

## Conference Paper

# Edu Gender Unity: Development of Gender Responsive Learning Model for Junior High Schools in Indonesia

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## Abstract

The pilot study on the implementation of education at Junior High Schools (SMP) revealed that gender bias is still present in various aspects. In the learning, it was found that some materials were not gender responsive, learning interaction sometimes caused one of the parties to be discriminated, and the teacher's and students' sentences contained stereotypes. One of the subjects which has the potential for and contributes to gender bias is Social Sciences (IPS). As a subject which correlates with the practices of social life, Social Sciences reflects the gender bias as an existing reality. Other subjects which are potential for gender bias are Natural Sciences, Arts and Cultural Arts and Crafts, and Language. In Natural Sciences and crafts, the bias is often found the existence of interaction. In the Natural Science practicum class, which is correlated with animals, there is often a higher ratio of male to female students. On the other hand, on the practice of crafting class, female student levels are typically higher. In language subjects, it was found that the use of discourse and sentences did not show gender equality and justice, often depicting males in strategic roles and the females in domestic roles. A learning model needs to be developed with regards to the values of gender equality and justice, from the earliest years of schooling. This study sought to identify the basic competencies and learning aspects which are gender biased. The results are followed up by developing the gender-responsive Edu Gender Unity learning model. The development involved the subject teachers as the researcher's partner in designing, developing, and trying out the gender responsive learning model design. The development of this learning model is intended for Indonesian Language, Cultural Arts and crafts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences subjects. The development consists of (1) the formulation of gender responsive indicators, (2) teaching materials to achieve the gender-responsive competence, and (3) learning strategies which correspond to achieve gender-responsive competence.

**Keywords:** Gender Responsive, Learning, Junior High Schools

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Published: 29 July 2020

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the WCGS Conference Committee.

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## 1. Introduction

Being treated differently due to gender or social condition is a common practice among society members. In fact, some of these values seemed to have been transformed into standard rules that must be obeyed. However, as a result of social construction, rules are always worth debating and renewing, especially if they contain discriminatory practices, injustice, or even violence.

Views on gender are often contradictory. Gender is a social, cultural and political concept of masculinity and femininity. This gender construction sometimes pays little attention to the principles of equality and fairness so that one of the sex groups experiences marginalization, subordination, discrimination, heavier burdens, and violence. This is what underlies the importance of gender responsiveness as part of education.

Education as a conscious effort to implement changes should be designed in such a way so that inequality and injustice can be reduced or eliminated. Unfortunately, practitioners in education are not so aware of fair gender construction. Hanum (2010) mentions that education is still dominated by biases due to teachers, principals, and education managers' unresponsiveness to gender. Ella (2009) also mentions disparities in education which are reflected in the low participation of women in policy formulation and decision making.

Struggles for gender equity through education are expected to generate individuals who uphold democracy, justice, basic human rights, religious values, multicultural values, and diversity to eliminate discrimination of any kind. There are 3 important aspects that should be considered in the development of gender responsive learning; they are learning objectives, teaching materials, and learning strategies.

All learning subjects can be potentially gender biased. However, there are some subjects that are considered to be more biased than the others due to their specific material characteristics, for instance Indonesian Language, Natural Sciences, and Culture, Art, and Craft. Learning materials of the Indonesian Language subject are often gender biased. The texts used in the learning process usually contain daily life events or stories that basically reflect patriarchal conditions and thus are considered lack of gender equity. These texts position men in strategic roles, while women are placed in domestic roles. Gender bias is also found in the language used and illustrated in the texts.

Contrasting gender biases are often found in Science, Culture and Craft learning activities. In the practice of natural science subjects related to animals, the involvement

of male students is often more intensive than that of female students. In contrast, in Culture and Craft, female students generally play a more intensive role.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The development of gender responsive learning model began with identifying aspects of learning that have the potential to bias gender in Indonesian Language, Natural Science, as well as Art and Craft subjects. Identification started from analyzing the lesson plans (RPP) made by the teachers and continued with conducting observations in schools. After that, important aspects, namely learning objectives, teaching materials, and learning strategies that function to realize gender responsive learning were developed based on the identification results.

