



Border museum as pedagogical space: Strengthening students' nationalism through contextualized history learning in Anambas

Adelina Darmauli Simanjuntak^{*1}, Saefur Rochmat²

¹Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia, adelinadarmauli.2024@student.uny.ac.id

²Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia, saefur_rochmat@uny.ac.id

^{*}Corresponding author: Adelina Darmauli Simanjuntak; E-mail addresses: adelinadarmauli.2024@student.uny.ac.id

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Abstract. Border museums have the potential to serve as contextualized educational spaces that foster students' nationalism, particularly in geographically isolated and culturally complex frontier regions. This study investigates how border museums are integrated into history education and how they contribute to students' national identity development in the Anambas Islands, a peripheral maritime region of Indonesia. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis across two public high schools and the Anambas Border Museum. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants, including 40 students, 4 history teachers, and 6 stakeholders such as museum managers, principals, and community leaders. The findings reveal that museum-based history learning enhances students' engagement with local historical narratives, cultivates pride in national identity, and promotes experiential and reflective learning. Teachers act as key

mediators in contextualizing museum content, while institutional challenges such as limited infrastructure and weak curriculum integration hinder full implementation. The study provides practical insights for developing pedagogical models that leverage local cultural institutions to promote nationalism and civic awareness in marginalized border areas. These findings contribute to education policy discourse, particularly regarding the integration of cultural heritage institutions into formal history curricula in remote and underserved contexts.

Introduction

The erosion of nationalism among youth living in border areas is an urgent and multifaceted global problem. This problem is particularly acute in regions that are geographically vulnerable, underdeveloped, and have hybrid cultures near neighboring countries. In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon is exacerbated by limited state presence and infrastructure development, which fosters a sense of marginalization and weakens emotional attachment to national identity - as observed in communities in Temajuk, West Kalimantan (Rachmawati & Dewi, 2021). Similar trends are seen globally; in Kazakhstan, for example, exposure to foreign media, especially Russian channels, has influenced the orientation of youth in ways that deviate from national ideals (Petrov et al., 2025). In addition, the stark socioeconomic disparities between bordering countries often lead young people to view their own countries unfavorably, thereby increasing identity crises (Daneshmehr et al., 2024).

Historical and geopolitical transformations, such as EU enlargement, have also prompted nationalist responses among youth in Central European border regions, driven by perceived threats to cultural sovereignty (Merabishvili, 2023). These dynamics point to the need for holistic strategies to strengthen national identity, primarily through participatory and contextually relevant educational interventions. Programs such as project-based learning and educational visits have been shown to foster students' emotional engagement with national symbols and narratives (Zakso et al., 2019; Widana et al., 2023). In addition, a broader ecosystem involving families, local communities, youth organizations, and local governments is crucial to fostering a collective sense of national identity in peripheral areas. Intercultural competence education also has the potential to mitigate disintegrative influences from outside, although its effectiveness in frontier contexts remains unexplored.

In this context, border museums-institutions that embody the historical, cultural, and socio-political dynamics of borderlands emerge as important yet underutilized spaces for nation-building. Museums such as the UK Border Agency Museum and the National Border Patrol Museum in El Paso exemplify how border narratives can be curated to shape national identities, often reflecting selective historical memories and social tensions (López-García, 2025; Zaiotti, 2023). Through dissonant exhibitions and emotional storytelling, these institutions allow visitors to negotiate complex notions of nationalism, ethnic identity, and shared belonging. However, museums face significant challenges in aligning their educational aspirations with historical realities and pedagogical expectations. Many teachers recognize the pedagogical potential of museums for interdisciplinary learning. However, issues of access, logistics, and institutional readiness often stand in the way of effective integration into the school curriculum. More critically, there is a growing call to re-conceptualize museums not only as repositories of facts, but as dialogical spaces where historical legitimacy is debated and reinterpreted (Depaepe, 2021; Zankowicz, 2024).

Although museums have been internationally recognized as alternative learning environments, the educational landscape in Indonesia, especially in border regions, has yet to tap their potential fully. Studies from other countries highlight how museums, enhanced with technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR), offer immersive learning experiences that foster historical empathy and critical engagement (Baniyamin & Rahim, 2019; Moorhouse et al., 2019). However, in Indonesia, museums often remain underutilized due to low visitation rates, static exhibition designs, and limited collaboration with educational institutions (Handoko & Nugroho, 2024; Shyiramunda & van den Bersselaar, 2024). These challenges are exacerbated in remote border areas such as Sebatik Island, where access to formal education and cultural infrastructure is extremely limited (Husain et al., 2021). Despite the considerable potential for museums to bridge the education gap in these marginalized areas, scholarly literature specifically addressing museum-based pedagogy in Indonesia's borderlands is scant (Ambarwati et al., 2023).

