



## Critical Reflection of Female Reality in Physical Education at High Schools in the Municipality of Surakarta

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### Abstract

In a social order until recently, the male and female status is still often being debated. This discourse is increasingly phenomenal in sports and physical education which often firmly create problems of dichotomy between men and women both in the perspective of sex and gender. This study aims to explore the extent to which the understanding of the concept of gender ideology is among teachers, high school students, stakeholders, and the public in the municipality of Surakarta and their implications in physical education. This research is designed as a qualitative descriptive exploratory study. The social setting as the object of this research is High School (SMA) in the municipality of Surakarta. The techniques of data collection employed in this research were deep interviews, observation, and documentary studies. The results showed that the average understanding of the concept of gender still overlapped with the concept of sex. The characteristics of the dominant gender ideology were naturally patterned. This was influenced by social, cultural, and religious contexts and the general social perspective towards women. Although the discourse of gender equality had emerged in many ways, people in general still strongly believed in the differences between male and female. This is then strongly implied in the implementation of physical education teaching practices. Forms of domination in learning, differences in standards, as well as distinctions in patterns of communication and sanctions, are still phenomenal.

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## INTRODUCTION

Physical education is definitively different from sports. However, oftentimes the way people view physical education can not be separated from how they view sports in general. It should be realized that the Indonesian culture is significantly characterized by all aspects of the patriarchal pattern. Therefore, it is inevitable in the area of sports. Sports are always attached to masculine roles. Strenuous physical activities requiring maximum muscle strength has always been a public perspective of the sportive image. In reality, such a perspective is inevitable in the area of physical education.

If referred to the original definition, physical education is contained in the mandate clearly outlined in the curriculum, namely "... as an integral part of the overall education utilizing physical activity as a means to achieve the goal of education in general". The definition can easily be interpreted that physical education is not just education on the body but the body is placed as a medium to achieve educational purposes. Ironically, the reality in the community is that it generally considers physical education as education concerning the body. Therefore, physical education is inseparable from how people view the body. In Indonesian tradition, the body is placed as an ethical space that should always be disciplined. Many social values are built by learning the reality of the body. A gracious, neat, and well-mannered body is a representation of the value of glorious behavior. On the other hand, that the body is fully disclosed is a symbol of a lack of politeness, so it needs to be educated and disciplined. It is inevitable, given that physical education and sports are unable to free their entities from the social and cultural space surrounding them. As stated by Antony Laker (2002: 1), "There is an inevitable and symbiotic relationship between culture, education, and sports. Education and sports are two of the major institutions of our society. As such, they interact with each other, and of course, other institutions, to contribute to what we commonly regard as culture and society. In this way, neither education nor sports are ideologically neutral because they have

implicit values which we incorporate into recognition of both culture and society. This incorporation of sports and education into the meaning of society and culture legitimates them and gives them both a value and a place."

How people view the body has an impact on how the body classification arises in society and how to value and allow them to do it. The male body is more synonymous with the commonplace reality that is not so questionable for reassembly. In contrast, the female body is a representative of the many sanctities that must be covered properly to avoid embarrassment. This viewpoint is certainly in line with the general view of how Indonesian people embrace religions and belief and how they also discuss the issue of women's bodies in public spaces. As an example, the religion of Islam clearly provides the rules of how the female body should largely be covered neatly except before her relatives.

As in other social institutions in which discourse on gender equality is always warm to talk about, in the world of sports the discourse is also raised. Arguments about the concept of gender equality are increasingly felt in sports because until now it is always understood that sports are closely related to the masculine tradition. When trying to further scrutinize it, it turns out that sports and women's issues are still continually debated to date. Various factors such as myths, ethics, cultural structure, and religious interpretations have cornered female in the uncommon position to fully engage in the sports world. This is in line with the expression expressed by L. Webb and D. Mac Donald (2007: 494):

"Various authors have found organizational culture to be an issue related to women and leadership. For example, Blackmore (1999, p. 131) found that discourses of masculinity 'tap into particular cultures to produce a range of exclusionary practices roommates "keep women in their place", either as subordinate to men in power or as different to downloading once in leadership '. The discursive practices of physical education are infused with

the pervasive influences of sports. Therefore, the nature of sports and its cultivation of male dominance and superiority have particular implications for physical education and serve to exacerbate other factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in this area."

In the discourse of emancipation in the practical stage, Indonesia often runs recklessly without considering the variety of ideologies which later evolve within the community. This also appears to arise in the physical education teaching practices in Indonesia. The discourse of "similarity" between male and female as a direct translation of the discourse of emancipation has phenomenally become a fair interpretation without any fair consideration against the varieties of ideologies that develop. Furthermore, how if many students in the physical education learning processes in Indonesia believe that men and women should differ? An issue will certainly arise when it is compared with the discourse of equality promoted by the curriculum and practiced by the teacher.

