LIMITED GENDER KNOWLEDGE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF 20 TEACHERS OF SDN 28 DAN 43 RAWANG TIMUR PADANG, WEST SUMATERA)

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the lack of gender knowledge of 20 teachers in two primary schools in Padang. It is assumed that teachers in primary schools are important to have gender knowledge. This is because primary schools are the basic education for pupils in building their character and constructing their mindset, especially mindset with gender awareness and gender sensitivity attitude. Thus during learning process, teachers without gender bias and lack of gender knowledge may widely spread the gender sensitivity and gender awareness in order to fight the bias gender and discrimination against women. The research takes qualitative method by using in-depth interview and distribute questioner toward 20 teachers in 2 primary schools. The result showed that most teachers in these two elementary schools lack of knowledge about gender concept. They seem likely difficult to make different among the definition of sex and gender concept. This lack of knowledge to some extent affected the learning process such as prefer to choose boys as chairman in the class, separate boys and girls in several activities. It is recommended in increasing the socialization process of gender knowledge around primary school's teachers.

Keyword: Gender, knowledge, elementary school.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kurangnya pengetahuan gender dari 20 guru di dua sekolah dasar di Padang. Diasumsikan bahwa guru di sekolah dasar penting untuk memiliki pengetahuan gender. Ini karena sekolah dasar adalah pendidikan dasar bagi siswa dalam membangun karakter mereka dan membangun pola pikir mereka, terutama pola pikir dengan kesadaran gender dan sikap sensitivitas gender. Jadi guru yang mengajar tanpa bias gender dan memiliki pengetahuan yang cukup tentang gender memainkan peran penting untuk menyebarkan kepekaan gender dan kesadaran gender secara luas guna melawan bias gender dan diskriminasi terhadap perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan wawancara mendalam dan mendistribusikan kuesioner kepada 20 guru di 2 sekolah dasar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar guru di kedua sekolah dasar ini kurang memiliki pengetahuan tentang konsep gender dan agak sulit untuk membedakan antara definisi jenis kelamin dan konsep gender. Kurangnya pengetahuan sampai batas tertentu mempengaruhi proses pembelajaran karena adanya beberapa bias gender dalam kegiatan sekolah. Disarankan untuk melakukan sosialisasi pengetahuan gender kepada guru sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: Gender, pengetahuan, sekolah dasar.

Introduction

Having less knowledge about gender may bring an impact on discrimination against

women. This discrimination is still widespread across the country; whether in both of developing or developed countries; it is happened continuously and become a global

problem (Saparinah Sadli, 2010). Recently, there have been a number of government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) focused on reducing these gender issues. However, these efforts have shown unfulfilled results. This can be seen from many cases of discrimination that have occurred, especially related to violence against women. Data from the Commission on Women's Rights (Perempuan, 2018) there is increasing number of violence against women around 74% from 2016 to 2017. Compared to data collected in 2016, the cases of violence against women are 259,150 cases and in 2017 became 348,446 cases.

Commission on Women's Rights (*Komnas Perempuan*) also revealed that most cases are domestic violence or in a personal area that is 9,609 cases (71%) of physical, sexual, psychological and physical abuse. The next case in the violence in the public area is 3,528 (26%) in the form of rape, obscenity, harassment, criminal cases, and media violence. Last, violence against women happened in the level of state atmosphere (the state seems to ignore women's right in the form of local evictions- *penggusuran*) has up to 217 (1.8%). The increasing number of discrimination can be said as a mirror of society whose have not enough gender sensitivity to prevent the discrimination and violence against women.

Based on the increasing number of violence, it can be said that discrimination against women still exists in many levels of society. Therefore, gender sensitivity or critical attitude towards gender discrimination is required in order to raise gender awareness and to diminish the gender discriminations. Gender-sensitive attitudes should not only be owned by policymakers in the government level, or

among women activists itself but also from non-government, activist and observers of gender issues and public figure in the community. Gender-sensitive attitudes should also be a part of teachers, especially teachers in primary school. This is because teachers as educators become role models for their students. In line with the name of primary or elementary schools, this school level is a basic place and becoming the first step for children not only for getting formal education that affected their mindset but also for building their character basically.

