
A Multimedia Learning Approach to National Character Education: Utilizing Modern Song Arrangements for Indonesian Youth

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Abstract

The erosion of nationalism among Indonesian millennial youth, driven by globalization and widespread consumption of foreign digital content, represents a critical concern for national character education. This study investigates whether millennial-arranged national song videos distributed through YouTube are associated with high levels of nationalist sentiment among Indonesian youth. Using a one-group post-test design, 207 participants (aged 19–25 years) viewed four curated millennial-arranged national song videos and completed a structured questionnaire. Grounded in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning Mayer, Social Cognitive Theory Bandura, Uses and Gratification Theory Katz et, Semiotic Theory, and Emotional Learning Theory, the study found that 56.8% of respondents reported the highest level of love for the homeland (Scale 5). "Tanah Air" (55.1%) and "Wonderland Indonesia" (34.8%) were most influential. These findings suggest that creatively arranged audiovisual content on YouTube is associated with high nationalist sentiment among Indonesia's digital-native generation, though causal inference requires further controlled experimentation. Implications for character education policy and digital pedagogy are discussed.

Keyword: audiovisual media; millennial youth; nationalism; YouTube; character education; Indonesia; song video arrangement; national identity

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INTRODUCTION

Nationalism defined as a collective sense of attachment, pride, and loyalty toward one's nation is an indispensable pillar of social cohesion, state integrity, and cultural preservation (Barrington, 2006). In Indonesia, a diverse archipelagic nation of over 270 million people united under the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), nationalism has historically served as the binding thread of national identity. However,

accelerating globalization and the pervasive influence of digital media have triggered growing concerns regarding the erosion of nationalist sentiment, particularly among the millennial generation born between 1981 and 1996 (Suryana & Dewi, 2021).

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed the information and entertainment landscape, granting Indonesian youth unprecedented access to foreign cultural content through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, and Spotify. According to national digital media surveys, young Indonesians spend an average of four to six hours daily on social media and video streaming platforms, predominantly consuming content originating from South Korea, Japan, the United States, and Europe (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2023; Muhima et al., 2024). This shift in media consumption has been accompanied by a measurable decline in youth engagement with local cultural products, including national songs, traditional arts, and patriotic narratives (Muslim et al., 2025). These trends pose a serious challenge to character education programs that seek to cultivate nationalist values among the younger generation.

Within this challenging context, a remarkable grassroots cultural phenomenon has emerged: the creative rearrangement of Indonesian national songs by millennial content creators, packaged as cinematically rich music videos and distributed through YouTube. Productions such as "Wonderland Indonesia" by Alffy Rev ft. Novia Bachmid and "Tanah Air" by Syarla Marz ft. Ilham has garnered tens of millions of views, generating intense emotional responses, widespread social sharing, and public discourse about Indonesian identity (Putranto & Susilo, 2021). This phenomenon suggests that when nationalist content is packaged in aesthetically appealing and culturally relevant formats, it retains or even amplifies its power to engage young audiences.

Despite the promising visibility of this phenomenon, rigorous empirical studies examining the effectiveness of millennial-arranged national song videos in fostering nationalism remain limited in the academic literature. Existing research has broadly demonstrated the effectiveness of audiovisual media in civic and character education (Nicolaou et al., 2019; Muhima et al., 2024), and qualitative analyses have confirmed the presence of nationalist messaging in specific videos (Putranto & Susilo, 2021). However, experimental evidence demonstrating measurable increases in nationalist sentiment following exposure to these videos, and theoretical explanations of the underlying mechanisms, remain an important gap in the literature.

