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# SONG PREFERENCES IN MUSIC LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF TEACHERS' HABITUS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL BASED ON PIERRE BOURDIEU'S APPROACH

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**Abstract.** This research is motivated by the significant role of music, particularly songs, in elementary education, where music serves not only as entertainment but also as a pedagogical tool that facilitates learning and character development. The study aims to analyze the strategies employed by music arts teachers in utilizing songs and to examine the interplay among habitus, cultural capital, and the school environment in music education practices. Employing a qualitative case study design based on the Creswell model, the research was conducted at SD Jakarta Timur Region II during the 2025/2026 academic year, with music teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data collection involved observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, followed by qualitative analysis through data reduction, presentation, and verification. The findings indicate that the interaction among habitus, cultural capital, and curriculum requirements shapes teachers' song selection in elementary music education. Teachers' personal habitus and experiences promote the inclusion of both traditional and popular children's songs, whereas institutional cultural capital prioritizes national and thematic songs. Additionally, evolving social dynamics enable teachers to incorporate songs from digital media, aligning music instruction more closely with students' contemporary experiences.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have shown that educational quality (Burroughs et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020) and teacher competence (Burroughs et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020). Accurate selection of teaching materials is critical to enhancing educational quality, particularly in elementary school music instruction (Calderón-Garrido & Gustems-Carnicer, 2021; Timotheou et al., 2023). Song selection for music classes significantly influences student motivation (Ng et al., 2022), the development of musical skills (Concina, 2019), and the transmission of cultural values (Walden, 2020; Wang & Webb, 2024). Consequently, understanding the factors that shape elementary school music teachers' song selection is essential. Teachers' choices are informed not only by their musical skills and pedagogical knowledge, but also by their habitus and cultural capital (Kong, 2021; Wang & Tai, 2025).

Bourdieu defines habitus as a structure shaped by an individual's social experience and cultural background (Costa et al., 2019). Cultural capital, encompassing knowledge, skills, and experience within a specific field, also influences teachers' professional decision-making (Nielsen et al., 2023; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). Music teachers who possess substantial cultural capital in music and extensive pedagogical experience typically select songs that align with students' developmental needs (Ivemark & Ambrose, 2021; Poblete et al., 2019), as well as reflecting the social and cultural values that exist in the surrounding community (Gunara & Sutanto, 2021; Lilliedahl, 2021).

Existing research indicates that while many music teachers possess foundational knowledge of music and pedagogy, they frequently fail to integrate social and cultural factors when selecting teaching materials (Marcucci, 2020). Song selection in music education is often guided primarily by technical considerations, such as alignment with curricular requirements, rather than by students' social and cultural backgrounds (Bokiev & Ismail, 2021; Chen et al., 2024; Msimango, 2023). Furthermore, studies suggest that many teachers are not fully aware of how their own cultural capital influences song selection, which may limit the effectiveness of music instruction (Su & Jiang, 2021). Additional research has identified a persistent gap in teachers' understanding of how social and cultural factors affect music education (Feldman et al., 2020; Van Deusen, 2019). Consequently, elementary music education often relies on songs deemed "*universal*" or standard (Ibbotson & See, 2021; Julia et al., 2023), often neglecting Indonesia's cultural diversity. This practice may diminish student engagement, as learners could perceive the material as disconnected from their everyday social and cultural experiences (Espeland et al., 2021).

Previous research demonstrates a distinct focus that underscores the originality of the present study. Ali & Dwiprabowo (2023) examined the philosophical value of traditional music in fostering independence, whereas the current research empirically investigates how teachers' habitus and cultural capital influence song selection in elementary school music education. Gubbins (2023) highlighted how teacher involvement in the Musical Futures program revitalized personal musical practice. In contrast, this study analyzes song preferences as reflections of teachers' habitus and cultural capital, using a dual approach grounded in Bourdieu's theory. Furthermore, the research by Cuadrado-García et al. (2023) contributes to the understanding of teachers' personal musical experiences in the context of informal methods, while this study focuses on the local context of Indonesia, the specific object of study, namely song preferences, the broader use of Bourdieu's theory (habitus and cultural capital), and the dynamics of formal music learning in elementary school. Ali (2024) reviews music as a symbolic expression in traditional cultural power relations, while this study views music as a pedagogical practice that shapes teachers' habitus and cultural capital in formal education.

