

## **School teachers, national identity and an Indonesian-Malaysian border community: A case study in Entikong**

**Jagad Aditya Dewantara, Sulistyarini**

*Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia*

**Wibowo Heru Prasetyo**

*Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia*

**Efriani, Dwi Riyanti, Afandi and Maria Ulfah**

*Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia*

The concept of national identity in the nation-state is influenced by ethno-cultural identity. However, the decline in understanding and awareness among the younger generation in Indonesia has led to a national identity crisis, especially in the border areas. This research becomes a pioneer study investigating the forms and teachers' involvement in strengthening students' national identities at the border areas. The ethnographic approach reveals the depth of teachers' involvement, including students and school communities on the Indonesia-Malaysia border. This study shows that teachers' involvement is mainly through cultural festival activities, in which ethno-cultural identities that contain knowledge of ethnic groups in Indonesia are introduced. The teacher's success brings psychological changes shown in students' awareness and behaviour. This study provides insights and solutions that can be used to reduce the impact of the crisis and reflect views related to national identity. As input, ethno-cultural identity is paramount to strengthen the concept of national identity in the nation-state, especially for the younger generation.

### **Introduction**

Multicultural countries have been challenged by the degradation of national identity (Golob et al., 2016). One form of the degradation of national identity in Indonesia is the loss of humanist attitudes, social care, and mutual cooperation rooted in local culture (Adha et al., 2019; Olendo et al., 2022). It may bring on antisocial attitudes that get away from the shared values that have long been owned by every ethnic group. In the context of a nation-state such as Indonesia, the degradation of national identity is experienced by many citizens who live in cross-border zones. A current issue at a border area is dealing with declining national identity among the younger generation in Entikong sub-district of West Kalimantan. The issue is influenced by poor infrastructure, high social disparities, and low national cultural expectations. This can trigger the younger generation's loss of awareness and pride in their ethno-cultural identity at the border.

Social and economic conditions in neighbouring countries may have a negative impact on the minds of the people and the younger generation in a border region. Inequality in Malaysia's social and economic aspects can trigger apathy towards major issues in border areas, such as territorial and cultural claims. This issue also causes a bias between national consciousness and awareness of its ethno-cultural identity. For example, two countries that lost their cultural identity were Brazil and Mexico. Their cultural roots and cultural identity were diminished by Portuguese and Spanish colonialism (Thomas, 1961). Mexico

does not have its own language and culture; even traditional Mexican music, art, and dance follow Spain (Prem, 1992).

This study describes the teacher's critical role as a pioneer in strengthening Indonesian national identity. Through education and character building in schools, the teachers can campaign the state identity, for example teachers who live at the border may initiate volunteerism to mobilise a national identity activity. Volunteering for activities inside and outside the classroom may help counter national identity degradation. Besides serving as educators, teachers at a border region must be pioneers of social movements in schools and communities to increase public understanding and awareness of national identity (Slabbert & Saayman, 2011). Teachers may be competent in addressing the issue because they have various teaching and educating strategies. Since Indonesia's Entikong District is a border area that is diverse in culture and ethnicity, it requires teachers' involvement to strengthen national character building.

The teachers who participate directly in the school and social environment have contributed to good solutions for strengthening the ethno-cultural identity of the border areas through school activities. National character building pioneered by teachers has been carried out through education that provides a space to maintain the primary and secondary national identities that young people at risk of ignoring. However, evidence of lack of attention to this goal may occur, for example rarely organising traditional cultural events locally or nationally, such as art festivals. Indonesia's local cultural values must be preserved because the local culture is a concrete form of primary national identity in Indonesia. The local culture must be maintained together by each Indonesian, particularly teachers who can act as pioneers and mobilisers. Primary identity refers to the local culture, such as traditional clothing, arts, the local language, and regional songs. The local community's appreciation for their culture has a broad positive impact, and it is essential for building social interactions within an ethnic group or with another ethnic group. Therefore, it is vital to initiate teachers' direct involvement to plan, implement, and evaluate school activities such as those covering traditional arts, flag-raising ceremonies and cultural festivals, that can strengthen the forming of a national character (O'Grady & Kill, 2013).

