



The Teachers' Perceptions of Religion-Based Gender Concepts in Early Childhood Education Institutions: The Gender-Responsive Education Implementation

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Abstract

This study examines the understanding of gender concepts by early childhood education teachers with religious backgrounds from specific religious-based school environments in Yogyakarta. This study aims to investigate gender issues in education, especially in Early Childhood Education. This study generally aims to analyze the implementation of gender-responsive education in PAUD, while the specific objective is to describe the influence of teachers with certain religious backgrounds on the implementation and the influence of teachers' perceptions of gender concepts on the implementation. This study uses a quantitative cross-sectional survey method. The population in this study was all PAUD teachers in two sub-districts in Yogyakarta, totaling 52 PAUD teachers. A stratified cluster random sampling technique was conducted in two stages. Data was collected using closed questionnaires tested empirically for validity and reliability. The analysis techniques in this study were simple linear regression analysis and multiple linear regression, which had previously met the prerequisite tests for normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity. The results of the study indicate that: (1) There is an influence of the background of teachers who teach in religious-based schools on the learning carried out by these teachers in the classroom; (2) The teacher's perspective or perception has an influence on the implementation of gender-responsive education in the PAUD where the teacher works; (3) There is an influence of different religious backgrounds on the teacher's perception of gender concepts on the implementation of gender-responsive education in PAUD.

Keywords: Teacher perception, gender concept, teacher religion, gender responsive education.

Introduction

The issue of gender equality has been widely studied worldwide. These studies include the division of gender roles and the opportunities for men and women to fulfill their rights in various aspects of life, such as education and employment. Indonesia, with its patriarchal culture that places men above women, has yet to keep pace with developments in gender equality thinking. Data shows that Indonesia's gender development is suboptimal, with the highest level of gender inequality among ASEAN countries (Katadata, 2021b). Acting in ways created by culture and violating them will be punished.

Traditions that have been passed down through generations are difficult to change. One way to break the chain of outdated cultures is through education. Education should not discriminate against students, including based on gender, to ensure equitable and non-discriminatory education. UNESCO also believed that gender education can optimize

students' potential in their diversity and contribute to ending harmful gender attitudes, practices, and norms, thus fostering an equal, just, and inclusive society.

This gender inequality occurs at various levels of education, starting with early childhood. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Indonesia is considered unequal in curriculum, teacher-student interactions, and play (Zulkarnaini & Adriany, 2021). However, gender awareness is crucial to instill in early childhood through gender-responsive education. Children who receive gender-responsive education early on will gain a foundation in gender equality, including respecting others regardless of gender. These habits can be acquired because the influence of gender stereotypes on motivation, from a developmental perspective, begins during preschool and intensifies through late childhood (Master et al., 2021).

Given the urgency of providing gender-responsive education from an early age, the role of teachers, especially early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, is crucial. A teacher's positive perception of gender can provide equality in access, control, participation, and benefits for both male and female students (Wijanarko et al., 2022). Teachers are the figures who interact most frequently with students at school, so the material they deliver, how they provide it, and their spontaneous behaviours contribute to shaping students' mindsets and behaviors. The role of educators in early childhood education, as researched in Kober Tunas Bangsa, was not explicitly addressed in specific materials or themes, but demonstrated through role models, familiarization, and non-discriminatory treatment of students (Hasanah, 2019).

Many factors can influence teachers' classroom learning. The emergence of religiously based schools is widespread, enabling teachers to teach according to the school's culture. Gender practices in early childhood education (PAUD) stem from teachers' beliefs about gender, influenced by broader socio-political discourses (Warin & Adriany, 2017). This study sought to examine the understanding of gender concepts among PAUD teachers, reflecting the religious backgrounds of teachers from religiously based schools in Yogyakarta. The research area was chosen because Yogyakarta is the province with the highest gender development index score in Indonesia (Katadata, 2021a). The results of this study will serve as a basis for developing gender-responsive education in PAUD.

