

Navigating Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms: The Role of Habitus in Teacher–Child Interactions

Sriyati Dwi Astuti * | Zulkipli Lessy | Sibawaihi

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a crucial role in introducing children to the values of cultural diversity through educator-child interactions, particularly within Indonesia's multiethnic context, where risks of intercultural conflict persist. This study explores how harmonious interactions between educators and children are maintained in culturally diverse settings. Using a qualitative approach grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, the research involved 10 educators and 30 children at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta. Data were collected through interviews and classroom observations, using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to evaluate the quality of interactions across three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Scores ranged from 1 (low) to 7 (high), indicating the extent and quality of positive interaction indicators. The results show that educators at Fastrack Funschool embody culturally aware teaching practices that promote mutual respect and tolerance. These practices are reflected in warm emotional climates, effective classroom management, and supportive instructional strategies. Interactions are characterized by sensitivity to cultural differences, flexibility in accommodating children's perspectives, and responsiveness to individual needs. Through consistent social practices, children internalize inclusive values, which contribute to forming a culturally sensitive habitus. The study concludes that high-quality educator-child interactions serve as a key mechanism for fostering cultural harmony, building a learning environment that is both inclusive and adaptive to Indonesia's cultural plurality. These findings emphasize the transformative potential of ECE settings in promoting intercultural understanding and shaping children's social dispositions for living in a diverse society.

Correspondence Email:

sriyatidwiastuti05@gmail.com*

Keywords

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INTRODUCTION

Technology's rapid advancement and leap have transformed many aspects of modern human life. Mobile phones and the internet have reshaped perceptions of space, time, and culture (Shirayev & Levy,

2012). On one hand, these developments can give rise to issues such as stereotyping and prejudice (Abrams, 2010), on the other hand, they also foster new knowledge, understanding, and perspectives. Reflecting on Indonesia's current condition of diversity—whether in religion, race, ethnicity, or belief systems—it becomes increasingly vital to cultivate cultural awareness and recognize the existence of differences among communities. This awareness is essential to fostering mutual understanding and tolerance, enabling people to live peacefully without conflict (Sagita et al., 2016; Visiaty, 2020).

The most crucial level of education to address this issue is Early Childhood Education (ECE). ECE holds significant potential as an effective tool for shaping interethnic understanding and harmony through internalization and socialization (Nash, 1990). This period is a critical stage in forming the foundational aspects of children's personalities and their worldview, as emphasized by (Montessori, 2013) and (Berk, 2013). With the right approach, early childhood education can nurture a generation skilled in communication, capable of understanding and appreciating cultural diversity, and thereby help prevent future ethnic conflicts (Alie Humaedi, 2014; Harahap, 2018; Sagita et al., 2016; Utami, 2020).

According to Bourdieu, early childhood is a crucial stage for forming habitus—the primary tendency to think and act in particular ways (Alanen et al., 2015). The social environment becomes fertile ground for shaping regular patterns of behavior and thinking (Huang, 2019). Education is an empirical reconstruction of the transformative process between habitus and the field, where habitus is instilled within school institutions to reconstruct social conditions (Rosenberg, 2016). The researcher identifies Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta as an educational institution where teachers and children interact in a culturally diverse environment. This identification was made through observations of both infrastructure—including school buildings, facilities, and learning technologies—and suprastructure—such as the school's vision and mission, curriculum, and educational policies. These two aspects demonstrate that Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, founded by Alissa Wahid (Mursalat, 2022), is a culturally diverse school institution committed to developing universal values aimed at preparing children for a dynamic and adaptive global life (Observation, Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, March 2, 2023).

A broad range of literature on teacher–child interaction studies at a large scale has been conducted in several countries around the world, including Singapore, Finland, China, Chile, and Germany. In Singapore, Karuppiyah (2021) examined the quality of teacher–child interactions in pre-school institutions using the CLASS instrument. The study concluded that interaction quality could be categorized into three domains: emotional support, classroom management, and instructional support. Salminen et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between teacher–child interaction quality and children's self-regulation abilities in Finland and Portugal. The research found that low levels of emotional quality and positive behavioral support from educators significantly affected the development of children's self-control.

