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## Equalization Access to Education as an Effort to Foster the Nationalism of Indonesian Migrant Workers' Children in Border Areas

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**Abstract:** The discussion about the loss of nationalism values in the Indonesian migrant workers' (IMW's) children in border areas, has become an important issue in the world of Indonesian education. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of Community Learning Center (CLC) in fostering nationalism values in IMW's children, as well as to reveal the teaching experience and meaning of nationalism from the perspective of teachers at CLC Sarawak, Malaysia. The research uses qualitative method with case study approach that focuses on factors that can foster nationalism of IMW's children. Data collection obtained through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results showed meaningful findings according to the conditions in the education system in CLC, as well as socio-cultural conditions that affect every activity in the border area. The first finding indicates that CLC has an important (central) role in fostering the nationalism of IMW's children in border areas. The second finding shows the fact that teachers are still experiencing some problems in the field, such as; limited access to information and communication, teacher education background, school conditions, limited educational units, learning facilities, and family and social environments. The third finding emphasizes the importance of nationalism for teachers who devote themselves to teaching in border areas, because teachers have a crucial role in transferring knowledge, providing meaningful learning experiences, and fostering the nationalism of IMW's children.

**Keywords:** *Border area, community learning center, meaning of nationalism, teaching experience.*

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### Introduction

The discussion about the loss of nationalism values in the Indonesian migrant workers' (IMW's) children in border areas has become an important issue in the Indonesian education world. Nationalism, which is said to be an element that shapes and maintains a nation's national identity (Une, 2010), as well as an important concept that must be maintained to keep a nation standing firmly (Bria, 2018), is only regarded as a meaningless expression by IMW's in border areas. The fact shows that IMW's abroad, especially in Malaysia, only focus on working for wages in order to fulfill their daily needs, while other issues related to national symbols are put at the bottom of the list. It is not only the poorly educated IMW's that ignore nationalism in making a living, the highly educated IMW's also lack a sense of nationalism (Primawati, 2018). Considering this as a concerning issue due to the reason that IMW's indifference about the importance of nationalism adversely affects children who follow their parents working in border areas.

In general, most of IMW's children, who were born and grew up in Malaysian oil palm plantations, have lost their Indonesian identity and the fading of nationalism values in themselves, such as; unwell-memorizing the national anthem of Indonesia Raya, having no idea about the flag or emblem of the Indonesian state, lack of knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Indonesia, and the desire to return to Indonesia was not apparent in their attitude and behavior (Andita et al., 2016; Rahmawati, 2017). Furthermore, research from Prasetyo et al. (2020) conducted through the *Volunteerism Teaching Indonesian Children* program in Sarawak, Malaysia, further confirms that IMW's children prefer Malay language over Indonesian, the lack of knowledge of Indonesia makes their sense of belonging reduced, and national identity that is part of the sense of nationalism has faded in IMW's children.

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This condition is also caused by uncertainty of national and regional policies governing education issues in border areas. The findings of the study of Itasari (2018) showed that the implementation of the fulfillment of the right to primary and secondary education in the border areas of Indonesia and Malaysia in West Kalimantan Province, has problems, obstacles, as well as special challenges. There are 11 clusters of findings on the fulfillment of the right to education, and one of the clusters of problems is the emergence of "unintended areas of school" at the elementary and secondary levels in the border areas of the state in West Kalimantan Province. Although at the national policy level, there has been Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, however, there are no local regulations that specifically regulate the issue of primary and secondary education in border areas. This is a consequence of the implementation of Local Government Law No. 23 of 2014, which explains that education affairs are still the affairs of the central government, thus the region does not regulate it further at the level of local policy (Itasari, 2020).

The problems about the loss of nationalism values in IMW's children above, give a very deep concern for Indonesia, considering the future of Indonesia is in the hands of children as the next generation. If nationalism is defined as integrity, loyalty, willingness to sacrifice, and sense of belonging for the homeland and nation (Muawanah, 2015), then it should be manifested in real actions, such as; ready to fight, work hard, learn, excel, be independent, and compete for the advancement and dignity of the nation (Aspinall, 2016). Therefore, the Indonesian state through the Ministry of Education and Culture must provide equal and equitable access and education services to IMW's children, thus IMW's children are able to feel the presence of the state as a form of support in the fight for educational rights in border areas.

Education is actually able to provide a happy and satisfying learning experience and life experience (Ashwin, 2010) for every child without issues of racism, discrimination, marginalization, or social class discrimination, so that the child's potential can develop thoroughly into a whole person (Suparlan, 2016). Education is also expected to be an agent of change in society as an effort to transform and improve the quality of life personally and socially (Priestley et al., 2012). Education needs to play a role in breaking the chain of poverty through quality education services, therefore IMW's children can change their own destiny for their better future.

