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ANALYZING CHILDREN'S TREATMENT AND ROLE IN INDONESIAN RESEARCH: CURRENT PRACTICES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ezis Japar Sidik[1], Dhafid Wahyu Utomo[2], Dedy Subandowo[3]
[1,2] English Education Department, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Indonesia
[3] Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the treatment and role of children in research practices in Indonesia. Using a content analysis of six research-based articles, this study aims to understand the current state of involving children in research in Indonesia. The articles were selected based on three criteria: the focus of child research, the disciplines of research, and the availability of English language versions. The content analysis was carried out by systematically examining how each article addressed ethical considerations, participant involvement, and the research methodologies employed, particularly in relation to children as research participants. The findings show that researchers often fail to provide adequate treatment for child participants and tend to treat them similarly to adult participants throughout the research process. Additionally, children's involvement in research is not always voluntary, as evidenced by the lack of informed consent or consent from adult guardians, posing a risk to their safety and well-being. To address these issues, this study highlights the need for ethical guidelines that encompass specific aspects, such as obtaining genuine informed consent, safeguarding child welfare during research, and respecting children's unique vulnerabilities and rights. Existing frameworks like UNICEF's Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) guidelines or international research ethics codes could be adapted to the Indonesian context. Other relevant research institutions, such as the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, universities, and research communities, must also establish these guidelines to ensure ethical standards are upheld in research with children.

Corresponding Author:

Dhafid Wahyu Utomo
English Education Department, FKIP Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Serang, Indonesia
Email: dhafid.wu@untirta.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of academic inquiry has recognized the importance of considering the experiences of children in research (Kehily, 2009). Historically, children's perspectives were often overlooked or marginalized in studies, leading to an underrepresentation of their voices in social sciences (Christensen and James, 2000). Involving children in research not only has the potential to enhance research theories but also to improve the lives of not just the investigated children but also others indirectly (Lewis, 2008; Kehily, 2009).

However, involving children in research poses unique challenges compared to adult participants, such as differences in planning and conducting the research (Lewis, 2008). Children are considered vulnerable, incompetent, unreliable, and incomplete (Mayall, 2000; Morrow and Richards, 1996), and thus require special treatment to protect their welfare and to gain a better understanding of their perspectives (Mayall, 2000).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) provides important guidelines for protecting children's rights, including their right to express their views in matters affecting them (Article 12), which is relevant to research (Lundy et al., 2011). Researchers have a duty to promote and

protect children's rights, and the principles of child research should not conflict with this obligation (Bell, 2008). Indonesia has signed and ratified the CRC (Presidential decision, 1990) and has enacted laws and regulations such as the Law on Children Protection (2014) and the Ministerial Regulation on the System of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (2015), and established institutions like the Indonesian Commission on Child Protection (Presidential decision, 2016) and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Presidential decision, 2015). However, these laws and institutions do not provide specific ethical guidelines for implementing the rights of children in research.

This paper aims to explore how Indonesian researchers treat children in the absence of clear ethical guidelines and codes of conduct in educational research settings, in comparison to adult participants. The paper focuses on three main issues in conducting research with children: ethics, power relations, and methodology.

1.1 Research with children: Some differences

There is an ongoing debate whether research with children is similar to or different from adults (Punch, 2002). One view suggests that child research is indistinguishable from adults'; therefore, similar methods are employed to child research as that of adults' (See Punch, 2002). However, another perspective argues that there are some inherent differences between child and adult research although the two also show some similarities in respect with some issues such as confidentiality and privacy (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Punch, 2002; Einarsdóttir, 2007). Some conditions when working with children are entitled different treatments in comparison to working with adults. Punch (2002), for example, addressed three broad areas namely the position of childhood in adult society, adults' attitudes towards children and the children themselves. Firstly, children are in reality considered a subclass social institution which is constrained by adults; thus, their lives are controlled and limited by adults. Children are also perceived to have different level of competencies and abilities in providing valid and reliable information. Finally, children inherently possess distinct differences from adults such as in communication and experience.