Literature review

Gender has a more complex meaning than sex. A deeper understanding of gender relates to the characteristics, values, and roles that differentiate men and women. Herdiansyah (2016) States that gender refers to a set of sociocultural characteristics associated with men and women. According to Santrock Santrock (2019) Gender refers to a person's characteristics as male or female. Gender refers to the sociocultural classification of men and women based on societal values and norms (Hanum, 2018).

Men and women have different roles, both biologically (sex roles) and socially (gender roles). Sex roles are inherent to everyone and cannot be changed, while gender roles are not. Gender roles vary across time and social groups (Mlama et al., 2005). According to Alice Eagly (Santrock, 2019), gender differences result from the different roles assigned to men and women. UNICEF notes that most cultures worldwide hold women as having lower status and power than men and control fewer resources (Santrock, 2019). When women adapt to

lower status and power roles in society, they exhibit a more cooperative and less dominant profile than men.

Gender development combines individual learning and external factors such as broader social and cultural contexts. Children learn to behave according to gender roles or categories through observation, imitation, and modeling. Researchers identify four key agents in sex role socialization: family, peers, school, and the media (Skelton et al., 2012).

During early childhood, children are in families consisting of parents, grandparents, and other family members, who are the central intermediaries for sex role classification (Hurlock, 1980). Children at this age enter a period where they imitate what they see from adults or their surroundings. A research review by Bronstein concluded that the influence of mothers and fathers is on Mothers' socialization strategies and Fathers' socialization strategies (Santrock, 2019). Mothers in many cultures socialize their daughters to be more obedient and responsible than their sons and limit their daughters' autonomy more, which is the mothers' socialization strategy. Meanwhile, Fathers' socialization strategies are when fathers pay more attention to sons than daughters, engage in more activities with their sons, and make more efforts to promote their sons' intellectual development.

Regardless of gender, education provided by parents or embedded by teachers in learning, peers quickly join in the process of responding to and modeling masculine and feminine behavior (Martin, Fabes, and Hanish; Rose and Smith; Zozuls et al. in Santrock, 2019). Peers widely reward and punish gendered behavior. Children's peers have different gender parenting patterns than their children and will act according to the education instilled in them. Peers can behave in both masculine and feminine ways, influencing children in the same group. Peers can reprimand and take over things considered masculine or feminine tendencies. Indirectly, children gain gender perspectives through their peers.

If children attend preschool or childcare centers, teachers and other caregivers play a significant role in gender role classification (Hurlock, 1980). Preschool children spend most of their day at school with teachers and peers. While at school, children do not receive serious stimulation or learning that is intentionally designed to achieve gender equity and perfect and appropriate gender mastery (Herdiansyah, 2016).

Children attending early childhood education (PAUD) spend most of their day with teachers and friends. While at school, children do not receive serious stimulation or learning that is intentionally designed to achieve gender equity and perfect and appropriate gender mastery for children (Herdiansyah, 2016). Schools require a holistic approach involving various interventions to create gender-responsive schools. A gender-responsive school is one where the academic, social, physical, and surrounding community environments consider the specific needs of girls and boys. A holistic intervention package may include certain elements (Mlama et al., 2005).

Gender responsive education considers the needs of both boys and girls in teaching and learning. Teachers are tasked with planning, designing, organizing, and conditioning learning from beginning to end according to the needs of the children. Gender responsive learning planning requires teachers to do several things, namely (1) Reviewing teaching materials for gender responsiveness; (2) Choosing teaching methodologies that ensure equal participation between girls and boys; (3) Considering classroom arrangements; (4) Managing gender

constraints for learning in the classroom; and (5) Making time for adequate feedback from both girls and boys (Mlama et al., 2005).

This study focuses on gender equality in education, particularly at the early childhood education (PAUD) level. The subjects were PAUD teachers, and the study focused on their perceptions of gender and the implementation of gender-responsive education. Several previous studies are relevant to this research regarding the subjects and variables in this study. These previous studies were taken from 2019, 2020, and 2022.