One of the important roles of education is to maintain the values of nationalism as a dignified nation (Susilowati et al., 2017). Providing an understanding of values of nationalism to IMW's children is expected to prepare them to become citizens who have a strong and consistent commitment to defend the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), which is based on the spirit of nationalism. IMW's children are also expected to have the confidence to build a common future under the same country, despite differences in religion, culture, race, ethnicity, or classes (Rahmawati et al., 2014).

The form of support that has been done by the state to facilitate the access and the education services for IMW's children in border areas is through the Community Learning Center (CLC) program. CLC is one of the institutions that organizes various types of non-formal and informal educational activities (Rahma et al., 2019). The purpose of CLC is to promote human development by providing lifelong learning opportunities to everyone in the local community, as well as supporting the empowerment, social transformation, and improvement of people's quality of life (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2012). Children's education services in border areas are divided into two categories, based on their place, namely education services that enter the territory of Indonesia and the territory of Malaysia. The fulfillment of educational needs located in these two locations certainly demands different treatment because it is in different territory of the country (Noveria, 2017).

The discussion about CLC in this paper related to the existence of CLC in border areas outside the territory of Indonesia, which is the state of Sarawak and Malaysia which is a place for IMW's children to get access and educational services. It is known that the state of Sarawak, Malaysia is an area directly adjacent to the Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia, and it has three lines or Cross Border Post (PLBN), namely Entikong, Badau, and Aruk. Although the CLC program has been present to facilitate access and educational services for IMW's children, this does not close the fact that there are still shortcomings in the implementation system. According to data from the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (2019) in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, explained that until June 30, 2019 there have been 62 CLC and only 23 Guru Bina (Guru Bina is a teacher sent from Indonesia based on the selection held by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia). This data shows that there is an inequality between the number of CLC and the number of teachers sent by the Indonesian government to teach in CLC, while the presence of teachers is very important to transfer knowledge (Van Driel & Berry, 2012), provide meaningful learning (Meschede et al., 2017), maintain the nation's cultural identity (Siswoyo, 2013), and instill the values of Indonesian nationalism to IMW's children.

The data above is also supported by an interview with one of the principals at CLC Sarawak, which revealed that the limitations of teachers/educators have become the main problem at CLC Sarawak. This is due to the licensing process for admission and teaching at CLC Sarawak, having to go through a long and complicated administrative procedure. This issue becomes an urgency that needs to be studied deeply, because the nationalism crisis experienced by IMW's children, can indirectly relate to the educational process obtained at CLC. Therefore, this study aims to describe the role of CLC in fostering nationalism values in IMW's children, as well as revealing the teaching experience and meaning of nationalism from teachers at CLC Sarawak, Malaysia.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This research uses qualitative method with case study approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) describes the case study approach as a research strategy to carefully investigate a program, process, event, activity, or group of individuals. In this study, the cases investigated focused on factors that could influence or foster the nationalism of IMW's children, such as; CLC's role as a provider of access and education services, teacher experience and teaching strategies, school conditions, the meaning of nationalism from a teacher's perspective, and the influence of the family and social environment. The research was also based on the framework of interpretation or paradigm of social constructivism, in which individuals seek to understand the world and develop subjective meanings of life experiences, so that participants can construct the meaning of situations formed in discussions and interactions with others (Lincoln et al., 2011). Thus, the position of researchers in this research, put more emphasis on the search for diverse views or lean as much as possible on the views of the subject during teaching and service in border areas.

### *Participants*

The research participants focused on teachers who taught at CLC Sarawak, Malaysia. The research participants used were 12 people, which were; 3 construction teachers, 6 Guru Pamong (Guru Pamong is Malaysian local teachers or Indonesian migrant workers' are recruited by companies or plantations to teach at CLC and the costs are charged to the plantations that employ them), 2 principals (Guru Bina), and 1 CLC manager. To select research participants, purposive sampling technique was used, which aims to obtain participants who can provide in-depth knowledge of certain phenomena (Suri, 2011) related to education in border areas. After determining the participant of the study, the next step of the researcher is to obtain the approval or written permission of the research participant as evidence that it is willing to help provide information about experiences and phenomena that occur in the field. This research was conducted for 3 months, starting from January to March 2020 at CLC Ladang Ladong and CLC Melur Gemilang, which is located in border areas outside Indonesia, namely Sarawak state, Malaysia.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection in this study uses observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observation aims to investigate the programs that have been run by CLC and the learning process implemented by teachers as an effort to foster the nationalism of IMW's children. Observations are also focused on the environmental conditions in which IMW's children learn, facilities provided by CLC, learning processes and materials, and social interactions between IMW's children and teachers. Observations are made during the learning process, and researchers are involved in or part of the learning process (Petty et al., 2012). Meanwhile, in-depth interviews aim to get a variety of perspectives from research participants (CLC managers, principals, teachers) related to the problems and challenges faced in growing the nationalism of IMW's children. In addition, documentation data is used as supporting data in describing the real conditions that occur in the field, collected through various information obtained from staff or CLC parties, such as; documents about CLC service system, curriculum, teacher data, student data, staff data, activity reports, photos, and other supporting documents that contribute to research.