The neglect of peripheral contexts in education and urban studies further underscores this research gap. The focus of research has historically gravitated towards metropolitan centers, thus reinforcing spatial inequalities and ignoring the realities of people's lives in peripheral areas (Bădescu, 2023, 2024; Rokem & Boano, 2023). Although research has recently begun to shift towards understanding small towns and frontier regions, methodological limitations remain-particularly in capturing the sociocultural complexities of peripheral life (Negi et al., 2024; Ren, 2021). To overcome these limitations, an integrative comparative approach is needed that bridges the gap between urban theory and realities in peripheral areas.

With this in mind, this study positions the border museum in Anambas Regency, Riau Islands Province, as an important pedagogical resource for strengthening nationalism among secondary school students. Located at the strategic northern tip of Indonesia and bordering Malaysia and

Vietnam, Anambas encapsulates the tensions and opportunities of border identity. In this context, the museum serves not only as a custodian of local heritage, but also as a platform for experiential learning that matches the reality of students' lives. Unlike conventional textbook-based history teaching, which often feels abstract and disconnected, museum-based learning invites students to engage with real historical artifacts, local narratives of territorial defense, and everyday stories of resistance against foreign encroachment (Ioris, 2022; Porada et al., 2024; N. L. A. Talib, 2024).

This pedagogical approach is aligned with the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum in Indonesia, which emphasizes project-based learning and the development of the *Pancasila learner* profile. Museums become dynamic laboratories where students can build national identity through critical reflection, emotional engagement, and community participation. Teachers, in turn, play a transformative role as facilitators who mediate students' interpretations of historical symbols and narratives (Lee, 2025; N. L. A. Talib, 2024; Jayantika et al., 2024). However, for this educational potential to be fully realized, systemic collaboration between educators, museum curators, and local governments is required to design learning programs that are integrative, curriculum-aligned, and culturally relevant.

This research aims to explore the educational potential of border museums in Indonesia by answering two core questions: 1) How are museums in border areas utilized in teaching history in secondary schools? 2) To what extent does museum-based history learning influence the development of nationalism among students? Using a contextual qualitative approach, this research not only seeks to document educational practices but also to uncover deeper meanings related to students' historical experiences and identity formation in the border region. This research contributes to bridging the gap between formal education and the cultural realities of living in peripheral communities. By prioritizing museums as transformative learning spaces, this research advances an affective, contextual, and inclusive model of history education that fosters national identity based on local wisdom and historical awareness.

Method

Research Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how the border museum functions as an educational space and contributes to strengthening students' sense of nationalism through history learning. A qualitative design was chosen to capture the in-depth perspectives, lived experiences, and contextual interpretations of the participants involved in museum-based education. By focusing on the meaning-making process among students, teachers, and local stakeholders, this design enables a comprehensive understanding of how educational encounters within the museum influence identity formation in the border region.

Research Setting

The research was conducted in Anambas Islands Regency, a geographically remote and culturally diverse border region located at the northernmost tip of Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. This regency shares maritime borders with Malaysia and Vietnam, making it a strategic yet marginalized territory in terms of educational access and national integration. Fieldwork took place between October and December 2024 in two public secondary schools, SMA Negeri 1 Siantan and SMK Negeri 4 Anambas, and at the Anambas Border Museum, the only institutional repository of historical and cultural narratives in the region. The two schools were selected through purposive sampling to represent different levels of integration of museum-based learning into their curriculum.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study consisted of 40 high school students, four history teachers, and six additional stakeholders comprising two school principals, two museum staff members, two education office officials, and two cultural leaders from the local community. Participants were selected using a criterion-based purposive sampling strategy, focusing on individuals who had firsthand involvement in the implementation, facilitation, or experience of museum-based history education. The sample provided a balanced representation of perspectives across institutional, pedagogical, and community domains, enabling a multidimensional exploration of the topic.

To ensure immersion and contextual understanding, the principal researcher was physically present at all research sites throughout the data collection period. The researcher adopted a participant–observer role during school visits and museum programs, observing learning activities, taking fieldnotes, and engaging in informal conversations with participants. The researcher also resided temporarily in Letung, the administrative center of Siantan Island, which enabled closer interaction with the school and museum environments. Two local informants assisted during fieldwork: a non-participating history teacher who helped coordinate school access and a museum volunteer who facilitated contact with cultural figures. Their involvement ensured smooth logistical coordination and supported contextual validation during member checking.