This study was designed to fill this gap. The research objectives are: (1) to empirically measure changes in nationalist sentiment among Indonesian youth following exposure to millennial-arranged national song videos; (2) to identify which specific videos are most effective in fostering nationalism; (3) to explain the effectiveness of this medium through an integrated theoretical framework drawing on multimedia learning, social cognition, audience theory, semiotics, and emotional learning; and (4) to derive implications for national character education policy in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government has responded to the challenge of declining nationalism by embedding nationalist values within the national curriculum through the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile) framework, which identifies love of the homeland (*cinta tanah air*) as one of six core character competencies (Rachman et al., 2024). However, critics have noted that conventional approaches to nationalist education, including mandatory singing of national songs, recitation of the Pancasila, and flag ceremony rituals, are perceived by many millennial and Generation Z students as obligatory performances disconnected from their actual media lives and cultural experiences (Suryana & Dewi,

2021). Bridging this gap between policy aspirations and the lived realities of digital-native youth requires innovative pedagogical approaches that meet young people in their actual media environments.

The emergence of millennial-arranged national song videos on YouTube represents a unique convergence of youth creativity, digital platform culture, and nationalist expression. Content creators such as Alffy Rev have demonstrated that there is a genuine popular appetite for Indonesian cultural content when it is presented in formats that align with contemporary aesthetic sensibilities. The viral reach of these videos, "Wonderland Indonesia," alone has accumulated over 200 million views, far exceeding the audience typically reached by conventional nationalist education programs, suggesting that this medium has the potential to function as a powerful supplement or alternative to formal nationalism curricula (Putranto & Susilo, 2021). Understanding the mechanisms of this effectiveness, and the conditions under which it is maximized, is therefore a question of both theoretical and practical significance.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design using a One-Group Post-test Only Design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design was selected because the study sought to measure post-exposure nationalist sentiment among participants who had viewed millennial-arranged national song videos. It is important to acknowledge a key limitation of this design: the absence of a pre-test and a control group means that observed scores cannot be unambiguously attributed to the video intervention, as baseline nationalist sentiment was not measured. Accordingly, the findings of this study are interpreted as descriptive and associative rather than causal. Future research employing randomized controlled designs with pre- and post-test measurements is necessary to establish causal claims. The experimental treatment constituted the sequential viewing of four curated song videos in a single session.

The research participants were Indonesian youth (millennial generation, aged 19–25 years) currently residing away from their home cities or provinces, either for study or work purposes. This specific subpopulation was strategically targeted because geographical displacement from one's homeland is expected to heighten the emotional resonance of nationalist audiovisual content, potentially amplifying attitudinal responses. Participants were recruited via purposive sampling through social media networks (WhatsApp groups, Instagram, and Twitter/X) during February–March 2024. Invitation posts described the study as a survey about youth responses to Indonesian national song videos. A total of 221 individuals accessed the survey link, and 207 respondents (response rate: 93.7%) completed the post-treatment questionnaire in full and were included in the analysis. It is acknowledged that self-selection bias may be present, as individuals who voluntarily respond to a survey about national songs may hold stronger pre-existing nationalist sentiments than the general millennial population. This limitation is discussed further in the conclusion.

The experimental treatment consisted of the sequential viewing of four millennial-arranged national song videos, selected based on their YouTube view counts, production quality, and thematic relevance to Indonesian nationalism. Table 1 provides details of the four videos used.

Table 1. Millennial-Arranged National Song Videos Used in the Experiment

No	Song Title	Performer	YouTube Link
1	Tanah Air	Syarla Marz ft. Ilham	https://youtu.be/fAM7ejUL1do
2	Ibu pertiwi	Shanna Shannon	https://youtu.be/N9554TDGqE0
3	Spirit of Papua	Alffy Rev ft. Nowela Mikhelia	https://youtu.be/aaFNTpG8qyU
4	Wondeland Indonesia	Alffy Rev ft. Novia Bachmid	https://youtu.be/aKtb7Y3qOck

After viewing the videos, participants completed a structured online questionnaire via Google Forms. The primary dependent variable “love for the homeland” was measured using a five-item Likert scale (Table 2), where each item assessed a distinct dimension of nationalist sentiment: affective attachment, pride, willingness to defend, preference for local culture, and sense of national belonging. The five items were adapted from established nationalism measurement instruments (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Smith, 2001) and reviewed by two content experts in Civic Education (PPKn) before data collection. Content validity was confirmed through expert review, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.92. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.81$), indicating good reliability. The scale score reported in this study represents the mean of all five items per participant. Participants also indicated which of the four videos had the greatest influence on their nationalist feelings and provided demographic information.