Setiawan Wijanarko, Luthfiah Nurlaela, Maspiyah, and Tri Rijanto (2022) Conducted a study entitled "Teachers' Perceptions of Gender towards Gender-Responsive Learning in Tourism Vocational High Schools." This study aimed to determine teachers' perceptions of gender towards gender-responsive learning. The results of this study indicate that teachers' perceptions at SMKN 8 Surabaya are positive and can positively impact gender-responsive learning. This study and future research share similarities in their research approach and data collection techniques, namely, quantitative using closed-ended questionnaires. The difference is that the research subjects are teachers who teach at different educational levels. In addition, the study will also analyze the religious backgrounds of the teachers.

Tshewang Dorji (2020) In his research entitled "Awareness and Practice of Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A Case Study of Senior High Schools under Thimphu Thromde, Bhutan." This study examines how teachers know and adopt gender responsive pedagogy in their daily learning process. The study results indicate that teachers know little about gender and gender responsive pedagogy. This research has similarities with the research to be conducted, namely, both examine the implementation of gender responsive education carried out by teachers. The difference between this research and the research to be conducted is the level of education the teachers teach, namely, senior high school teachers. In contrast, the research concerns early childhood education level teachers.

Roudlotul Islamiyah and Suparno (2019) In their study entitled "Teachers' Knowledge in Early Childhood Gender Education." This study aimed to determine the influence of teachers' knowledge on implementing gender education in early childhood. The final finding of this study was that there was a significant influence of teachers' knowledge about early childhood gender education on the implementation of gender education. The similarity between this study and the current study lies in the variables examined, namely the knowledge or perceptions of early childhood teachers and their implementation in early childhood gender education. Meanwhile, the difference is that the current study also considers teachers' religious backgrounds in their perceptions and implementation of gender education.

Research method

This research is quantitative and uses a survey method. This method was chosen because the researchers wanted to collect sample data from a population to determine the influence of the dependent and independent variables. Teachers' religious backgrounds and perceptions of gender concepts were the independent variables in this study, while the implementation of gender-responsive education was the dependent variable. Quantitative

research uses numerical measurements, which are then calculated and analyzed to find generalizations with predictive value.

The research sample was taken using purposive random sampling. It consists of teachers who teach in religious-based institutions, namely Islamic or non-Islamic. The number of samples in this study was determined using purposive random sampling. The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage determined the regional sample, and the second stage determined the respondent sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019). The research area sample was selected from five districts, two of which were Yogyakarta City and Sleman Regency. The next stage was determining the respondents, with the criteria being teachers who teach in Islamic and non-Islamic institutions. The final number of respondents was 52, consisting of 27 respondents from non-Islamic institutions and 25 from Islamic institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY).

Data were collected through a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-5. A scale of 1 indicates strongly disagree, and a scale of 5 indicates strongly agree. The questionnaire was used to determine teachers' mastery of gender concepts and implementation of gender-responsive education. The variables measured in this study consisted of one independent variable, namely teachers' perceptions of gender concepts, and the dependent variable, namely the implementation of gender-responsive education in early childhood education.

The instrument for teachers' gender concept perception was developed from key agents of gender role socialization (Skelton et al., 2012) and Jelena Z. Maksimovic and Jeena S. Osmanovic (2019). The indicators for measuring this are (1) Relationships with coworkers (of the same or different genders); (2) Self-acceptance and self-evaluation; (3) Self-satisfaction and job satisfaction; (4) Teaching; and (5) Initiative and openness. While Penina Mlama, Marema Dioun, Herbert Makoye, Lornah Murage, Margaret Wagah and Rose Washika developed the dependent variable instrument (Mlama et al., 2005). The indicators of this variable include (1) school facilities, (2) school programs, and (3) classroom learning.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive techniques and parametric statistical analysis, namely linear regression. The descriptive technique aims to determine the characteristics of the respondents. Meanwhile, linear regression begins with a test of the requirements assumptions and aims to answer the research questions. Parametric statistical analysis was conducted using the application IBM SPSS Statistics 24, using simple linear regression analysis to determine the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable and multiple linear regression to determine their influence simultaneously.