Learning objectives were developed by analyzing Basic Competence (KD) from scientific aspects, potential biases that exist, and gender values that can be embedded. The potentials for gender bias and gender values were analyzed by considering aspects of student access, participation and control of learning, as well as the benefits of learning for students. Analysis and formulation of these objectives formed the bases for developing learning materials and strategies. The results of the development were incorporated into the lesson plans (RPP) which were then discussed further with the teachers and tried out in the classrooms.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. The Aim of Gender Responsive Learning Model

Learning objectives reflect learning process and learning outcomes that are going to be achieved by students. Basic competence is a number of abilities that students must master in a particular subject. The formulation of gender responsive learning objectives began with formulating learning indicators that show measurable or observable behaviors that will be assessed at the end of the lesson.

The development of gender responsive learning objectives must take into account the initial characteristics of male and female students proportionally while still referring to the curriculum content standards of the field of study concerned. Formulation of gender responsive learning objectives means integrating a gender component into learning. The gender element does not have to be made explicit in the formulation of learning objectives, but the formulation of these objectives should be free from

gender bias. Formulation of learning objectives that pay attention to gender aspects will ensure the implementation of learning that respects the equality of human rights in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, or other conditions. Gender responsive learning objectives must be formulated with complete sentences containing competencies to achieve and materials to learn by considering gender aspects implicitly or explicitly.

One of the gender responsive learning objectives in Science Class VIII, for example, is "Analyzing motion in living things, movement in humans, and efforts to maintain a healthy motion system". One of the indicators formulated is "identifying synergistic and antagonistic muscle work". The basic competence of learning can be identified by its potential biases and by how it embed gender values into learning. Based on the analysis, in terms of access and participation, there is a possibility of inequity in competency practices due to media limitations. In terms of access and participation, it is necessary to analyze the possibility of parties having limited access and participation. In observational performance, all students must get equal opportunities for practicing the basic competence. Likewise, in reporting activities, all students must have the same experience. In terms of control, those who have weak control or self bargaining should receive more attention. In practical activities related to humans or animals, there are times when female students have unusual, inappropriate, or disgusted feelings that must be avoided. If there is an unjust practice of competence, students will not benefit the same. Learning objectives can be formulated according to the results of the analysis. The formulation of objectives must strengthen the involvement of all students, including women in the practice of competence. Therefore, the formulation of learning objectives can be made explicit for this purpose, for example "Every student (male and female) can identify synergistic and antagonistic muscle work through careful observation of media activities." The statement every student (male and female) should be emphasized because basic competence is often gender biased.

The basic competences of Indonesian Language and Art and Craft subjects are also prone to gender bias. In fact, all students, both male and female, should be allowed to observe an object. All students, both male and female, should be allowed to get involved in presentation activities and classroom discussion. Because of the patriarchal tradition in Indonesia, the discussion leaders are generally men. In such conditions, learning objectives can be explicitly stated that presentations must be done by all students. Therefore, the learning objective should emphasize the point, for example, by stating that all students present the results of the group discussion. Likewise, even though women are considered more skilled and more organized, craft work or embroidering

should not be limited to female students, but should be done by all students without exception.

### 3.2. Gender Responsive Learning Materials

Learning materials play an important role in the teaching and learning process. Learning materials develop perceptions that shape values in the minds of students. Gender responsive learning materials are learning materials that teach/treat/describe justice and equity to students. The aspects of gender, economy, age, disability, caste/ethnicity, language or a combination of these dimensions with all conditions must not limit students in gaining access, participation, control, and benefits from various aspects of life and from the sources of science technology knowledge and information.

Gender responsive learning materials depict dynamic human portraits in relevant cultural settings and contexts. For instance, both women and men can become experts in information and technology and can do various household chores together or alone, and someone with a certain disability can become a professional in a field.