This study uses a digital ethnomusicological methodology to examine how teachers' habitus, cultural capital, and use of digital platforms shape music selection in elementary education. The research introduces a framework for integrating traditional and global music and develops a pocketbook to help teachers create culturally informed song lyrics. The study's contribution is its examination of music pedagogy within Indonesia's digital and multicultural context, highlighting how teachers' sociocultural backgrounds affect song selection, student engagement, musical understanding, and character development. This research aims to develop a more inclusive and culturally grounded model for song selection in elementary music education. This model is expected to improve the effectiveness of music learning by aligning it more closely with students' lived experiences and socio-cultural values. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) In what ways are habitus and cultural capital related to teachers' choices of song types in elementary music learning? (2) How can the relationship between teachers' habitus, cultural capital, and their song selection be identified? (3) How do social and cultural factors within the educational context influence elementary school teachers' song choices?

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## RESEARCH METHODS

The research used a qualitative approach with a case study design based on John Creswell's model. The study was conducted at SD Jakarta Timur Region II during the 2025/2026 semester and focused on music arts teachers selected through *purposive sampling* based on their musical backgrounds and teaching experience. The research process comprised the following stages: (1) case selection analysis to identify relevant teachers based on background, experience, and personality; (2) research design, including literature review, framework development grounded in Bourdieu's theory, and instrument preparation; (3) data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation studies to determine factors influencing song selection; (4) data analysis using qualitative methods; (5) evaluation through reflection and triangulation; and (6) reporting and publication. Figure 1 illustrates the research process in greater detail.

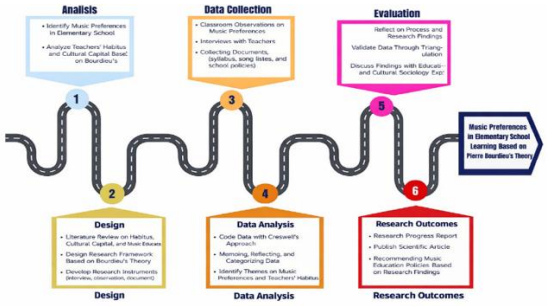



**Figure 1.** Research Flow

Figure 1 illustrates the research flow as a sequence of steps, beginning with analysis and design, followed by data collection and analysis, and concluding with a sequence that reflectsganized sequentially to reflec:stematic approach, encompassing the identification of song preferences, analysis of teacher habits, design of research instruments, execution of observations and interviews, validating findings, analysis, validation procedures, analysis, and the formulation of recommendations for song selection models and scientific publications.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings on song preferences in elementary school music learning and analyzes these findings using Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The results are organized by the stated research questions and discussed in relation to empirical data, the concepts of habitus and cultural capital, and relevant prior studies.

### 1. Teachers' Musical Habits and Song Selection Tendencies

The study demonstrates that teachers' song selection in educational settings is influenced not only by curriculum requirements but also by their habitus and cultural capital. Habitus, shaped by life experiences, musical exposure, and socio-cultural background, serves as an internal guide for teachers' preferences in music instruction. Teachers raised in environments rich in local cultural traditions are more likely to select traditional songs such as Naik Delman or Lihat Kebunku. As one teacher explained, "*Since I was a child, my parents always introduced regional songs, so when teaching I automatically chose the same song because it was attached to the house*."

In contrast, teachers with greater exposure to global popular music frequently incorporate modern or popular songs into their teaching practices. Another teacher's statement illustrates this: "In school and college I used to listen to a lot of pop songs, so it was easier to teach songs that were close to my daily life and that of my students."