Table 2. Questionnaire Likert Scale for Love of the Homeland

Scale	Description
1	Really do not love my country at all
2	Do not love the Motherland
3	Neutral / Enough
4	Love of the Motherland
5	Really Love the Motherland (strongest feeling)

Descriptive statistical analysis was applied to the questionnaire data, including frequency tables, percentage distributions, and measures of central tendency. The primary outcome of interest was the proportion of respondents selecting Likert scale levels 4 or 5, and the identification of the most influential video. All data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Result

The study produced three key quantitative findings: the demographic profile of participants, the relative influence of each song video on nationalist sentiment, and the overall level of love for the homeland reported after the viewing session.

The demographic profile of respondents showed that the majority of participants (68.2%) were aged 19–21 years, with a smaller proportion (31.8%) aged 22–25 years. This distribution confirms that the study successfully targeted the core millennial youth

demographic. Figure 1 presents the percentage of respondents who identified each song video as the most influential in fostering their nationalist sentiment.

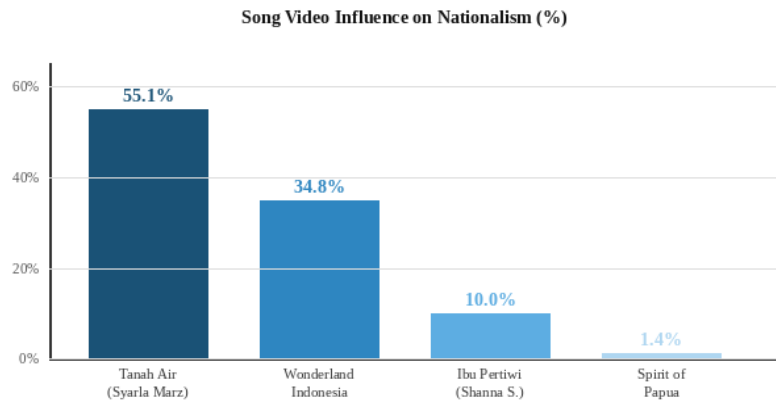


Figure 1. Percentage of Most Influential Song Video Reported by Respondents

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 3 below, “Tanah Air” (Syarla Marz ft. Ilham) was identified as the most influential video in fostering nationalist sentiment, selected by 55.1% of respondents, followed by “Wonderland Indonesia” (Alffy Rev ft. Nova Bachmid) at 34.8%, “Ibu Pertiwi” (Shanna Shannon) at 10.0%, and “Spirit of Papua” at 1.4%. The average nationalism score reported per video in Table 3 was calculated by grouping respondents who nominated each video as most influential, then computing the mean of their five-item Likert scale scores. This sub-group averaging procedure reflects the nationalism level of those most moved by each respective video.

Table 3. Summary of Quantitative Results by Song Video

No	Song Video	% Influential	Avg. Nationalism Score (1–5)	EffectCategory
1	<i>Tanah Air (Syarla Marz ft. Ilham)</i>	55.1%	4.72	Very High
2	<i>Wonderland Indonesia (Alffy Rev ft. Nova Bachmid)</i>	34.8%	4.58	Very High
3	<i>Ibu Pertiwi (Shanna Shannon)</i>	10.0%	4.21	High
4	<i>Spirit of Papua (Alffy Rev ft. Nowela Mikhelia)</i>	1.4 %	3.89	High

Figure 2 presents the distribution of respondents' self-reported love for the homeland on the five-point Likert scale. The most striking finding is that 56.8% of all respondents selected Scale 5 ("Really Love the Motherland"), and an additional 29.0% selected Scale 4 ("Love the Motherland"), indicating that a combined 85.8% of participants reported strong or very strong levels of nationalist sentiment following the viewing session.

