

## EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL MEDIA ON INDONESIAN STUDIES FOR THIRD-CULTURE KIDS IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** Indonesian Generation Z faces challenge in strengthening their national identity because of globalization. This is an urgency as Indonesia is progressing towards “Golden Indonesia 2045” where the goal is to have an advanced cultural richness over shared identity. One segmentation of Generation Z that encounters a challenge in self-identity perception is Third-Culture Kids (TCK). Their disconnection from the national identity during identity development can trigger identity crisis. One way to nurture their national identity is through teaching them Indonesian studies, consists of Indonesia’s cultural heritage, history, tradition, core values, and language. However, many TCKs struggle as they have short attention spans and language barriers towards most conventional educational media delivered in Indonesian language. This paper aims to fill in the gap of the limited research on this topic. The method is through qualitative method by reviewing previous studies on educational media related to Indonesian studies. This goal is to provide recommendations for further education development, in providing educational media for TCKs. The results underline the importance of interactivity aspects and the use of bilingual language, which has significantly helped BIPA students. The results suggest implication to design an interactive educational media that supports TCKs’ learning characteristics with local community involvement. The school managerial implication is to provide educators with inclusive education trainings and support families with transition programs during school induction.

**Keywords:** third-culture kids; Indonesian studies; educational media; interactivity, golden Indonesia 2045

### Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural country of over 1340 ethnic groups across over 17000 islands. Because of that, Indonesia needs a unification to bridge its cultural, ethnic, and social differences. The unification is through having a shared national identity rooted in Indonesia’s core values. Notably, a strong national identity develops a sense of belonging towards the nation

that spans across generations. It triggers positive pride to contribute to nation’s development, politically and economically. Indeed, it is crucial to ensure the same core values are passed down through generations. Thus, having a shared national identity empowers the nation’s future potential.

Having a shared national identity becomes an important subject due to the

nation's goal towards "Golden Indonesia 2045", aiming for an advanced cultural richness over shared identity. One way to keep track of the cultural progress development is through Cultural Development Index with indicators of cultural heritage, socio-cultural resilience, education, cultural economy, gender, literacy culture, and cultural expression. The government has published the 2013 Cultural Development Index score of 57.13 out of 100, which increased only by 2 points from the previous year (BAPPENAS, 2023). Still, the score highlighted remaining gaps of cultural economic across Indonesia.

One way to nurture the national identity is through teaching Indonesian studies; a collection of studies in Indonesia's cultural heritage, history, tradition, core values and language. Through the Cultural Endowment Fund, the government pushed development of more educational media, commonly offered in Indonesian language. A variety of educational media emerged, such as ebooks (Gogahu & Prasetyo, 2020), comic books (Zakiyah et al., 2022) and websites (Pratama, 2021); which can be categorized into audio, visual, and audio-visual media; chosen based on its effectiveness, efficiency, as well as teacher's capability to use the media (Nasron et al., 2024).

Despite the advancement of Indonesian studies, it is hard to stay away from foreign cultures' influences through globalization. While it can empower personalized growth experience, it can also affect a collective identity. Globalization can replace rooted identity from family. It has greater influence on younger generation who feel disconnected as an Indonesian. Indeed, many Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) perceived Indonesian studies as monotonous and outdated. A survey conducted found an increased preference over foreign cultures among

Generation Z (IDN Research Institute, 2024). As such, they are not shy to show they prefer to speak foreign language and embody foreign cultures more, which significantly affected their knowledge in Indonesian values (Nugroho & Reswari, 2024; Salsabila et al., 2024).

One segmentation group of Generation Z with significant exposure to globalization is the Third-Culture Kid (TCK), who are exposed to multicultural situations throughout their upbringing. To illustrate, students attending international-setting schools are part of TCKs (Delaere-Maclean, 2021). TCKs are different from their peers attending public schools or living among neighborhoods with strong local influences. TCKs may live among the same neighborhoods but actively embody and believe in different values. They naturally developed their own unique identity; blending their home culture (as their first culture) with the local culture (as their second culture) and a sense of belonging that goes beyond any specific locations, languages, or traditions; which is an in-between space of "third culture". Thus, they can assimilate different cultural cues and languages naturally. Consequently, it can also hinder them from understanding educational media brought in Indonesian language, including Indonesian studies. Siregar & Rangkuti (2022) previously identified common language errors in pronunciation, intonation, forming sentences, and fluency among Indonesian attending international schools in Jakarta.