Similarly, Leyva et al. (2023) study in Chile revealed that the three domains of teacher–child interaction—emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support—positively contributed to the development of children's academic and language functions. These findings support that socio-emotional learning is closely related to children's cognitive and academic abilities. Downer et al. (2012) also found that warm and emotionally responsive interactions, well-organized classroom management, and cognitively stimulating engagement support positive child development.

These studies reinforce the idea that the quality of educator–child interaction significantly contributes to children's potential development. However, these studies have not explicitly addressed the cultural dimension. Cultural norms and values carried by educators play a critical role in their interactions, as they shape children's behavioral and cognitive tendencies.

This paper complements previous studies by focusing on educator–child interactions within culturally diverse early childhood education institutions. The researcher argues that socially constructed psychological attitudes of mutual respect and intercultural understanding are essential to minimizing cultural misperceptions that may lead to intercultural conflict. For this purpose, the study poses two

research questions: (1) Why do interactions between educators and children occur harmoniously within the culturally diverse educational environment of Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta? (2) How is habitus formed within the educator–child interactions in this culturally diverse early childhood education institution?

The Rationale of the Study

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement and increased cultural interaction, the role of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in shaping children's understanding of diversity becomes ever more critical. As a multiethnic and multireligious country, Indonesia faces challenges related to intercultural misunderstanding and potential conflict. Schools must therefore serve as centers of cognitive development and as arenas for cultivating social values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences. Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, with its commitment to cultural inclusivity, offers a unique context where intercultural habitus can be nurtured through meaningful educator–child interactions. This study is grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, which provides a powerful lens to understand how early interactions shape children's dispositions and attitudes toward cultural plurality.

Objectives

This study investigates the formation of intercultural habitus through educator–child interactions in a culturally diverse early childhood education setting. Specifically, the research is guided by two main objectives: (1) to explore how harmonious interactions are sustained between educators and children within the multicultural educational environment of Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta; and (2) to analyze how educators' culturally responsive practices contribute to the formation of habitus among young children. These objectives are intended to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural education in early childhood by highlighting the importance of interaction quality in shaping inclusive social dispositions.

METHODS

Participants

This study involved 40 participants, consisting of 10 educators and 30 children from four different classes at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling to ensure representation across various class levels and cultural backgrounds within the school environment. These participants were chosen due to their daily involvement in learning activities that reflect intercultural interactions within a diverse educational setting.

Research Procedures

This research adopted a qualitative design to explore the dynamics of educator–child interactions in a culturally diverse early childhood setting, guided by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*. The theoretical framework of *habitus* allows for an in-depth examination of how social and cultural structures are internalized and enacted through everyday practices in educational contexts. The study was conducted at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, which serves children from various cultural and religious backgrounds. This setting provided a rich context for exploring how values of respect, tolerance, and inclusion are fostered through classroom interactions.

Data was collected using two primary methods: in-depth interviews and non-participant classroom observations. Interviews were conducted with 10 educators to gather insights into their perspectives, teaching approaches, and awareness of cultural diversity. Classroom observations were guided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) instrument, developed by [Pianta \(2004\)](#), which evaluates the quality of educator–child interactions in three core domains: Emotional Support (Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspective), Classroom Organization (Behavior

Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Formats), and Instructional Support (Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling). These tools provided structured yet flexible means of documenting the complex social interactions in multicultural classrooms.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed a thematic qualitative approach, with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* serving as the primary analytical lens. Data from interviews and observations were first transcribed and then coded inductively and deductively to identify recurring patterns and themes. The CLASS observational data were scored on a 7-point scale, where scores of 1–2 reflected low-quality interactions with minimal indicators of support, scores of 3–5 represented moderate to good quality, and scores of 6–7 indicated excellent interaction quality marked by rich, meaningful engagement between educators and children.