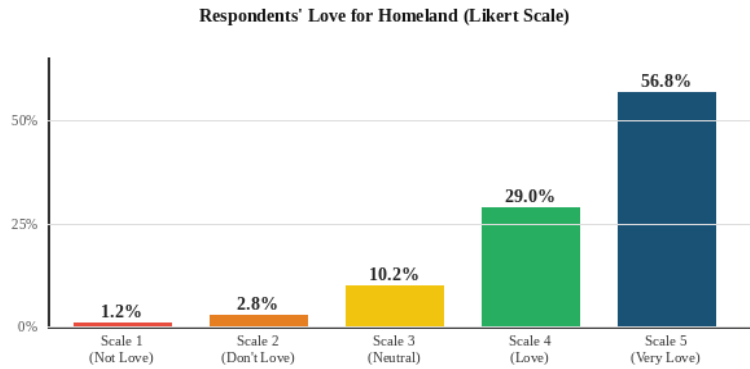


Figure 2. Distribution of Respondents' Love for the Homeland on the Likert Scale

DISCUSSION

The finding that 56.8% of participants chose the maximum Likert scale score for love of the homeland after watching millennial-arranged song videos is a noteworthy descriptive outcome. This result is consistent with findings from related studies on audiovisual media and nationalism in Indonesia. Muhima et al. (2024), in a systematic review published in *Heliyon* (Elsevier), found video-based approaches to be among the most promising for fostering civic and nationalist attitudes among Indonesian students. The present findings extend this literature to a non-formal, digital learning context. It must be noted, however, that the absence of a pre-test and a control group means that alternative explanations cannot be ruled out. Specifically, three rival hypotheses warrant consideration: (1) participants may have held strong pre-existing nationalist sentiments before video exposure, reflecting a self-selection effect among those willing to participate; (2) geographic displacement from their hometowns may have independently elevated emotional salience of national identity regardless of the video content; and (3) social desirability bias may have inflated self-reported nationalism scores in an explicitly nationalist survey context. These confounds do not invalidate the findings but underscore the need for controlled experimental designs in future research

The dominance of "Tanah Air" (55.1%) over the other three videos can be explained through multiple theoretical lenses. From a semiotic perspective (Putranto & Susilo, 2021), "Tanah Air" deploys a maximally familiar set of national signs the melody universally known by all Indonesians since childhood updated with modern production aesthetics that signal contemporaneity and cultural relevance. The combination of deep mnemonic familiarity with fresh aesthetic presentation creates what semiotic theory would term a "sign of maximum resonance": the signifier activates pre-existing affective associations while the modern signification reinforces their relevance for a new generation.

The prominence of "Wonderland Indonesia" (34.8%) confirms findings from a 2025 *Journal of Computational Social Science* (Springer/Scopus) study by Yesudhas et al. (2025), which used social network analysis of YouTube comments to demonstrate that this video actively triggers expressions of Indonesian national identity and collective pride. The cinematic richness of "Wonderland Indonesia," combining spectacular drone footage of

Indonesian natural landscapes with diverse regional cultural performances, operationalizes the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2021) by simultaneously engaging auditory and visual processing channels with complementary and emotionally resonant content.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) provides a framework for understanding why the videos are effective not merely as entertainment but as tools for attitudinal change. Music videos featuring representations of Indonesian cultural richness, natural beauty, and historical heritage can function as "nationalist models", representations of what Indonesian identity looks and feels like that viewers internalize through observational learning. This modeling mechanism is amplified by the emotional states induced by the music, consistent with Emotional Learning Theory (Jensen, 2000), which posits that emotionally charged experiences create stronger and more durable attitudinal imprints than neutral presentations.

Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz et al., 1974) illuminates a crucial enabling factor: the millennial arrangement style makes the videos genuinely entertaining. This entertainment value is not merely a cosmetic addition but a fundamental mechanism of persuasion. It lowers the audience's defenses against overt nationalist messaging by embedding that messaging within a media experience that the audience actively seeks and enjoys. A study on multicultural education by Muhima et al. (2024) in the Heliyon journal (Elsevier, Scopus-indexed) confirms that media formats aligned with learners' existing preferences dramatically enhance the effectiveness of character education interventions. Table 3 summarizes the theoretical frameworks and their specific mechanisms of effect.

Table 4. Theoretical Frameworks and Their Mechanisms of Effectiveness

No	Theory	Key Mechanism	Application to Song Videos
1	<i>Cognitive Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2021)</i>	Dual-channel visual & auditory processing	Music + imagery reduces cognitive load; enhances retention of nationalist values
2	<i>Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001)</i>	Observational learning & modeling	Patriotic role models in videos inspire emulation of nationalist attitudes
3	<i>Uses & Gratification Theory (Katz et al., 1974)</i>	Active audience selects media for need fulfillment	Entertainment packaging overcomes youth resistance to nationalist content
4	<i>Semiotic Theory (Putranto & Susilo, 2021)</i>	Signs & symbols produce cultural meaning	Flag, landscape, and heritage imagery construct Indonesian national identity
5	<i>Emotional Learning Theory (Jensen, 2000)</i>	Emotion enhances memory & attitudinal change	Music-triggered emotion creates deep, lasting bonds to national identity

Figure 3 presents the conceptual framework synthesizing the relationships between the millennial song video medium, its theoretical mechanisms, and the nationalist outcome. The framework illustrates how the unique combination of visual and auditory stimuli in millennial-arranged song videos activates both cognitive (dual-channel processing) and affective (emotional engagement and social modeling) pathways, converging on increased nationalist attitudes.

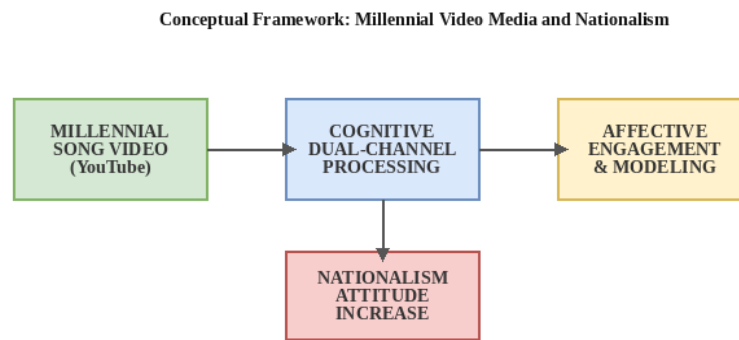


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework: Millennial Song Videos and Nationalism Pathways

The YouTube distribution platform is itself an integral component of the intervention's effectiveness. Research by Cahyono et al. (2022) demonstrated that YouTube-based learning was highly effective for reactualizing Archipelago Insight (Wawasan Nusantara) among university students during the pandemic. Wicaksono et al. (2022) confirmed that digital platforms play an important role in sustaining community-based cultural values. The algorithmic recommendation features of YouTube, which expose viewers to related content following initial engagement, mean that the nationalist effects of a single video viewing session may be amplified by subsequent exposure to additional nationalist content driven by the platform's recommendation system.

The particularly strong effect observed among participants residing away from their hometowns aligns with predictions from Emotional Learning Theory regarding the role of emotional context in media effects. The affective gap between current circumstances (geographical displacement) and the idealized homeland depicted in the videos creates a heightened state of emotional receptiveness what psychologists' term "homeland salience" that amplifies the emotional impact of nationalist audiovisual content (Jensen, 2000). This finding suggests that millennial-arranged song videos may be particularly valuable tools for maintaining nationalist ties among Indonesian diaspora communities.