In facilitating the data collection process, researchers have first compiled observation and interview protocols according to the needs and objectives of the research. Observation and interview protocols used have been examined by experts (*expert judgment*) as an effort to help direct research questions, thus it is not to deviate from research objectives. In obtaining the *trustworthiness* of the findings in the field, researchers first prepare and collect data, then describe the findings and map representative material with the theme of the study (Alase, 2017).

### *Analyzing of Data*

Data analysis is done using to help of ATLAS.ti software version 8, which is one of the data analysis software that is specific of qualitative data analysis. The data analysis process emphasizes the analysis of inductive content, which includes; preparation and grouping of data, coding data, mapping themes, reporting findings, researchers used the technique of triangulating data sources through the same information collection with different methods, and data collection by the same method against different data sources (Howe, 2012). Some of the observation and interview excerpts that are considered the most representative in describing and explaining the main themes, have been presented in the discussion section. In addition, to obtain the reliability or dependability of data coding (Sousa, 2014), the researcher conducted three general cycles, such as; 1) the process of gradually coding responses by research participants; 2) another condensation process which further helps the researcher reduce statements (or sentences) from what the research participants actually expressed; and 3) the category phase (or stage), which allows the researcher to narrow down to words the responses of the research participants.

### Findings/ Results

The findings of this research cover three main themes, namely; 1) The role of CLC in fostering the nationalism of IMW's children in border areas, 2) The experience of teaching teachers in border areas, and 3) the meaning of nationalism from the perspective of teachers in border areas. The findings of this study reveal the fact that there are still many shortcomings in the education system in CLC, although CLC itself has a main function in providing access to education and training, information services and community resources, community development activities, as well as coordination and networking centers (UNESCO, 2012).

The *first* finding related to the role of CLC in fostering the nationalism of IMW's children in border areas have been carried out optimally by all parties which involved in the education system in CLC. For example, the use of the Indonesian curriculum as a guideline in the learning process, the implementation of CLC program to foster child nationalism has been running well, and the support of the state through the KJRI in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia has also been focused on improving the quality of services and access to education for IMW's children in border areas.

In general, based on the findings of interviews with CLC managers, principals and teachers, CLC is a place to get access to education for IMW's children, because with school, IMW's children can get diplomas to continue their education to a higher level and children also have the opportunity to be able to change their own destiny. In addition, with CLC, children able to remember about their own country, because CLC education system prioritizes the introduction of diversity in Indonesia (multiculturalism) (Samsuri & Marzuki, 2016), both in terms of culture, language, ethnicity, race, religion, history, customs, etc. (Setiawan et al., 2020) . This is done to raise awareness that even though children live in Malaysia, children remain Indonesians who have a national spirit and a feeling of love for the country (Bakar et al., 2018).

The *second* finding related to the experience of teaching in border areas shows the fact that teachers still experience some problems in the field, such as; limited access to information and communication, educational background of teachers who teach in CLC were graduated from high school (SMA), school conditions that is not very good, limitations of existing education units or only until elementary school (SD), learning facilities are still limited or less supportive, and the family and social environment of IMW's children is not very conducive because parents do not pay much attention to the development of children's education and behavior.

The findings of the interview with Mr. LI expressed his own pride because he had been given the opportunity to serve, nurture, and educate children who were forced to follow their parents to Malaysia to work. Mr. LI emphasized that teaching IMW's children in border areas (Malaysia), is very different from teaching children in elementary schools in Indonesia, this is due to the elementary schools in Indonesia usually have students from the same tribe or city and a fairly controlled environment, while IMW's children in CLC come from diverse tribes and of course with different family conditions as well. Thus, sometimes teacher find it difficult to shape the character or behavior of the child. This statement is also strengthened by Mr. JU's teaching experience explaining that in CLC there are children who have their own models and characteristics depending on the area where the child comes from, each child has its own identity that has been formed based on socio-cultural in his area, both in terms of language, culture, customs, character, and religion. Therefore, when we teach children in CLC, it is as if we teach children in every region in Indonesia, because they come from Lombok, Bima, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Java, Sumatra, and etc. Thus, the implications of teaching or learning activities provided by teachers should emphasize knowledge of children's characteristics, care, interaction, focus on children's needs, more personalized approach to learning, and respect for each child's opinion (Krahenbuhl, 2016).

The *third* finding emphasizes the meaning of nationalism from the perspective of teachers in border areas. In general, all teachers interpret nationalism as the spirit of patriotism, willing to sacrifice, feelings of love and pride for the country, and respect the diversity of the nation. Nationalism has become something very essentials for teachers who devote themselves to teach in border areas, since the lack of access and facilities in border areas comparing to the urban area, such as education, information, communication, consumption, entertainment, etc.