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These examples underscore that song selection in elementary music education is influenced by both professional standards and the teachers' personal cultural backgrounds and educational experiences. This alignse aligns with Bourdieu's (1990) assertion that habitus consists of dispositions instilled through prolonged social experience (Carlson & Schneickert, 2021; Friedman, 2016). Habitus operates unconsciously; therefore, teachers' song choices are not solely rational decisions but also reflect the social and cultural structures internalized since childhood. Songs selected for classroom use often arise not from curricular requirements, but from the teacher's collective memory and musical experiences, which are perceived as "natural" and relevant. Furthermore, cultural capital significantly influences teachers' song preferences. Teachers with cultural capital, such as musical knowledge acquired through formal education or personal musical experience, demonstrate a strong ability to adapt songs to meet learning objectives. As one teacher noted, *"Some of the songs I taught were actually songs that I had heard as a child. So I unconsciously chose a song that I had known for a long time."* Another teacher stated, *"My experience in music courses helped me adjust the songs. Sometimes I modify them a little to fit the material or the age of the child."* These observations indicate that song selection is influenced not only by curricular requirements but also by the embodied cultural resources that teachers bring to the classroom.

Cultural capital, such as access to instruments, scores, digital media, qualifications, and music certifications, expands the range of song choices available to teachers and enhances their professional legitimacy. This study categorizes these selections to show how teachers' habitus and cultural capital shape their preferences, values, experiences, and cultural orientations. The classification of song types used in elementary music instruction is presented below. Interview data from a teacher at SDN 07 Makassar corroborate these findings. The teacher stated that some song choices were informed by personal experience: *"When I was a child, my parents often played children's songs such as 'Balonku' or 'Burung Cockatoo '. So when I teach, I feel that the songs are the easiest and most comfortable to use."*

Video observations of lessons at SDN Makasar 07, including activities focused on teaching intervals with the pianica, revealed that teachers often selected songs from their personal digital playlists rather than relying solely on official textbooks. During interviews, teachers explained: "*I keep a few songs on my phone, so when I need a song to move the kids or get them focused, I choose the ones I usually listen to as well*." These practices indicate that song selection in the classroom is both flexible and context-dependent. Songs serve not only as entertainment but also as pedagogical tools that enhance the classroom environment, promote student concentration, and support the music learning process, such as interval training with the pianica (see Figure 2).




**Figure 2.** Music Arts Class 4 SD/Tri Sudarmi/SDN Makasar 07/DKI Jakarta. (https://youtu.be/csw0ptnNE-I?si=orGzNpVVV1IiE1iw)

The findings indicate that song selection is influenced not only by professional

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considerations but also by teachers' life experiences, musical habits, and enduring cultural backgrounds. The next section classifies how teachers receive music instruction in elementary schools.
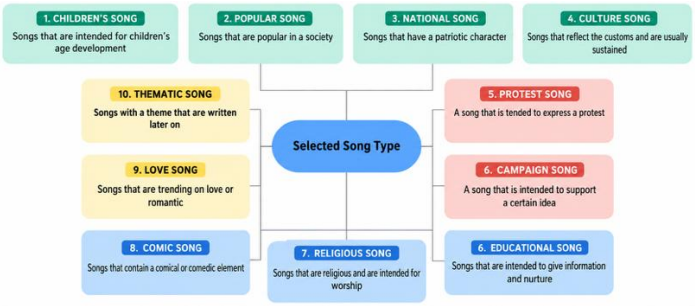



**Figure 3.** Selected Song Type

Figure 3 presents a classification of song types teachers selected for elementary school music lessons. The categories include children's songs, regional songs, national songs, contemporary songs, popular songs, childhood songs, ceremonial songs, competition songs, educational songs, cheerful songs, viral songs, and thematic songs. Each category reflects various considerations in song selection, such as student development, cultural values, curriculum requirements, digital trends, and teachers' personal musical experiences. This classification highlights that song selection is shaped not only by pedagogical factors but also by teachers' habitus, cultural preferences, and musical capital.