Result and Discussion

Respondent characteristics were mapped into several categories, another factor overlooked in this study. One characteristic used as a variable in this study is religion. The respondent characteristics described include religion, gender, highest level of education, and length of service. The 52 respondents in this study came from 13 different institutions. Religious differences were only categorized into Islam and non-Islam, with 25 Muslim respondents from Islamic-based institutions and 27 non-Muslim respondents from non-Islamic-based institutions.

Based on the data on respondents' gender characteristics, most respondents were female. Of the 52 respondents who filled in their gender information, only one was male.

Another characteristic was the respondents' highest education level, with 19 having completed a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (PAUD) in line with their professional field. In contrast, 15 others had completed a bachelor's degree in a non-PAUD field, and the remaining 18 did not state their highest level of education. In addition to education and work experience, the length of service was the majority, having taught for over 10 years, with 37 teachers. This characteristic was another factor that was ignored in the research data analysis.

Data analysis was conducted to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable and the simultaneous effect of two independent variables on the dependent variable. The effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable was determined through simple linear regression analysis. The independent variables in this study were religion (X1) and teachers' perceptions of gender concepts (X2). Meanwhile, the dependent variable in this study was the implementation of gender-responsive education in early childhood education (PAUD). The effects sought through this simple linear regression analysis were the influence of religion on the implementation of gender-responsive education in PAUD and the influence of teachers' perceptions of gender concepts on the implementation of gender-responsive education in PAUD.

Table 1. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	43.803	6.557		6.680	.000
Religion	-2.616	.889	-.385	-2.945	.005
Self-Concept	.086	.113	.099	.758	.452

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of the influence of Religion (X1) on the Implementation of Gender Responsive Education (Y) and Self-Concept (X2) on the Implementation of Gender Responsive Education (Y). Decision-making is based on the Sig. Value. If the Sig. Value is greater than or equal to the Sig. Value < 0.05 indicates an influence between X and Y. According to Table 1, the significance is known. The value of the variable "Religion" is $0.005 < 0.05$, indicating a significant influence of the variable "Religion" (X1) on the implementation of gender-responsive education (Y)—meanwhile, the Sig. The value of the variable "Perception of the Concept of Gender" is significant, with a p-value of $0.452 < 0.05$; it can be concluded that there is no influence of the variable "Perception of Gender Concept" (X2) on the implementation of gender-responsive education (Y). In addition, Table 1 contains information about the direction of the influence of X on Y. The variable X that has an influence is variable X1, and based on Table 1, the regression coefficient (B) on the variable "Religion" (X1) is negative, so it can be said that the direction

of the influence of variable X1 on Y is negative. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient (B) shows that for every one-point increase in the level of religion (X1), the level of implementation of gender-responsive education (Y) will decrease by 2.616.

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the influence of both independent variables simultaneously on the dependent variable. The independent are intended. The variables in this study are religion (X1) and teachers' perceptions of gender concepts (X2). Meanwhile, there is only one dependent variable (Y), namely the implementation of gender-responsive education in PAUD. This study's multiple linear regression test results are as follows: Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Test						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	93.264	2	46.632	4.727	.013 ^b
	Residual	483.428	49	9.866		
	Total	576.692	51			
a. Dependent Variable: Gender Responsive Implementation						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Gender Concept, Religion						

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the influence of religion (X1) and perception of gender concepts (X2) on the implementation of gender-responsive education (Y). Decision-making is based on the Sig value. If the value of Sig. < 0.05 means there is an influence between X1 and X2 on Y. Based on Table 2, it can be seen from the Sig. Value of 0.013, namely < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is an influence of the variables of religion (X1) and self-concept perception (X2) together on the implementation of gender responsive education (Y).

