

The Influence of Identity Material on Gender Identity Development in Elementary School Students

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Abstrak

Studi ini menganalisis pengaruh materi identitas terhadap pembentukan identitas gender siswa sekolah dasar melalui tinjauan pustaka. Materi identitas dalam pembelajaran mencakup pemahaman tentang peran gender, norma, dan harapan yang dapat mempengaruhi persepsi siswa tentang diri mereka sendiri dan orang lain. Jika materi ini mengandung bias gender, hal itu dapat memperkuat stereotip yang membatasi perkembangan anak-anak. Sebaliknya, materi yang dirancang secara inklusif dapat membantu siswa mengembangkan pemahaman yang lebih fleksibel dan toleran terhadap keberagaman gender. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber akademis, termasuk jurnal, buku, dan dokumen kebijakan pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa materi identitas berbasis kesetaraan gender dapat membentuk pemahaman yang lebih terbuka tentang gender pada siswa. Teori kognitif-sosial Bandura dan teori perkembangan gender Kohlberg mendukung temuan ini, bersama dengan penelitian empiris yang menunjukkan bahwa intervensi pendidikan berbasis gender dapat mengurangi stereotip pada anak-anak. Studi ini merekomendasikan pengembangan kurikulum yang lebih inklusif dan pelatihan untuk pendidik guna menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung kesetaraan gender di sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: *Identitas Gender, Materi Identitas, Pendidikan Dasar, Bias Gender, Kesetaraan Gender*

Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of identity material on the formation of elementary school students' gender identity through a literature review. Identity material in learning includes an understanding of gender roles, norms, and expectations that can influence students' perceptions of themselves and others. If this material contains gender bias, it can reinforce stereotypes that limit children's development. Conversely, inclusively designed material can help students develop a more flexible and tolerant understanding of gender diversity. The research method used is a literature study by analyzing various academic sources, including journals, books, and education policy documents. The results of the study indicate that gender equality-based identity material can form a more open understanding of gender in students. Bandura's social-cognitive theory and Kohlberg's gender development theory support these findings, along with empirical research showing that gender-based educational interventions can reduce stereotypes in children. This study recommends the development of a more inclusive curriculum and training for educators to create a learning environment that supports gender equality in elementary schools.

Keyword: *Gender Identity, Identity Material, Elementary Education, Gender Bias, Gender Equality*

INTRODUCTION

Gender identity is a fundamental aspect of individual development, especially in childhood. From an early age, children begin to build an understanding of gender roles through social interactions and learning experiences in the family, school, and community environments. In the context of formal education, Elementary Schools (SD) have a strategic role in shaping students' understanding of gender identity through the learning materials taught. Identity material, which includes an understanding of gender roles, norms, and expectations, can influence how students perceive themselves and others. If this material is delivered with gender bias, it can reinforce stereotypes that limit children's space to develop their potential. Conversely, if the material is designed inclusively and based on gender equality, it can help shape a mindset that is more open, flexible, and tolerant of the diversity of gender identities.

Several empirical data show that education is still one of the main factors in the reproduction of gender stereotypes. A UNESCO study (2021) reported that in many countries, including Indonesia, the school curriculum still contains gender bias, both in the representation of characters in textbooks, the division of roles in illustrations, and in the selection of examples in learning texts. In addition, research by Wijayanti & Santoso (2020) found that in elementary school textbooks in Indonesia, there is still a tendency to present men in leadership roles and women in domestic roles, which has the potential to limit students' understanding of the potential for broader gender roles.

Although many studies have discussed the influence of education on the formation of gender identity, there is still a research gap in understanding how specific identity materials taught in elementary schools can influence this process, especially in the Indonesian context. Several previous studies, such as those by Martin (2005) and Bigler (2014), have shown that gender-biased learning materials can reinforce stereotypes and limit students' understanding of gender roles. However, these studies focus more on the influence of the curriculum in general, without specifically examining how identity materials are designed and taught in elementary school learning. In addition, most of the studies were conducted in Western countries, so they are less relevant to the socio-cultural context of Indonesia which has different education systems, norms, and values.