The classification of songs selected by teachers, as shown in the image above, demonstrates that songs used in elementary school music learning originate from traditional repertoires and popular children's songs from previous generations. This pattern suggests that teachers' preferences are shaped less by contemporary children's music curricula or trends and more by enduring musical habits. These habits are developed through long-term life experiences, such as exposure to songs during childhood, family traditions, and the surrounding social environment. Such experiences serve as an implicit foundation for song selection in educational settings, often occurring without formal deliberation. According to Bourdieu, habitus constitutes a system of dispositions that unconsciously guides practice (Alexander et al., 2022; Lau, 2004).

These findings support previous studies showing that teachers' personal musical experiences and childhood memories influence repertoire selection Schiavio et al., 2020; Vaizman & Harpaz, 2023; Mohan & Thomas, 2020; Thompson et al., 2023). Teachers also favor traditional children's songs because they are accessible and convey educational and moral values Pastorek et al. (2022) . Thus, song selection reflects pedagogical goals, cultural identity, and collective experience.

One teacher explained, "*I liked to play songs when I was a kid, like the song 'Naik Delman', 'Balonku'; it is a song that leaves a mark, so it is easier to teach it*" (Teacher A, SDN Pekayon 03). Another teacher similarly emphasized the influence of family experiences on song preferences: "*I often sing songs that I know from home first, from my parents*" (Teacher B). Teachers' musical experiences establish enduring preferences that, through habitus, influence their song selection. Educators often select songs that are familiar, relevant, and practical, thereby connecting elementary music education to specific socio-cultural contexts. According to Gaunt et al. (2021), school music practices reflect the interplay among personal identity, local culture, and institutional requirements. Examining these habitual practices is essential for designing culturally relevant music curricula.

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## 2. Institutional Cultural Capital and Reproduction of Educational Structures

Teachers' song selection is closely linked to the curriculum's symbolic authority. Songs included in thematic books, designated as national compulsory songs, or used in competitions acquire legitimacy through recognition by the state and the education system. According to Bourdieu's framework Bourdieu (1986), this process constitutes a form of institutional cultural capital that privileges certain types of knowledge. Consequently, teachers not only select songs but also help distribute and reinforce the curriculum's authority. For example, one teacher stated, "*If there is a song in the book, it must be taught, because later there will be an assessment as well*" (Teacher C, SDN Pekayon 05). This dynamic also extends to the teaching of musical instruments featured in textbooks, as illustrated in Figure 4.

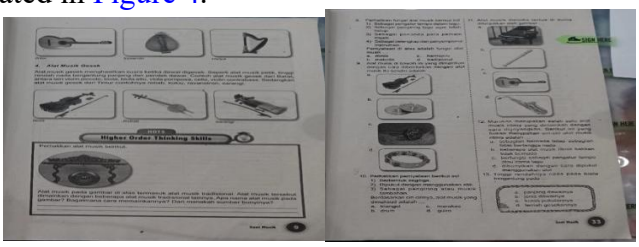


**Figure 4.** Music Textbooks in Elementary School

Teachers reproduce educational structures through their practices. Songs deemed legitimate function not only as musical material but also as instruments for instilling national identity, discipline, and values. In this context, the teacher acts as an agent of symbolic reproduction, ensuring that students receive cultural forms sanctioned by the dominant system. For instance, singing Garuda Pancasila or Indonesia Raya instills state-regulated ideological awareness. This observation aligns with research by Hardy & Kallio (2023), which shows that music in schools often functions as a medium of social control and perpetuates ideological values that reinforce the structure of the state and nation.

Personal musical habits, such as childhood songs and family traditions, often conflict with institutional cultural capital represented by curriculum-based songs. Teachers often feel more comfortable with songs rooted in personal experience, yet they adhere to songs from thematic books because of their formal legitimacy. As Teacher A stated: "*I prefer to use traditional songs, but if there is a new song in the book, I still have to teach it.*" This tension exemplifies, as Giroux (1983) notes, a contradiction in pedagogical practice, wherein the educator functions both as an autonomous cultural agent and as an instrument for reproducing the dominant structure. Figure 5 presents findings regarding the reasons and considerations teachers employ when selecting songs.