Table 3. The magnitude of the influence of X on Y					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.402 ^a	.162	.128	3.141	2.244
a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Gender Concept, Religion					
b. Dependent Variable: Gender Responsive Implementation					

Table 3 provides information about the magnitude of the influence of X1 and X2 simultaneously on Y. The magnitude of this influence can be seen through the R Square value, which is 0.162. If converted into a percentage, the influence of X1 and X2 on Y is 16.2%.

The Influence of Teachers' Religious Background on the Implementation of Gender-Responsive Education in Early Childhood Education

Gender-responsive child Education in a religious context involves integrating the principles of equality and gender equity in religious Education environments, while respecting faith-based values. Each religion has its values, but all religions carry positive values. Schools that instill specific religious values in children are a key consideration for parents when choosing a school, ensuring their children can properly instill the values of their religion. These values also encompass values relating to others of the same gender and different genders.

Gender bias is becoming difficult to avoid in schools because the culture has previously normalized it. Gender Inequality responsiveness is a gender system in which men are superior to women. Gender responsiveness encompasses equal access, an inclusive approach, gender-responsive implementation, and gender-responsive impact (Anis Zohriah, Hikmatul Fauzjiah, Adnan, 2023). This concept can be included in the school curriculum and religious material.

Faith-based schools have specific religious beliefs as their guiding principles, unlike public schools, which accommodate various religions and thus take a compromise approach to creating a learning environment for students of all faiths. Each school has the right to choose the principles and values it believes in to instill in its children. Parents must select schools according to their beliefs and value *each* family as a place for their children to learn.

Children experience the formation of gender understanding from an early age. Through the lens of post-structuralist feminism and queer Theory, children actively develop their understanding of gender and construct it for themselves and others (Adolph, 2016). How children see themselves and others of the same or different genders is a result of their knowledge and experiences from an early age. Children's knowledge and experiences become data in their brains, guiding their actions.

People in the early childhood environment can potentially promote knowledge of broad gender Education for children. It is important to note the consistency of all stakeholders in creating a gender-responsive and expansive environment. Early childhood environments that are consistent, supportive, and cooperative in their approach to gender tend to create contexts that promote pro-diversity spaces (Chapman, 2022). Children can see diversity as an opportunity and a positive thing, not a threat that must be avoided or eliminated.

Typical environment. Consistently instilling religious values plays a role in shaping children's understanding of gender. The extent of this influence can vary depending on the individual institution and its human resources. This study examined the religious background of teachers and schools without examining the religious values they uphold and implement in schools. The results showed that teachers' religious beliefs and the schools' beliefs as the basis for learning influence how teachers implement gender-responsive Education for children.

The Influence of Teachers' Perception of Gender Concepts on the Implementation of Gender-Responsive Education in Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

Teachers tasked with educating children at school were themselves students. The knowledge gained through Education is supported by their teaching experience, thus elaborating both into comprehensive material to be presented to children. Teachers can select and adapt materials and teaching methods to the environment and the students. The extensive knowledge and skills of teachers trained through higher Education have the potential to positively and effectively influence children's future development (La Paro et al., 2018).

Teachers acquire knowledge and mastery of material through teacher training and integrating their educator experiences. This integrated knowledge framework encompasses three approaches: *knowing why, how, and what. All of this is an effort to build an in-depth understanding of the subject* so that teachers' knowledge can be optimized (Adoniou, 2015). Therefore, it is important for teachers to have knowledge and experience and combine them to gain a complete understanding.

The hypothesis test results on teachers' perceptions of gender concepts on implementing gender-responsive Education in early childhood Education (PAUD) showed an effect. This is in line with previous research that examined teachers' knowledge of gender concepts and their application, which was significant, with an effect size of 31.6% (Islamiyah & Suparno, 2019). Some educators may have limited experience in recognizing gender patterns, and their attitudes and beliefs are among the reasons why gender Education is not optimal and affects interactions with children (Filipović, 2018).

The theory teachers acquire constitutes knowledge that needs to be supplemented by direct experience, literacy experiences, and discussions from various sources. Although teachers are responsible for instilling gender concepts in early childhood education (PAUD), collaboration with stakeholders, including parents, is essential to ensure they also have the knowledge and skills to implement gender-responsive education. Beyond the school environment, sex role socialization involves family, peers, and the media (Skelton et al., 2012).

