



PARENT'S AND TEACHER'S VIEW OF GENDER STEREOTYPE

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Info Artikel

Sejarah Artikel:

Diterima Oktober 2014
Disetujui Nopember 2014
Dipublikasikan
Nopember 2014

Keywords:

*Gender stereotype, children,
parents, teachers, change*

Abstract

The role of parents and teachers in changing gender stereotype may a new discussion in Indonesia. The socialication still limiited, thus this topic help inform public about the development, improvement, and how to change gender stereotype in early childhood. This study aimed to explore parents' and teachers' experiences, perceptions, and expectations regarding prevention and management of early childhood gender. The assessment can be done by each thing related to children at home or school e.g. toys, jobs, etc. Need times to socialize and overcome the stereotype for parents, teacher, and also the community around the children. This is necesarry for the development of the children to allow them thinking "out of the box".

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ISSN 2252-6382

Childhood is a golden age for an individual. It is called golden age because in during that period (0-5 years) he/she receives lots of information about anything. Their brain are like sponge which can absorb everything around them. In this age, parents, teachers, and society in general play an important role for their development. Adults' role in childrens' circumstance are able to be a teacher and guide them being an open minded person. Children are unique, as an adult we can not treat them as a little adult who can do everything as we said. Method of the approach is how we can mingle with them and be like them, feel what they feel, do like they do, and act like they act. These are challenging but provenly successful. When we become like them, they will trust us and closer to us, and those time are important to putting in the informations. For this reason, appropriate, good, and positive stimulation is of a great importance for our young children.

Children learn about gender and develop their gendered identities through their interactions with others and through their experiences of positioning themselves within society and being positioned by others. Gender it self has several definitions, it usually refers to a set of characteristics that are considered to distinguish between male and female, reflect one's biological sex, or reflect one's gender identity. It is one's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or a boy or girl).

Gender role stereotyping occurs when a person is expected to enact a series of norms or behaviors based upon their sex.

Children learn at a very early age what it means to be a boy or a girl in our society. It is difficult for a child to grow to adulthood without experiencing some form of gender bias or stereotyping, whether it be the expectation that boys are better than girls at math or the idea that only females can nurture children (Susan, 1997). As children grow and develop, the gender stereotypes they are exposed to at home are reinforced by other elements in their environment and are thus perpetuated throughout childhood and on into adolescence (Martin, Wood, & Little, 1990).

Reasons for gender stereotypes and segregation are including gender blindness, boys and girls themselves, parents, kindergarten teachers, school teachers and education counselors, traditional gender stereotypes and gender specific expectataions in society, the media, tv-programmes, and labour market (Sofie, 2012). Studies in Indonesia show that kindergarten teachers often have a very stereotypical approach towards girls and boys. They expect different things and treat boys and girls very differently.

De Beauvoir wrote about how gender inequality begins from childhood in her section Lived Experience. Gender stereotypes exist and are being reinforced right from the beginning of a child's life. Introducing gender neutral activities, stories, toys and comments in interaction with children, sometimes much to the criticism of contemporaries who believe that girls and boys have to be brought up differently (Rachel Zeng, 2012).

The moment a child is born, gender stereotyping takes place at full force. From the choice of colours when buying clothes for the newborn to toys when it comes to gift selection for the baby shower, gender plays a major factor. In fact, exposure to gender stereotypical models will become a consistent part of the child's life. Social learning theory proposes that examples provided by the existing same-sex models in the child's environment, along with the constant reinforcement on gender appropriate behaviour plays a huge part on the acquisition of sex-typed behaviours occurring during the pre-school years (Rubel et. al., 1988).

The Cognitive-Developmental Theory formulated by Kohlberg (1966) on the other hand, suggests that children's understanding of gender develops in stages. Kohlberg believed that children do not actively process gender information until they reach gender constancy which is the third developmental stage of theory that occurs when the child is between 5 to 7 (Sammons, 2009).

Differing slightly from Kohlberg, gender schema theory introduced by Bem in 1981 explains that children develop a basic gender schema by the time they are about 2 and is able to associate themselves as females or males. This marks the beginning of the process whereby children begin to seek out information from their environments to help them understand "maleness and femaleness" (Sammons, 2009). The more they pick up the "contents of the society's gender schema, they learn which attributes are to be linked

with their own sex and, hence with themselves" (Bem, 1981, p. 355).

The information that surrounds the child and which the child internalizes comes to the child within the family arena through parent-child interactions, role modeling, reinforcement for desired behaviors, and parental approval or disapproval (Santrock, 1994). As children move into the larger world of friends and school, many of their ideas and beliefs are reinforced by those around them. A further reinforcement of acceptable and appropriate behavior is shown to children through the media, in particular, television. Through all these socialization agents, children learn gender stereotyped behavior. As children develop, these gender stereotypes become firmly entrenched beliefs and thus, are a part of the child's self concept.