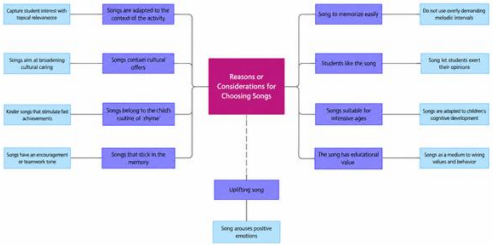



**Figure 5.** Reasons for Song Selection

Interview data corroborate this finding. One teacher stated, *"If the song is in a thematic book, it must be taught. Because there will be an assessment later, it will inevitably be a priority"* (Teacher C, SDN Pekayon 05). Similarly, a teacher at SDN 07 Makasar remarked, *"Lagu-lagu wajib nasional biasanya saya ajarkan dulu, soalnya itu*

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*bagian dari aturan sekolah dan sering dipakai saat upacara atau penilaian."* In addition, analysis of teacher textbooks reveals that lists of national songs, such as "*Indonesia Raya*," "*Garuda Pancasila*," "*Maju Tak Gentar*," and "*Tanah Airku," serve as* primary references for teachers when selecting songs to teach. These findings indicate that the curriculum's legitimacy not only guides instructional practice but also establishes a hierarchy of songs considered important for learning.

The concept map delineates two principal considerations in song selection: personal-affective factors, such as familiarity, memories, and student preferences, and formal-institutional factors, including textbook alignment, ease of teaching, and educational value. Consequently, teachers' song choices demonstrate an interplay between individual musical practices and institutional requirements, especially those related to school curricula, ceremonies, and competitions. This influence is evident in the statement: "If the curriculum is usually in thematic books, like the songs *'Tanah Airku', 'Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa'*, it is mandatory." (Teacher C). Another teacher further highlighted adherence to school regulations: "*If it is a competition or ceremony, it must be a national compulsory song, because that is what the school asks*." (Teacher D).

According to Bourdieu (1986) this framework, institutional cultural capital is derived from an individual's position within the social structure. In the teaching profession, legitimacy is established through official symbols, such as the selection of songs deemed appropriate by the school system. Consequently, teachers' song choices reflect not only their musical preferences but also their adherence to the symbolic authority of the state and educational institutions. Research by Knudsen & Onsrud (2023) and Tullberg & Sæther (2022) demonstrates that the national anthem taught in schools serves as a tool for reproducing collective identity, shaping both national consciousness and political legitimacy. These findings align with those by Buchborn et al. (2023), who argue that school music repertoires are often shaped by educational policies and the state's ideological interests, positioning teachers as agents who disseminate hegemonic values.

In Indonesia, Alwi et al. (2023) they also emphasized that selecting a national anthem and compulsory songs for school ceremonies is a strategy to instill patriotism and discipline through music. This shows that institutional cultural capital not only determines what songs are taught, but also narrows teachers' autonomy to express their personal musical habits. Teachers may prefer childhood songs or popular songs, but the formal legitimacy of the national anthem or songs from thematic books often takes precedence. This aligns with Annala et al. (2022), who argue that education is a contradictory arena in which teachers serve as cultural agents who bring personal experience and as reproductive agents of dominant structures through curriculum and school rules.

### 3. Identifying the Relationship between Habitus and Cultural Capital of Teachers with Song Selection

The findings reveal a shift in teaching practices influenced by engagement with contemporary cultural capital. Teachers not only reproduce educational structures through songs from thematic books or compulsory selections, but also adapt to popular cultural dynamics, including song trends from platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. This shift is evident in the expanding sources of reference songs, which now extend beyond the official curriculum to include social media, digital platforms, and elements of students' daily cultural environments. Interview data further supports this observation. One teacher stated, *"Sometimes I take songs from TikTok or YouTube, because those are the ones that are trending and the children follow them faster."* Another teacher noted, "*If a viral song is popular, I use it to break the ice so that the children are more*

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*enthusiastic."* These findings suggest that social media has become an important resource for teachers in song selection and exemplify the influence of contemporary cultural capital on music learning practices in elementary schools.