## **Background**

### **The concept of national identity in Indonesia is "nation-state"**

Some scholars argue that national identity is defined at the individual level that cannot be separated from the notion of people's character or national character (Basri et al., 2021). They argue that national identity is part of the political legitimacy of a country (Zhan & Wang, 2014; Moordiningsih et al., 2021). Persons who have lived in a place for a long time believe they are part of that country. Each country has differences and similarities in determining its respective national identities. In the national realm, the characteristics and personalities of individuals are described through similar language, race, and ethnicity (Suwoko, 2022). For example, the Chinese are depicted by most of the world's citizens as having physical characteristics such as slanted-eyed, fair complexion, and Asian. Other

scholars identify a national identity based on the psychology of the individual, in which the individual has absolute awareness that influences social aspects, and it can even change other people's perceptions and views about the person (Caron, 2013). In this aspect, national identity refers to the social psychology of a citizen. It has the cognition that the country where the individual lives give special characteristics to its citizens (Kulyk, 2016). These traits can be identified based on a person's national identity in a particular country. Therefore, the nation's existence, the power of legitimacy, and the civic culture are essential sources for a country that adheres to a nation-state system such as Indonesia.

Indonesia is a nation-state that was formed based on ethnic and cultural diversity. Related to this, the concept of national identity in Indonesia becomes crucially relevant to the form of the nation-state, which consists of two main structures as its constituents, namely, culture and local wisdom (the recognition of the culture in each region of Indonesia, sense of belonging to the land of birth, sovereignty, cultural traditions, social norms, and beliefs) and at the political level (state power, political system, government philosophy, state foundation, and constitution). The *Uti possidetis* doctrine also influences national identity in terms of politics. This principle was applied to determine the territorial boundaries of a newly independent country by ensuring that the borders followed the old colonial boundaries, in this case, the Dutch East Indies (Hendrix, 2001). These two concepts need to be combined to create the legitimacy of the state in building the concept of the modern nation-state.

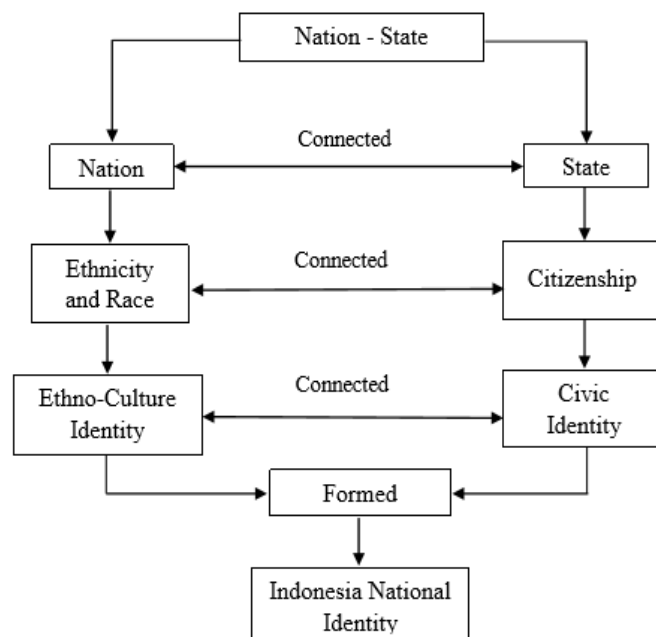


Figure 1: Concept of national identity in Indonesia "Nation-State"

Historically, national associations in Indonesia formed sub-tribes that were categorised as ethnic groups. Forming a "nation-state" requires three interconnected components: state and nation, citizenship connected to a multi-ethnic and racial society, and ethnic-cultural identity related to citizen identity. According to Ernest François Eugène Douwes Dekker, a Dutch nationalist, what is meant by an Indonesian is a person who holds an oath of allegiance to Indonesia, lives in Indonesia and is dedicated to the Indonesian state. Dekker's view is not the background for a person to have an identity as an Indonesian citizen based on ethnicity and race (Arvian et al., 2013). Therefore, in Indonesia, there are also many tribes, races, and ethnicities that become one ethnic group, such as Chinese ethnic, Melanesian ethnics in Papua, and some who are descendants of Arabic cultures. Based on Figure 1, Indonesian national identity is inseparable from the culture, diversity of races, and ethnicities in each ethnic group. Conceptually, they can be divided into political and cultural identities, which are all interrelated and create an Indonesian national identity.

