

Promoting Gender Awareness through a Multicultural Approach in History Learning

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini didasari oleh kesadaran akan ketidakseimbangan representasi gender dalam pengajaran sejarah. Sejak lama narasi sejarah yang dibangun dalam buku-buku teks pelajaran sejarah seringkali mengabaikan kontribusi perempuan dan menciptakan narasi yang terbatas terkait peran gender dalam perkembangan masyarakat. Narasi sejarah Indonesia perlu dirumuskan kembali melalui pendekatan multikultural untuk mencakup pengalaman dan kontribusi beragam kelompok gender dari latar belakang dan budaya yang beragam dalam pengajaran sejarah. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengupayakan refleksi kritis, berkelanjutan dan transformatif dalam pengajaran sejarah yang sadar gender melalui pendekatan multikultural. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah pemahaman dan kesadaran yang mendalam terkait gender kepada siswa serta pengetahuan adanya ketidakseimbangan gender dalam materi sejarah Indonesia.

Kata kunci: gender, multikultural, pengajaran sejarah.

Abstract

This research is based on an awareness of the imbalance of gender representation in history teaching. For a long time, historical narratives constructed in history textbooks have often ignored women's contributions and created a limited narrative regarding the role of gender in the development of society. Indonesian historical narratives need to be reformulated through a multicultural perspective approach to include the experiences and contributions of diverse gender groups from diverse backgrounds and cultures in the teaching of history. The purpose of this research is to strive for critical, sustainable and transformative reflection in teaching gender-aware history through a multicultural perspective. This research method uses qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The result of this research is a deep understanding and awareness of gender to students as well as knowledge of gender imbalance in Indonesian history materials.

Keywords: gender, multicultural, teaching history.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian history writing is stereotyped as masculine and gender-biased. This stereotype limits students' understanding of the diversity of gender experiences. The history curriculum generally tends to ignore or minimally document the contributions of women in historical events. In fact, many significant figures and events considered important are often

male. This creates a gap in gender representation. Commonly known female figures are Kartini, Cut Nya Dien, Christina Tiahahu, and a few other women who are no more numerous than the male National Heroes appointed during Sukarno's leadership. The history curriculum that does not pay attention to women's contributions has an impact on the gender aspect of history teaching, for example,

the lack of female role models that female students can follow. Gender and multicultural issues were born from a reflection of the conditions of society that experienced injustice and inequality (Sangadji, 2016). Sudrajat's research (2014) shows that through schools, teachers can practice and instill values of pluralism to students, and teachers can act creatively to spearhead multicultural education. When multicultural education is not carried out properly, coupled with conditions that are not gender-aware, this can lead to various kinds of conflicts that can divide existing socio-cultural relations (Arifin, 2012).

Gender inequality occurs in many places, such as schools, jobs, or in society. The root of the problem can be traced to the influence of culture in shaping gender-related norms and values in the context of education, especially the teaching of history. History has the function of strengthening character education, as well as providing educational materials that are basic, in-depth and based on the nation's past experiences to build awareness and understanding of themselves and their nation (Sutanto, 2014: 35). It is inappropriate if the teaching of history tends to ignore the experiences and contributions of women. This can reduce understanding of the historical context as a whole, as well as strengthen the

conditions of a society that is not gender aware.

A multicultural approach to teaching history provides more space to introduce and appreciate the contributions of women from various cultures. According to Madjid (1995), women's contribution to Indonesian history is not small. Women contribute to maintaining the legacy of the fire of struggle through the delivery of stories, songs, dances, skills, and other cultures. In fact, Ho Wan Hoy, a minority who later changed her name to Tika Nurwati, fought on behalf of the Republic during the Physical Revolution by becoming a member of the Indonesian Red Cross and the Indonesian Women's Army to become a spy (Pringgodigdo, 1986). This is why it is important to recognize the diversity of gender experiences in a historical context. Recognizing the diversity of gender experiences means that we broaden our perspective on how history is shaped, appreciate the diverse contributions they have made, and create historical narratives that promote gender equality and social justice.

A multicultural approach to history teaching carries great potential to break down gender stereotypes by presenting diverse historical narratives. Teachers who adopt this approach can present stories from different cultural and gender perspectives. The result of this approach is that students can explore the often overlooked contributions of women and

individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in history. Through this exploration, they not only balance gender representations, but also critique stereotypes and biases that may exist in culture and history. The experience of listening to and learning about stories of gender experiences from different cultures also encourages students to develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the complexities of gender identity. More than just a history lesson, the multicultural approach inspires students to engage in more inclusive and equitable social change by introducing them to historical figures who fought for gender equality. This approach not only opens up space for more inclusive representations in history, but also helps in building better gender awareness and striving for a more inclusive society as a whole (Banks, 2002).

The overall aim of this article is to promote a deeper understanding of gender through a multicultural perspective in the teaching of history, as a step towards creating a more inclusive and relevant curriculum.