Gender-oriented learning materials must leave false stereotypes, must not perpetuate gender stereotypes, and must encourage all students to maximize their potential by cooperating and collaborating with other students. The integration of gender insight into learning materials can start from the selection of good materials. Teachers of the Indonesian Language subject, for example, can select texts or stories that are not gender biased or patriarchal, such as stories that tell about beautiful women who are obedient to men who are strong and dominant. Among these stories are Indonesian folklore which, according to Soedjiono (2006), shows the unworthiness of women as a role model. Folklore contains women's excessive passivity in dealing with problems and strong dependence on men.

Stories chosen as learning materials should be stories that are gender neutral and that can promote gender equity. Female characters can be highlighted for example by emphasizing on their tenacity in adapting to the environment and creatively finding a solution to an issue. Conversely, men should not always be described as dominant in solving problems, unbeatable, and wealthy. Stories can be balanced so that women are also shown as intelligent, responsive, and well driven.

Language use must also be considered in developing learning materials. Vocabulary that is identical to a certain gender can be used only as needed. In the Natural Science subject, the use of vocabulary is emphasized in scientific vocabulary that has no particular connotation, for example when the teacher explains about human organs.

Gender bias in language can be seen in bad labeling or a negative view of one particular sex (Macaluso, 2016). Negative labeling certainly harms the labeled group. Therefore, negative labeling, such as women are neat, boys are noisy, girls are shopping maniacs, should not be found in learning materials.

Gender bias in language can occur as an implication of the existence of certain fields that are associated with certain sexes. For example, beauty is associated with women, automotive topics are identical with men, and so on. Therefore, in the text-based Indonesian Language subject, a variety of topics must be chosen so that the language used is also diverse.

To make language more gender-neutral, a text writer should be objective and multi-perspective. Certain vocabulary may indeed be identical with one sex, but language must still be presented as a tool to express objective thoughts and feelings.

Gender responsive learning materials must also use gender-neutral examples, illustrations and drawings. Illustrations in the Indonesian Language subject that corroborate the story must also be considered to avoid a potential gender bias. "Steps to make crafts" can be picture-less or presented with a balanced figure of men and women.

### 3.3. Gender Responsive Learning Activities

Learning process is key because it determines the achievement of attitude, knowledge, and skill competences. These competences will be achieved if learning process is implemented properly and correctly, including by considering gender aspects. Gender responsive learning activities hold the following principles: (1) equal opportunities for all students (without exception) to participate in learning activities, (2) equal opportunities for all students (without exception) to strengthen their motivation, (3) equal opportunities for all students (without exception) to achieve learning objectives, and (4) equal access to learning.

By considering these four principles, learning can fulfill the needs of students according to gender and student conditions as well as create security, comfort, and warmth for all students. Learning must encourage all students to create positive relationships by mutual respect, cooperation and freedom from violence in its various forms (Zahro and Sulistyorini, 2010).

Gender responsive learning strategies must explicitly facilitate the different learning trends of male and female learners. Grouping and seating arrangements must be made so that male and female students have equal access to learning (teaching materials,

media, and teachers). The access to learning resources and media must be equal to male and female students.

Gender bias in learning activities can also occur due to teacher interpretation of gender-unresponsive lesson plans. Therefore, lesson plans need to include operational instructions on how a non-biased activity can be carried out. Both male and female students should experience practicing the learning competences. These experiences should not only be represented by one or several students or a group of students from a certain sex group. When carrying out an animal experiment, for example, only male students can participate because this activity is considered more suitable for boys rather than for girls.

## 4. Conclusions

There should be clear instructions on how to carry out gender responsive learning activities so that all students, both male and female students, can have an equal opportunity to participate in the learning process, such as becoming the leader of a discussion group. By doing so, student and teacher awareness of how to build a good relationship can be awakened. Instructions for group formation also need to consider the aspects of gender. How to form a group should be mentioned in the lesson plans, for example by stating that “you can work with the student who sits next to you” (men with men, women with women) depending on the type of activity done in the classroom.

The procedures of how to perform gender responsive learning activities must be written explicitly so that all students can have equal access to practicing the learning competences or to becoming the leader of a group. A learning activity that involves men and women must also be based on social ethics.

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