Fundamental questions related to ethno-cultural identity are an essential part of Indonesian national identity because Indonesian national identity is formed by the three interconnectings of culture, race and ethnicity, which cannot be separated. At the cultural level, the relationship includes nation, ethnicity/race, and ethno-cultural identity. At the political level, this includes state, citizenship, and civic identity/culture. There are generally two opposing views on national identity and ethno-cultural identity. Although the former emphasises the interconnectedness between national and ethno-cultural identities, it is essentially in contradiction. This is triggered by the existence of the state's political hegemony and the characterisation of certain ethnic groups. For this reason, national integration is done to minimise differences in ethnicity and culture. This needs to be limited or diminished to create a nation-state's integrity. On the other hand, the second approach believes that a nation is created from a positive action that comes from the consciousness of ethnic groups. However, after the nation was founded, the government reinforced national awareness that the nation was founded on the historical basis of ethnic origins and ancestral culture (Wang & He, 2014). In the case of Indonesian national identity, the role of ethno-cultural identity is a key part that cannot be separated from the formation of the nation-state. Therefore, politics (the state) and culture (the nation) are integrated into a single unit within the state apparatus, covered by a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

### **Data and methods**

The present research applied an ethnography approach to match the multi-ethnic field situations and conditions by involving teachers and students with various cultural backgrounds, including Malay, Dayak, Javanese, and Sundanese. The data were collected both inside and outside the classrooms through field observations. For example, teachers and students were observed during the training on flag-raising, marching, and preparation for national cultural festivals. It covered recording the teachers' activities and the students, who were occasionally interviewed when they were relaxed and did exercises. Interviews with community members around the school were also carried out to support the research data collection.

## **Participants**

The study employed purposive sampling to obtain relevant sources and informants. The sample comprised four teachers and 12 students from four different schools, representing Malay, Dayak, Chinese, and Javanese. The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 18 years, and adults ranged from 30 to 50 years old. The research anonymises participants, as promised in an informed consent procedure.

## **Data collection**

The present research applied an ethnographic method covering observation, interview, and secondary data feeders. The research data were collected using an interview protocol from March 2020 to December 2020 in Indonesian. The interview questions dealt with nationalism, cultural literacy, school activities, and involvement in maintaining national identity at the border. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and for purposes of illustrative quotations some items were translated into English with help from a professional translator and proofreading service. In addition to observation, the field data were supported with photos of enterprising cultural activities, flag-raising practices, and documents like teaching-learning planning implementation and evaluation process findings. The data were validated using triangulation techniques (Denzin, 2009).

## **Data analysis**

The field data collected were coded in coding, grouping field data, crossing data, and triangulation. The key data for this research were identified from the interview transcripts, to obtain each participant's viewpoint. Gerring (2017) claimed that this stage's process is used to understand the meaning of every single sentence. The next step was triangulating the data by seeking corroboration from observation file notes, history, documents, and interview notes. After this, the next step was assembling the specific data categories, identifying emerging themes, and further coding each qualitative item. Then, the data were deductively discussed using the relevant theories and previous research results (Creswell, 2009). The present research aimed to reveal the participants' types of involvement in maintaining primary and secondary national identities.

## **Results**

### **Social, cultural, and educational conditions at the Indonesia-Malaysia border**

Entikong District (Figure 2), Sanggau Regency, which has geostrategic value on the one hand and natural wealth on the other, is the main driver of various central government policies. This district is often the target of exploitation, which raises various social, economic, and cultural implications for its inhabitants. The ethnic diversity that has existed on the border for a long time shows the dynamics of relations that are not always symmetrical, mainly due to demographic engineering carried out by the government for strategic and socio-cultural reasons (Fatmawati & Dewantara, 2022).