But like other Generation Z, Indonesian TCKs need Indonesian studies. Especially when they constantly create their definition of home to describe their belonging. TCKs share a common challenge in self-identity perception, which can lead to identity crisis. Aligned with Erikson's Identity Development Theo-

ry, TCKs need strong goals, values, and belief to be a whole person (Long, 2016). Equally important, the right educational media needs to consider Generation Z's learning preference towards digital media that allows them to multitask (Ramadhan et al., 2024) as well as cultivate their lack of creativity and collaboration skills. They have notable need of interactivity aspect, in form of class discussion and real-life simulation (Dewi et al., 2021). They need constant movement of images and informative elements to keep them immersed. As such, they have limited attention span when given a conventional media (Nicholas, 2020). It is fundamental to offering the right educational media for their identity development, otherwise there is an identity loss generation.

While there is an increasing awareness on teaching Indonesian values, there is still limited paper review that delve into Indonesian studies subject with focus on Third-Culture Kids. This study aims to review previous research on various media about Indonesian studies. The goal is to give recommendation for further education development, especially in providing the educational media.

### **Indonesian Third-Culture Kids and Identity Development**

Identity development process is complex. It roots beyond where someone live or where their parents are from. The Erikson's Identity Development described the process of how someone understand who they are as a person, a result of facing challenges during the identity formation phase (12 to 18 years old). They collect different values and form their own personal values as they socialize. Meanwhile when someone then becomes unsure about who they are, they experience identity confusion (Long, 2016).

Previous studies have underlined re-occurring cases of identity development challenges among TCKs. Like many Generation Z, TCKs are also influenced by demographics, family dynamics, environmental influences, psychological traits, and socio-cultural aspects. They are natural curious learners in life with open-mindedness (Saputri & Wandebori, 2014) observing, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Hopkins, 2020). However, TCKs commonly feel alienated because they are exposed to extreme differences in value, unlike their peers. Previous studies found a high number of depressive symptoms (Thomas et al., 2021), in adjusting to feelings of loss (Liu et al., 2024), stress, and anxiety (de Vroedt, 2022) among TCKs. As such, they need more time to regulate emotions.

In contrast, TCKs develop stronger multilingual skills during identity development. They develop a keen awareness of cultural differences of body language, social norms, to etiquette when socializing. Mosanya & Kwiatkowska (2023) also mentioned their flexibility in switching between languages as they speak. Regardless of how, not all TCKs possessed the same level of language proficiency. Some face language barrier and labelled as having intellectual disability (Tanu, 2016). Previous research mentioned their challenges in understanding information delivered. Thomas et al. (2021) mentioned the language barrier significantly influenced their comprehension and participation in class discussion. Thus, Jones et al. (2022) suggested mixing language to maintain their home language proficiency. It is a priority to keep in mind their language proficiency when designing an educational media.

Indonesian students at international school fell into the category of what defined TCKs experience. Previous study

mentioned how being exposed to international setting, allows them to juggle between worlds (Tanu, 2016). In other words, TCKs face cultural duality as they blend in values at home and at school. Moreover, most Asian families wanted their next generation to be exposed to diverse cultures to be open-minded. Asian parents expected their children to know other cultures and still know how to be Asian enough. Because of that, teachers at international-setting school are expected to support students with different backgrounds, as they need different treatments (Long, 2016). Ultimately, teachers need to continuously enhance their knowledge and teaching method. This comes to light especially when previous research on hybrid learning during COVID-19 pandemic, found some teachers have a limited awareness of the latest education developments (Hefira et al., 2022). It is important for teachers to expand their knowledge and method to have a positive proactive and resilience attitude. In turn, teachers' proactiveness significantly influenced their innovative work performance (Wenehenubun & Prihanto, 2024), which will conversely promote an interactive class. There should be improvements within school regulation to support TCK's learning characteristics. All in all, TCKs' complex factors and their identity development process, need serious attention if "Golden Indonesia 2045" is Indonesia's next milestone.

## **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative method to answer the research gap in Indonesian TCKs learning Indonesian studies. The goal is to give recommendation for further education development, to provide the educational media. In this context, Indonesian studies is used to classify studies

in Indonesia's cultural heritage, history, tradition, core values and languages. The research reviewed previous studies on various educational mediums about Indonesian studies, through literature review found from 2023 to 2024. The keywords used were "Indonesian studies media", "Indonesian studies" and "Indonesian culture teaching". There were two main phases done. Pre-screening and screening phases were done to filter similar data answering the research objectives. From 51.700 research papers found on database, the pre-screening phase found 237 papers eligible within the criteria of title relevancy to the study objectives. Then, the abstract screening was done to filter journal credibility and relevancy to the objectives, where this research found 6 eligible papers. This research has no intention to reveal distortion of cultural contents published, but only how the information is delivered

## **Result**

The study filtered the research database with keywords of "Indonesian studies media", "Indonesian studies" and "Indonesian culture teaching", and found 6 papers eligible to review; aiming to offer implication for further education development. The chosen papers were filtered based on its journal credibility, published journal time range, title relevancy, abstract screening, and relevancy to the study objective. The following key findings of eligible papers are explained below.