Meanwhile, Morrow and Richards (1996) identified the conceptualization of children as vulnerable, incompetent and powerless as among the driving conditions to distinguish child from adult research. Children are perceived vulnerable either inherently such as physical appearances and lack of knowledge and experience, or structurally such as the lack of economic position and the lack of civil rights (Lansdown, 1994; Morrow and Richards, 1996). Accordingly, different research process is required in order to protect them from hams including from researcher's exploitation. The incompetence of children also needs attentions. Although children are social actors who are expert in their own world, researchers need specific strategies in order to gain their views and experiences effectively (Lundy et al. 2011). Finally, researchers are in need of building comfortable relationship with children's participants. Children dealing with stranger adult researchers can be frustrating and uncomfortable; thus, researchers need to manage these situations in order that their view and experiences can effectively contribute to the proposed research.

The aforementioned conditions provide inherent challenges for researchers in conducting research with children. The challenges include the complexities in ethics, power relation and methodology (Lewis, 2008; Bradbury-Jonesa and Taylor, 2015; Mortari and Harcourt, 2012; Cutter-Mackenzie, et al. 2015; Dalli and One, 2012; Einarsdóttir, 2007).

Accordingly, the focus of the following section is to discuss these three issues particularly the differences of child research regarding the ethical 'informed consent' of involving them in research, the relation researchers have with children, and the employment of methodology.

1.2 Differences in ethics

Ethics refers to a set of moral principles and rules of conduct which provide guidelines for researchers to carry out their research in an ethical manner (Morrow and Richards, 1996). One of important ethical practices in research is relating to informed consent that researchers have to obtain from human participants. While it is applicable to all potential human subjects, obtaining informed consent in child research is, in practices, different from adult research. Indeed, one of central differences between child and adult research relates to ethical issues especially the informed consent (Punch, 2002). The principle to this difference is to provide protection for the perceived weak, passive, vulnerable children against potential physical and psychological harms, abuse and exploitation including from researchers (Morrow and Richards, 1996).

The informed consent is an initial but important process of negotiation between researchers and their prospective participants. At this stage, researchers provide relevant and detail information to targeted participants regarding their research proposal, and give them opportunities to decide whether to opt in or opt out from the proposed research (Einarsdottir, 2007; David et al., 2001). By this, the participants are adequately informed with their responsibilities and potential dangers as the expense of their participation (Einarsdottir, 2007; David et al., 2001). When children become the targeted participants, researchers have responsibilities to inform them using understandable language (Einarsdottir, 2007). While the informed consent can be directly received from adults, it is not the case in children subjects. The researchers willing to

work with children have to receive the informed consent from a number of adult gatekeepers such as parents, teachers, principals, or other relevant authorities prior to getting the consent from the targeted children (Einarsdottir, 2007; Skelton, 2008; Morrow and Richards, 1996). Such parental and other adults' consents become an essential requirement for the researchers in order to present comfort and safety for children who are perceived not yet fully competent to provide decisions (Skelton, 2008). In regard to these reasons, it is then important that the informed consent of children should be an ongoing process where researchers have to review and renegotiate it over time with children (David et al., 2001).

Despite this, there is still an ongoing debate regarding the ways of gaining informed consent from children. Based on the literatures, there are at least two central issues relating to this debate: children capacity and nature of consent (Gallagher et al., 2010). On the one hand, children are viewed as social actors who are competent or even more competent in their own right (Kendrick et al., 2008). Thus, questioning their capacity in giving their own decision is contradictory to their status. Furthermore, it is argued that the central issue to children's informed consent is not on the basis of their age or competence, but rather on the ability of the researchers to provide sufficient information which is adequate to children's competencies in order for them to make informed decision (David et al. 2001). In addition, it is not the children who should prove their capacity, but the researchers who should presume their capacity in making decisions (Lundy et al. 2011). Getting consent from other adults is, on the other hand, in contradiction with the nature of consent itself (Alderson, 1992). The consent is a token of agreement from the subjects directly, and not from other people, to voluntarily participate in the proposed research (Skelton, 2008). Indeed, it is, in practices, often the case that gatekeepers block access to children who may be capable of giving informed decisions by themselves (Heath et al. cited in Gallagher et al. 2010) leading to a loss of opportunity for them to express their perspectives and to contribute in development and innovation for their own sakes (Cowie and Khoo, 2017). Irrespective to these debates, many authors viewed the complexities of giving information understandable and adequate to children in the process of getting their informed decision (David et al. 2001).