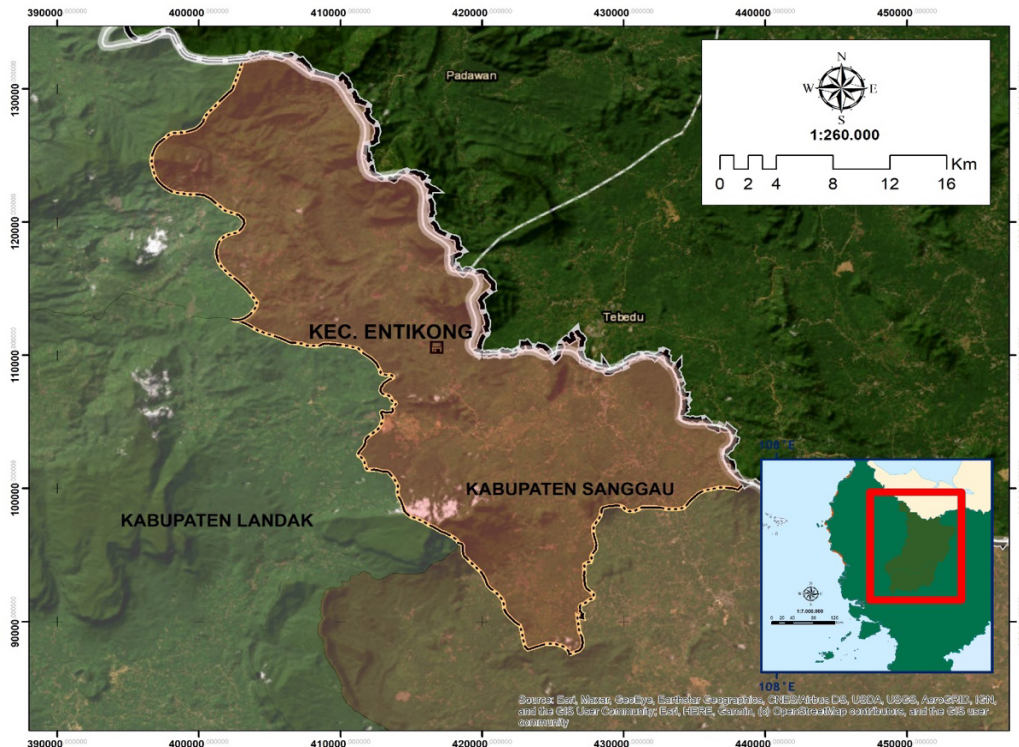


Figure 2: Map of the border area of Entikong  
(use web reader 'zoom in' function to view)

The research found a gap between expectations and reality in the border areas. Education and health matters in West Kalimantan's border needed to be improved in infrastructure and quality. Most residents of Entikong were pleased to send their children to Malaysia to study because, in Malaysia, education is free of charge and is undertaken with adequate educational facilities. Indonesian people on the border saw a difference between Indonesia's education and that in Malaysia-Indonesia. Schools in Malaysia were built with complete facilities, some including student dormitories. People at the border want good quality education to enable a better future. This finding was illustrated in an interview with a student who is an Indonesian citizen studying in Malaysia:

At a Malaysian school, I like the facilities at this school. Even when I first came here, I was amazed by the teacher's way and the school's atmosphere. It was different when I went to an Indonesian school which has many limitations, and the schools at the border have not been touched by the government. Therefore, my parents sent us to the school here (Malaysia). (Interview with Student B2; B4, B11 provided similar responses)

Education here plays an essential role in people's lives. Education development in the border areas is related to developing and forming insights, attitudes, and learners' national behaviours (Alsoudi, 2017). A study by Martono et al. (2020) on education issues in the

border areas found that improving the quality of human resources was a key requirement for improving the people's welfare and national character.

The socio-cultural life in Kalimantan between Dayak and Malay tribes influenced each other and was tied in a close kinship bond (Efriani et al., 2020). This situation occurs even though the country's physical boundaries have been established, but Indonesia and Malaysia have no socio-cultural boundaries. Therefore, the teachers must play a role in forming national identity through education about socio-cultural aspects of the border communities. These socio-cultural aspects are built up in the multicultural border community of Entikong (Brown et al., 2018). High social solidarity in the context of diversity is a prerequisite for a good democratic life because of the darkness that often arises in the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia through political polemics and racism. Both countries must continue to develop socially-harmonious boundaries through education, health, and the economy. Although the border people differ in citizenship, they keep a harmonious interaction: "We are the descendants of Dayak Bidayuh with one blood, one ethnic group, and one custom" (Suwartiningsih et al., 2018). A student from the Bidayuh Dayak tribe explained his identity as a Bidayuh from Indonesia.

My mother is from the Bidayuh Sontas tribe of Indonesia, but some of my mother's family are Malaysian citizens. We see no differences in tradition between Bidayuh Sontas and Bidayuh Entubuh in Malaysia. Even though we are in different countries, we still maintain our citizenship status in Indonesia even though our welfare differs from that of families in the other country (Malaysia). (Interview with Student B3; B5, B10 provided similar responses)

A person's social identity is the same as the national identity because both are positive identities that the citizens must maintain (Nayasi et al., 2022). Although there are different opinions among scholars about the dominant national and cultural identity in ethno-centrism (Kraus & Yonay, 2000), the ethno-cultural identity of the community should not be politically removed because the concept of nation-state in Indonesia is derived from the cultural identity of each ethnic group and the ethnic groups that form Indonesia's national identity. Therefore, people living on the border of Indonesia-Malaysia treat the existing culture as a shared owned culture that must be adhered to, based on the values of local wisdom, traditions, and religious customs framed by societal norms.