Teachers intentionally select songs that reflect children's contemporary experiences to foster psychological closeness and increase learning motivation. Songs popular on social media capture students' attention because they are familiar in everyday life, whereas songs passed down through families exemplify the continuity of musical habitus across generations. Consequently, teachers fulfill a dual role by preserving traditional culture while also engaging contemporary popular culture.

This action can be understood as a form of actual cultural capital (embodied) that is used strategically by teachers to gain recognition and pedagogical success in the educational arena. They use the flexibility of habitus to bridge the gap between children's culture (based on social media) and the demands of the formal system. As Bourdieu (1990) states, social agents are not only shaped by structures but can also play strategies in the arena by using the capital they have. These findings align with research by Nielsen et al. (2023), who found that music teachers use popular repertoire to build closer social relationships with students. A study by Guan & Matsunobu (2022) also found that integrating popular music learning allows for a "cultural dialogue" between teachers and students, with students making music for identity negotiation. Waldron (2023), found that using viral songs from YouTube and TikTok increased elementary school students' participation in music learning, although it sometimes created tension with the demands of a formal curriculum. Figure 6 below shows the results of research on the reference sources of money songs used by teachers.

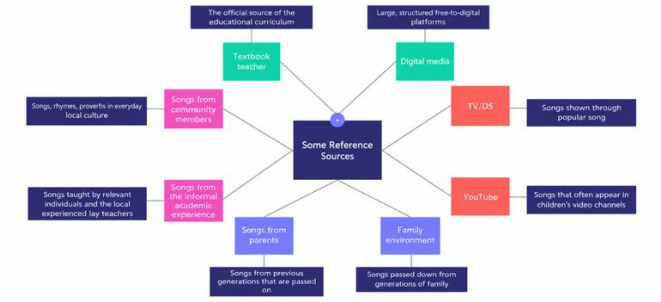



**Figure 6.** Song Reference Source

The map of song reference sources illustrates a complex social context in which teachers' habitus and cultural capital interact with traditional influences, including family, community customs, and personal experiences, as well as contemporary influences from social media and digital platforms. Teachers therefore act not only as implementers of formal educational requirements but also as cultural mediators who connect traditions, personal identities, and popular trends in music learning. This finding confirms that teachers' song choices are shaped by past experiences, textbooks, and contemporary cultural resources. Social media and digital trends are new references, such as songs from TikTok, YouTube, or other viral songs popular among children. As one of the teachers said: "*Children now like songs from TikTok, so sometimes I look for people who know them to be enthusiastic*" (Teacher E). Another teacher added, "*If there is a positive viral song, I use it too. You see, they become enthusiastic and join in singing*" (Teacher F).

The selection of these songs shows how teachers use new forms of cultural capital to connect with students' experiences, making learning activities more appealing. Teachers use flexible strategies and adapt their usual practices to connect pedagogical objectives with popular cultural contexts that engage students. These findings support

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Blackwell et al. (2022), who found that incorporating popular repertoire in music education strengthens social relationships between teachers and students. Bartleet et al. (2020) Further assert that popular music provides a platform for cultural dialogue, enabling students to negotiate their identities within formal educational settings. Frytsiuk et al. (2025) observed that using viral songs from TikTok and YouTube increased student participation in elementary music education, although it posed challenges in aligning with the official curriculum. Consequently, teachers' integration of both traditional and contemporary cultural capital exemplifies strategic adaptation to the evolving cultural dynamics of contemporary students.