1.3 Differences in power relation

Another aspect of child research which is distinguishable from adult research is the nature of relations. Different nature of relationship in research with children is required not only for the sake of giving protection to them (See Punch, 2002; Morrow and Richards, 1996), but also for the sake of effective research strategies (Einarsdottir, 2007). Accordingly, Christensen and James (2000) assumed that the nature and outcome of research can be shaped through the nature of relation and context in communication between researcher and the researched. Considering its importance, Mortari and Harcourt (2012) suggested that 'before deciding methodological choice and techniques of inquiry in research with children, it is firstly important for researcher to build relation with them.'

It is noted that unequal relationship between researchers and children inherently exists on the basis of differences in age, status, competency and experience (Einarsdottir, 2007). It is suggested that when these inequalities are not appropriately addressed by researchers, it is possible that children's engagement can lead to unexpected results where they only try to please the researchers because of their fear or intimidated (Einarsdottir, 2007). While it is often difficult to reduce these discrepancies in researcher-children power relation, the aforementioned author suggested that some practical ways can be considered when working with children such as acting to be least-adult role, using child-friendly methods and techniques, or contextualizing research in more comfortable environments to children. In addition, Christensen (2004) suggested that the unequal power of relation can be reduced through the researchers' understanding of children's culture of communication which can be done by observing their language use, their conceptualization of meanings and actions. By this means, researchers can identify different codes of conduct and communication, context and timing acceptable for children (Christensen, 2004).

1.4 Differences in Methodology

An issue that is closely associated with the process of method selection in children research relates to their positions in research. As Christensen and Prout (2002) mentioned the status of children in research can fall into four roles: child as object; child as subject, child as social actor, and child as participant and co-researcher. Unlike the first case, researchers, in the last three roles, place children as active participants whose views and aspirations can provide useful insights and contribution for better works. Although no significant challenge can pose in the first case, placing them as passive object can be problematic both ethically and practically (Cowie and Khoo, 2017). From ethical perspective, their right to freedom of expression particularly 'in the matters affecting them' is not respected (UNCRC, 1989). Similarly, from practical point of view, treating them merely as object might not effective to portray essential information regarding their present experience or future aspirations (Scoot, 2000). Accordingly, it is important that 'children should no longer be considered as passive object of research, but rather be empowered as active participants whose accounts can be of genuine portrayals of their perspectives and experiences' (See Cowie and Khoo, 2017). Active participation of children is essential as they are competent social actors in their own right (See, Kendrick et al., 2008; Cowie and Khoo, 2017) who can best provide information in regard with

their own perspectives, actions, and attitudes (Scoot, 2009). Thus, making them as the only object of research, and taking adults as their behalf to be the main source of information is not always effective to provide accurate representation of children's insights. Indeed, previous findings showed that contradiction is often found between the accounts provided by children and their parents (Scoot, 2009).

However, in order the intended views and lives of children can be directly obtained, researchers are faced with special challenges as not all traditional methods and techniques in adult research might be applicable to children (See. Christensen, 2004). In this case, research with children requires employing appropriate methods that fit with their competence, knowledge, interest and context of the children (Einarsdottir, 2007; Punch, 2002). In addition, researchers are suggested to use a range of different methods and techniques suitable with their capacity which can include innovative or adapted 'fun and child-friendly' methods and techniques such as the use of visual aids of drawings and photographs (See Punch, 2002; Morrow and Richards, 1989). Furthermore, Morrow and Richards (1989) suggested that 'a more social-anthropological approach allowing data to be coproduced as a result of researcher-researched relationships is more useful rather than the data driven by problem-oriented adult questions'. The aforementioned authors also suggested that the use of a range of creative methods, multiple research strategies (triangulation), more than one method of investigation or more than one type of data is another way of doing effective research with children.