Data Collection Methods

Three data collection methods were employed: (1) participant observation in schools and the Anambas Border Museum to examine learning interactions and student engagement with historical exhibits; (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, principals, museum staff, and community leaders to elicit narratives on their experiences and perceptions; and (3) document analysis of relevant materials, including lesson plans, syllabi, museum catalogs, and local historical archives. To comprehensively capture how museum-based history learning influences students' nationalism, two primary instruments were utilized: an interview guide and an observation sheet. The interview guide explored participants' views on the museum's educational function and its role in shaping national identity in border contexts, as outlined in Table 1, which serves as a narrative framework for understanding learning experiences and strategies.

Table 1. In-depth Interview Guide

No.	Informant	Topic	Question
1	Student	Learning Experience and Attitude towards Nationalism	a. Tell us about your experience when you went to the border museum.
			b. What impressions do you remember most from the visit?
			c. What do you think is the connection between the visit to the museum and history lessons at school?
			d. Did the visit make you understand more about the history of your region?
			e. Does visiting the museum make you feel more proud to be part of the Indonesian nation? Why?
2	History Teacher	Learning Strategy and Museum Integration	a. What are your reasons for taking students to visit the museum?
			b. How do you prepare for learning before and after the museum visit?
			c. What are the challenges you face in integrating museums into history learning?

No.	Informant	Topic	Question
3	School Principal Museum Manager	Institutional Support and the Museum's Role in Education	d. How do you assess the impact of museum visits on students' understanding of nationalism?
			e. Do you feel that museums can be a permanent part of the history curriculum?
			a. How does the museum support the school's learning program?
			b. What are the educational facilities provided for students?
4	Community/ Cultural Leaders	Local perspectives on education and nationalism	c. Does the museum have a special program for the border region?
			d. To what extent do you see the museum playing a role in instilling national values in the younger generation?
			a. How do you see the role of museums in maintaining local cultural identity?
			b. Do you think museums play a role in the education of young people on the border?
			c. What are your hopes for the development of museums and history education in this area?

The observation instrument was designed to capture key indicators such as student engagement, the role of the teacher, the role of the museum, contextual activities, and student attitudes towards nationalism, all of which are integrated in the museum-based history learning process in the field.

Table 2. Observation Focus and Indicators of Museum-Based Learning

No.	Aspect	Observed Indicator
1	Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students actively ask questions or discuss Students are interested in artifacts or narratives Student response to teacher or museum guide directions
2	Teacher's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher facilitates student discussion or questions Teacher connects artifacts or museum content to the history curriculum
3	Museum role (facilities and staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guide's narration is appropriate to the local historical context Interactive media or visual maps are available to support understanding Educational support materials such as brochures, videos, or teaching aids are available.
4	Contextualized Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are reflective tasks such as worksheets, essays or presentations Discussions or learning activities take place on site
5	Student Attitude towards Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students show pride in local and national history Students relate the museum visit experience to their identity and nationality

The interview and observation instruments were validated by three experts in history education, learning evaluation, and qualitative instrument development. Using a 4-point Likert scale to assess content relevance and clarity, Aiken's V yielded average scores of 0.92 for the interview and 0.90

for the observation sheet, indicating strong content validity. Minor revisions were made based on expert feedback to refine conceptual precision and indicator operationalization.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, following the model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process included: (1) data familiarization, (2) coding of important features, (3) identification of recurring patterns, (4) construction of thematic categories, and (5) interpretation by linking empirical findings with the theoretical framework. The coding process was done manually without the use of qualitative data analysis software, which allowed the researchers to engage closely with the raw narratives and their contextually appropriate meanings.

Trustworthiness and Validity

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several verification strategies were applied. Triangulation was applied by comparing data across participant groups (students, teachers, stakeholders) and data sources (interviews, observations, documents). Member checking was conducted by sharing thematic summaries with participants to validate interpretations and ensure accuracy of representations. Debriefing sessions with academic peers also supported critical reflection, which enabled refinement of findings and reduction of potential researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted under the ethical principles of research. Formal permission was obtained from the relevant educational institutions, museum authorities, and local education offices prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after providing a clear explanation of the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and steps taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All data were handled with integrity and presented in a manner consistent with responsible academic behavior.