For an explanation of the theme or findings of the above research, it has been formulated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Interpretation of Research Findings

Theme	Sub-Theme	Research Findings
CLC's role in fostering nationalism	1. Education system in CLC	The education system in CLC includes the curriculum, the goals to be achieved, and the strategy of instilling the value of nationalism in IMW's children.
	2. CLC Program	All CLC programs that have been run are aim to provide services and access to education for IMW's children.
	3. Understanding the value of nationalism	Provide an understanding of the value of nationalism in IMW's children has been done through habituation / cultivation and other programs that have been run.
	4. The impact of teaching nationalism	Teaching nationalism to IMW's children has an impact on improving children's competence and creating the sense of belonging for the country and nation.
	5. Support of the country	State support through KJRI in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia has been focused on improving the quality of services and access to education for IMW's children in border areas.
Teacher's experience in teaching	1. Education background	Guru Bina: is a teacher sent from Indonesia based on the selection held by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud) through the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel (Directorate General of GTK) and the Directorate of Teacher Development of Basic Education (Directorate of PG Dikdas). Guru Pamong: is Malaysian local teachers or Indonesian migrant workers' are recruited by companies or plantations to teach at CLC and the costs are charged to the plantations that employ them.
	2. School conditions	Discussion about school conditions related to access, learning facilities, learning processes, learning methods, learning strategies, and additional activities.
	3. Strategy to instill the value of nationalism	Strategies to instill nationalism during the learning process and in activities outside the school.
	4. Problems and challenges	Problems related to the cultivation of nationalism values and environmental and social challenges are less conducive.
	5. Family and social environment	Parents do not pay much attention to the development of education and behaviour of children.
The meaning of nationalism	1. The urgency of nationalism	Nationalism becomes very essentials because the aim is to instill nationalism to the IMW's children, Indonesian schools that exist abroad are certainly very respectful of nationalism, and obligatory to love their homeland, due to the difference atmosphere, environment, and customs abroad compared to Indonesia, thus nationalism is very needed for all.
	2. Aim of nationalism	The purpose of instilling nationalism is wishing the children have a sense of pride and love for their own people, even with everything here and the various conditions that children see, hear, and discover, but children still have a sense of pride and love for their own nation.
	3. Spirit of nationalism	The spirit of nationalism must remain in every soul of youth of Indonesia.
	4. Access to work	The loss of one's nationalism can also be due to economic difficulties and getting a job in their own country.

## Discussion

### *CLC's Role in Fostering Child Nationalism*

The Community Learning Center (CLC) project was launched in 1998 within the framework of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All (APPEAL), which aims to promote human development by providing lifelong learning opportunities to all people in local communities, as well as supporting the empowerment, social transformation, and improvement of people's quality of life (UNESCO, 2012). CLC as one of the educational institutions that provide access to education, training, and community development services located in Sarawak, Malaysia, has a very important role in instilling and fostering nationalism values for IMW's children. Therefore, the education system implemented in CLC, both from curriculum, objectives, strategies, programs, and competency improvement must be completely impartial to the needs of IMW's children and urgency in the field. This argumentation is supported by the research of Rahma et al. (2019) which concluded that the role of CLC in non-formal education include; (1) non-formal education programs held by CLC to reference the needs of society nowadays and in the future that can be a form of initiative to inspire society; (2) CLS as the platform to do social activities in non-formal education programs, it must be facilitated with the complete facilities to support a simple non-formal education program; (3) the society as the aims of non-formal education program in order to empower them, thus CLC has to be able to motivate and support the social needs, in particular the equality of access to education.

The education system in CLC, which includes the curriculum, objectives, strategies, and CLC programs, have been well planned and implemented. The findings of the interview with Mr. AR who is one of the teachers at CLC explained that the curriculum used in CLC purely uses the Indonesian curriculum, making it easier for teachers to teach Indonesian materials to IMW's children. However, there will certainly be limitations and shortcomings if the learning process too fixated on the curriculum, thus each individual teacher (self-concept) (Utomo et al., 2019), is expected to be able to explore the material to instill and foster children's nationalism. Furthermore, based on the findings of an interview with one of the CLC managers stated that the main purpose of CLC establishment is due to the needs in the field that is almost 80% of field workers' from Indonesia, so that education services for IMW's children must be in Sarawak, Malaysia. This is done to give parents a convenience, comfort, and focus on work without rethinking access to education for their children. In addition, the CLC program is also expected to provide access to higher education for IMW's children, such as junior high and high school education units, as a strategy to keep farm workers' working in Sarawak, Malaysia.

CLC programs that have been run to instill and foster the nationalism of IMW's children, among others; habituation by conducting ceremonial activities, reading Pancasila, reading the 1945 Constitution, The Youth Pledge, singing the national anthem, and introducing a variety of Indonesian cultures and products. The purpose of this program is to instill and foster nationalism in the hope that later IMW's children can return and continue their education in Indonesia, because somehow children may not be forever in the border area or the country of Malaysia. This habituation process is relevant with the theoretical perspectives proposed by Billig (1995) which explain that the reproduction of nationalism is not happening in a particular cases, rather that it may be happen every day and continuously, such as; the utilization of national flag in daily life, sport events, national anthems, money's symbols, popular expressions and the changing of phases, patriotic club, or the events held by educational institutions. In addition, UNESCO (2012) has explained that CLC program has been proven effective in reaching out and providing knowledge's to the marginalized communities. Thus through its flexibility and diversity, CLC has power to contribute in developing the learning environment and provide the learning needs of unlucky people.

