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores the integration of the national anthem into Social Sciences Education. This research focuses on the Indonesian national song “*Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*” examining its geographic and nationalist meaning. Using this song as a resource will increase meaningful social studies learning, including geography, history, and Indonesian cultural diversity. This study identifies the impact of integrating the national anthem on student engagement, emphasizing the instillation of civic responsibility. The national anthem is a reminder of national identity and active participation in social affairs, in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. Practical applications suggest student-centered learning models, especially problem-based learning, to address cultural diversity. The approach reflected in the long distance between Sabang and Merauke makes social studies learning more fun and meaningful for students. The national anthem is positioned not simply as a historical artifact but as a dynamic symbol that fosters lifelong creativity, critical thinking, and civic engagement. Integrating the national anthem into social studies education transforms it from a classroom tool to a guiding force in forming responsible and engaged citizens.

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