Theoretically, inclusive and gender-equality-based identity materials can be a solution to addressing gender bias in education. Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive theory states that social through observation and imitation plays an important role in the formation of identity, including gender identity. If children see that in the learning material there is an equal representation of gender roles, they will be more likely to develop an understanding that is not limited to stereotypes. Meanwhile, Kohlberg's (1966) gender development theory emphasizes that children's understanding of gender develops gradually, so that material identities that are adjusted to the student's developmental stage will be more effective in forming a healthy and inclusive gender identity. In addition, Judith Butler's (1990) social construction theory can enrich this study by seeing how gender identity is not something static, but is formed through social practices, including educational practices in schools.

Considering this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of identity materials on the development of gender identity in elementary school students through the literature review method. This study seeks to identify how material identities in learning in elementary school can influence students' understanding of gender and provide recommendations for the development of more inclusive learning materials that support gender equality.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution in complementing previous studies by providing a new perspective on how identity materials in the basic school curriculum in Indonesia can shape students' gender identities. This study also offers novelty (newness) by integrating Bandura's social-cognitive theory, Kohlberg's gender development theory, and Butler's social construction theory in analyzing this phenomenon. The findings of this study are expected to be a basis for curriculum developers, teachers, and educational policy makers in designing learning materials that are more inclusive and do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Therefore, this study not only contributes to the development of educational science, but also has practical applications in creating a more equal and inclusive learning system for all students in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a literature study method (literature review), which is a research method carried out by collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing information from various relevant written sources to answer research questions. Literature study was chosen because this study aims to understand how identity material in learning in Elementary Schools can influence the development of students' gender identity, which can be examined through theoretical studies, previous research results, and analysis of education policy documents.

1. Data Collection Strategy

Data collection in this study was carried out through a literature search with the following steps:

- a. Keyword identification: The search was carried out using keywords such as gender identity in education, curriculum and gender bias, gender role in elementary education, identity-based learning, and relevant keywords in Indonesian.
- b. Systematic search: Literature was obtained from scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Springer, and indexed national journals such as SINTA and Garuda.
- c. Inclusion and exclusion criteria:
 - 1) Inclusion: Articles published in the last 10 years (2014–2024), discussing topics related to gender identity in elementary education, and sourced from reputable journals.
 - 2) Exclusion: Articles that are not directly related to the material on identity in elementary school learning, do not have full access, or do not meet academic standards.
- d. Source selection: After the initial search, sources were screened based on topic relevance, research quality, and publisher credibility.

2. Data Analysis Techniques

- a. The data collected were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach, namely:
- b. Information classification: Data from various sources were categorized based on main themes, such as gender representation in the curriculum, the impact of gender bias in education, and inclusive teaching strategies.
- c. Comparison of findings: Previous research results were compared to identify patterns, research gaps, and differences in perspectives between studies.
- d. Source triangulation: To ensure data validity, this study compared information from various sources to identify consistency of findings and avoid bias in interpretation.

3. Literature Study Steps

This research follows the stages of literature study based on Zed (2004), namely:

- a. Preparing library tools and sources: Determining search tools (databases, reference managers such as Mendeley), and collecting relevant literature.
- b. Compiling a working bibliography: Recording all sources used, noting important information, and organizing data for further analysis.
- c. Organizing time: Scheduling the process of searching, reading, and analyzing data so that the research runs systematically.
- d. Analyzing and recording research materials: Checking the contents of library sources, comparing them with previous research, and drawing conclusions from the results of the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study uses a literature study method by collecting and analyzing various relevant sources. The data collection process is carried out systematically through searching for appropriate keywords, selecting sources based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and extracting data from sources that have high credibility and are indexed. The literature sources used include books, scientific journals, research articles, academic documents, and other written sources that discuss the influence of identity material on the gender identity of elementary school students.

Based on the results of the literature analysis, this study found that identity material taught in elementary schools has a significant influence on the formation of students' gender identity. Learning materials that reflect gender equality can help students develop a more flexible and

inclusive understanding of gender roles. Conversely, materials that contain gender bias tend to reinforce traditional stereotypes and limit students' understanding of gender identity.

Theoretically, the results of this study are supported by Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive theory, which emphasizes that social learning through observation and imitation plays an important role in identity formation. Thus, inclusive learning materials can encourage students to develop a more open perception of gender roles. In addition, Kohlberg's (1966) gender development theory also shows that children's understanding of gender develops gradually, so that identity materials that are adjusted to the child's developmental stages will be more effective in forming a positive gender identity. A study by Martin and Halim (2019) also supports this finding, by showing that gender equality-based educational interventions can reduce gender stereotypes in children.