Results and Discussion

Results

From Observation to Reflection: Contextualized Learning through Museums

The findings indicate that border museums are increasingly used as contextual learning tools by history teachers. In both SMA Negeri 1 Siantan and SMK Negeri 4 Anambas, annual museum visits are part of the local history curriculum, though implementation differs. SMA Negeri 1 Siantan adopts a structured, reflective approach, while SMK Negeri 4 Anambas applies a more flexible, report-based model.

Table 3. Frequency of Museum Visits in History Learning

School	Number of Visits/Year	Form of Learning Activities	Integrated Material
SMA Negeri 1 Siantan	2 times	Guided visit + discussion	Local history, colonialism, national borders
SMK Negeri 4 Anambas	1 time	Free visit + report	Local heroes, Anambas' cultural identity

Table 3 shows that SMA Negeri 1 Siantan implements a more structured and consistent use of the border museum than SMK Negeri 4 Anambas. Learning activities at the museum are enriched with guided discussions and reflective tasks, emphasizing local historical themes such as anti-colonial resistance and border significance. Although visit frequency remains limited, both schools have begun integrating museum-based learning into classroom instruction. Teachers take proactive roles in facilitating student engagement with artifacts and local narratives, reinforcing experiential

learning principles that promote deeper historical understanding. At SMA Negeri 1 Siantan, this integration is more systematic, with teachers linking exhibitions to the curriculum through interpretive assignments. Image 1 compares both schools across five key dimensions of museum-based learning: student engagement, teacher facilitation, museum resources, contextual learning, and nationalism.

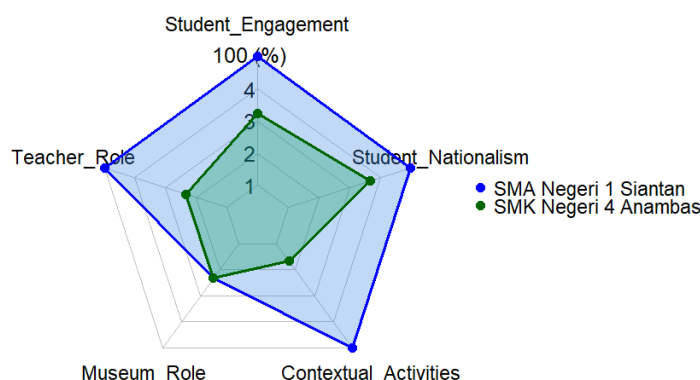


Image 1. Comparison of Observation Results of Museum-Based Learning in Two Schools

Image 1 compares observation outcomes from SMA Negeri 1 Siantan and SMK Negeri 4 Anambas across five key dimensions of museum-based history learning: student engagement, teacher role, museum support, contextual activities, and nationalism. Data were collected using structured observation sheets scored on a 1–4 scale. SMA Negeri 1 Siantan consistently outperformed across all dimensions, particularly in teacher involvement, contextual tasks, and student engagement, highlighting the role of teachers as active facilitators who connect museum content with curricular goals through discussions and reflective assignments. Conversely, SMK Negeri 4 Anambas demonstrated moderate performance, characterized by weaker scores in instructional support and contextualization, primarily due to less structured museum use and limited curriculum integration. Both schools scored similarly on the museum role dimension, indicating shared challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, static exhibits, and limited educational resources. Overall, the findings suggest that the pedagogical approach, rather than the museum’s presence alone, determines the success of museum-based learning in fostering historical understanding and national identity.

Reorganizing Identity: Shifting Student Nationalism through Museum Visits

Museum visits show a positive impact on students' nationalistic attitudes and awareness. Through interviews and surveys of 40 students, significant improvements were found in four main aspects: a sense of pride in being part of the Republic of Indonesia, knowledge of local history, awareness of the importance of border areas, and interest in history lessons.

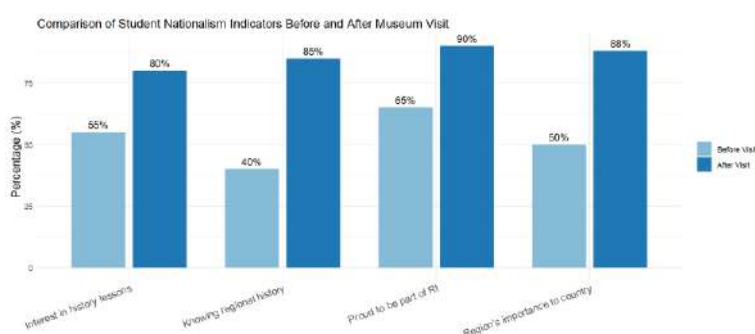


Image 2. Comparison of Student’s Nationalism Perceptions Before and After Museum Visit

Image 2 shows a significant improvement in students' perceptions of nationalism after participating in museum-based history learning. The most substantial increase was in their understanding of local history, from 40% to 85%, indicating that the museum effectively connects students with regional historical narratives. Awareness of the strategic importance of their region rose from 50% to 88%, while pride in being part of the Republic of Indonesia increased from 65% to 90%. Interest in history learning also improved, from 55% to 80%, demonstrating that contextual and experiential approaches can enhance student engagement.