## 4. The Influence of Social and Cultural Factors on Song Selection

### The Function of Songs as Pedagogical Tools and Value Transmission

Teachers select songs within a broader socio-cultural context. Songs function not only as entertainment but also as pedagogical tools for character development, promoting nationalistic values, supporting emotional regulation, and strengthening student cohesion in the classroom. Consequently, songs constitute a significant medium for transmitting values and reproducing culture. Bourdieu (1990) asserts that schools serve as arenas where social values and cultural dispositions are reproduced through symbols, including songs. Teachers' song selections are influenced by factors such as family, society, media, and childhood experiences. Interview data suggest that many teachers retain musical preferences formed during childhood and inherited from their family environment. One teacher (G2, interview 10/14/2024) explained: *"I often choose songs that my mother used to sing, such as Indonesian children's songs that are soft and have a moral message. It feels closer and suitable for children."* Beyond familial influence*, societal values also shape teacher preferences.* Another teacher (G4, interview 10/16/2024) stated: *"In my home environment, children often sing Islamic songs, so I also adjust them in class so that they feel familiar."* Furthermore, mass media and digital platforms are becoming increasingly influential sources. As one teacher noted (G1, interview 12/10/2024): *"Now those references are a lot from YouTube and TikTok. I first see if the song is positive, then I use it in class."* Childhood experiences also shape teachers' pedagogical preferences and beliefs about song selection. Another teacher (G3, interview 10/15/2024) recounted, *"I grew up with national compulsory songs, so I felt it was important to keep introducing them to students, so that they have a sense of love for the country as I felt in the past."*

These findings indicate that teachers' decisions are influenced not only by personal preferences but also by complex interactions with the social environment. Figure 7, illustrates the social and cultural factors that shape teachers' choices regarding song selection for classroom use.

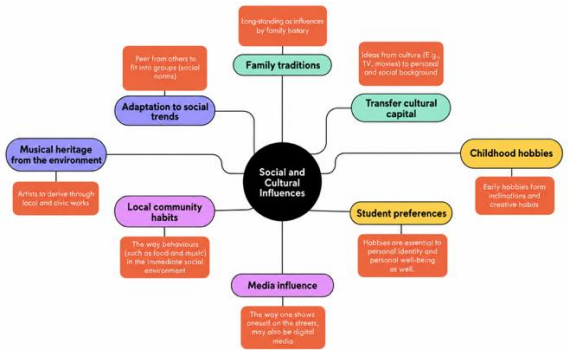



**Figure 7.** Social and Cultural Influences

Analysis of the chart (Figure 7) indicates that songs serve as meaningful pedagogical media. Teachers employ songs not only to foster a positive classroom

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environment but also as symbolic instruments to cultivate specific dispositions in students. For instance, nationalist songs promote patriotism, while religious songs impart moral and spiritual values. Conversely, teachers utilize popular songs from social media to strengthen emotional bonds between teachers and students. These practices align with interview findings, which highlight that songs in the classroom function as multifunctional pedagogical tools for value transmission, atmosphere creation, and regulating the pace of learning. As Teacher G explained: "When the children start to make a fuss, I sing a song slowly, like ‘Lihat Kebunku’, so that the atmosphere is cool." Similarly, Teacher A noted: "*I choose songs that are cheerful, so that they are enthusiastic and not sleepy*." Therefore, songs are strategically employed to calm, motivate, or facilitate transitions during learning.

According to Bourdieu, this practice indicates that songs are integral to symbolic reproduction. Singing activities guide students to think, feel, and act in alignment with prevailing social structures. Songs serve as pedagogical tools and cultural codes, which teachers transmit as educational agents. Thus, song selection is shaped not only by teachers' individual preferences but also by broader socio-cultural influences that contribute to students' character development. Empirical studies corroborate these observations. For instance, Rehfeldt et al. (2021) demonstrate that songs in basic music education facilitate both the acquisition of musical skills and the transmission of social and cultural values. Sakti et al. (2024) highlight the significant role of traditional children's songs in fostering togetherness and discipline in elementary education. Additionally, Campbell (2022) reports that using popular songs in early childhood and elementary classrooms strengthens emotional bonds between teachers and students, creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