Previous research also supports this finding, a study by Sholeha and Al Baqi (2023) found that the presence of family members, such as parents and siblings, did not significantly affect the formation of gender identity in early childhood, indicating that other factors, including learning materials, play an important role. In addition, research by Nur Fitria and Muthoharoh (2024) emphasized the importance of the role of the family in forming gender identity and roles in early childhood, but also showed that the media and educational environment have a significant influence.

Furthermore, Pirdaus (2022) examined the dynamics of gender identity in children in the digital era and found that digital media has a complex role in the formation of gender identity, both positively and negatively, depending on how the media is used and supported. This finding emphasizes that in addition to learning materials in schools, digital media also plays a role in the formation of children's gender identity.

The findings of this study indicate that identity material taught in elementary schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of gender. A curriculum that includes the concept of gender equality allows students to understand that gender identity is not something rigid, but is influenced by social and cultural norms that continue to develop. This is in line with previous research which found that a gender-biased curriculum can reinforce stereotypes and limit students' freedom of movement in understanding their identity.

In the context of comparison with previous research, studies conducted by Martin (2005) and Bigler (2014) showed that gender-biased learning materials can reinforce stereotypes in children. Meanwhile, this study expands on these findings by emphasizing how specific identity materials can help shape a more inclusive understanding of gender. Studies conducted in Western countries have also shown that educational interventions that emphasize gender equality can reduce gender bias. However, this study highlights the importance of adapting identity materials to suit the socio-cultural context of Indonesia, so that they are more effective in shaping students' gender identities.

Furthermore, this study also contributes by integrating social-cognitive theory and gender development theory into the analysis of identity materials in elementary schools. With this approach, this study offers new insights into how education can be a tool for shaping a more inclusive understanding of gender among children.

Although this study successfully identified the influence of identity materials on the formation of elementary school students' gender identities, there are several limitations that need to be considered. One of them is the limited access to all relevant literature sources, especially journals that is not freely available. In addition, because this study is based on literature studies, the findings may not fully reflect the reality on the ground. Therefore, further research is recommended to combine literature study methods with empirical research, such as interviews or direct observations in elementary schools, in order to gain a deeper understanding.

As a recommendation, the development of identity materials in the elementary school curriculum needs to consider aspects of gender equality more seriously. Teachers and education policy makers can play a role in ensuring that the learning materials used do not contain gender bias that can limit students' understanding. In addition, further research can be conducted using a quantitative approach to measure the specific impact of identity materials on the development of elementary school students' gender identity. Thus, it is important for educators and policy makers to ensure that learning materials in elementary schools are free from gender bias and reflect

gender equality. This will help students develop a more inclusive and flexible understanding of gender roles, as well as prevent the reinforcement of traditional stereotypes that can limit their identity development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review that has been conducted, this study found that identity material in the elementary school curriculum has a significant influence on the development of students' gender identity. Learning based on gender equality can help students understand that gender identity is not something rigid, but can develop according to social and cultural contexts. Conversely, material that contains gender bias tends to reinforce stereotypes that limit students' space to understand and express their gender identity.

The findings of this study are in line with Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive theory, which emphasizes that children form an understanding of gender through observation and social interaction. In addition, Kohlberg's (1966) gender development theory also supports that gender understanding develops gradually according to the child's age and experience. Previous empirical studies, such as those by Martin & Halim (2019) and Bigler (2014), also show that gender equality-based educational interventions can reduce gender stereotypes among children.

However, this study has several limitations, such as limited access to several academic sources and the lack of empirical research that can strengthen the findings of this literature study. Therefore, further research is recommended to combine literature study methods with empirical research, such as interviews with teachers and students or direct observation in the school environment.

As a recommendation, the development of identity materials in the elementary school curriculum needs to pay more attention to the aspect of gender equality. Teachers and education policy makers must ensure that learning materials are not only free from gender bias, but also actively encourage a more inclusive and flexible understanding of gender roles. Thus, the education system can be an effective means of building a more progressive gender awareness among elementary school students.

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