The observations of researchers during their time at CLC showed that CLC programs have been running quite well, this can be seen from the various activities that children do from morning to afternoon. Morning activities begin at 7:30 a.m. local time. Before starting the learning activities, children and teachers performed gymnastics with the song "Naura - Aku Indonesia" for 15 minutes. It was followed by a flag ceremony at 7:45 a.m. The flag ceremony was held for 15 minutes with the composition of 4 officers consisting of 3 flag bearers who at the same time served as readers of Pancasila, readers of the Opening of the 1945 Constitution, youth oath officers, and Dasa Dharma Pramuka, as well as 1 child serving as the leader of the ceremony. When the flag is ready, the flag officers only hold the Red and White flag without being raised, but only spread out, then the children and teachers sing the song Indonesia Raya. The children started to enter the class at 08.00 am, before starting their learning, the children sang national songs such as Hari Merdeka, Sabang to Merauke, Tanah Indonesia, Ibu Kita Kartini, and others. Children conduct learning activities in multigrade classes consisting of three classes of study groups (PAUD and Kindergarten classes, grades 1-3 elementary school, and grade 4 elementary to junior high school. Break at 10:00 and enter class again at 10:30. The learning activities were completed based on the class level, namely PAUD and Kindergarten classes at 11:00, grades 1-3 elementary and grade 4 elementary to junior high school finished at 12:00. Before returning home, the children sang national songs such as Hymn Pramuka, Garuda Pancasila, and Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa. In the afternoon, the activity starts at 16.00 with various activities such as line-up rule training (PBB), scouting, sewing activities, learning traditional Indonesian food cooking skills, and angklung training until 18:30 Malaysian time.

The implementation of CLC program above conducted in a structured and consistent manner. It is expected to have a positive impact on behavior change or the growing spirit of nationalism in IMW's children. In addition, another positive expectation is the improvement of children's competence both intellectually, attitudes/behaviors, physical and spiritual (Huang, 2013; Irmansyah et al., 2020), and has a love for their homeland and Indonesia. CLC itself has a special program to improve children's competency, namely the *Sarawak Bridge* scholarship program which aims to provide facilities to IMW's children in developing children's abilities, talents, and interests by continuing their education to a higher level in Indonesian schools. This program is based on the limitations of the CLC education unit which is only up to elementary school, and also as a form of state support for the rights of the youth in obtaining equal and equitable access to education (Suparlan, 2016). Ismawati (2018) explains that to be able to give the understanding about nationalism, it has to use the relevant learning materials with the contexts and children's needs, and the activities or programs are implemented consistently to familiarize children in learning. In addition, Zakso et al. (2019) add that in maintaining the nationalism of IMW's children in border areas, requires efforts to increase the role of the school, youth organizations, parents, local government, and society. In particular the role of the schools, it is important to cooperate with the children in implementing the nationalism activities or programs.

Other state support has also been focused and pursued on improving the quality of services and access to education for IMW's children in border areas, such as increasing the number of educators (teachers), procurement of learning facilities, ease of access to services and passport issuance, visits from various Indonesian government agencies to improve the quality of education and health, and the implementation of the *Indonesian Student Friendly Match* (ISFM)

which aimed to strengthen fraternities and motivating IMW's children to be more active in learning (Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI), 2019). This is relevant to the research findings of Andita et al. (2016) which explains the role of KJRI in improving access to education for IMW's children, namely: 1) *Representation*, is attending various meeting invitations or meetings, attending invitations commemorating national days and public holidays, representing the Ministry of Education to submit visa applications, stay permits, and teaching permits for teachers sent by CLC, and responsible in applying for student visas to the Immigration Department in Malaysia; 2) *Negotiations*, is conducting meetings with the Government of Malaysia, for example, meeting with the Regional Education Officer (PPD) / Education Office about the mission and vision of CLC as a non-formal school for IMW's children, trying to negotiate so that all CLC have legality and approach the Government of Malaysia thus CLC that does not have a license still able to operate; and 3) *Protection*, which is fully responsible for protecting all personal rights, property, and interests of Indonesian citizens re-affairs abroad.

The explanation of CLC's role above emphasizes that CLC has tried to optimize its role as an educational institution that provides quality services and access to education for IMW's children, CLC also has a vital position in instilling and fostering nationalism of IMW's children, as well as a place for IMW's children to know, appreciate, and love the nation and country of Indonesia. In addition, foster teachers also have an essential role in instilling and fostering nationalism of IMW's children through the provision of access to quality education (Tikly & Barrett, 2011) and meaningful knowledge of learning content/substance (Van Driel & Berry, 2012).