Findings from the ScienceDirect article by Rahmat et al. (2025) on youth, social media, multiculturalism, and cultural integration in Indonesia, published in *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* (Elsevier), further corroborate the present study's conclusions. That study found that Indonesian youth who engage with digital content reflecting their cultural identity are more likely to embrace and contribute to Pancasila-based nationalism. The millennial-arranged national song videos appear to function as precisely this type of identity-affirming content, presenting Indonesian cultural diversity in a format that resonates with contemporary youth aesthetics.

An important consideration for the practical application of these findings is the role of creative quality and aesthetic innovation in determining video effectiveness. The marked difference in influence between "Tanah Air" (55.1%) and "Spirit of Papua" (1.4%) cannot be attributed solely to differences in ideological content, since all four videos carry broadly nationalist messages. Rather, the difference in effectiveness appears to reflect differences in production quality, aesthetic innovation, and cultural universality factors that determine

whether a video succeeds in capturing and sustaining viewer attention long enough for its nationalist messages to register emotionally and cognitively. This observation suggests that nationalist education through digital media requires investment not only in ideological content but also in production values and cultural relevance.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the Indonesian context. Across Southeast Asia and the broader Global South, nations face similar challenges of maintaining nationalist cohesion among youth populations whose media lives are dominated by globally produced content. The model demonstrated in Indonesia mobilizing the creative capacities of young content creators to produce locally grounded, aesthetically contemporary, and emotionally resonant nationalist content for digital distribution may offer a transferable template for nationalist education in other pluralistic nations navigating the tensions between globalization and cultural preservation. Future comparative research examining similar phenomena in Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand could illuminate both the universally applicable principles and the culturally specific conditions that shape the effectiveness of digital nationalist pedagogy.

From a policy perspective, these findings support the integration of digital media competency into teacher training programs for Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) teachers. Educators who understand how to curate, contextualize, and facilitate discussion around millennial-arranged nationalist content can leverage the demonstrated affective power of this medium within formal educational settings, complementing the informal exposure that students already receive through their personal YouTube usage. The development of structured lesson plans incorporating curated millennial song videos, combined with guided reflection activities that encourage students to articulate connections between the emotions evoked by the videos and their responsibilities as Indonesian citizens, represents a promising pedagogical innovation worthy of systematic research and development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that millennial-arranged national song videos, distributed through YouTube, are associated with high levels of nationalist sentiment among Indonesian youth. Descriptive findings show that a substantial majority (85.8%) of participants reported high or very high levels of love for their homeland following exposure to four curated videos, with 56.8% selecting the maximum response (“Really Love the Motherland”). “Tanah Air” (55.1%) and “Wonderland Indonesia” (34.8%) were identified as the most influential videos. These outcomes are interpreted through an integrated theoretical framework encompassing the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, Social Cognitive Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, Semiotic Theory, and Emotional Learning Theory. However, given the one-group post-test only design, the absence of a control group, and the potential for self-selection bias in the sample, causal claims cannot be firmly established from this study alone.

The practical implications of these findings are significant, though they must be situated within the study’s methodological constraints. Character education policymakers may consider incorporating curated millennial-arranged national song videos into Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) curricula and informal character education programs targeting digital-native youth. Educational institutions could leverage YouTube and other

digital platforms as supplementary vehicles for nationalist pedagogy. Nevertheless, practical implementation in formal school settings will require attention to: (1) equitable technology access across urban and rural schools; (2) teacher capacity-building to curate and contextualize digital nationalist content; and (3) curriculum alignment with existing PPKn learning outcomes. These preconditions must be addressed before wide-scale adoption can be recommended.

Future research should address the methodological limitations of the current study by employing randomized controlled designs with control groups, pre-test and post-test measurements to assess change over time, and longitudinal follow-up to examine the durability of nationalist attitude increases. Investigation of demographic moderators including regional background, socioeconomic status, prior exposure to nationalist content, and level of digital media literacy would enrich understanding of the boundary conditions of this effect. Cross-cultural comparisons with other Southeast Asian nations navigating similar challenges of nationalist education in the digital age would further extend the theoretical and practical relevance of this research agenda.

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