METHOD

This research adopted an in-depth literature study approach, which involved a stage of data collection and careful analysis of a wide array of relevant literature sources, such as scholarly journals, articles and books that focused

on the established research theme. This method, as explained by Moleong (2006), allows the researcher to summarize, evaluate and synthesize the findings contained in the existing literature in order to support the conceptual framework and develop a deeper understanding of the subject under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Gender Representation Imbalance in History Teaching

The imbalance of gender representation in the history curriculum, especially in Indonesia, reflects the lack of attention to women's contributions to historical events and the formation of society. History taught in schools is often dominated by narratives that focus on the roles and achievements of men, such as political figures, military leaders and male intellectuals. Meanwhile, women's contributions are often ignored or considered less important, confirming that Indonesian history belongs to men (Kuntowijoyo, 1994:99) and the main actors of historical events are almost all narrated as male-dominated (Fatimah, 2006). The imbalance in the history curriculum also has implications for the subject matter of history textbooks. The representation of women in the subject matter of history textbooks used in schools is often minimal in telling the role of women in Indonesian history. Both in the context of the struggle for

independence, nation building, and women's contributions in other fields are often forgotten or only briefly mentioned. Whether we realize it or not, the historical reality of women has been ignored as a process of Indonesian history (Purwanto, 2006: 35). This creates a real gap in the understanding of gender roles in national history, and also implies that women's contributions are unimportant.

Within the limited selection of examples and case studies, course materials often use examples and case studies that emphasize the role of men. For example, when discussing historical figures or important events, the role of women tends to be ignored or only briefly mentioned without any depth. There are more than 2,000 Indonesian history books published since 1997, but only 2 percent discuss and mention women (Hartiningsih, 2007). With limited examples and case studies that highlight the role of men, students tend to be exposed to a narrow picture of what is considered the norm or desirable model in society. This can reinforce the view that men's roles are more dominant or more valuable in history and society in general, while women's roles are considered less significant or not comparable. Such views can make students more likely to internalize and reinforce gender inequalities in their thinking and behaviour, as well as in their perceptions of gender roles in society. Another impact of limited examples and

case studies is a lack of appreciation for the diversity of gender experiences and contributions, which can lead to limited knowledge of the history and cultural richness that actually exists in society.

Patriarchal influences in curriculum development are evident where the dominance of a male-first culture in history often influences the development of history curriculum. This can result in unbalanced and inaccurate narratives related to gender roles in history. The imbalance of gender representation in history curricula, particularly in Indonesia, creates challenges in creating a more inclusive and accurate understanding of history and the role of gender in shaping society. Further steps are needed to address this imbalance and create a more representative and inclusive history curriculum for all genders.

The lack of representation of women in historical narratives has a significant impact on students' gender awareness and their understanding of history. Here are some of the impacts that can occur:

a. Limited Understanding of Women's Role in History

When women's roles are ignored or minimally represented in historical narratives, students tend to have a limited understanding of women's contributions to the formation of society and important historical events. They may only recognize male figures and the events associated with them,

while women's contributions are often forgotten or ignored. Well-known female figures in history are Kartini, Dewi Sartika, Rohana Kudus, and a few others (Lubis, 2002). This contradicts Ayu Wulandari's (2020) explanation that in the Indonesian revolution, women even had an important role in the Indonesian independence revolution, especially in the kitchen and treatment for wounded fighters.

b. Unequal Recognition of Gender Contributions

The underrepresentation of women in historical narratives can create an imbalance in the appreciation of gender contributions. Students may tend to perceive male contributions as more valuable or significant compared to female contributions, as they are less exposed to stories that reflect female contributions. This is not only detrimental to women themselves, but will impact the field of education, which is of low quality (Dangol, 2019).

c. Influence on Students' Gender Identity

Historical narratives that minimize the role of women can affect the gender identity of students, especially girls. They may feel that their roles and contributions are not recognized or valued in history, which can reduce their self-confidence and aspirations. The narrative of heroism in the book is too political, whereas the core of heroic stories are values or ethics that

can be used as a source of reflection (Mulyana, 2013: 89).

d. Perpetuation of Gender Stereotypes

The imbalance of gender representation in the history curriculum reflects broader injustices in society, which are also reflected in the rampant cases of sexual harassment and domestic violence reported by Komnas Perempuan by the end of 2023. The underrepresentation of women in historical narratives can create a narrow view of their role in the development of society, ignoring their contributions and the diversity of gender experiences and achievements. This not only results in a distorted understanding of Indonesia's history and cultural richness, but also reinforces harmful gender stereotypes. In the context of sexual harassment and domestic violence cases, internalized gender inequality and a lack of appreciation for women's contributions to history can create an unsupportive environment for gender equality and women's safety. Based on this, it is important to revisit the history curriculum and expand the representation of women to promote gender equality, appreciate their contributions to history, and reduce gender hostility in society as a whole.

e. Narrow Insight into the Diversity of Human Experience

The lack of representation of women in historical narratives deprives students of the opportunity to understand the diversity of human experience. They may not get a complete picture of how gender roles can vary from culture to culture and over time.