### *Teaching Experiences in Border Areas*

The discussion about teaching experience is divided into several sub-themes, among others; teacher's educational background, school conditions, strategies to instill nationalism values, problems and challenges faced, as well as family and social environmental factors that influence children's behavior. Every teacher who teaches in border areas has a diverse educational background, there are teachers who are specifically sent from Indonesia based on the selection held by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud) through the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel (Directorate General of GTK) and the Directorate of Basic Education Teacher Development (Directorate of PG Dikdas) or called Guru Bina, and is Malaysian local teachers or Indonesian migrant workers' are recruited by companies or plantations to teach at CLC and the costs are charged to the plantations that employ them are called Guru Pamong. Participants in this study were 2 Guru Bina and 6 Guru Pamong. Guru Pamong had different educational qualifications. Usually, Guru Pamong only graduate from the same high school and Guru Bina has a bachelor's education qualification. Each participant has their own scientific competencies and teaches different subjects, such as music arts subjects, science education, Islamic religious education, Indonesian language, citizenship education, and character education oriented towards the cultivation of nationalism values. Sasongko et al. (2019) explained that the fulfillment of teacher qualifications in the border area aims to; (1) provide educational services for IMW's children who do not have access to education where their parents work in Malaysia; (2) the development of the potential of learners to become a spiritual human beings who believe and have fear to the Almighty God, be noble, healthy physically and spiritually, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens; and (3) build a sense of nationality, cultivate the values of unity, preserve culture and instill personality and pride as Indonesian citizens.

Related to the condition of schools in CLC, the condition is still not adequate due to the limited learning space and learning support facilities (Rahman et al., 2020). The observation and documentation of researchers showed that in CLC there are only 3 (three) classrooms for children, 1 (one) toilet, and 1 (one) book room. The bookshelves in the library room are also not too big, only measuring 2 x 4 meters containing books about fairy tales and subject books (Indonesian Language, Science, Social Sciences, Citizenship) from grade 1 to grade 6 elementary school. Some books have a donation from "BRI Peduli Bangsa Ber-Indonesia" and the rest is a purchase book from CLC itself. The facts that appear in this field are quite alarming, because one of the factors supporting the implementation of quality learning is the availability of learning facilities that are worthy to be used as a place to learn (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). This fact is also corroborated by the research from Yanti et al. (2019) showing that in Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan, about 30% of the population is illiterate and about 5-10% of elementary education children experience dropouts. Similar conditions that are more concerning also occur in Puring Kencana Subdistrict, Kapuas Hulu Regency, where school-age children prefer to attend school in Malaysia rather than school in the country itself. This is due to the limited educational facilities and infrastructure in Indonesia, Indonesian children prefer to go to Sarawak, Malaysia which has better and free school facilities.

Related to the learning process, teachers have tried their best in transferring knowledge and planting the nationalism values of IMW's children in each subject taught. The observations during the learning process showed that in the interaction teachers and children use Indonesian both in the classroom and outside the classroom, however, when the teacher or child interacts with Malaysians, they are using Malay language. Then, the teacher also introduced Indonesian history, educated children to appreciate differences, introduced and practiced traditional Indonesian games, and directed children to participate in the activities of the nation's cultural festivals. This is done in order to give

information, knowledge, and understand for children about the cultural diversity of their own people (Y. Rahmawati et al., 2014), thus children can apply in their daily lives.

In addition, teachers apply various learning methods and strategies so that children do not get bored easily in following every learning process (Dunlosky et al., 2013), such as *rolling stick* quiz methods that provide a variety of questions based on the level of the child's class, questions given usually around the knowledge of the national emblem, the basis of the country, the creator of the Song of Indonesia Raya, the name of the highest mountain in Indonesia, the first and current President, and the number and meaning of feathers on the Garuda. Other methods that teachers use are also usually by lecturing, questioning, playing videos, and creating small groups that discuss the themes given by the teacher. Although, there are some learning methods that some people consider outdated, such as lectures and question-and-answer, which tend to make teachers (*teaching-centers*) (Freire, 2005), however, these methods are still effective and efficient to use in IMW's children in border areas, due to various factors inherent in the lives of IMW's children themselves, such as social, cultural, economic, psychological, and knowledge levels (Hartas, 2011).

The teacher also explained the learning strategies used in fostering the nationalism of IMW's children is by habituation every day to instill good character values for children. Refraction is carried out such as ceremonies every morning, reading laws, introducing Indonesian culture, ethnic diversity, customs, regional arts, regional dances, regional songs, and musical instruments through learning in schools. In addition, children are also required to participate in commemorating national big days such as the Youth Pledge, Independence Day of Indonesia, National Education Day, National Children's Day, Teacher's Day, etc. Here, teachers are trying to create a community that is relevant to the conditions in Indonesia, so that IMW's children can imagine and feel the learning experience as in Indonesia. This is what Anderson (2006) refers to as imagined communities that portray the nation as socially constructed communities, imagined by people who consider themselves part of that group.