1.5 Research with children in Indonesian context

While ethical guidelines and codes of good practice in conducting research with children exist in many developed countries such as the UK, Europe, or USA, albeit not always very specific (Bell, 2008; Cowie and Khoo, 2017; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Gallagher et al., 2010), the same case is likely not easy to find in Indonesian context. These countries employ different ethical standards of child research in comparison from adult counterparts as their ways to protect them from harms and to respect their rights to freedom of expression when engaging in research. The CRC has become an important reference for these countries in developing the ethical guidelines for child research particularly as stipulated in Article 12 and 13 of the convention (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012). The position of the CRC is considered vital as the principles of child research should not stand apart from researchers' obligation to protect and promote children's rights (Bell, 2008). However, Indonesia which has ratified the CRC for more than 25 years has not appropriately employed these principles into research practices. The implementation of children's right principles lacks attention from the interest of the government, research bodies, higher educations and journal publishers. The following section is to elaborate their lack of consideration regarding the position of children in Indonesian research traditions.

At first, the engagement of children in research receives less attention from the Indonesian government although a number of laws and regulations have been promulgated as parts of its commitment to implement the provisions of child rights as stipulated in the CRC (www.peraturan.go.id/). According to Indonesian legislation database, there are more than hundred relevant laws and legislations under '*child protection*' keywords ranging from nation-based laws, presidential and ministerial regulations to provincial and district regulations, but these legislations do not contain specific ethical guidelines how children should be treated and protected once engaging in research. The only provision on children research is mentioned in the medical research context as stipulated in the Article 47 of the children protection law (Act No. 17, 2016) stating that "*The state, government (national, provincial, and district), public, family and parents hold responsibilities to protect children from the medical research utilizing them as the object without any parental consents, and not concerning with the best interest of the children.*" In another law on the national system of research, development, and implementation of sciences and technology (Act No. 18, 2002), rather than addressing the importance of ethical procedures, the law puts more emphasis on the ethics of professions as stated in Article 12 "*to ensure the responsibilities and accountabilities of the professions, professional organizations hold responsibilities to determine standards, requirements, certification, and codes of ethics of professions.*"

Unfortunately, the ethical guidelines of child research are also out of the interest from the government-run research institutions particularly the ministry of research, technology and higher education (Menristekdikti) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). The Menristekdikti, although it offers regular research awards and grants to researchers and university lecturers, has hitherto not possessed any clear ethical guidelines and codes of conducts for the researchers and lecturers in conducting research either involving human subjects or in particular involving children (Ristekdikti, 2017). Unlike the ministry, LIPI currently has two related regulations on research ethics such as regulation on the codes of ethics for researchers (2013a) and another regulation on the guidelines of research ethical clearance and scientific publication (2013b), but none of these provides specific guidelines for the research with children. The former regulation, for example, only provides some general guidelines of the ethical conducts in the research as stated in the fourth and fifth codes that:

"The researcher conducts the process of research in an honest, conscientious, and fair manner towards its research environment" (Fourth code)
"The researcher respects the object of human research, biological and non-biological natural resources morally, acts in accordance with the favor of nature and character of the object of his/her research, without discriminating and undermining the dignity of all God's creatures" (Fifth code).

Similarly, the latter regulation, which is expected to be an important reference for the researchers regarding the ethical acceptability of their works, also does not address specific guidelines regarding child research procedures. Although it contains some procedures to gain ethical clearance in conducting studies with human beings, no specific guideline is provided regarding the involvement of children. It only provides general guidelines regarding the involvement of human being in research which should be done in accordance to the principles of privacy, anonymity, dignity, and psychological comfort as human (LIPI, 2013b). The children are even not listed as potential informants and respondents in research who only include: voluntary university students, general publics, paid publics, special public groups (on the basis of age or social status), specific resident samples and other (Appendix 1, LIPI, 2013b).

The specific attention regarding the position of children in research also lacks attention from the interest of higher education institutions and journal publishers including those that specialize on children's studies. From the research ethical guidelines released by some local universities, for example, the position of children in research is not specifically distinguished from their adult cohorts; therefore, their position in research is possibly classified on the same theme of 'human objects' which should be treated on the basis of honesty, thoroughness, openness, responsibility, and respect (LPPM, 2014; UT, 2014; ITB, 2011). Likewise, this issue has not become the consideration of many journal publishers in national and local levels. For instance, the TEFLIN journal, recently awarded 'A' accreditation from the Ministry of research, technology and higher education, only provides general guideline under the heading of Hazards and human or animal subject stating that "if the work involves human, animals, procedures or equipment that have any unusual hazards inherent in their use, the author must clearly identify these in the manuscript" (http://journal.teflin.org/index.php/journal/index). Better guidelines are provided by the International Journal of Education providing emphasis on the importance of including the informed consent from human participants in manuscripts although it, once again, does not specify the participation of children (http://ejournal.upi.edu/). Another journal focusing on childhood studies such as the Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education Studies is also not much different in this respect; it does not specify any ethical procedures when the author (researcher) involves children in their research (https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/ijeces/about).