2. A Multicultural Approach in Promoting Gender Awareness

Multicultural and multiculturalism are different. Multicultural education is a science that teaches cultural diversity to students (Supardi, 2018), while multiculturalism is an understanding that emphasizes cultural equality and equality, so the multicultural approach can be interpreted as education that emphasizes recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity, ethnicity, religion, language, and other backgrounds in the learning process (Abdullah, 2006). This concept recognizes that society consists of diverse groups and individuals with different experiences, values, and needs, so education should reflect and respect this diversity. In the context of history teaching, the multicultural approach broadens the scope and perspective of history to include the contributions and experiences of diverse gender, ethnic, cultural and social groups.

A multicultural approach to promoting gender awareness in history teaching can be done in several ways:

a. Inclusion of Women's Narratives and Contributions

A multicultural approach to history teaching includes the inclusion of women's narratives and contributions that were previously ignored or minimal in the history curriculum. Teachers can introduce stories about influential female figures in history and illustrate their role in the development of society. There are many female figures in Indonesian history who played a focused role in improving the position of women until they developed to improve the right to education and the right to life (Manilet-Oherella, et al, 1992).

b. Analysis of Gender Norms and Values

Through a multicultural approach, students are invited to analyze the gender norms and values underlying a given historical narrative. They can identify gender stereotypes contained in the narrative and critique them critically to understand how these norms influence perceptions of gender roles.

c. Exploring the Diversity of Gender Experience

Teachers can use multicultural approaches to deconstruct stereotypes and broaden students' understanding of the diversity of gender experiences.

This includes exploring how gender experiences may vary based on cultural background, religion and social context.

a. Use of Multicultural Resources

Using multicultural resources in history teaching, such as literature, historical documents and cultural artifacts from different groups and cultures, can help students gain richer insights into gender experiences in diverse contexts.

b. Interdisciplinary Approach

Multicultural approaches to history teaching can also be combined with interdisciplinary approaches, such as gender studies or cultural studies, to deepen students' understanding of gender roles in history and society.

By applying a multicultural approach to history teaching, teachers can broaden the scope of students' understanding of the role of gender in history, increase their awareness of gender diversity, and promote an inclusive attitude and respect for cultural diversity.

There are several strategies and methods that can be applied to incorporate diverse gender perspectives in history teaching:

a. Inclusive Selection and Use of Source Materials

Teachers can select and use source materials that include diverse gender contributions and experiences. This includes using historical sources that

highlight the role of women in historical events, as well as introducing alternative narratives that showcase the diversity of gender experiences.

b. Curriculum Retracing and Revision

Teachers can conduct a walkthrough of the existing history curriculum to identify gaps in gender representation and make necessary revisions. This includes adding modules, units or topics that expand the representation of women in history.

c. Use of Case Studies and Critical Analysis

Runeson and Host (2009) explain that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear. Using case studies and critical analysis of gender roles in specific historical events can help students understand the diversity of gender experiences.

d. Project-based approach

Han (2014) explains that students in project-based learning have autonomy in investigating, challenging, responding to questions from complex problems, as well as practicing skills demanded in the 21st century. A project-based approach can be used to enable students to conduct research and present information on women's contributions to history. This could be a

research project on influential female figures, the reconstruction of an inclusive historical narrative, or the creation of source materials that highlight diverse gender roles.

e. Gender-based Discussion and Debate

Organizing gender-based discussions and debates can help students understand different perspectives related to gender roles in history. Teachers can facilitate discussions on contemporary issues related to gender and encourage students to relate to learning history.

f. Inviting Guest Speakers and Gender Experts

Inviting guest speakers and gender experts to speak in class can provide valuable insights into the role of gender in history. Guest speakers can share personal experiences or academic knowledge about women's contributions in various historical contexts.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can create an inclusive and immersive learning environment where students can develop a better understanding of gender roles in history and society.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of history plays an important role in shaping understanding of the development of societies and civilizations. However, it is often the case that the historical narratives taught are ignored or

pay little attention to the contributions of women, creating an imbalance in gender representation. This phenomenon encourages the need to develop a new approach to teaching history that is more inclusive and sensitive to gender. Through a multicultural approach, efforts are made to revise Indonesian historical narratives to reflect the experiences and contributions of diverse gender and cultural groups. This approach emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives in the teaching of history, recognizing that every group has a valuable contribution to make to the formation of a nation's history.

By increasing understanding and awareness of gender among students, a significant change in the way history is taught is expected. Critical reflection on existing historical narratives and awareness of gender imbalances can encourage more inclusive and equitable changes in the history curriculum. It is hoped that the results of this research will make a positive contribution to changing the approach to teaching history to be more gender-sensitive. Thus, history teaching can become a more effective tool in promoting gender equality and recognizing the contributions of all groups in the formation of a nation's history.

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