Thematic interpretation focused on how classroom practices revealed culturally responsive teaching, power relations, and implicit values embedded in daily routines. Special attention was paid to how educators' awareness of cultural diversity informed their behaviors, language use, and emotional support for children from various backgrounds. These findings were examined in light of *habitus* formation, highlighting how children gradually internalize mutual respect and inclusivity norms through sustained, high-quality interaction. Ultimately, the analysis illuminated how early educational settings can function as key arenas for the reproduction—or transformation—of social dispositions in a multicultural society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The *habitus* of mutual intercultural respect at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta is evident through educator–child interactions across the following three domains:

Emotional Support

Below is the scoring of educator–child interaction indicators in the domain of emotional support at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta:

Table 1. <Emotional Support Scores>

Dimension	Scale	Interaction Indicators
Positive Climate	Good	Moderate
Negative Climate	Fair	Few
Teacher Sensitivity	Good	Moderate
Regard for Student Perspective	Good	Moderate

Classroom Organization

The following table presents the scoring of educator–child interaction indicators in the domain of classroom organization:

Table 2. <Classroom Organization Scores>

Dimension	Scale	Interaction Indicators
Behavior Management	Good	Moderate
Productivity	Good	Moderate
Instructional Formats	Good	Moderate

Instructional Support

Below is the scoring of educator–child interaction indicators in the domain of instructional support at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta:

Table 6. <Instructional Support Scores>

Dimension	Scale	Interaction Indicators
Concept Development	Fair	Few
Quality of Feedback	Good	Moderate
Language Modeling	Good	Moderate

Discussion

This discussion interprets the research findings using Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory. The researcher elaborates on the dimensions within the three CLASS domains by presenting field data to support the discussion.

Positive Climate

A favorable classroom climate is an emotionally and physically safe and welcoming environment for children. Noddings ([Irvine, 2003](#)) emphasizes that the academic goals of schools cannot be achieved unless educators create a socially and emotionally healthy classroom setting. This was evident at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, where educators intentionally fostered a warm social and emotional atmosphere. Teachers were observed to offer more rewards than punishments (Observation at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, April 6, 2023). These rewards included applause, sincere praise, stickers, stars, and small gifts, which made children feel happy and comfortable as they engaged joyfully in the learning process.

Previous studies support the assumption that a favorable classroom climate facilitates learning and improves academic performance ([Cabello & Terrell, 1994](#)). Although the dominant cultural structure at this school is Javanese, the institution actively introduces children to various Indonesian cultures, such as through traditional songs like *Suwe Ora Jamu*, *Cublak-Cublak Suweng*, and *Yamko Rambe Yamko*. The children sang these songs with joy and expressive body movements. On another occasion, they enthusiastically sang *Itsy Bitsy Spider* in English. The enjoyment stemmed not merely from the songs themselves but from the favorable climate established by the educators, which enabled the children to engage in singing and dancing activities free from cultural alienation. Despite language, accent, or dialect differences, the children experienced cultural diversity firsthand and responded to social structures within the school arena. Quoting ([Fox, 2014](#)), social structures are embedded in the minds of those who experience them. Children internalize cultural diversity through daily interactions with teachers and peers, which later shape their cognition and identity. These experiences become their perceptions and cognitive schemas, dispositions that develop into habitus. As Bourdieu asserts, the *primary habitus* is formed in early childhood ([Alanen et al., 2015](#); [Reay, 1995](#)), interpreting Bourdieu, explains that habitus is transformed through action, becomes diversified, and serves as the basis for all future experiences.

Negative Climate

According to the conceptual framework of teacher–child interaction, a hostile classroom climate is characterized by sarcasm, disrespect, or more severe behaviors such as bullying, victimization, yelling, threats, punishment, or physical violence ([Leyva et al., 2023](#)). However, such practices were not observed during the field study. This was further supported by an interview with Ms. A (April 18, 2023), who stated that while raised voices occasionally occurred at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, they remained within normal and acceptable limits. The absence of extreme negative interactions suggests that a hostile classroom climate is largely absent in this educational setting.

Teacher Sensitivity

According to [Karuppiah \(2021\)](#), teacher sensitivity involves providing comfort, assurance, and encouragement; recognizing children's need for support; offering individual attention; responding to children's emotional cues; addressing problems promptly; and creating a classroom environment where

children feel safe and supported. In this context, educators act as culturally responsive teachers (Irvine, 2003), who acknowledge and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the teaching process. Responsiveness means reacting appropriately within learning contexts, without stereotyping or prejudice toward students from diverse backgrounds.

At Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, for instance, a neutral term like *kakak* refers to older peers. However, in different Indonesian ethnic groups, terms for older siblings vary: *empok* (Betawi), *ayuk* (Malay), *mbak* (Javanese), *uni* (Minangkabau), *teteh* (Sundanese), and others. During one classroom interaction, a Javanese child asked Ms. W, a teacher in the "Nusantara Class", why in a TikTok video she watched with her older sibling, the term *mbak-mbak* was used to refer to a housemaid. Ms. W responded with a culturally conscious explanation, stating that such terms differ across cultures and none are inherently wrong. What is unacceptable, she emphasized, is mocking others' cultural ways of speaking or addressing (Observation, April 5, 2023).

Differences in laughing styles, speech patterns, handshakes, and eye contact are also culturally based. Yet, educators at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta demonstrate awareness and respect for this diversity. They encourage children to do the same, fostering respect for peers from different ethnic backgrounds (Interview with Ms. E, April 16, 2023).

Educators also exhibit cultural sensitivity in cooperative learning activities by forming heterogeneous groups of students from various ethnicities, promoting collaborative learning. Teachers value the diverse ways children engage with learning—for example, some children speak with loud voices, while others say more softly. The educators respond neutrally, avoiding judgment or favoritism. This indicates a high intercultural awareness and a deep understanding of students' cultural norms for behavior and communication (Observation, April 5, 2023).

Further evidence of teacher sensitivity was observed during a World Storytelling Day celebration. Mr. T greeted all students using religious greetings from multiple faiths, and the children appeared familiar and comfortable with all of them. On that day, the children wore traditional outfits representing various Indonesian cultures, including *batik lurik*, *kebaya* (Javanese), *baju pangsi* (Sundanese), Chinese conventional attire, western-style suits and dresses, *baju kurung*, *Muslim clothing*, and *pesa'an* (Madura). Mr. T responded positively by complimenting their appearance, saying they looked handsome and beautiful in traditional clothes. He even invited them to take group selfies with the teachers who wore traditional outfits (Observation, March 29, 2023).

These interactions demonstrate that cultural education at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta is not limited to cognitive knowledge of diversity. Instead, children experience and embody the values of living together in cultural harmony.

Valuing Children's Perspectives

Karuppiyah (2021) defines teacher sensitivity as the educator's ability to provide comfort, reassurance, and encouragement; to recognize children's needs for support; to offer individualized attention; to respond appropriately to emotional cues; to address issues on time; and to foster a classroom environment in which children feel secure and emotionally supported. Concerning the educators' competence in cultural awareness at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta, the first aspect involves teachers organizing structured activities that reflect cultural diversity. One such activity is storytelling, which incorporates folktales from various regions of Indonesia. The purpose is to broaden children's cultural perspectives beyond their traditions. Educators consistently emphasize that all cultures are valuable and unique (Observation, Fastrack Funschool, March 28, 2023).

The second point pertains to educators' respectful flexibility in responding to children's ideas. For instance, during a class session featuring models of traditional Indonesian houses, one of the models displayed was the *rumah gadang* (the conventional house of the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra).

A child, B, who had previously visited family in that province, showed an eager desire to share his thoughts. Recognizing this, the teacher allowed the child to express his perspective about the traditional house (Observation, Fastrack Funschool, March 28, 2023).

Another instance of valuing children's perspectives occurred when students were asked to sit cross-legged on the floor during class. One Javanese girl chose instead to kneel in the *bersimpuh* position—a culturally appropriate posture for women in Javanese tradition, similar to the sitting posture during the final *tashahhud* in Islamic prayer. The teacher respected her choice and allowed her to sit in a way that reflected her cultural background (Observation, Fastrack Funschool, April 3, 2023). In Javanese culture, men are considered polite when sitting cross-legged, while women are deemed respectful when sitting *bersimpuh*. For both genders, stretching legs straight out (*selonjor*) is generally inappropriate in formal settings.

The third point relates to teachers maintaining a balanced conversation with children. During a dialogue between an educator and a child, one student, D, spoke in a distinct regional accent. Rather than joking or drawing attention to the child's speech, the educator responded empathetically and encouraged an inclusive environment. This avoided reinforcing bias or discomfort and fostered mutual understanding among the children.

The behaviors of educators—who demonstrate cultural awareness, empathy, openness, and the ability to accommodate children's perspectives—have contributed to developing a new habitus among children at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta. This habitus is characterized by tolerance and positive engagement with cultural and religious diversity. According to Jonathan Doherty (Maughan & Little, 2017), children's behavior and attitudes are shaped genetically and by how they respond to environmental differences.