To enrich the quantitative insights on changes in students' nationalist attitudes, their reflective narratives were examined, with dominant keywords visualized in Image 3.



Image 3. Word Cloud of Students' Reflection after Museum Visit

Image 3 illustrates students' reflections derived from interviews and post-visit reports highlighting dominant terms such as “history,” “museum,” and “region,” which signify the integration of museum experiences with their historical understanding and local identity. The frequent appearance of “proud,” “connected,” and “aware” suggests that museum-based learning fosters emotional engagement with students' regional heritage, aligning with Ausubel’s (1963) theory of meaningful learning that emphasizes connecting new experiences to existing cognitive structures. Terms like “ancestor,” “border,” “struggle,” and “resistance” reveal students' growing recognition of their region within the national historical narrative. This indicates an emergent civic identity shaped through contextualized encounters with the past. In the border education context, such affective and reflective engagement not only strengthens historical knowledge but also deepens awareness of their region’s strategic role in national sovereignty. Therefore, the word cloud functions not merely as a frequency map but as a psychosocial indicator of how students internalize nationalism through authentic, localized learning experiences.

Teacher as Cultural Mediator: Designing Meaningful History Encounters

History teachers show creativity in adapting museums as teaching media. Some of the strategies used include: on-site discussions, reflective essay assignments, visit reports, and historical time mapping from artifacts.

Table 4. Teachers' Strategies in Museum-Based History Learning

Teacher Name	Learning Strategy	Learning objectives	Obstacles faced
Teacher A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct structured discussions with students during museum visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop students' critical thinking skills Encouraging reflection on local history narratives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited printed teaching materials relevant to museums No official museum-based learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigning post-visit reflective essays to encourage meaning-making about local history 		module is yet available
Teacher B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide individual visit report assignments Organizing group presentations on local historical figures and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving students' communication skills Connecting local history with national narratives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpredictable sea weather conditions often disrupt the visit schedule Limited school budget to support learning activities outside the classroom
Teacher C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented a visual introduction to the museum before the visit. Conduct comparative discussions between museum narratives and history textbooks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging critical evaluation of historical sources. Building students' empathy for the context of the border communities' struggles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The museum does not yet have digital content that can be accessed from schools Internet access at school is still very limited

Table 4 illustrates the diverse strategies employed by teachers in integrating museums into history learning in border schools. Each approach reflects both contextual adaptation and a distinct pedagogical orientation toward reflective, contextualized instruction.

Teacher A adopts a reflective-interpretive strategy, combining on-site discussions with post-visit essays to foster critical historical thinking. The primary challenge is the absence of printed modules aligned with museum content, underscoring insufficient structural support for alternative resources. Teacher B emphasizes communicative competencies through report writing and group presentations, encouraging students to rearticulate local history within national narratives. However, implementation is hindered by geographic constraints such as erratic sea weather and limited budgets typical of peripheral education settings. Teacher C utilizes an analytical-collaborative model, integrating visual briefings, source comparisons, and timeline-based tasks to enhance historical literacy and empathy. However, this approach is constrained by inadequate digital infrastructure and limited instructional time, exacerbated by weak institutional coordination.

Collectively, these profiles highlight that effective museum-based pedagogy hinges on teachers' ability to navigate field realities through adaptive strategies. Simultaneously, the recurrent barriers reveal the urgency of curriculum flexibility and institutional backing, including resource provision, teacher capacity-building, and sustainable school-museum partnerships. Teachers thus serve as critical cultural mediators, linking the national curriculum with lived local histories. Ensuring the long-term success of museum integration requires both pedagogical innovation and systemic policy support tailored to border education contexts.

When Institutions Fail: Pedagogical Challenges in Border Education

To better understand the institutional constraints in implementing museum-based history education, this study triangulated data from teachers, principals, and museum managers to identify recurring structural challenges. Table 5 summarizes how these pedagogical and infrastructural barriers are distributed across stakeholder groups.

