

Enhancing Early Childhood's Love for the Homeland Through Folk Songs at KB At-Taqwa, Singosari District, Malang Regency

Any Farihatun Nisa¹, Farida Nur Kumala², Ayu Asmah³

^{1,2,3} Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, Malang, Indonesia

e-mail: ^{*1}anyfarihatun@gmail.com, ²faridankumala@unikama.ac.id,

³ayuasmah@unikama.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to enhance early childhood's sense of love for the homeland through the use of folk songs at KB At-Taqwa, Singosari District, Malang Regency. The study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach implemented over two cycles. The participants were children aged 5–6 years. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that learning folk songs, namely *Padang Bulan* and *Cublak-Cublak Suweng*, successfully enhanced children's sense of love for the homeland. This improvement was reflected in the children's ability to recognize folk songs and their enthusiasm and enjoyment while singing them. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of folk songs is effective in fostering children's love for their homeland.

Introduction

Love for the homeland is one of the essential character values that should be instilled from an early age. Early childhood represents the golden period of development, during which character values can become deeply embedded in children's personalities (Adeliana et al., 2023; Aji & Wangid, 2022). Love for the homeland is a fundamental value that should be nurtured from an early age so that it becomes firmly rooted in young children's character (Fadlillah et al., 2022). Love for the homeland refers to ways of thinking, behaving, and acting that demonstrate loyalty, concern, and high appreciation for the nation's language, physical environment, social life, culture, economy, and political system (Farida et al., 2022; Prihantini et al., 2025; Taskiyah & Widyastuti, 2021; Yathasya et al., 2022).

Currently, children are increasingly exposed to foreign cultures. Children aged 5–6 years at KB At-Taqwa, Singosari District, Malang Regency, frequently sing foreign songs, have limited familiarity with folk songs, and show greater interest in modern popular music. Most children are unable to sing or even identify the titles of Indonesian folk songs. Moreover, they have not yet demonstrated a sense of pride when singing national songs; some even alter the lyrics merely for amusement. According to Elan and Handayani (2023) and Suri (2021), these conditions indicate that children's love for the homeland remains relatively low. One effective approach that aligns with young children's

developmental characteristics is the use of songs as instructional media to cultivate patriotism.

Folk songs embody cultural values, moral principles, and national identity that can be introduced to children in an enjoyable manner. These songs generally portray the characteristics and everyday life of local communities, while their lyrics are written in regional languages (Syarifah et al., 2022). Through folk songs, children become familiar with local languages, customs, and cultural traditions as integral parts of Indonesia's national heritage. Folk songs possess characteristics that are highly compatible with the developmental needs of young children, including simple melodies, memorable lyrics, and an enjoyable atmosphere. Consequently, they enable children to learn in a more engaging and interactive way (Halim et al., 2025). The use of folk songs in early childhood education is considered effective because children learn through singing, movement, and imitation, all of which are consistent with the principle of learning through play.

Various studies have explored the use of songs, educational games, and other instructional media to foster children's love for the homeland (Rahmawati et al., 2022; Anggraeni & Rahman, 2023). For example, Wartini et al. (2019) attempted to enhance patriotism among children in the Strawberry Playgroup through the use of a snakes-and-ladders game. Their classroom action research demonstrated a significant improvement, increasing from 23.2% in Cycle I to 84.7% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that educational games can serve as effective

media for introducing national symbols and fostering nationalism in early childhood. Nevertheless, the study focused exclusively on board games as learning media, leaving the potential of arts and local culture as instruments for internalizing patriotic values largely unexplored.

Furthermore, Anggraeni and Rahman (2023) argued that love for the homeland should be instilled in early childhood through character education as a response to the challenges of globalization, which may gradually erode national cultural identity. Their study emphasized the importance of nurturing children's character so that they appreciate national culture, take pride in using regional languages, and develop a commitment to preserving national unity. However, the research remained conceptual and descriptive in nature, without proposing or empirically testing specific instructional models or learning media capable of enhancing children's sense of patriotism.

Suri et al. (2024) offered a different perspective by examining traditional games as a medium for cultivating children's love for the homeland through a literature review. The study concluded that traditional games such as *congklak*, *engklek*, jump rope, *egrang*, hide-and-seek, and *kolodood* embody values of togetherness, cooperation, cultural preservation, and national character development. These findings broaden the understanding that local culture can serve as an important learning resource in character education. Nevertheless, because the study employed a literature review methodology, it did not provide empirical evidence regarding the direct implementation of traditional

games in early childhood education settings or their effectiveness in improving children's patriotism.

Meanwhile, Munawaroh et al. (2025) developed a learning approach based on the preservation of the traditional performing art *Angklung Gunung* to cultivate patriotic character among young children. Their findings demonstrated that children's active participation in playing the instrument and understanding its philosophical meaning strengthened their sense of belonging toward national culture, promoted togetherness, and instilled discipline and responsibility. This study confirmed the considerable potential of traditional arts as a medium for character education. However, its focus remained limited to instrumental traditional arts, specifically *Angklung Gunung*, rather than simpler and more accessible musical activities that are closely connected to children's daily experiences, such as singing folk songs.