### **Involvement of teacher volunteers in the border schools: Protecting national identity through cultural festivals**

The teachers at the border may be seen as considered pioneers playing a significant role in promoting nationalism in the less developed and outer regions of Indonesia. Their role is central in maintaining ethno-cultural identity from perceived threats from transnationalism and global cultures, such as lifestyle, food, fashion, and foreign languages, which are increasingly loved by young people and then become a "standard" and a new trend of their culture (Murase et al., 2017). Since 2018, the schools at the border, such as *Sekolah Menengah Atas* (Senior High School), SMA 1 Sekayam, Entikong, have implemented a national cultural values program. As illustrated in Figure 3, in 2019 some teachers at SMA

1 Sekayam organised a program called *Giati Budaya Nasional* or Cultural Activation Festival, maintaining national cultural values to strengthen the importance of nationalism. This program was designed to encourage all students and young people at the border to not forget their national culture as Indonesians' primary identity. The school culture festival program is routinely held every year. Teachers participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating the program results.



Figure 3: Cultural festival activities at SMA 1 Sekayam

At first, this program was initiated by teachers who saw the condition of the younger generation, who had started to forget much of their cultural identity. Teacher A1 revealed the cultural festival's importance in providing insights about ethno-cultural identity to each student at border schools, including various ethnic groups, traditional arts, languages, and local clothing. The involvement of teachers is crucial.

I see they have forgotten local traditions and local Indonesian cultures. Their pride and concern for preserving culture are not ingrained in the heart of the younger generation at the border areas. We, as teachers, are concerned about this, so we took the initiative *Giati budaya*, which is a cultural festival to maintain local wisdom and national identity.  
(Interview with Teacher A1)

In the interview with the teacher above, the Cultural Activation Festival was used also to create solidarity and harmony in upholding the values of ethno-cultural identity in different tribes. When someone understands other cultures, he/she will understand the ideals of diversity and avoiding ethnocentrism.

While this project was taking place in Teacher's A1 class, researchers tried to understand some students' views about their traditional culture and its relation to their ethno-cultural



identity. Researchers asked, "Why is Malay different from Javanese and Dayak?" Interviewees used their own frame of mind in answering:

I'm a Dayak, but so far, I don't understand what Javanese and Malay culture is like. Even initially, I didn't understand my own culture [while laughing]. The Culture Project makes me proud of my own culture. In terms of differences between ethnic groups, I gave an example, Riswandi is from Javanese, and I am from Dayak tribe. He and I are different in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture. So it is a kind of the uniqueness in diversity in Indonesia that we must respect and preserve. (Interview with Student B4)

This implies an imperative for awareness of ethno-cultural identity to be delivered to the younger generation, being more than a preservation of cultural values. During this research project, researchers were prompted to ask a teacher, "Tell me, why should a Cultural festival be created and what is the urgency of this crisis?"

Once upon a time around 2018, before this festival was held, I found some students in my class looked unfamiliar with the illustration of the Malay culture of West Kalimantan and its traditional clothes that I showed them in front of the class. I asked my students about their traditional clothes, arts, and dances, but they couldn't explain them. Learning from this condition, we, teachers, took the initiative to create a cultural festival to internalise and restore their awareness of ethno-cultural identity. The aim is to promote the cultural and national identity of every ethnic group in Indonesia. (Interview with Teacher A3)

The interview above shows that implementing the Cultural Festival at border schools has grown lively in recent years. This happens because of the efforts and involvement of teachers in creating creative ideas to preserve local cultural values from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. Even though this is outside the main duties of teachers and there is no additional payment from the government, teachers still carry out this activity as state volunteers.

One of the schools that was successful in pioneering the cultural festival is Senior High School 1 Sekayam. Through teachers' involvement in the cultural festival, this school began to be known as a pioneer school for preserving national cultures. As a result, students become more acquainted with their culture, ranging from cultural traditions, traditional clothes, and regional dances to customs. This program was initiated without any fees from the government or private agencies. The budget comes from fundraising among teachers. When asked about the source of initial funding for the cultural festival program at the border schools, one of the teachers answered:

The funds come from self-fundraising among teachers because there has been no assistance from any party. Initially, we formed a teacher group consisting of teachers in our school. After the group was formed, we designed and started a small festival in our school. In the next activity, however, we were assisted by the teacher community and donations from students at the border areas. They voluntarily form their initiative to buy and rent traditional clothes. Some of them even set up their own group to enliven this festival. In the following years, we required all students to participate in this activity with

the support of personal funds. This is meant to make them aware that cultural identity is an important part of national identity in Indonesia. (Interview with teacher A2)