As teachers play an important role to transfer knowledge, to build students' character, and to be role models for their students, it is important to give the teachers gender knowledge so that they can be gender sensitive. By having gender sensitivity, the teachers in Primary school in Padang (SD) can easily transfer the idea about gender issues. They may implement their gender knowledge through their learning process in the class to the pupils. It can be said that having gender knowledge and transferring it to the pupils is important.

This is because the pupils can absorb the gender knowledge in order to be people with gender awareness and will have mindset justice and will no longer preserve the patriarchy mindset. This article describes and analyzes the knowledge of teachers in two primary schools (SD) on their understanding of gender concepts. It also analyzes the effects of such ignorance on their sensitivity to gender, particularly in the way they teach and transfers knowledge in teaching and learning process.

Method

The research methodology in this article takes qualitative descriptive (Creswell, 2013). The collection of the data is done in two ways; distributed questioners and in-depth interview. The questionnaire distributed toward 20 teachers, consisting of three male teachers and seventeen female teachers. These 20 teachers come from two public elementary schools which totally have 24 teachers including 15 teachers from elementary school of 28 (SDN 28) which consisting of 13 female teachers and 2 male teachers.

Next, SDN 43 with 9 teachers consists of one male teacher and 8 female teachers. The unequal composition of teachers between the sexes male and female is clearly seen in these two primary schools. This reality also happened in many primary schools in Padang; mostly male teachers teach sports lesson and teach Islamic religious education. The rest of the teachers are female teaching who taught various subjects. The second is using an in-depth interview (in-depth interview) toward 5 teachers in two elementary schools consisting of 4 female teachers and one male teacher.

Conceptual Framework

It has been known that gender and sex are two different things but strongly connected to each other. Because of that, some people seem to be misunderstood pertaining to both the definition of sex and gender. Even though these two concepts are connected, but it did not synonym (Tompkins, Cook, Miller, & LePeau, 2017). As Fakih stated that gender is a social construction, determined the roles of male and female throughout social interaction; because of that the gender role may be able to be different in different time and different places and these roles do not a permanent but can be

exchanged (Fakih, 2006). According to American Psychological Association (Psychological, 2012), sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male or female while gender refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that given culture associated with a person's biological sex.

These two different concepts tend to be misunderstood by many people. This also can be seen through some teachers in primary schools in many provinces in Indonesia. This condition leads to a lack of gender awareness and affects gender sensitivity and neglect of gender inequality.

As a result, gender discrimination exists in many different places and different layers of society. Some effort has been done by the Indonesian government such as already enacted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1984. It has ratified through several programs such as Gender Equality (*Pengarusutamaan Gender*).

This program aims to draw all of the public policies regarding women and children's lives with gender issues. Additionally, there is a formal government institution which is called the Ministry of Empowerment of Women and Children (*Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak- KPPA*), formerly called the Ministry of Women's Roles. These formal institution aims to diminish discrimination against women.

Not only government institutions, but non-governmental institutions also active and involved in reducing discrimination against women. This can be seen through some non-governmental organizations in Indonesia, such as the National Women's Rights Committee (*Komnas Perempuan*) and the Women's Crisis

Center (WCC) and other local NGOs, focusing on women's issues.

Furthermore, we already know that the schools with all of the elements attached play an important role in enhancing the character of students and prepare them to face their future. Elementary schools are the place where children build their first attitude. These school not only a space to transfer the knowledge but also to communicate with certain values. The knowledge and values influenced their way of thinking. However, there are many people who hold the patriarchal way of thinking with a tendency to discriminate against women, including elementary school teachers.

As the teachers part of people who growth within the traditional families that common with the different treatment of sons and daughters, to some extent, contributes in developing gender gap in education (Kingdon, 20AD). Additionally, education and social condition of one society are two things that cannot be separate; it is a reciprocal relationship among education and society in which the social condition of one society can be seen through education level of this society (Yamin, 2009). This means that when people tend to have higher education, it is hoped that their society reflects this high level through respecting all people in different layers of society (high, middle and low class). The indication for this situation can be seen through gender awareness in their society.