Table 5. Matrix of Institutional Challenges Reported by Stakeholders

Type of Institutional Challenge	History Teacher	School Principal	Museum Manager
Absence of museum-based learning modules	✓		
Limited access to internet/digital resources	✓	✓	
Weak school-museum coordination	✓	✓	✓
Limited time in the school history curriculum	✓		
Inadequate funding for out-of-school educational visits		✓	
Lack of interactive or curriculum-appropriate exhibitions			✓

As shown in Table 5, institutional challenges in museum-based education span across schools and cultural institutions, rather than being confined to individual actors. Teachers cited the lack of curriculum-aligned modules, poor internet access, and limited instructional time as major barriers to implementing reflective and contextualized learning. Principals emphasized logistical and financial constraints, particularly in funding museum visits and supporting digital access. Both teachers and principals pointed to weak coordination between schools and museums, a concern echoed by museum managers, who also noted the scarcity of interactive and curriculum-relevant resources. This shared issue of fragmented collaboration highlights the urgent need for an integrated policy framework that systematically connects cultural institutions with the education sector, especially in remote border regions.

Thematic Synthesis: Interconnected Narratives from Interviews

To deepen insights from observation and capture a holistic view of museum-based history learning, this study conducted in-depth interviews with students, history teachers, museum managers, and community leaders. The aim was to explore their perceptions, experiences, and expectations regarding the museum's educational role in border contexts. Thematic coding revealed five core themes reflecting emotional, pedagogical, institutional, and sociocultural dimensions. These themes, summarized in Table 6, illustrate how each stakeholder group shapes the meaning and practice of history education in peripheral regions.

Table 6. Summary of In-depth Interview Findings by Theme

Theme	Key Findings	Informant Source
Emotional Impact of Museum Visits on Students	Students feel proud and emotionally connected to local history after visiting the museum. Their region is perceived as more meaningful.	Students, History Teacher
Museum as Local-National Bridge	Teachers and students see museums as connecting local narratives with national identities. Artifacts help contextualize national history.	Students, Teachers, Museum Managers
Teacher's Role in Museum-Based Learning	Teachers act as facilitators, linking museum content to the curriculum and providing reflective assignments. However, some lack structural support.	History Teacher
Institutional and Infrastructure Support	Museum managers recognize the need for educational tools and digital access. Teachers face logistical constraints such as time and transportation.	Principal, Museum Manager
Local Community Perspectives and Expectations	Cultural leaders emphasized the role of museums in maintaining cultural identity and hoped for the integration of museums into education policies.	Community Leaders, Museum Stakeholders

Table 6 synthesizes five key themes from in-depth interviews with students, teachers, principals, museum managers, and community leaders, reflecting the cognitive, affective, and structural dimensions of museum-based history learning in border areas.

The first theme highlights the emotional impact of museum visits, where students expressed heightened pride and connection to local history, supported by teachers who viewed museums as offering deeper engagement than conventional classrooms. Second, museums were seen as bridges between local narratives and national identity, especially crucial in peripheral regions often overlooked in mainstream historiography. Third, teachers emerged as facilitators who mediate historical interpretation through reflective and critical pedagogy. Fourth, institutional and infrastructural challenges—such as the lack of interactive media, digital resources, and curriculum-aligned materials—were emphasized by school and museum stakeholders, underscoring the need for cross-sector collaboration. Finally, community leaders voiced strong expectations for museums to preserve cultural identity and advocated for their formal integration into border education policy. Beyond summarizing themes, Table 6 illustrates how history education in border contexts is co-constructed through dynamic interactions among actors. This relational ecosystem is further visualized in Image 4, which maps the interplay between museum experiences, pedagogical strategies, and community aspirations in shaping students' national identity formation.

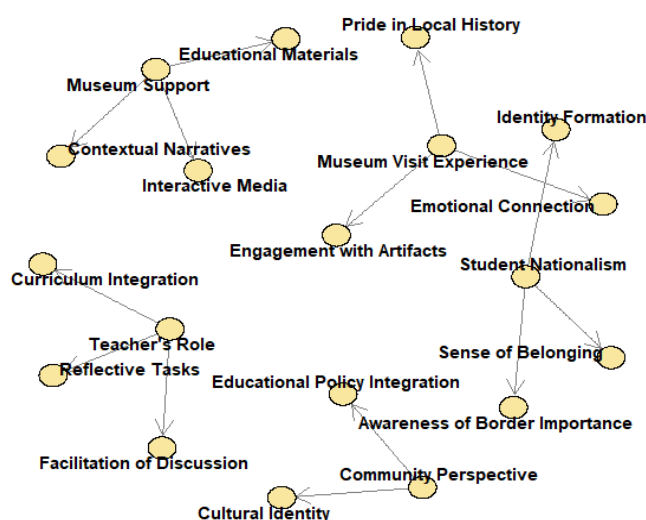


Image 4. Thematic Flow Map of In-Depth Interview Meanings

Image 4 illustrates the conceptual flow among five key themes from in-depth interviews, revealing how historical understanding through museums emerges from the interplay of student experiences, pedagogical strategies, institutional conditions, and sociocultural contexts in border areas.