Schools, through teachers, act as intermediaries that introduce and instill gender concepts in children. They need to increase their knowledge of gender concepts. Early childhood is a time of rapid gender development, requiring appropriate guidance and direction. Heywood & Adzajlic (2023) state that children begin to understand that boys will remain boys even if they appear female, and vice versa. Furthermore, they also state that after age five, children have a greater capacity to discuss and understand morals and values, including gender.

Understanding the stages of children's thinking skills is one of the key considerations in instilling gender concepts in children. Teachers, as key players in instilling these concepts in schools, can use the stages of child development as a reference in determining materials and methods for instilling gender concepts in children. The results of this study indicate that the teacher's religious background has a greater influence on the implementation of gender-responsive Education in early childhood Education (PAUD) than the teacher's age.

The Influence of Teachers' Religious Background and Gender Concept Perception on the Implementation of Gender-Responsive Education in Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

The combined influence of the two X variables is 16.2%. This figure ignores various factors beyond teachers' religious backgrounds and gender perceptions. Many other factors influence the formation of children's gender concepts. In addition to the classroom teacher, who interacts directly with children, the broader school landscape, from facilities to policies, can also be a contributing factor beyond this study. This is in line with research showing that school quality benefits girls more than boys in terms of academic achievement and child behavior (Autor et al., 2016). This inequality makes the instilling of gender-responsive Education in children less than optimal.

Early childhood gender concepts develop along with the child's developmental stages and the environment in which they live and attend school. Children actively shape their understanding of gender based on the nature of their social environment and how they think about sex (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Even though they are still young, they still have their considerations when making decisions, such as choosing playmates based on gender (Wainman et al., 2012). The role of teachers in this regard is based on various factors, including teacher self-concept, competency, and mastery of gender concepts. Each teacher needs to utilize these resources to implement gender-responsive Education in early childhood Education. Another survey showed that teachers have attempted to utilize their capacities to create gender-responsive Education (Campbell et al., 2017). Other research states that early childhood Education teachers have promoted fair gender play between boys and girls, but in some challenging cases, gender stereotypes still arise (Lynch, 2015).

The findings of this study confirm that teachers influence children's gender concepts. Teachers' beliefs, such as their religious beliefs and their perceptions of gender concepts, collectively play a significant role in the implementation of gender-responsive Education in early childhood Education (PAUD). However, considering the significant percentage of teachers' influence, it is important to recognize that teachers are not the primary source in shaping children's gender concepts. Various other factors contribute to the development of children's gender concepts. Gender-responsive Education implemented by school teachers is only one factor in developing children's gender concepts. In addition to implementing gender-responsive Education in PAUD, teachers also engage stakeholders to work together to optimize the instillation of gender concepts in children.

Conclusion

The backgrounds of teachers who teach in religious schools influence their teaching in the classroom. The results will help teachers identify their religious backgrounds as a basis for evaluating their teaching methods in the classroom. The impact on collaborative learning with children will be the creation of gender-responsive learning without abandoning religious values.

Teachers' perspectives, or perceptions, regarding gender are based on long-held beliefs. These perspectives influence the implementation of gender-responsive Education in the early childhood Education (PAUD) where they work. The results serve as a reflection for

teachers and schools to develop gender-responsive Education through classroom instruction and general school programs. Children and the next generation who receive gender-responsive Education will feel the impact indirectly.

Different religious backgrounds significantly influence teachers' perceptions of gender concepts and the implementation of gender-responsive education in early childhood education (PAUD). The two variables, namely religious background and teacher perceptions, influence the implementation of gender-responsive Education in PAUD. These two variables have different levels of influence compared to the direct influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Therefore, this study will help understand the factors that influence teachers' implementation of gender-responsive Education for children. This discussion will impact curriculum policy and school management to ensure gender responsiveness.

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