Furthermore, the teachers create the school's arts and culture festivals to shape the students' characters and behaviours as nationalists. The program was designed to internalize each student's local cultural values and implement them in their social life. B1 and B7 students interviewed in this research said,

... the arts and cultural festivals organised at school indirectly reminded us and the youth at the border not to forget our identity and identity as Indonesian people with a distinctive local culture. (Interview with Students B1, B7)

This cultural festival was supported by another informal group, the volunteer teachers. An informant described the stages from the planning to the evaluation as follows,

Before the national arts and cultural festival is conducted, we, the teachers, prepare the concept and plan for one month. After finishing the planning, the program is implemented. The festivals have been held regularly every year starting from 2017. We do protect and preserve the national cultural values derived from the local wisdom. The students are required to perform the traditional art performances in the traditional clothes of their region, music, and regional dances. (Teacher A1)

These school festivals were initiated by the teachers of SMA 1 Sekayam, Entikong, to preserve the local culture. Extending further around Entikong, these events now have participation from other schools, participated by the schools, including SMA 2 Sekayam, SMA 1 Beduai, and Junior High School (SMP) 3 Entikong. Based on social psychology, the teachers' role is at the intragroup level, where the teachers can influence the individuals under their supervision, taking action based on the teachers' role and status (Gehlbach, 2010). At this level, the teachers play a decisive role in quality, leadership, and cooperation to shape students' character and behaviour. Thus, the cultural festival at the border is a forum for the younger generation to preserve the cultures that exist in Indonesia. In organising for this Cultural festival, Teacher A4 did encounter some obstacles in the field, which researchers recorded in an interview:

Sometimes we experience difficulties in the field, such as limited funds and infrastructure. However, I made it clear that not all children have a lot of money. So, we cannot force them to spend money to participate in this festival. So, we teachers, who are volunteers and the driving forces in this activity, provide support in the forms of finance and energy. Gradually, over time, I and the other volunteer teachers were happy to see our children be very excited to learn about Indonesian cultures, and they were enthusiastic to participate in the cultural festival. There are students who prepare in advance. For example, they prepare for the festival approximately ten to twelve weeks before their performances. They practice folk songs, folk dances, and fashion shows wearing traditional clothes from various regions in Indonesia. (Interview with Teacher A4)

Additionally, teachers' involvement through arts and cultural festival activities made the students recognise and appreciate various national cultures in Indonesia. The teachers'

role and participation in encouraging the students to attend cultural festivals in schools affect the number of students who sympathise and respond positively to these activities. Enthusiastic students succeed in fostering the spirit of nationalism through cultural festival activities initiated by the volunteering teachers. Initially, the budget for the events provided by the school was small. The festivals were financially contributed mainly by the teachers and the students, as stated by the students below.

In the beginning, this activity was funded by the teachers and students because of the government or schools' absence of financial support. This activity was purely initiated by the teachers at the border who were willing to re-cultivate the national culture. If the community, the government, and the schools can synergize well, then not only the teachers who participate but all elements of the community will be involved. (Interview with Student B5; similar responses from Students B8, B9).

Teachers and schools on the border were encouraged to form a national cultural community, the MGMP (School Subject Teachers' Community; see Figure 3) that made it easier to coordinate the implementation of cultural festivals. Teachers were involved in class teaching and contributed concepts and ideas related to nationalism campaigns to all students on the border. The teachers are not only interested in the event planning stage but also participate actively in the festivals. Through a cultural festival, the teachers could successfully campaign on nationalism effectively and efficiently because the festival was advantageous in introducing local culture, providing cultural education, providing public space for regional arts, and so forth.

The cultural festivals enabled the local communities and teachers to interact socially and work together. Therefore, the community could play an active role in preserving the national culture. The cultural arts festival activities that involved the teachers and the community were oriented to raising awareness of all communities on the border. It would build a sense of responsibility, loyalty, and respect for their local culture. Internal coaching through peer groups within the teachers' community is required to improve the teachers' competence and professionalism. One of the high school teachers in Entikong stated:

The students can maintain nationalism through small things, such as loving local products, attending flag-raising ceremonies, participating in Scout activities, singing the national anthem before the class, and singing a national song afterward. In such a way, students can keep maintaining and preserving their national identity. (Interview with Teacher A1)

Besides cultural festivals and traditional uniformity in schools on the border, there were complementary activities in schools on the border, such as the mental development of national ideology through a flag-raising action. The flag-raising activity was a semi-military activity that emphasised marching for the flag-raising ceremony every Monday. The goal was not just marching, but was also mental coaching to strengthen national identity. With the two activities, the traditional arts festival and the flag-raising activities, there was an emphasis upon teachers playing a leading role in strengthening students' primary and secondary identity in the border region.