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that the participation of children in research is not supplied with clear and specific ethical guidelines ranging from the government to publishers. The ethical guidelines of child research are developed on the basis of general principles as that of involving adult subjects. In this situation, the last chance will then rest on the researchers themselves: how they treat their children's participants in comparison to adult subjects. Regardless the absence of the ethical guidelines, it is assumed that the ethical responsibilities of the researchers themselves become the foundation of all research (Skånfors, 2009). In addition, researchers are required to manage their ethical responsibilities of research to all research communities as well as their research subjects (Cowie and Khoo, 2017).

2. METHOD
2.1 Design and research question
This study took a content analysis to six research-based articles on children in Indonesian context. This analysis was intended to identify the authors' treatment of the children engaging in their research. To achieve this aim, the analysis was based on two research questions as follows:
   a.   How were children treated in Indonesian research practices?
   b.   What roles were children engaged in Indonesian research practices?
2.2 Selection of journal articles
As noted above, there were six articles chosen for the analysis. The selection of these articles was based on three criteria: focus of child research, areas or disciplines of research, and use or availability of English language version. At first, the articles had to be research-based that related to issues about children. Apart from that, the selected articles only focused on educational-related issues in different school contexts from kindergarten to secondary school. The last, the selection was limited to the articles published in English language or the availability of English version. After applying these criteria, the selection process was conducted by searching articles from different sources particularly university-based journal websites, Teflin journal website and national journal indexing website (http://id.portalgaruda.org/?ref=home). Finally, there were six articles selected from four university-run journals and Teflin journal as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: List of analyzed articles

Author(s)	Titles	Research context	Publication (Journal)
(I) Setiasih, L.	(2014). 'The role of out-of-school English literacy activities in promoting students' English literacy	Primary school (4th grade)	TEFLIN Journal (2014), 25(1), pp62-79.
(II) Rachmajanti, S.	Impact of English instruction at the elementary schools on the student's achievement of English at the lower secondary school	Secondary school (7th grade)	TEFLIN Journal (2008), 19(2), pp160-185.
(III) Sariyati, I.	The effectiveness of TPR (Total Physical Response) method in English vocabulary mastery of elementary school children	Primary school (1st grade)	Parole - Journal of Linguistics and Education, (2013), 3(1), pp50-64.
(IV) Prabowo, J.	Applying materials of an EFL writing courseware for 8th grade students of junior high school	Secondary school (8th grade)	Journal of English Language Studies, (2016), 1(1), pp45-62.
(V) Wahyudi, A. & Pamuji, A.	Improving students spelling ability by using making words in SDN 6 Palembang	Primary school	Jambi-English Language Teaching Journal, (2016), 1(1), pp20-27.
(VI) Sunengsih, N. & Fahrurrozi, A.	Learners' Language Needs Analysis of English Subject in Azkia Integrated Islamic Primary School	Primary school (3rd & 4th grades)	Indonesian Journal of English Education, (2015), 2(1), pp89-103.

2.3 Procedures of analysis

There were three issues that became the main concern of this study: ethics, power relation, and methodology. The analysis emphasized on the ways the authors addressed these three issues in engaging children in comparison to engaging adult cohorts. The discussion of ethics focused on the procedures that the authors took in choosing the children as their research subjects including obtaining gatekeepers' consent and children's consent. In addition, the discussion analyzed the methodology employed by the authors which included the employment of research designs and data tools. At the end, the analysis looked at power relations that the researchers had with researched children. The forms of their relations were analyzed on the basis of the researchers' initiatives to reduce equal power relations between the researchers themselves and children (Einarsdottir, 2007).