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review

Article Title	Educational Media
Investigating the Implementation of Multimodality and Spherical Video-Based Immersive Virtual Reality in The Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers' Learning Materials (Rahmanu et al., 2023)	Spherical video-based immersive virtual reality (SV-IVR)
The Development of Cultural Literacy for Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) Students through RPG Games with A Gamification Approach (Yuriananta et al., 2023)	Role-playing game "Legend of Malang"
Representing and Implementing Moral Values to Foreign Students in Indonesian Textbooks for Learners Other Than Indonesians (Pratiwi et al., 2023)	Indonesian Textbook "Sahabatku Indonesia"
Using Social Media for Preserving the Javanese Traditional Arts: Adaptation	Social media (Youtube and Facebook)

Strategy of Sobokartti in the Millennial Era (Yuliati et al., 2023)	
Character Education Values of Pancasila Student Profiles in the Puppet Figure Wayang Arjuna: A Javanese Cultural Perspective (Subiyantoro et al., 2023)	Puppetry "Wayang"
Indonesian National Assessment Support: Can RE-STEM Android App Improve Students' Scientific Literacy Skills? (Subali et al., 2023)	Android App "RE-STEM"

**1. Spherical video-based immersive virtual reality (SV-IVR)**

The multimodality and spherical video-based immersive virtual reality (SV-IVR) has proven to improve BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) students' Indonesian language proficiency both in speaking and writing. The SV-IVR answered challenges found in conventional teaching and learning process using handouts and eBooks. The SV-IVR media is a combination of multiple different mediums or a combination of inter-arts, through audio, video, text, and images with immersive virtual reality. With the



help of virtual reality, there is enough user control to explore a 360-degree experience which significantly influences students' satisfaction, interaction, and situational experience. The SV-IVR enhanced writing, speaking, and getting familiar with new vocabularies. Consequently, it required high technology to capture the real-life simulation on a higher pricing point. Also, there should be enough time to get users (teachers and student) to be familiar with the new technology.

## **2. Role-playing game "Legend of Malang"**

The role-playing game (RPG), named "Legend of Malang", also significantly proven to improve BIPA student's Indonesian language proficiency. The game offered a real-life simulation to explore Malang city's urban legend, while surviving from natural disaster. With the help of gamification approaches of points, badges, ranks, behaviors, and skills; students learned the sociocultural of Malang city. The teachers' involvement contributed to the success implementation. The teacher prompted the students' understanding and explained the new vocabularies found during the gameplay.

## **3. Indonesian Textbook "Sahabatku Indonesia"**

The Indonesian textbook "Sahabatku Indonesia", which also translated to "Indonesia My Friend"; was another example of media exploration for BIPA students. The textbook is chosen to answer the challenge in limited local moral values mentioned on the existing BIPA textbooks; when it could teach them Indonesian characteristics better. The textbooks used images, biographical and dialogues texts.

The textbook incorporated 13 Indonesian moral values and 5 pillars ideology (religion, pluralism, democracy, social justice, and humanism) throughout various contexts; from Indonesian tourism to culinary situations. For instance, Indonesian's friendliness in greeting one another based on situational time and social relationship. The learning goal was to become more familiar with the Indonesian customs and avoid misinterpreted attitudes that may be misinterpreted Indonesia's social norms.

## **4. Social media (Youtube and Facebook)**

"Sobokartti", a traditional dance studio located in Semarang city, Indonesia, introduced interesting insights on utilizing social media as their educational media. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the dance studio maximized the technology to touch wider audience with relatively cheaper production cost, in comparison to live performances. Its modern take can only be a success when it is done together as a team. "Sobokartti" managed to create a sense of belonging, within members and the audience. Using Facebook Group named "Perkumpulan Sobokartti", which translated to "community of Sobokartti"; their contents revolved around being part of the dance studio. Everyone at the studio contributed to the content creation, ranging from management meeting results to performance documentations. For instance, the trainers uploaded "behind the scenes" videos. The importance of product knowledge to maximize each platform feature is essential. For instance, they maximized the use of share feature to facilitate marketing of "word of mouth". The social media became a successful educational media because it focused on communal theme. It underlined

the influence of local and community's involvement, to offer Indonesian studies subject for those who are not familiar with before.