In addition to involving teachers, students and educators, local arts festivals were organised to attract people around the border to preserve the values of Indonesia's primary national identity. The teachers were motivated to become volunteers in carrying out this activity because of the perceived degradation of the values, the characters, and the national identity of the community on the border. The teachers, particularly those who acted as volunteers and nationality pioneers, were generally well dedicated to a die-hard spirit in campaigning for the school's national values. Teachers' spirit on this border is focused on improving students' personalities and character to become accustomed to not forgetting their country's identity (Dawson & Shand, 2019). The teacher volunteers' initiative and creativity make a positive contribution through implementing school activities integrated into the national culture and flag-raising. Teacher volunteers' participation must be based on the individuals' awareness, reflected in the results of individual positive thinking that the engagement process begins from a critical perspective, then leads to the individual actions mobilising the soul and mind.

## **Discussion**

Education here was a milestone in developing a nation (Alsubaie, 2016). The knowledge and skills of a nation's youth generation could be achieved through education (Martono et al., 2020). The main purpose of education is to educate and prepare the younger generation to be the following leaders. The students should be provided with the knowledge and skills required to participate actively as community members and contribute to the development of shared values and identity. Education can also refer to a systematic attempt to deliver knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills. It increases individual potential and one's chances. Educating is the responsibility of, for instance, parents, adults, children, teachers, public and private sectors. To produce qualified education in the border areas requires attention and analysis by all education shareholders (Reséndez, 1999). The primary and secondary national identities are established through various elements, including religion, culture, ethnicity, and education (Hedetoft, 1993).

Schools can support the younger generation to maintain their national identity (Reséndez, 1999). The local culture and arts based-festival could help shape character and moral integrity, as was shown by individuals who were strongly committed to and aware of national identity, especially in local cultural contexts (Johnson-Pynn et al., 2014). Thus, by having such activities, the students could increase their understanding and knowledge about the strength and uniqueness of the ethnic groups in Indonesia. Community services were an example of fostering and instilling a sense of national identity and are becoming an essential part of education (Putnam, 2000). Activities in community services can emphasise the value of tolerance and harmony, regardless of religion and race, and develop an understanding of the cultural uniqueness of each tribe (Butcher et al., 2007).

Many people on the border needed help in understanding how to implement their national identity in social life. All educational sciences in terms of skills, academics, and personal are needed in constructing the young generation's personality (Taijun & Hu,

2015). Therefore, teachers' volunteerism is required to strengthen one's understanding of national identity through education and character planting, especially in schools.

Table 1: Constraint, strategy, and result in maintaining one national identity

Role	Constraint	Strategy	Result
Students	The students did not understand how to maintain their national identity.	The teacher delivered teaching and campaigned on how to sustain the national identity through the school activities.	Students gained a better understanding and independently performed activities to maintain their national identity.
	The students had low participation and less active roles in performing activities that maintain national identity.	The students were involved by wearing their traditional clothing in every cultural festival.	Students improved their participation in national cultural festivals.
Teachers	The teachers lacked competence in innovating to create interesting teaching that enables students to keep their national identity.	Internal development through a <i>peer group</i> within the teacher's community.	Improving the competence and the professionalism of the teachers.

Teachers have a critical role in starting the students to acquire a sense of nationalism, especially by providing understanding and raising awareness of maintaining their national identity (Jaskulowski & Surmiak, 2017). To involve students in supporting the national identity, teachers could deliver school learning activities and campaigns (Table 1). For example, by asking students to wear the traditional clothes of their ethnic group, teachers attempted to increase student participation in cultural activities.

The volunteering by teachers helped to maintain the students' national identity through education that creates opportunities to obtain identity and good quality (Jeni & Winterton, 2010). The involvement of volunteer teachers plays a vital role in protecting or maintaining the primary and secondary national identity, especially the residents and the border areas (Martono et al., 2022). A teacher must have a volunteer spirit that grows out of empathy because professional teachers must be wise in designing, implementing, and evaluating school activities related to maintaining the national identity (Durham, 2013). Teachers can provide the teaching and learning materials using media or real examples to understand better and develop the character of nationalism that can be implemented in daily social life (Zhou & Shang, 2011).