3.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As previously noted, this paper was to shed lights on the Indonesian researchers' treatment on children in research. Based on the analysis of six published articles, the authors used different range of contexts, designs and techniques in their research with children. As shown in Table 2, the authors conducted their studies with the children in different contexts: kindergarten, primary schools and secondary school with approximate ages of children between 4 to 15 years old. They also used different research approaches from qualitative, quantitative to mixed designs with testing and interview as the more common tools of data sources. However, the role of children's involvement in these studies was only limited to be the object and 'partly' subject, and no study treated them beyond these two roles (Christensen and Prout, 2002). The findings also showed that none of these authors addressed their ethical procedures in engaging children's participants particularly relating to the informed consent from either the children themselves or adult gatekeepers. Considering all studies were carried out at the school contexts, there were supposed to be a number of gatekeepers to pass through especially principals, teachers, and parents (Einarsdottir, 2007; David et al., 2001; Skelton, 2008), but no author elaborated how they could get access to their children subjects. Finally, these authors tended not to prioritize their relation with children. The authors tended to maintain the unequal relation with the children as shown in the use of patriarchal mode of relation.

Table 2: Children in Indonesian research perspectives

| Articles | Ethics | | | | Methodology | | | | Power relation | |
	Gatekeepers encountered	Gatekeepers' consent	Children's consent	Role of children (participants)	Design	Research context	Instruments	Child-data status	Nature of relation	Nature of communication
I	Principal, Teachers, Parents	No	No	(active) Subjects	Case study	Primary school	(Pre-post) test* Interview* Students' documents*	Test/ primary Others/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	Patriarchal (Powerful researcher)
II	Principal, Teachers, Parents	No	No	Subject	Ex post facto	Primary school	Test* Questionnaire* Interview	Test/ primary Questionnaire/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	Patriarchal (Powerful researcher)
III	Principal, Teachers, Parents	No	No	Subject	Mixed qualitative-quantitative	Primary school	Test* Observation*	Test / primary Observation/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	No direct interaction
IV	Principal, Teachers, Parents	No	No	Subject	Case study	Secondary school (Grade 7)	Questionnaire* Observation*	Observation/ primary Questionnaire/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	Patriarchal (Powerful researcher)
V	Principal, Teachers, Parents	No	No	Subject	Quasi-experiment	Primary school	Test* Questionnaire*	Test/ primary Questionnaire/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	Patriarchal (Powerful researcher)
VI	Principal, Teachers, Parents**	No	No	Object	Phenomenology	Primary school (Grade 3 & 4)	Class observation* Interview Documents	Observation/ supplementary	Unequal power relation maintained	No direct interaction

*) Instruments carried out to children

3.1 The treatment on children in research

Based on the preceding findings, it can be said that there was no special treatment that the researchers have employed regarding the participation of children in research. There were tendencies that the authors equated the engagement of children in research to that of adults. This was evident in every stage of the research process, ranging from the initial process of engaging them, the employment of designs and techniques, to data analysis and reporting.

At first, the 'informed consent' as an important process in selecting and engaging children was not properly addressed in all writings, either concerning children's consent or that of adult gatekeepers. While it could be assumed that conducting research in school contexts should have obtained prior consent from school principals or teachers—and it might be the authors' oversight not to include this in their writing—the consent for engaging children as participants was another issue. Researchers have a responsibility to ensure comfort and safety for children participants in all research processes (David et al., 2001; Skelton, 2008) and to demonstrate accountability to participants, parents, readers, and other academic communities (Punch, 2005). Including children's consent or that of adult gatekeepers is therefore essential to address in their writings. More importantly, consent to conduct research at schools should be distinguished from consent to engage children as research participants.

Considering the lack of mention in the reviewed writings, it seems likely that children's engagement in research was not based on their voluntary decision or under the proper acknowledgment of gatekeepers but rather on a 'taken-for-granted' assumption. In this case, the position of adults, particularly principals and teachers, played a more significant role in research involvement than the children themselves. This suggests that children's participation might have been driven by their powerless position or fear of adults (Einarsdottir, 2007) rather than voluntary decision-making. If this assumption holds, the children's comfort and safety were potentially compromised.

A similar issue was observed in the use of research designs and techniques. Traditional research approaches were employed without adjustments to align with children's age and maturity (CRC, 1989; Christensen, 2004; Punch, 2002). For example, utilizing quantitative designs that rely solely on test measurements for children under 10 years old risks yielding biased results (Morrow and Richards, 1989). Similarly, the use of interviews and questionnaires without adapting their content or language for children was problematic. This oversight could have created difficulties for children in completing these child-unfriendly tools, potentially leading to misleading information (Einarsdottir, 2007; Punch, 2002).