The theme “*Experience Visiting the Museum*” serves as the catalyst, where students form emotional bonds with local history manifested through pride, engagement, and affective responses to artifacts highlighting affective learning as a foundation for internalizing nationalism. This leads to the “*Teacher’s Role*”, where educators function as mediators, linking museum narratives to the curriculum via reflective tasks and discussions. The pedagogical engagement of teachers is critical to transforming visits into meaningful educational experiences. Institutional enablers appear in the “*Museum Support*” theme, reflecting the importance of contextual materials and interactive media, though still limited in availability. Effective museum-based learning hinges on stronger collaboration between schools and museums. The trajectory culminates in “*Student Nationalism*”, where learners demonstrate enhanced national identity, spatial awareness, and a sense of belonging positioning museums as dynamic arenas for identity formation, beyond static repositories. Finally,

“Community Perspective” reinforces the idea that sustainable museum education requires collective endorsement. Community leaders view museums as vital in preserving cultural memory and instilling local-national pride. Thus, Image 4 synthesizes the interconnected roles of actors and structures in shaping museum-based history education, affirming its potential as a transformative and participatory space for cultivating nationalism in peripheral regions.

Discussion

This study explores the transformative role of museums as contextual spaces for history learning that foster student nationalism, shape pedagogical strategies, and enhance social interaction. Findings reveal that museums enable direct engagement with historical artifacts and local narratives, aligning with experiential and contextual learning models (Johnson et al., 2022; Evi Yupani & Widana, 2023). Through activities such as collection exploration, visual mapping, and reflective dialogue (N. S. A. Talib et al., 2023), students develop deeper emotional and cognitive connections to history. The integration of smart technologies, augmented reality, and gamification further boosts engagement and knowledge retention (Tandzegolskiene & Kasperuniene, 2020), while collaborative museum spaces promote cultural identity awareness (Nofal et al., 2020; Rachabathuni et al., 2025). Despite this potential, challenges remain, including limited localized teaching materials, underrecognized museum educators, and weak school–museum collaboration. In border regions like Anambas, museums hold significant promise to deliver impactful historical education while reinforcing national identity through local heritage.

Museum visits significantly enhance students' nationalism by fostering pride in national identity, understanding of local history, and appreciation of border regions' strategic roles. This aligns with Social Identity Theory, which frames identity formation through group affiliation (Daynes-Kearney & Gallagher, 2024; O'Reilly et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Museums serve as agents of nation-building by presenting cultural heritage and historical narratives that evoke emotional and cognitive engagement (Manley et al., 2023; Zou et al., 2022). Direct exposure to local history and border community contributions deepens students' geographical awareness and fosters social meaning-making (Eklund, 2020). Even when addressing complex issues, museum education cultivates historical consciousness and moral values (Robinson et al., 2024), positioning museum learning as a powerful medium for shaping contextualized and inclusive national identities.

Teachers' strategies in museum-based learning are adaptive and creative, aligning pedagogical goals with students' needs and local contexts. This approach promotes interactive, reflective, and collaborative learning (Ambarwati et al., 2023). Teachers act as cultural mediators, linking national curricula with localized museum narratives and guiding artifact-based interpretation (Karakuş Yılmaz et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2022). Strategies include structured discussions, reflective writing (Ponce-Delgado et al., 2024), chronological mapping, and digital tools for collaborative inquiry. Interdisciplinary and problem-based learning models further enrich the experience (Marx et al., 2021; Song et al., 2025). However, curriculum alignment, infrastructure, and time constraints remain challenges, making the teacher's role both pedagogical and strategic.