### **5. Puppetry "Wayang"**

This study focused on empowering Indonesian students with understanding and embodiment of local values. The research emphasized the importance of Indonesian values through Indonesia's traditional visual art performance and UNESCO 2004 intangible heritage, a puppetry known as "Wayang". It was part of Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture program to strengthen Indonesian student's character, named "Profil Pelajar Pancasila" which translated to "Student Profile of Pancasila". The "Wayang" the puppetry conveyed values within Pancasila foundational principles. The visual art performance depicted urban legend stories with spiritual values. One of the famous character, Arjuna, is chosen as the main character on this subject. Arjuna is known for his noble character and victorious stories fighting the unsettling characters, like Korawa. Arjuna "wayang" character has six dimensions of the "Pancasila" profile: faithful, global awareness, cooperative, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. Arjuna's physical attributes also carried symbolic meanings (such as "liyepan" eyes and "wali miring" nose). Further studies suggested analyzing other "wayang" characters to see how it can convey Indonesian values.

### **6. Android App "RE-STEM"**

This study took a different approach compared to the previous studies, because it answered challenges in studying science. This study is included due to its result in offering an alternative teaching method

on how to incorporate Indonesian studies within interdisciplinary subjects. The use of traditional toys as part of ethnoscience method, significantly improved secondary student's scientific literacy skills, especially in the topic of sound wave. The traditional toys were chosen based on the student's familiarity in daily life, which were "Tarutu" (a traditional flute made from coconut or banana leaves to demonstrate sound length and frequency), "Cup Telephone" (a traditional toy made from paper cups to demonstrate sound wave different mediums), "Calung" (a traditional musical instrument used to study frequency and resonance), and "Sempritan Manuk" (a traditional whistle made of bamboo to demonstrate frequency range because of air). With the help of everyday traditional toys, students can connect their local culture understanding with the scientific understanding (ethnoscience). The learning process were done through an app named "RE-STEM" that enabled students to explore the science content easily. The results shown significant increase in engagement rate when expressing scientific analysis among students with higher local culture understanding. On the other hand, a group of students with lower local culture understanding, found difficulties in analyzing the scientific aspects. Overall, the RE-STEM app further expanded variety of education media about Indonesian studies, especially in interdisciplinary subjects.

## **Discussion**

The results have widened perspective on how to offer Indonesian studies on different mediums within various context for TCKs. The interesting findings are the exploration of different interactivity levels incorporated.

To begin with, there was a significant potential in enhancing learning experience through inter-arts media with modern technologies. Combining multiple media to support one another (in this case: audio, video, text, image, and immersive reality) shown promising effort to increase student's participation in class. Thus, the SV-IVR and gamification approaches through "Legend of Malang" role-playing game are suitable for TCKs. This is aligned with previous study where Thomas et al. (2021) mentioned TCK's struggle in adapting and participating in class. The educational media is seen suitable for TCKs who need encouragement in confidence and expressing interest (de Vroedt, 2022; Liu et al., 2024) as well as help in social interaction (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Their adaptation process to new technology potentially promotes peer learning as they learn with friends. The novel modern technology has previously mentioned to enhance speaking and writing skills of BIPA students, who has the same situation of learning Indonesian studies like TCKs. Thus, it will be helpful for TCKs, who need to learn Indonesian language to maintain their connection to rooted identity (Jones et al., 2022).

Next, the interactivity aspect found on the use of social media features. The "Sobokartti" case proved how social media can spread the word and increase community engagement. The creative exploration of social media features is relevant to TCK's digital literacy characteristics that preferred interacting and multitasking digitally (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Additionally, it highly emphasized the role of local community involvement. Thus, designing an educational media for TCKs need local involvement. With their natural cross-cultural understanding, TCKs could learn cultural traits easier from first-hand sources.

Additionally, interactivity was also found on textbooks, named "Sahabatku Indonesia" that filled in the gaps moral values taught in BIPA class. The one-way indirect interaction with local morale consideration has proven to enhance cultural understanding. This is a valuable perspective for educators to consider alternative ways aside from modern technologies, where not all are familiar of. This is aligned with previous research that mentioned that not all educators were aware of the latest educational development, both knowledge and method updates (Hefira et al., 2022).