## Conclusion

The involvement of teachers in maintaining younger generations' national identity at border areas is mainly voluntary. One form of this is their success in making students

aware of the importance of preserving traditional arts and restoring their cultural identity. Through the Cultural Festival, the teachers at the Entikong border have successfully changed students' attitudes and awareness of their cultural identity. For example, the students in the border areas show their love for their national identity by showing an attitude and sense of pride in wearing local traditional clothes, not being shy about carrying out traditional customs, mastering various local dances, and singing regional songs.

The spirit of volunteerism is not easy to instil because volunteers must demonstrate responsibility, empathy, participation, honesty, and solidarity (Prasetyo et al., 2019). As educators, teachers need to have a voluntary character within themselves, which helps them solve problems locally. The results from this study support the view that ethno-cultural identity does not conflict with the concept of national identity in Indonesia. Instead, strengthening ethno-cultural identity in students forms an awareness of tolerance and mutual respect for culture. This achievement contributes to a culturally diverse Indonesia to remain interconnected as a nation. So, forming a national identity cannot be separated at the political or ethno-cultural levels. This study can serve as a theoretical and practical discourse about countering crucial problems in the degradation of national identity in the "nation-state" country. It can also help to reduce problems related to various forms ethnic ethnocentrism, and be a reference for volunteer educators elsewhere who face similar problems.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Muhammad Pramulya, a lecturer at Universitas Tanjungpura, who has assisted in the making of the map. I also extend my thanks to the informants involved in this research, and to Dr rer. nat. Rini Muharini, S.Si., M.Si. of Universitas Tanjungpura, who helped to improve the language used in this study.

All the authors involved in this manuscript declare they have no conflicts of interest to disclose. The funds used for this research are personal and do not come from any organisation.

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**Jagad Aditya Dewantara** is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Civic Education at Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia. His research relates to racial and ethnic topics, citizenship studies, nationality, ethnology, and the anthropology of citizenship. He is Head of Study Center of Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Heritage, Universitas Tanjungpura.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3734-4283>

Email: [jagad02@fkip.untan.ac.id](mailto:jagad02@fkip.untan.ac.id)

**Dr Sulistyarini** is a lecturer in the Department of Civic Education at Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Indonesia. Her research interests are in character education, social education and citizenship education.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0770-9285>

Email: [sulistyarini@fkip.untan.ac.id](mailto:sulistyarini@fkip.untan.ac.id)

**Wibowo Heru Prasetyo** (corresponding author) is a lecturer in the Department of Civic Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia. His research is focused on character education, citizenship education, digital citizenship, moral education and ecological citizenship.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9146-063X>

Email: [whp823@ums.ac.id](mailto:whp823@ums.ac.id)

**Efriani** is an anthropologist in the Department of Anthropology at Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia, and a member of the Study Center of Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Heritage, Universitas Tanjungpura. She is a lecturer and researcher who is interested in cultural studies, and issues of border communities. She has experience in conducting ethnography on ethnicity in the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1087-9429>

Email: [efriani@fisip.untan.ac.id](mailto:efriani@fisip.untan.ac.id)

**Dr Dwi Riyanti** completed her PhD study in 2017 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA. She has been teaching English since 2005 in the Department of English Language Education, University of Tanjungpura, Indonesia. Her research interests are in the areas of English teacher education, English language teaching and learning, language learning strategies, and English language teacher identity.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4140-3637>

Email: [dwi.riyanti@fkip.untan.ac.id](mailto:dwi.riyanti@fkip.untan.ac.id)

**Afandi** is a lecturer and educational researcher in the Department of Biology Education at Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia, and a member of the Center for the Study of Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Heritage, Universitas Tanjungpura. He is interested in 21st century educational studies and ethnoscience research in biology learning, and is experienced in conducting studies on the use of ethnoscience in the field of education.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3172-1797>

Email: [afandi@fkip.untan.ac.id](mailto:afandi@fkip.untan.ac.id)

**Maria Ulfah** is a lecturer in the Department of Economics Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Indonesia.

Email: [maria.ulfah@fkip.untan.ac.id](mailto:maria.ulfah@fkip.untan.ac.id)

**Please cite as:** Dewantara, J. A., Sulistyarini, Prasetyo, W. H., Efriani, Riyanti, D., Afandi & Ulfah, M. (2023). School teachers, national identity and an Indonesian-Malaysian border community: A case study in Entikong. *Issues in Educational Research*, 33(2), 510-528. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier33/dewantara.pdf>