The implementation of learning in CLC also uses multigrade teaching model. Multigrade teaching is a form of learning that allows a teacher to teach children of two or more different levels of class in one learning process and at the same time (Sampson & Condy, 2016). The model of multigrade teaching in CLC is due to teacher shortages, uneven number of children, and limited number of classrooms. This is relevant to the theoretical perspective proposed by Brown (2010) that explain the meaning of multigrade teaching which refers to teaching and learning process for children from many ages, values, and competences of the same groups. This concept lets teacher to involve in more than one level of classes in the same period. Multigrade teaching is the best strategy and it is considered important in providing access to education for all children, especially in rural areas, of course this is very relevant with the condition of CLC in Sarawak which is mostly in oil palm plantation areas (Thephavongsa, 2018).

Although teachers have done optimally in instilling and fostering nationalism of IMW's children, however, it is undeniable that there are still many problems and challenges faced by teachers, both in the school environment and outside the school. Mrs. HJ explained that the main problem in the school environment is that there is often a misunderstanding between teachers from Indonesia (Guru Bina) and Malaysian local teachers or Indonesian migrant workers' (Guru Pamong). Teachers recruited by CLC are randomly selected or in accordance with their duties and knowledge to become educators/teachers. Many teachers do not have educational background, so mastery of the methods and learning strategies applied is not in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the child, for example teaching with a military system that uses physical force if the child cannot be conditioned. This explanation is relevant to the findings of Aswan (2019) research which revealed that most teachers have minimum education qualifications equivalent to high school level and are tasked with helping teachers build the character of IMW's children in Sabah oil palm plantation, Malaysia. The limitations of educational background is what causes the inability of teachers to apply learning methods or strategies that suit the needs of children.

Another problem is related to parents' lack of care for their children's education. The findings of the interview with Mr. AR, explained that parents here prioritize work or improving the family economy, thus, if there are better jobs elsewhere, then parents will go straight out or move, without thinking about the fate of their child's education. In this case, we cannot fully blame the decision of parents to move jobs, due to the increasing demands of the economy and the difficulty of earning a decent income in their own country (Santosa & Kamala, 2019). In addition, the social environment here is also not very well, as many local children in this neighborhood whose jobs are simply wandering, motor racing, smoking, and bad habits. This is a challenge for teachers in CLC, because no matter how great and good the methods and strategies that teachers can achieve, it will never happen without the support of the family and social environment (Prasetyo et al., 2020).

#### *The Meaning of Nationalism from a Teacher's Perspective in a Border Area*

Nationalism defined by the state can be seen as the knowledge of nation, feelings of love of the homeland, and practice in maintaining nationalism (Pamungkas, 2016). Nationalism is also interpreted as a loyalty between the individual and his country, a sense of love and pride in the nation and state, as well as the ability of the state in maintaining the identity and self-esteem of its people (Muzayanah, 2017). The findings of interviews with teachers in border areas, interpreting nationalism as a sense of love and pride towards the homeland, loyalty, national spirit, willing to sacrifice,



awareness of the diversity of the nation, concern with others, even an expectation of a better life. Mr. AR also explained that nationalism is very important because our goal is to be sent here to instill nationalism to the IMW's children. As is known, that Indonesian schools that exist abroad are certainly very upholding nationalism, because the atmosphere, environment, and customs here, is very different from in Indonesia, so nationalism is very important for children to remain in love with the country even though they are already there. This discussion relevant to the opinions proposed by Gellner (2006) about the definition of a nation as a condition where community has the same cultures, including in the context of idea, symbol, association, behaviour activities and communication, and also confess that they are bound in the name of national fraternity.

The purpose of instilling nationalism in IMW's children is to increase feelings of love towards the homeland and its people, strengthen fraternity relations between friends in border areas, appreciate the diversity of the nation, and have a sense of pride in their own nation. Therefore, nationalism has become an important agenda to be instilled early on into IMW's children through learning in CLC. Thus, various methods, strategies, materials, activities, and learning praxis have been implemented by teachers for the purpose of planting and growing nationalism in IMW's children. Activities outside the school are also more intensively carried out to increase children's interest in being motivated to learn and get to know the culture and characteristics of Indonesia. This is relevant to the research from Muhtarom (2020), which explains that the easiest way to increase the interest of children/learners in loving their country is to introduce the characteristics of their respective countries such as the national emblem, national anthem, national language, national heroes, folklore, and the superiority of their country's cultural findings.