Next, a study about the use of traditional visual art performance has widened exploration of traditional local wisdoms as part of Indonesian studies, namely Indonesian puppetry named "wayang". The character Arjuna portrayed Indonesian values of "Pancasila" through its symbolic physical forms and storytelling. In light of this, there were opportunities to involve local visual art performances to deliver Indonesian studies. Puppetry is suitable for TCKs who has a natural curiosity on various subjects, aligned with previous research on their learning traits of open-mindedness and observing (Hopkins, 2020; Saputri & Wandebori, 2014). Again, the puppetry art performance shown interaction level between puppetry master and audience, where it is suitable for TCKs who has short attention span (Nicholas, 2020), which required providing constant objects movement to keep them immersed.

Finally, educators can also integrate Indonesian studies with interdisciplinary subjects, for instance science subject through "RE-STEM" app. By incorporating familiar traditional toys (such as "tarutu", "cup telephone", "calung", and "sempritan manuk") that students know, with the science subject of sound wave;



the students were able to connect their cultural understanding and academic context. The ethnoscience aspect is suitable for TCKs whose characteristics are able to easily navigate complex subjects by connecting the academic subject with their real-life experiences (Rauwerda, 2021).

All in all, the literature review results introduced interactivity aspects within diverse mediums in teaching Indonesian studies. There were also long-term impacts from exploration of advanced technologies, comparative studies and ethnoscience to create immersive learning experience. Align with this research's goal to give recommendations for further educational development, this study wanted to emphasize the crucial role of the teacher. The teacher's role to facilitate and guide the students throughout the new technology adoption, the new vocabularies, and cooperation is worth noting for. The research further underlined the need for constant improvement of teachers' trainings to keep all stakeholders updated to the latest education trend. Next educational development should focus on how to effectively utilize these innovative and highly advanced technologies as educational tools, without forgetting the focus in Indonesian studies.

## **Conclusion**

The literature review has introduced innovative alternative teaching approaches to offer Indonesian studies on various mediums and into different educational contexts (such as the use of inter-arts media, digital game, social media to traditional visual art performance). This research underlined the need to further explore interactivity aspects within diverse mediums, to support a flexible teaching method in Indonesian studies. The inter-

activity aspect should not be limited to modern technologies, but also through textbook and performance art mediums. From a design perspective, it is crucial to promote localization. The design angle should involve local communities to enhance relevance and effectiveness within the chosen interactivity level. The subject on Indonesian studies should always consider the students' level of understanding of the cultural and contextual needs. Or in other words, educators should continuously bridge real life experience and academic context.

To answer the research's goal to give recommendations for educational development, there are implications that can be drawn from this study. To begin with, designing an educational media for TCKs should start by empathizing with their characteristics. Educators and designers should be aware of their vulnerability, learning styles and language proficiency. The goal is to develop an educational media with interactive aspects to promote engagement. The media should have enough visual aid and an extended vocabulary list.

Continuing, there should be adjustment on educator's teaching style, especially because they need to create an inclusive learning system. First, the school management must acknowledge differences within teachers' understanding level of the updated teaching and learning condition. There must be a given understanding of TCKs characteristics within school regulations and trainings. Second, promote awareness of student's learning gaps that may rise due to disruption in their learning continuity. Indeed, a repetitive practice and training would be beneficial for both educators and students in their teaching and learning. Third, encourage reflection time for personal growth and stress management. It

is important to be mindful of a student's emotional wellbeing in class. Fourth, encourage class engagement that answers challenges in building relationships, namely through peer learning. Finally, the school's curriculum needs to continue incorporating Indonesian studies (including social behaviour norms, traditions, and customs) to promote sense of belonging as Indonesian TCK.

The family's involvement is also crucial. Previous research mentioned the importance of family aspect to identity development. Thus, schools can facilitate induction sessions, namely cross-cultural student transitions, for TCK families about the dynamic learning environment their child is about to experience. Then, friendly reminder families to create a healthy environment at home by maintaining connection with their root, namely through family tradition and home language.

In summary, while the current methods demonstrated significant potential in fostering Indonesian studies, such as improving language proficiency to promote cultural understanding. Further research should focus on refining the interactivity approaches and involve empathy with TCKs characteristics in mind. Until then, Indonesian studies remain as an interesting subject to delve into, both culturally sensitive and technologically accessible.

### **Limitations**

There were limitations that should be acknowledged, particularly for the purpose of further research. It is worth noting that there may be more research papers that contributed valuable insights but were excluded due to the publication time range. Aside from time range, it is also inevitable to acknowledge that there may be other factors during the pre-screening and

screening phase that excluded the papers due to incomplete explanations in the title, abstract, chosen keywords or journal credibility.

### **Further Research**

Further research should dig into the impact of the selected technologies incorporated, with the teaching competencies required, to facilitate an effective teaching. Additionally, the research topic can consider the influence of mixed-language and mixed-culture households on cross-cultural identity formation may present as promising research in the future.

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