Another concerning aspect was the relationship between the researchers and the researched children, which appeared more patriarchal. The children were positioned as inferior and under the control of researchers, with their voices and experiences considered supplementary rather than central to the research. The lack of children's input was also evident in data interpretation and analysis, where the authors' perspectives dominated, leaving no room for children to contribute. As Lundy et al. (2011) emphasized, involving children in data interpretation is crucial to ensure that findings genuinely reflect their perspectives and experiences rather than the researchers' assumptions about them.

These patterns suggest a broader issue: the lack of child-centered methodologies and an overarching adult-centric approach in the reviewed studies. Addressing these gaps requires practical solutions. Researchers should adopt child-friendly methods that respect children's developmental stages and actively involve them throughout the research process. Training programs focusing on child-centric methodologies and ethics would help researchers design and conduct studies more effectively. Moreover, the establishment of ethical guidelines specifically for research involving children in Indonesia is crucial. These guidelines should be informed by international best practices, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) guidelines, to ensure that children's rights, comfort, and safety are prioritized.

3.2 The positions of children in research

In addition, the involvement of children in the research has not placed them in the ideal position especially as competent social agents in their own world (See Lundy et al. 2011). It was evident that their engagement in these studies was limited only as the object and 'partly' subject of research (See. Christensen and Prout, 2002). Although most articles tried to consider the children's perspectives and experiences through interview and observation, it could be said the children only acted 'partly' subjects as their contribution for the research was not primary, but only supplementary to those of adults'. In this case, children's own perspectives and experiences were less appreciated where the reliance on adults' perspective (on behalf of children) and other aspects of measurement (test and observation) were more dominant as the data reference. Therefore, the opportunity of obtaining better children's own perspectives and experiences could not be achieved (Scott, 2000).

There was also no evidence that these authors were willing to empower children's participation to engage them more actively either as social actors or co-researchers (See. Christensen and Prout, 2002).

Rather than respecting the engagement of children, the authors tended to consider the role of children as subordinate to adults. The authors have not considered the capacity of children to provide more contribution in their research. The authors' conceptualization on children engagement was in opposition to many scholars that 'the best people to provide information on children's perspectives, actions and attitudes are the children themselves' (Scott, 2000). However, the potential opportunity to have meaningful experiences and lives of the children has not been adequately facilitated in the research as shown by the limited choices of research techniques employed by the researchers particularly test, observation and questionnaire.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated researchers' treatment of children's participation in Indonesian research traditions. The findings revealed significant ethical gaps, including a lack of attention to child-specific needs, reliance on adult-centric methods, and inadequate consideration of informed consent, all of which risk compromising children's safety and rights. Additionally, children were often not meaningfully empowered in research, with their roles limited to being either objects or supplementary subjects whose perspectives were secondary to those of adults.

To address these issues, it is imperative to develop ethical guidelines tailored to the Indonesian context that align with international research standards and the principles outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These guidelines should emphasize the voluntary and informed participation of children, the use of child-friendly methods, and the prioritization of their safety and well-being. In practical terms, the Indonesian government should enact specific laws and regulations that ensure the protection of children involved in research, while also encouraging their active and meaningful participation in accordance with their developmental capacities.

Moreover, this study is limited to six English-language articles focused on educational issues, which may not fully capture the diversity of research practices involving children in Indonesia. While these criteria were chosen to ensure consistency and comparability, they may introduce bias and reduce the generalizability of the findings. Future research should broaden the scope by including articles from various disciplines and those published in local languages to provide a more comprehensive understanding of research practices involving children in diverse contexts.

Furthermore, research institutions, including the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, universities, and research communities, must collaboratively design and implement these ethical frameworks. They could establish training programs for researchers to promote child-centric methodologies and create monitoring systems to enforce ethical compliance. Future research should explore how these guidelines can be operationalized across diverse disciplines and in various cultural settings, as well as investigate children's experiences and perceptions of research participation. By taking these steps, Indonesia can set a robust standard for ethical child research, ensuring both the advancement of knowledge and the protection of children's rights.children.

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