The meaning of nationalism in teachers in border areas is also reflected in the spirit of nationalism shown through mandatory songs sung daily by teachers and IMW's children. The obligatory song, titled 'Naura - Aku Indonesia', has a deep meaning in each of its lyrics, which explains the diversity of Indonesian, the spirit of brotherhood and peace, and a deep love for Indonesia despite being in a different place/country. The observations of researchers at the time of singing this compulsory song, all teachers and children showed seriousness and deep understanding when uttering lyrics of the song 'Naura - Aku Indonesia'. The atmosphere is rarely found in formal schools in Indonesia, an atmosphere that further confirms that Indonesia also lives at the end of the country. This atmosphere is very representative with the study of narrative discourse from Suaka and Temaja (2020) which illustrates the importance of instilling, nurturing, and maintaining the spirit of patriotism and nationalism for educational fighters, foreign exchange fighters, and even life fighters who are in border areas.

The picture of the teacher's experience above shows the amount of sacrifice made just to give and share knowledge to IMW's children that had been marginalized from the socio-cultural environment that should be in Indonesia. This image is in accordance with the context of nationalism proposed by Kohn and Calhoun (2017) nationalism is an ideology based on the premise that individual loyalty and devotion to the nation-state transcends the interests of other individuals or groups. Therefore, the question related to the meaning of nationalism, indirectly has been answered by itself with the willingness of teachers to devote themselves to teach and educate IMW's children in border areas. However, in addition to the willingness of teachers to serve in border areas, there are other factors why many teachers or Indonesians prefer to work in border areas (Malaysia).

The findings of interviews with teachers and some Indonesian migrant workers' (IMW's), explained that in Malaysia he thinks it is very easy to get a job, very different from in Indonesia which only has a few jobs. Jobs in Malaysia according to him are also paid a comparable price, thus it can fulfill the daily needs. This statement is supported by the findings of research from Santosa and Kamala (2019) which reveals the fact that many Indonesian choose to move to the region in Malaysia to work in oil palm plantations. The reason is simple, the salary as a gardener in Malaysia is higher than in Indonesia and it is easier to get a job rather than in Indonesia. Economic welfare and ease of access to work in Malaysia have been the main triggers to be the reasons many Indonesians want to move and work in Malaysia. This fact can be an evaluation and reflection to all parties to pay more attention to the problems that occur among the grassroots or lower social class communities.

### Conclusion

As has been revealed in this research that there are still some problems in the CLC system which is a place for IMW's children to get education and knowledge about their nation and country. Other facts are also revealed from the daily life or experience of teachers in border areas that face many problems and challenges, ranging from difficulty in access, school conditions, learning facilities, family and social environments that are not conducive, to idealism that is contradictory to an established system. However, all problems, challenges, and obstacles experienced by teachers, can be muted or held by a belief about Indonesian nationalism, which is interpreted as a sense of love and pride in the country, loyalty, national spirit, willing to sacrifice, awareness of the diversity of the nation, care for others, even an expectation of a better life.

The existence of CLC has provided an opportunity for IMW's children to get quality of education services and access like other children in Indonesia. In addition, CLC also has an important position and role in instilling and growing nationalism, because it is a place for IMW's children to know, appreciate, and love the Indonesian nation and state. The findings in this research can be used as a reference and reflection for the Indonesian government in reformulating

education programs for IMW's children in border areas. These findings can also provide an overview to the wider community of the real conditions that occur in the world of education in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area.

### Recommendations

Further research is expected to explore more about nationalism from the experiences of parents and IMW's children in border areas, or find a new meaning about nationalism that is studied from the experiences and views of Indonesian people in border areas. In addition, the development of education programs that are more favorable or focused on the characteristics and needs of IMW's children in border areas, can also be an essentials agenda in future research. This research can also be used as evaluation and monitoring material for policy makers regarding the empirical facts from the results of research in the field. While the results of this study were only obtained from CLC Ladang Ladong and CLC Melur Gemilang, there is still potential to be replicated and developed to produce more comprehensive and in-depth findings related to the problems, challenges, needs, and opportunities of IMW's children in border areas. As it is known, there are 62 CLCs in Indonesian border areas that still require exploration, study, and research to support improving the quality of education, equality, empowerment, social transformation, and the quality of life of the community.

### Limitations

This research has limitations on the research participant, because it only describes from the perspective of CLC managers, principals, and teachers. Further research should examine more about nationalism from the perspective of children, parents, and socio-cultural environments that influence it. In the methodology section, this research is still limited to the observation protocol used and the subjectivity of the researcher in conducting observations in the field. It is necessary to use different approaches (such as: phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, etc.) to get the depth of research findings. Limitations in this study are also related to the issue of nationalism of IMW's children in the border area, were raised as the main theme, while education in the border area has a more pressing complexity of problems, such as; inequality of access to education, inadequate learning facilities, limited learning resources, unfavourable family and social environments, social injustice, economic inequality, cultural acculturation, and loss of nationalism or national identity.

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### Authorship Contribution Statement

Suarno: Concept and design, data acquisition, data interpretation, drafting manuscript, writing. Suryono: Concept and design, critical revision of manuscript, supervision, final approval. Zamroni: Concept and design, critical revision of manuscript, supervision, final approval.

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