In this case, interactions with teachers are interpreted by children and become part of the cognitive framework that influences their future actions. Educators, as key agents in the educational field, can positively impact children's worldview and help them internalize a culturally conscious habitus that shapes their future lives. These culturally grounded behaviors—rooted in respect for difference—will contribute to constructing new social structures.

Returning to discussing cultural and interfaith tolerance education in early childhood education, Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta adopts an irenic or sympathetic approach to religious teaching (Martin, 2003). Children are introduced to the values of tolerance for other religions within their social community. This irenic framework fosters diverse and enjoyable learning experiences. For example, children are introduced to various places of worship through models or by visiting them directly (Observation, Fastrack Funschool, March 31, 2023).

Importantly, educators avoid any speech that promotes hatred or prejudice against other religions. Instead, they guide children to understand and appreciate the harmony that exists in diversity. Specialized educators offer Religious instruction weekly according to each child's religion (Interview with Ms. S, April 14, 2023). These efforts aim to nurture children's sympathy and empathy toward others, as they live and learn together in a community of differences. According to Christenson et al. (2012), the quality of interaction between educators and children is fundamental to fostering children's engagement in learning.

Behavior Management

Educators employ effective methods to prevent and guide children away from inappropriate behavior. This was evident in the interaction between Ms. D and a child during lunchtime. When child A disliked the broccoli served that day, he took some on his plate, ate it, spit it out, and refused to continue eating. Observing this, Ms. D approached him and explained the importance of not wasting food, encouraging gratitude for the sustenance provided (Interview with Ms. D, April 14, 2023). At Fastrack

Funschool Yogyakarta, children typically serve themselves from various nutritious lunch options, helping them manage their portions. However, teachers continue encouraging children to try all types of food to broaden their palates.

In this context, children acquire *habitus* through a process of socialization in which norms, values, and cultural practices are internalized and become integral to their thoughts and actions. A child's appetite is key to growth and development, as a healthy appetite supports physical, mental, and social well-being. Yet, not all children have a naturally good appetite; some are selective and only favor certain foods.

Teachers at Fastrack Funschool accompany children during lunch to model healthy eating habits (Observation, March 29, 2023). This guidance fosters a diverse and healthy eating *habitus*. A good eating *habitus* includes enjoying various nutritious foods and maintaining balance.

Additionally, educators instill proper dining etiquette based on Indonesian cultural values: praying before meals to express gratitude to God, sitting upright and adequately as a sign of respect for others, using appropriate utensils, speaking softly and politely during meals, and avoiding talking with a mouth full of food. These practices shape children's individual experiences and behavior patterns (Grenfell, 2019). Through such interactions, educators construct values essential for children's internal development (Saha, 2009).

Productivity

Educators manage time and routines effectively during the learning process to support children's skill development. Teachers follow a structured schedule such as: morning journal (10 minutes), opening session (10 minutes), core activities (30 minutes), and closing (10 minutes). This helps children learn time discipline (Interview with Ms. S, April 13, 2023). Teachers also give reminders like, "Okay... five more minutes, then we clean up and move on to the next activity."

On regular school days, children are already familiar with the sequence of activities, minimizing idle time and distractions. This efficiency is supported by an ideal teacher-child ratio—for example, in the Nusantara class, one teacher is responsible for eight children in a single classroom.

The productivity strategy teachers use helps children recognize the importance of time management. The quality of interaction in the learning environment fosters a child's perception of valuing time. *Habitus* represents mental dispositions shaped by a child's social environment as a response to cultural norms and environmental contexts (Feldman, 2016).

Instructional Learning Formats

Instructional learning formats reflect teachers' ability to use activities and methods that maximize child engagement and foster skill development. For instance, Mr. T used storytelling to engage children. During his storytelling session, he posed open-ended questions to stimulate moral and social reflection. In a story featuring a kind character, Pipip, who hesitates but eventually shares food with another character, Mr. T asked, "So, friends, what do you think Pipip should do?" The children eagerly participated. Later, when another character, Rota, invited someone new to his house, Mr. T asked, "How would you feel if someone you just met invited you to their house?" The children responded energetically that they wouldn't go.