**Pedagogical Strategies for Teachers and Functional Cultural Capital**

In educational practice, songs function not only as entertainment media but also as pedagogical tools with cognitive, affective, and social roles. Teachers utilize songs to facilitate learning, foster a positive classroom environment, and instill specific values. The application of songs in schools extends beyond classroom instruction to include various formal and informal school activities. This demonstrates the contextual flexibility of songs, as teachers adapt their selections to align with students' needs, situational demands, and individual characteristics. Interview data also indicate that teachers use songs to boost classroom engagement. As one teacher stated, *“If the children start to look bored or have difficulty focusing, I immediately play or invite them to sing a song. Usually the atmosphere is immediately fluid; they are more enthusiastic and ready to learn again.”* Another teacher noted, *“The song became a tool to start the lesson. As soon as the song was played, the children were immediately enthusiastic because the atmosphere turned more cheerful.”* These findings suggest that songs contribute to a more dynamic learning rhythm and enhance students' enjoyment of the learning process. The following chart (Figure 8) illustrates the context of song usage.




Figure 8. Context of Song Use

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Analysis of the chart (Figure 8) indicates that teachers' strategies for selecting and utilizing songs are closely linked to functional cultural capital. Rather than merely following established habits (habitus), teachers actively negotiate their choices based on context. For instance, teachers select simple songs when classroom conditions do not support maintaining students' attention, whereas they choose national-themed songs during national commemorations. This approach demonstrates that cultural capital, specifically teachers' knowledge of song types, is applied reflectively to achieve both learning and character-building objectives. Evidence from teacher interviews further supports these findings. Pedagogical strategies shape song selection by aligning with student preferences and the activity context. Teachers consider factors such as ease of memorization, age-appropriateness, and thematic relevance. As Teacher D stated: "*I choose songs that are easy to memorize. If it's too difficult, the kids won't be excited*." Similarly, Teacher C remarked: "*If it's the theme of independence, yes, I choose the appropriate song. For example, 'Hari Merdeka' or 'Tanah Air'*." These practices show how teachers mobilize cultural capital and habitus to meet specific classroom needs through adaptive, practical strategies, rather than relying solely on intuition or formal guidelines.

These findings align with Hargreaves & North (1999), who emphasize that music in education serves as a flexible social and emotional medium adaptable to students' contexts and needs. Palmer & Booth (2024) show in elementary school settings that thematic songs not only increased student engagement but also promoted discipline. Similarly, Kiss et al. (2025) and Vigl et al. (2023) confirm that music significantly enhances motivation, concentration, and a positive classroom climate. Therefore, teachers' song selection, as shown in interview excerpts and context charts, is a deliberate pedagogical strategy rooted in cultural capital that supports more meaningful learning and contributes to students' character development.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study show that habitus and cultural capital are central to teachers' selection of song types in elementary school music education. Musical habits shaped by childhood experiences, family traditions, social environments, and educational backgrounds lead teachers to prefer familiar songs, such as traditional and older popular children's songs, which are perceived as reasonable and relevant. In addition, cultural capital, including musical knowledge, access to musical resources, and the institutional legitimacy provided by the curriculum, broadens teachers' options but also requires adherence to official repertoires, such as national songs and those found in thematic books. This dynamic is evident in the ways teachers integrate personal cultural capital with institutional and contemporary cultural capital. Teachers draw not only on musical memories from the past but also engage with popular culture by selecting songs from platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and other social media that resonate with students' everyday experiences. This approach indicates that teachers function as agents who negotiate between personal preferences, curricular requirements, and the cultural expectations of contemporary students. Habitus forms the foundation of teachers' dispositions, while both formal and contemporary cultural capital are strategically employed to achieve pedagogical effectiveness within the educational context.

The findings suggest that teachers should expand their repertoire of songs by integrating traditional, national, and contemporary selections in a balanced way that supports pedagogical objectives and aligns with students' experiences. Schools should establish collaborative environments where educators can share best practices and

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develop innovative ways to use music as a medium for character education. Policymakers should consider implementing a more flexible curriculum framework, enabling teachers to incorporate songs from diverse sources, including positive elements of popular culture.

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