Parent-Child Interaction

Being a parent is by no means an easy job. The Hollywood film Parenthood implies that childrearing means a lifetime of anxiety for parents and goes as far as to suggest that after so many centuries, somebody must have found the formula for turning children into happy and successful adults. This surely reflects the difficulty of the process in contemporary life. as adults who care about giving children equal opportunities to explore their world and develop to their fullest potential regardless of gender, we should bear in mind not to limit their potential by restricting them to 'gender-appropriate' paths.

In the UK and the USA there is a strong adherence to what Singer (1993) has termed 'attachment pedagogy'. This pedagogy is based on the belief that continuous and constant maternal care is necessary to ensure secure development, and secure emotional attachment is a prerequisite for learning. Where such maternal care is not possible (e.g. the mother goes to work), the next best thing is care in early childhood settings that is modelled on the mother-child relationship.

From the time their children are babies, parents treat sons and daughters differently, dressing infants in gender specific colors, giving gender differentiated toys, and expecting different behavior from boys and girls (Thorne, 1993). One study indicates that parents have differential expectations of sons and daughters as early as 24 hours after birth (Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974).

Parents teach with rewards and discipline. They might praise girls and punish or discourage boys for the same thing. That is one way to create gender stereotypes. For example: Mom might praise her daughter when she picks flowers for her, but she might be upset with her son for doing the same thing. *Parents teach by spending time with their children.* Children see what their parents do. Children learn when they try to imitate their parents. For example: Children who watch their father do the dishes many times may think that doing the dishes is a male activity. On the other hand, children in single-parent families see their mother or father doing all

the chores. Those children usually learn that males and females can do similar tasks.

Parents teach by telling their children what they expect from them. Parents may expect different things from their sons and daughters. That supports gender stereotypes. For example: Parents might expect their son to do well in math, and they expect their daughter to do well in arts and crafts. *Parents teach by giving the children chores.* Parents may give different chores to sons and daughters based on their gender. For example: Boys take out the garbage, and girls do the dishes. *Parents teach through their comments.* Parents might tell their children that only males or females do/say certain things. For example: Mom might say, "I can't fix the car, that's your dad's job."

Children internalize parental messages regarding gender at an early age, with awareness of adult sex role differences being found in two-year-old children (Weinraub, Clemens, Sachloff, Ethridge, Gracely, & Myers, 1984). One study found that children at two and a half years of age use gender stereotypes in negotiating their world and are likely to generalize gender stereotypes to a variety of activities, objects, and occupations (Fagot, Leinbach, & O'Boyle, 1992; Cowan & Hoffman, 1986). Children even deny the reality of what they are seeing when it doesn't conform to their gender expectations (i.e., a child whose mother is a doctor stating that only men are doctors) (Sheldon, 1990).

Parents encourage their sons and daughters to participate in sex-typed activities, including doll playing and engaging in housekeeping activities for girls and playing with trucks and engaging in sports activities for boys (Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990). A study of children's rooms has shown that girls' rooms have more pink, dolls, and manipulative toys; boys' rooms have more blue, sports equipment, tools and vehicles (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990). Parental attitudes towards their children have a strong impact on the child's developing sense of self and self-esteem, with parental warmth and support being key factors for the child (Richards, Gitelson, Petersen, & Hartig, 1991).

Educators' Role

The word of 'educator' is more meaningful than 'practitioner' it refer to all adults who work with young children. There are two main reasons for this. First, all of those who are working with very young children are involved in their education. Second, the introduction and widespread use of the term 'practitioner' within the early years field has coincided with the introduction of initiatives intended to regulate and control this phase of education. While not advocating that the early years field should be free from scrutiny and accountability, it is important that those working within the early years field retain their sense of professionalism and purpose, while simultaneously retaining their ability to work flexibly and responsively. The word 'practitioner' not only conceals the true

nature of our work with young children, that of education in its widest sense, but also suggests that work within the early years field is essentially routine and mechanical. Using the word 'educator' emphasizes what those working in the early years actually do.

A teacher is someone who sees each child as a unique person and encourages individual talents and strengths. they makes a difference in each child's life and affects each family and the future of us all. Related to gender subjects, kindergarten teachers often; expect girls to be nice, good and do as they are told, perform twice as good as boys, and caring and considerate especially towards boys. Meanwhile boys do not do as their told, behave very physically and accept that they can't concentrate for a long time, and place boys at the center of attention. To provide a variety of experiences for both girls and boys, teachers are encouraged to be vigilant that both girls and boys experience the sand table, water table, computer, crafts, and math centers.