In an interview, Ms. V added that teachers always create space for children to participate and be part of the collective learning process (Interview, April 17, 2023). This participatory space reflects socialization, not as autonomous action, but as shared meaning-making within a social group (Bronwyn E Wood, 2022).. Allowing children to engage as active participants is essential to creating a learning environment that supports their growth into empowered, creative, and responsive individuals.

Concept Development

Interaction between teachers and children involves open-ended questions, project tasks, and problem-solving activities to foster deep thinking and creativity (Interview, Ms. V, April 17, 2023). For example, in the Nusantara class, children created batik using the *shibori* technique—an ancient Japanese method involving binding and dyeing fabric. Ms. V designed a project where children made batik patterns on socks and scarves. The children were excited about the project (Observation, April 10, 2023).

Located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Fastrack Funschool uses local culture—such as batik—as contextual material, making learning more meaningful. According to Lizardo (2004), *habitus* is a system of internalized knowledge and actions developed through socialization. Activities like early childhood batik-making help children develop a positive *habitus* by introducing Indonesia's cultural heritage and diverse regional batik motifs.

Quality of Feedback

Educators in early childhood education play a crucial role in shaping children's *habitus*. How they offer support, feedback, and respond to individual needs shapes children's self-perception and understanding of their world. Caring and dedicated teachers help nurture a positive *habitus*.

At Fastrack Funschool, one child, E, showed a strong interest in *wayang* (Indonesian puppetry) and even performed as a puppeteer. Teachers recognized his talent and invited him to perform during the year-end celebration. Afterwards, educators encouraged him to continue performing on larger stages (Interview with Ms. M, April 18, 2023). This kind of encouragement and feedback fosters children's confidence and perception of achievement.

In the batik class, Ms. V responded positively to students' creations by giving praise such as, "Wow, this is beautiful! The pattern looks like a spider web—so creative!" In addition to verbal praise, she also rewarded students with star stickers and tokens.

Language Modeling

In classroom interactions, students in the Nusantara class use Bahasa Indonesia, while English is used as the medium of instruction in international courses. English phrases are also incorporated for greetings and simple commands, such as "Good morning, everybody," "Nice job," or "See you tomorrow."

Ms. W played a video in the Nusantara class showcasing Indonesia's cultural diversity, including regions, food, clothing, and heroes (Observation, March 24, 2023). Afterward, she asked, "Who wants to share their thoughts about the video we just watched?" The children eagerly raised their hands. Ms. W calmly responded, "One at a time, everyone will get a turn," and called on child A, who said, "I liked it! My favorite food was in there—*rendang*! My mom always makes it for Eid, miss." Then, child D added, "I don't like *rendang*, it's too spicy." Ms. W smiled and explained that it's okay to have different preferences and we should still respect others' choices.

Ms. W demonstrated effective language modeling through these open-ended questions, encouraging children to expand their language skills. Teachers did not dominate the conversation but created space for children to speak and think freely.

These learning interactions emphasize education that respects and accommodates diversity. As key figures in early childhood education, teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's *habitus*—molding their perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors both now and for the future.

Limitation

This study is limited to a single case setting—Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta—thus the findings may not be directly generalizable to other educational institutions with different demographic compositions or cultural contexts. Moreover, the study focuses primarily on teacher-child interactions and does not deeply examine the role of family, peers, or institutional policy in shaping children's *habitus*. The research

also relies heavily on qualitative data, which, while rich and contextually grounded, may be subject to interpretative bias. Future studies could benefit from incorporating longitudinal methods and multi-site comparisons to expand understanding of how intercultural habitus is developed in early education environments.

CONCLUSIONS

The interactions between educators and children at Fastrack Funschool Yogyakarta fall within a “good” scale, as observed across three domains: emotional support, classroom management, and instructional support. Within these domains of quality interaction, educators at Fastrack Funschool consistently embed universal values of goodness. As a result, educator-child interactions unfold in harmony amidst diversity. Furthermore, the researcher found that *habitus* is cultivated through these interactions, where educators, possessing a relatively dominant position of authority, engage in intentional practices rooted in their cultural awareness and commitment to fostering mutual respect across differences. This culturally conscious perspective among educators positively influences children's awareness and readiness to engage in a globalized world that demands appreciation for cultural diversity and social equity.

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