On this basis, it is important to increase the sensitivity of teachers in order to broaden the knowledge of gender, reduce discrimination against women and convey the true concept of gender.

The Ambiguous of Gender Concept

This research found that the gender knowledge of elementary school teachers are diverse and tends to have less knowledge about gender. When teacher was asked for the term of gender, 17 people (85%) already know the term of gender previously, while 3 people (15%) admitted they have not heard the term gender before.

More detail questions about 'from where they know the word or the term of gender', of 17 teachers 9 of them (53%) answered that they knew about this word from mass media online, including television and radio, while 3 people (18%) claimed to obtain information during seminars, counseling or socialization. The same amount, 3 people claimed to know the gender word from colleagues or other teachers. The other two people respond they heard the word gender incidentally by hearing or seeing the term through casual or occasional conversations in an informal atmosphere and by filling out forms in English that include 'gender' and then they will get instruction to tick male or female.

Variable responses are also observed when 17 teachers are asked how long it takes to know the term or the word gender; the finding showed that 9 people (53%) responded have known the term gender for more than 4 years, even a teacher who is 41 years old already knows since college, which means she already knows more than a dozen years ago. Then less than 5 teachers (30%) answered that they knew the term gender within 2 to 4 years. Next, there are 2 teachers (12%) responded to know the gender for less than a year.

Interestingly, when the concept or definition of gender was asked, there are 10 teachers (59%) respond that gender refers to

biology, something common related to male and female. Next, there are 7 teachers (41%) answered exactly that definition of gender, such as gender is the different roles among male and female due to the socio-cultural construction of local communities. Another question is about God will toward 20 teachers. It is found that 16 teachers say God Will is a God's irreversible provisions. One mentions that God's will is a God's destiny to people and there are 3 teachers answered that all of the irreversible provision can be changed.

Based on that situation, it can be analyzed that on the one hand, ambiguous conceptions is understandable. This is because the teacher's lives are socialized by the idea and values that the roles of men and women are separated and dichotomized. These different roles became a tradition within most communities. The separation roles of those men and women tend to put men in the public sector while women's roles mainly in the domestic sector (Fakih, 2006). Since the different roles of male and female existed in many societies during centuries ago (Budiman, 1985), it brought a big impact on women when they want to do activities in the public domain. They may find many limitations when working in public sectors including opportunities in politics, education, and economic access, and they are hindered by social and cultural issues.

The limitation of women to participate in the public sector can be seen as many women tend to be subordinated and to be marginalized when they doing activities in public space while men in the superior and priority position.

In another hand, education is an institution that supposed to create equality and

justice for people through knowledge and understanding they get during studies. Sociologically, one of education's goals is to change students' attitude, their mindset, and their personality to be better than before (Karsidi, 2013). It also can be said that education's institution is a place to raise gender awareness. Nevertheless, in reality, education institutionally has not fulfilled its goal. Some reasons could be explained, one of them is related to some elements in the schools such as teachers, parents of students, and decision maker in education policies tend to have gender stereotype.

Dawar & Anand (2017) suggest that textbook is primary sources of information to children. Unfortunately, the representation of men and women in the textbook across the world whether in the developed countries or developing countries, mostly consist of gender bias over the years such as in verbal communication, visual and representation of job taking by men and women. All of these gender stereotypes tend to dichotomize the role of male and female which put women in a subordinate position.

Furthermore, research in Java also found that gender discrimination in the textbook robustly existed and it can be divided into form of job description, games and attitude (Darni & Abida, 2017). According to their research, in terms of job descriptions men in the textbook are depicted working in the public space and many kinds of demanding jobs while women's job is cooking, cleaning and anything related to housing staff; in terms of children's game, on the textbook girls are displayed playing with domestic toys while boys play roles such as fireman, police officer, and other masculine roles. In terms of

attitudes, boys are set to be brave while girls should be friendly and sensible.