A critical review of previous studies reveals a common objective of fostering children's love for the homeland through various approaches, including cultural activities, games, and character education. Nevertheless, they differ substantially in terms of the instructional media employed. Wartini et al. (2019) focused on snakes-and-ladders games, Anggraeni and Rahman (2023) emphasized the conceptual implementation of character education, Suri et al. (2024) reviewed traditional games through a literature study, while Munawaroh et al. (2025) employed the traditional art of *Angklung Gunung* as a learning medium. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that culturally based

learning media can effectively strengthen children's sense of nationalism. However, none has specifically investigated folk songs as the primary instructional medium for cultivating children's love for the homeland.

In fact, folk songs possess characteristics that are particularly appropriate for early childhood development. They integrate music, language, cultural values, philosophical meanings, and local identity into a simple, enjoyable, and memorable learning experience (Lita et al., 2024; Wahyuni, 2024). Singing is also one of the instructional methods most closely aligned with young children's daily lives because it simultaneously supports language, socio-emotional, artistic, and character development. Furthermore, folk songs not only introduce children to local culture but also cultivate pride in the nation's cultural heritage through repeated and affective learning experiences.

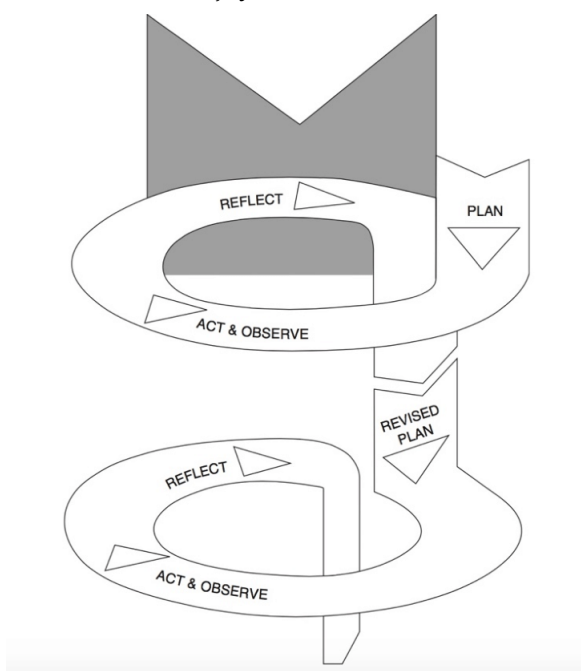
Based on the analysis of previous studies, a clear research gap can be identified. Existing studies on enhancing young children's love for the homeland have predominantly employed educational games, traditional games, character education programs, or traditional musical arts as instructional media (Elis, 2018; Wulandari & Agung, 2024; Hidayati et al., 2025). To date, no study has specifically examined the use of folk songs as the primary variable or instructional medium for fostering patriotism among young children, particularly those enrolled in playgroup programs. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by enriching culturally based

instructional strategies and providing an alternative learning medium that is effective, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate for fostering children's love for the homeland.

Methods

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the model developed by Stephen Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014). The Kemmis et al. (2014) model consists of a series of cycles, each comprising the stages of planning, action and observation, and reflection. These stages are implemented repeatedly (Susilo et al., 2022; Suhirman, 2021) until the research objectives have been achieved.

Figure 1. The Kemmis and McTaggart Spiral Model (1988), adapted from Wijaya et al. (2023).



Data were collected through observations, interviews with the

classroom teacher and children, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The trustworthiness of the data was established using source triangulation and method triangulation.

Result and Discussions

This classroom action research was conducted to enhance the sense of love for the homeland among children aged 5–6 years at KB At-Taqwa, Singosari District, Malang Regency, through the use of folk songs. The researcher employed observation, interviews, and documentation throughout the implementation of folk-song-based learning activities to obtain the required research data. For the observation stage, an observation sheet was developed as the research instrument. This observation sheet contained **four indicators** used to assess children's patriotic character.

Table 1. Indicators of the Love for the Homeland Character

Variable	Learning Outcome Element	Learning Outcome Sub-element
Love for the Homeland	Student Identity	Students recognize their roles as members of their family, school, and as Indonesian citizens, enabling them to adapt to their environment, existing rules and norms, and to recognize the existence of other countries in the world.

		Students know the name of their country.
		Students recognize their national symbols.
		Students recognize national songs.
		Students recognize folk songs.

Source: Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Education (BSKAP, 2025).

During the pre-cycle, the children's sense of love for the homeland in Group B1 of KB At-Taqwa Singosari had not yet developed optimally. This condition was reflected in the fact that most children were unfamiliar with folk songs and were unable to sing them independently. Although the children recognized several national songs, they often sang them jokingly without demonstrating a sense of pride. The level of achievement for the patriotism indicator remained low, with 56.25% achieved by nine children and 68.75% by one child.