The Importance to Change the Stereotype

To avoid gender stereotype in the school or class, teacher and parents should engage each other to discuss about this problem. This is to reduce misaprehend between teachers and parents, and also anticipate conflicts in developing the children in school. It is important to change the stereotype approach towards girls and boys. The question are, how important it is and how to change it?

Traditional gender roles limit children's opportunities to develop as individuals free from stereotypical expectations. Thus, stereotypes have a negative effect on gender equality in the remaining society which is gender segregation in choice of education, labour market, pay gap, etc.

At home, parent can help the children live without stereotypical language by being sensitive to limiting language and being prepared to discuss what's wrong with it when parent encounter it from others. Some suggestions for parent to create an environment to reduce gender stereotyping include:

- Parent imply that men or girls should behave in different ways or own different things. Don't belittle "running like a girl" or call any child a "sissy." One of the lessons specifically addresses teasing about the appropriateness of activities, traits or possessions, countering with "There's no such thing as a girl's haircut." Be careful with the words. When parent say something to their daughter, think about what will be said. Would parent say the same thing to their son? Try to say things that will help both boys and girls feel good. Say things that help them learn that they can do many things. Praise daughter and son for whatever they do well.
- Avoid directing children toward or away from particular toys or forms of play, especially imaginative play, as appropriate to their gender. Buy or make a toddler boy, the same as a girl, a rag

doll that looks like him and can wear his outgrown baby clothes. Don't intervene when a little girl takes up the baseball bat. Make both earth-moving trucks and baking equipment available in the sandbox and let the children choose freely which to use and when to swap.

- Do not expect all boys or all girls to like the same things. Ask children what he likes and doesn't like. Let the sons play dress-up, house, and dolls sometimes. Let the daughters play with trucks, blocks, and sports activities sometimes. Also let them say that they don't like those things. Make positive statements about girls and boys. Say nice things about both genders. Let children be creative and make their own toys with boxes, art supplies, sheets, and other items. Be ready for them to say they do not want to do that at some ages. Boy-girl friendships may develop later.
- Especially as children grow old enough to truly help out around the house, keep the chores evenly spread and without regard to gender. Let each child be responsible for learning to make his own peanut-butter sandwich, or for her own patch of garden, at least until they've grown into more advanced versions of these chores and discovered their own preferences. Each child should make his or her own bed each day, and share equally, as appropriate to age rather than gender, in setting and clearing the table, doing dishes, and home repair and maintenance.

- Take an active role in selecting child's reading material and leave out books that explicitly reinforce gender stereotypes. Supervise TV watching, music and video games, and make it clear that making poor choices on the basis of gender stereotypes, in addition to other values, will result in loss of privileges. However, discuss with children why this story isn't very true to life or that movie sets a bad example.
- "Mailman" has largely given way to "letter carrier," but other gender-based terminology is persistent. parent can help the children live without stereotypical language by being sensitive to limiting language and being prepared to discuss what's wrong with it when parent encounter it from others. Refer to servers rather than waitresses, and don't make distinctions such as "lady doctor" or "male nurse." Talk about what people do rather than labeling them at all.
- Recognize the abilities of all children without considering gender. Encourage children's self-worth, regardless of the activities they select. (Are both boys and girls acknowledged for sitting quietly? Are both boys and girls recognized for playing in the 'housekeeping' area?)
- Foster gender equality by encouraging boys and girls to do the same activities. (Encourage both genders to build with blocks and engage in craft activities.)
- Expose children to models of people in non-traditional gender roles.

As suggested by the Southern Poverty Law Center, program practices can be used to help reduce gender stereotyping. For instance:

- Avoid language that limits one gender or another from participating. Children learn what is expected of them from the language used by their role models. (Use gender-neutral labels, such as congressperson, mail carrier, flight attendant and firefighter.)
 - When selecting books for the children, strive to balance the gender of the main characters. (Choose stories with male and female heroes and villains, or protagonists and antagonists.) As noted by Roberts and Hill, stories typically focus on male achievements and present characters in stereotypical roles that support stereotypes. Remember to discuss and acknowledge both male and female heroes in stories — both men and women can accomplish great things.
- Between 4 and 7 years of age, children realize that gender is stable, regardless of changing clothes or actions. Children also notice teachers' behaviors and further learn about what boys and girls can do. Some suggestions for teachers to create an environment to reduce gender stereotyping include:
- Monitor teacher's behaviour in various situations. (How do teacher handle emotional behavior, such as when a child cries? Do they treat boys and girls the same?)

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