These gender stereotypes are already accepted by pupils since their early education life and automatically formed the way of student thinking and how they behave. This reality is supported also by the limited knowledge of the teachers about gender. As suggested by Victor & Ombati (2012) that gender inequality is aggravated by the lack of gender sensitivity among the teachers, ineffective teaching and lack of learning resources related to gender issues.

These all examples showed how gender bias existed within the society. One of the reasons can be explained why society put this inferior position toward women cannot be released from the idea of patriarchy mindset. Of course it will not be a problem if it does not create imbalances, but on the contrary, the idea of patriarchy has dominated; and tend to marginalize and discriminate women. They have a double burden or even triple burden. These burdens are a mirror of how gender bias affected women and directly connected with gender bias and less gender knowledge.

Societies might contribute to constructing the idea about men and women have separate roles traditionally. It is common to find men (who tend to be in the public sector) with women's roles (mainly in the domestic sector). It will not be a problem if it does not create imbalances, but on the contrary, the idea of patriarchy has marginalized and discriminated against women.

This situation to some extent provides the different roles that may bring a bad impact

on women when they want to involve in the public space; women are just seen as the second breadwinner when women working outside, while men as the first breadwinner. In many places, women still get less pay than men.

The ambiguous of gender knowledge and bias definition of gender concept by influential educators will ultimately lead to gender discrimination experienced by students. When this happens, of course, this is not good, especially when the teachers transferring of their knowledge to students such as (something common in the many primary schools) introduce students how to write correctly.

They also teach students to read fluently, count correctly and appropriately for the first time. Thus, an understanding of the concept of gender should be implemented by teachers in primary school to meet the target of education as learners who have a basic knowledge of gender-sensitive attitudes.

It is undeniable that schools are the second institution to educate and shape the character of children after the institution of the family; that the goal of civilizing human education began when primary school-aged; children are confidently handed over by their parents to an educational institution called the elementary school (SD).

Elementary school as an educational institution is an organization made up from a number of norms, values of rules and people. Furthermore, school has three functions in order to meet their education goal with gender sensitivity attitude including (Khotimah, 2008); 1) to implement the gender equality in the schools and reduce the discriminations among pupils, 2) to create gender equality among

teachers and people in this primary schools, 3) to reduce the elements that can cause violence and discrimination throughout transferring knowledge and fight for negative stereotype. In order to fulfill this goal, the lack of knowledge about gender and gender-specific attitudes among educators needs to be addressed as they are influenced by the state of mind they already have.

Indeed, the distinction of roles between men and women is not a problem; it is only a matter of knowing when these differences in roles lead to gender inequality or gender discrimination.

Gender Bias in the Learning Process

The lack of knowledge of most teachers in these two elementary schools, to some extent, had an impact on the learning process of students. The research found that the teachers' teaching style tend to have a gender bias. Of 20 teachers, 12 agree that the reality of differences among boys and girls as pupils are needed to pay attention, especially in choosing the chair in the class and in dividing them when doing the class activity. Pertaining to the selection of the chair in the class, it was found that these teachers consider chairman instead of chairwomen. Instead of choosing a girl as a chair, they prefer to choose boys. This can be understood since the teachers are deemed that boys are active and girls tend to passive. This idea occurs because of lack of gender sensitiveness and it leads them to have preferences toward boys to choose them as chairman in the class rather than the girls.

As a teacher, their preference preferably neutral and did not focus on one gender. This is also showed that girls

disadvantages in education even in elementary school existed because of the lack of gender knowledge of their teachers.

The disadvantage of girls in the schools during learning process to some extent can affect the opportunities for girls to broaden their capabilities and competencies. If this situation subsists in the long terms, it is not possible that the Education of 2030 agenda of UNESCO (Psaki, McCarthy, & Mensch, 2018) which focus on education quality by developing and retaining key skill of pupils may be unsuccessful. Thus it is important for teachers to improve their gender knowledge in order to avoid the gender stereotype during their learning process.