During Cycle I, the implementation of the folk song *Padang Bulan*, accompanied by movements, video media, and role-playing activities, began to produce positive changes. The children gradually became familiar with the folk song and actively participated in the singing activities. The achievement percentage increased from the pre-cycle stage to 62.5% in the first meeting of Cycle I. At the second meeting, following the integration of video media and role-playing activities, the achievement further improved to 68.75%–75%. The children also

appeared more enthusiastic and actively engaged throughout the learning process.

During Cycle II, using the folk song *Cublak-Cublak Suweng*, a more substantial improvement was observed. This was primarily because the song was integrated with traditional games and video media, enabling the children to become more active, confident, and willing to lead the activities. The children began requesting that the song be sung repeatedly, demonstrating a genuine interest in the activity. Nearly all participants memorized the lyrics and sang the folk song enthusiastically.

The achievement percentages increased significantly, reaching:

1. **75%–81.25%** for five children.
2. **87.5%** for four children.
3. **93.75%** for one child.

These findings indicate that integrating folk songs with play-based and movement-based activities can foster a stronger and more meaningful sense of love for the homeland among young children.

Table 2. Recapitulation of the Improvement in Children's Love for the Homeland

Research Stage	Average Achievement (%)
Pre-cycle	57.5%
Cycle I – Meeting 1	63.1%
Cycle I – Meeting 2	69.4%

Cycle II – Meeting 1	69.4%
Cycle II – Meeting 2	83.1%

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of folk songs is an effective instructional medium for fostering a sense of love for the homeland among children aged 5–6 years. This is evidenced by the increase in the average achievement score from 57.5% during the pre-cycle stage to 83.1% at the end of Cycle II. These findings are consistent with those of Fitria and Husna (2019), who reported a significant positive effect of using folk songs as a medium for cultivating patriotic character. Folk songs, characterized by their simple melodies, cheerful rhythms, and close connection to children's daily experiences, create an enjoyable learning environment. Through singing activities, children indirectly learn about the nation's cultural identity, allowing patriotic values to be internalized naturally and meaningfully.

The results further indicate that implementing folk songs successfully enhanced the sense of love for the homeland among children aged 5–6 years at KB At-Taqwa, as reflected in the increase in the average level of achievement from 57.5% during the pre-cycle stage to 83.1% by the end of Cycle II. This improvement was evident in the children's ability to recognize folk songs, sing them enthusiastically, and demonstrate pride and active participation throughout the learning process. These findings are consistent with those reported by Wartini et al. (2019), who found that the snakes-and-ladders game could enhance children's love for the homeland through enjoyable learning activities.

They also support the findings of Munawaroh et al. (2025), who demonstrated that traditional arts effectively cultivate patriotic character by introducing children to local culture. Collectively, these studies indicate that culturally based learning media provide meaningful learning experiences that facilitate the internalization of nationalistic values among young children. Nevertheless, the present study offers a distinct contribution by employing folk songs as the primary instructional medium, rather than educational games or traditional instrumental arts. Singing activities enable children not only to recognize local culture cognitively but also to internalize its values through repeated affective experiences. Consequently, folk songs represent an alternative instructional medium that is simpler, easier for teachers to implement in everyday classroom activities, and equally effective in fostering children's love for the homeland.

The findings of this study also reinforce various theoretical perspectives asserting that character development in early childhood is most effective when learning experiences are concrete, enjoyable, and aligned with children's developmental characteristics. As discussed in the introduction, folk songs encompass cultural values, moral principles, national identity, and regional languages that naturally introduce children to Indonesia's rich cultural heritage. Furthermore, the characteristics of folk songs—simple melodies, memorable lyrics, and their integration with movement and play—make the process of value internalization more effective. These findings support the theory that

young children learn most effectively through play-based activities and direct experiences. Accordingly, folk-song-based learning successfully integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously. Throughout the intervention, children not only memorized the lyrics of *Padang Bulan* and *Cublak-Cublak Suweng*, but also demonstrated positive behavioral changes, including increased enjoyment, self-confidence, pride in their own culture, and a desire to sing the folk songs repeatedly. These observations strengthen the view that cultivating patriotism in early childhood cannot rely solely on the delivery of concepts or factual knowledge; instead, it must be developed through continuous habituation involving emotional engagement, cultural experiences, and children's active participation. Therefore, the use of folk songs can be regarded as an effective pedagogical strategy for bridging character education theory with culturally based instructional practices in early childhood education settings.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this classroom action research, which was conducted over two cycles, it can be concluded that the use of folk songs is effective in enhancing the sense of love for the homeland among children aged 5–6 years at KB At-Taqwa, Singosari District, Malang Regency. The implementation of the folk songs *Padang Bulan* and *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* successfully fostered children's patriotic character. This improvement was reflected in the development of patriotism indicators, particularly the children's ability to recognize folk songs,

demonstrate happiness and pride while singing, and actively participate in learning activities. Through an enjoyable learning process that is developmentally appropriate and closely aligned with children's world, the value of love for the homeland can be instilled gradually and meaningfully.

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