Interviews revealed that museum learning involves layered interactions among students, teachers, museum educators, institutions, and communities, reflecting a sociocultural model. Teachers and students co-construct historical meaning through artifact engagement (Barker, 2020), while museum educators design programs within institutional constraints (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021; Hansson & Öhman, 2021; Menegaki, 2022). Effective collaboration between schools and museums is essential (Zadavec & Miklošević, 2022), with community involvement transforming museums into inclusive civic spaces (Friedeman, 2025; Springinzeisz, 2022). Modern museums offer multisensory and participatory experiences that strengthen cultural identity (Fattah & Eddy-U,

2019). Addressing digital divides and encouraging constructivist innovations like gamification are critical post-pandemic opportunities (Li & Zhang, 2025).

Ultimately, students' nationalism develops through complex interactions between personal experiences, pedagogical guidance, structural support, and shared aspirations. Museums function not merely as repositories, but as active cultural institutions shaping national identity through participatory learning (Karczewski, 2023). Student encounters with museum narratives facilitate the interplay of personal and collective memory, supported by reflective pedagogies (Hourdakis & Ieronimakis, 2020) and institutional frameworks (Rhodes II, 2024). As discursive spaces, museums allow for critical engagement with official narratives and contribute to identity formation by elevating cultural symbols and collective aspirations (Zhang, 2025). Thus, museums are strategic arenas where individual, pedagogical, institutional, and communal forces converge in shaping nationalism among youth, especially in border regions.

This study presents a novel contribution to the discourse on contextualized civic education by positioning border museums often overlooked cultural institutions as dynamic pedagogical spaces that foster nationalism among students in Indonesia's peripheral regions. Unlike prior research, which tends to focus on formal classroom practices or museums in metropolitan areas, this study emphasizes the lived experiences of students and teachers within remote, under-resourced border settings. By integrating emotional, cognitive, and institutional dimensions of museum-based learning, this research introduces a comprehensive and localized model of historical pedagogy that reflects the complexities of national identity formation in frontier zones. The incorporation of museum reflections, participatory narratives, and affective learning indicators positions this work as a pioneering exploration of border museum pedagogy in Southeast Asia.

While this study provides valuable insights into the integration of border museums in history education, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the scope was confined to two schools and one museum in the Anambas Islands, limiting the generalizability of findings across other border contexts in Indonesia or internationally. Second, the study employed qualitative methods without long-term tracking of nationalism development, which may restrict conclusions on the sustainability of identity formation outcomes. Lastly, the study did not quantitatively evaluate the correlation between frequency of museum visits and specific learning gains. Future research should adopt mixed-method or longitudinal designs, include comparative analyses across multiple regions, and explore the integration of digital technologies in museum pedagogy to enhance access and interactivity in remote areas.

Theoretically, this research expands Social Identity Theory by situating national identity development within a localized and affective educational framework. It demonstrates how identity formation is co-constructed through dynamic interactions between students, artifacts, pedagogical strategies, and sociocultural narratives. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on museum education by offering a grounded, context-sensitive model for history teaching in frontier regions underscoring museums not just as content providers, but as dialogic spaces that mediate memory, power, and belonging. Practically, the findings offer concrete strategies for educators and policymakers. Teachers are shown to be cultural mediators who must creatively align curriculum with localized experiences. The study encourages the development of museum-based modules that are curriculum-integrated, participatory, and reflective. It also calls for institutional policies that strengthen school museum partnerships, invest in infrastructure (such as mobile exhibitions or virtual museum platforms), and incorporate museum educators into formal training systems. In doing so, the research charts a path toward a more inclusive, identity-conscious, and place-based model of history education especially critical in border and marginalized areas where national cohesion must be nurtured from the periphery.

Conclusion

This study concludes that border museums have a strategic role as contextual and transformative history learning spaces in strengthening students' nationalism. Through direct experience with local artifacts and narratives, students not only gain cognitive understanding but also build emotional attachment and reflective national identity. Teachers serve as cultural mediators who connect the national curriculum with local realities, while museums serve as dialogic spaces that bring together structural support, pedagogical facilitation, and collective aspirations. Although this study is limited to a specific geographical context and has not quantitatively measured long-term impacts, the findings demonstrate the importance of strengthening collaboration between schools, museums, and communities to build a history education ecosystem that is inclusive, relevant, and rooted in local values. Policy development, curriculum, and technological innovations are needed to support the sustainability of museum-based history learning, especially in Indonesia's border regions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational policymakers integrate museum-based learning formally into the history curriculum, particularly in peripheral areas; provide professional development for teachers in contextual pedagogies; and enhance infrastructure and digital access in border museums. Furthermore, sustainable partnerships between schools, museums, and cultural institutions should be institutionalized to promote civic identity and national consciousness among youth living in frontier zones.

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