Pertaining to the gender differences in the class, out of 20 teachers, 3 teachers abstain did not have an opinion and only 5 teachers seriously mentioned that it is common and it is not a problem when they found male and female students in the class. This different gender did not a dilemma for them in doing class activities. These 5 teachers gave them some instruction did not base on gender but based on students capacities and capabilities.

Another comparison also can be seen through the question of which pupils in the class have problems during classroom study. These problems can be identified in terms of pupils' compliance in the classroom, discipline and meticulously in the classroom. Of 20 teachers, 18 of them recognized that boys are more difficult to be organized in the class. Nevertheless, their experiences tend to showed that the boys dare to appear in front of the class. As mentioned by one teacher

"... Teaching on the subject matter to pupils in elementary school is more

difficult than giving lessons to students in junior or high school or even university. We must be expressive in delivering the subjects in front of the class; otherwise, they tend to do not focus on seeing us. Based on my experience, it seems harder to teach primary school students than universities because we must be more expressive..."¹

The statement above showed the reality and the experiences of one teacher whose teaching the Primary School students. This is not easy; they must have different strategy such as having good communication that can be easily understood by pupils. Not only more expressive in delivering the subject, but they also must be aware of the content of the lesson and the emotional growth of pupils as teenagers. As stated by one of the teachers who teach Biology Subject in sixth grade:

"...In the Grade 6 Biology class, we separated the learning hours of boys and girls because there was a topic pertaining to the physical appearance of women and men. When the teenagers were learning this lesson, especially concerning the body organ and genitals of men and women these boys and girls are giggling. This made them did not

focus on the lesson. Thus we decide to separate them..."²

The statement above kind of interesting since there is a decision to have a separate class. It does not mean that they did discrimination. Nevertheless, they have some consideration that the targets (learning process run smoothly and the pupils learning completely) must be reached. This situation can be seen in two different views. In one side, the separation class among boys and girls during Biology Lesson may say as a different treatment among boys and girls in these two elementary schools. In another side, the separation class among boys and girls aims to meet the lesson's target.

Based on that situation, it may say that the differences among boys and girls cannot be seen as a gender bias completely. This is because psychologically these adolescences need favorable atmosphere for learning. To get this favorable atmosphere, the teachers thought that when they taught the lesson by separating them during learning process, this is a perfect condition. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that when the teachers have a lot of knowledge about gender ideas and gender sensitivity, and also teaching experiences, it is not difficult to transfer the lesson among boys and girls students without teaching separation in different classes.

It is not necessary to separate them since the teachers have skill in transferring the lesson with gender sensitivity nuance. The bias gender in learning process clearly has to avoid. Some issues hampered this learning process could be solved by giving the gender

¹Interview with Pak Suhatri, one of the male teachers, Saturday, 6 Agustus 2016

² Interview with Ibu M, one of the female teachers, Saturday, 6 August 2016)

knowledge and clearly different concept of sex, gender, and Godwill toward some teachers in primary schools.

Conclusion

The discrimination issues that arise in the community are closely linked to sensitive or gender-sensitive attitudes. The lack of gender knowledge and less gender-sensitive attitude in the different layers of society at least can be reduced by giving some information pertaining to the concept of gender and gender knowledge toward teachers in primary schools.

When society tends to perpetuate the tradition of conceptual prejudices and gender roles, it is also transmitted to educational institutions. Like the different roles represented in textbooks; teaching materials at the primary school level tend to be biased towards gender. As in textbooks, it shows the differentiation or dichotomy between the roles of men share and the roles of women play. The socio-cultural construction of a gender-based society in educational institutions, especially at the primary school level, seems to be visible through the materials

Admittedly, it takes a long time to bring about this sensitive or gender-sensitive attitude. Because during the years of reality that have been visible, it is always the number of women who become discriminated against because the construction of the socio-cultural community has formed a state of mind and a state of mind that defines the role women like that.

This way of thinking tends to be patriarchal so that sometimes the discrimination that occurs in the community emerges unconsciously and is so entrenched that it is difficult to change

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