Cultural aspects that are hardly discussed within the framework of injustice sports and physical education space leave acute problems of gender inequalities. Various practices of real injustice are manifested in the world of sports and physical education but it is often ignored. The problem of gender inequality is still a prominent part in the world, as expressed by Hartmann-Tews Ilse and Gertrud Pfister in *Sport and Women* (2005: 1) that in many countries around the world women have taken part in the sports but are often marginalized. Therefore, this study aims to obtain a picture of the image of a woman in the world of sports and physical education, whether it departs from the reflection of the women themselves, the community, and the view of education practitioners in the field of physical education/teacher. The results of this study are expected to be a new perspective as the basis for the development of sports and physical education in their social perspective.

Surakarta is one of the districts of the Central Java province which is currently active

in developing the region including in the field of sports and physical education. This is particularly evident with the launch of the Surakarta Community Education Service (*Layanan Pendidikan Masyarakat Surakarta*, henceforth LPMS) program during the administration of Jokowi. At the beginning, this program was criticized merely as a political move to gain popularity. However, in reality the criticism was not proved by the continuation of the program with a system that is more established, namely the Educational Subsidy for the Public of Surakarta (*Bantuan Pendidikan Masyarakat Kota Surakarta*, henceforth BPMKS), which provides strategic steps to offer education that is cheap and good in quality for the community in the city of Surakarta (Priyatno Harsasto and Laila Khalid Alfirdaus: 9).

Surakarta is a city that is historically attached to the history of *Kesunanan* Surakarta with its Islamic culture. Thus, it is common to believe that Surakarta is a sufficiently Islamic city with some of the evidence that many educational institutions are based on the Islamic ideology developing there. In addition, the Javanese culture, complete with its nature of politeness, is still felt strong in the culture of Surakarta community. At a glance, the gender discourse is closely related to the very strong patriarchal culture in the community of Surakarta. Women are only worshiped as the goddess mother, giving birth to children, and are regarded as *kanca wingking* (Purwadi and Munarsih, 2005: 4). The above issue has attracted the researchers to strive to further pursue the practices of the understanding and implementation of gender in the High School's physical education in the city of Surakarta.

From the data retrieval as a step in the preliminary study, it was found that the composition of physical education teachers in Surakarta, Sukoharjo, Klaten, Boyolali and Karanganyar is sexually dominated by male. The number of female physical education teachers identified is not more than 20 percent of the total population. In fact, data of the existing students show that they were dominated by the female by a ratio of 60%: 40%. The results of the interview in five areas show that students'

understanding of gender is still biased and is inclined at about sex, and it is believed that distinction remained stable until the

implementation of the physical education teaching practice.

**Table 1.** Results of preliminary study on the pursuance of physical education teacher

No	Region	PE Teachers		Percentage F/ M x 100%
		Male	Female	
1	Surakarta	96	19	19.79
2	Sukoharjo	102	16	15.68
3	Klaten	112	18	16.07
4	Boyolali	108	15	13.88
5	Karanganyar	98	17	17.34

Source: Collected from the 2015 teachers list in each school.

**Table 2.** Data on the number of students based on their sex and the total number of teachers.

No	Region	Year								
		2011			2012			2013		
		Total	Σ	Teachers	Total	Σ	Teachers	Total	Σ	
		Students	Students		Students	Students		Teachers	Teachers	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	Surakarta	7742	9410	428	7745	9412	429	7743	9409	429
2	Sukoharjo	7942	9711	431	7944	9714	432	7941	9712	432
3	Klaten	8138	10008	433	8143	10012	434	8140	1009	434
4	Boyolali	8036	9996	432	8041	9998	433	8039	9998	433
5	Karanganyar	7983	9750	431	7985	9753	432	7985	9755	432

Source: Surakarta dalam angka 2014/ BPS

At a glance, this is just a number that does not matter. However, if it is contemplated further, it proves to be an interesting phenomenon that deserves to be traced. A tendency certainly departs from the flow of thought. Similarly, why is the tendency toward the physical education attached to the realm of the male? Surely this is also related to how the community thinks about physical education that is related to the structure of sex and gender. The perspective of the reality of physical education as a masculine world tends to put the position of women not to be favorable in this sphere. If this is not realized, and left alone, of course, physical education will only manifest into a space that is unfair to female.

## METHODS

This research was designed as a descriptive qualitative research that is explorative and reflective in nature. It tried to study a phenomenon in-depth to reflect descriptively in order to provide meaning to the object of the study. According to Densin and Lincoln (1998: 8), the term “qualitative” is used to give emphasis on processes and meanings that are not assessed, or precisely measured, in terms of quantity, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers emphasize the nature of reality that is socially and situationally constructed to generate inquiries. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden inquiries.

In books on qualitative research there are many terms for people who provide information or answers to the questions raised by researchers

during the data collection process. Sometimes even in a single description the terms appear alternately, namely research subjects, informants, respondents, participants, and so forth. As is common in other qualitative research, the respondents in this study were purposively drawn to include teachers, students, community, and stakeholders related to the process of physical education.

As a logical consequence of the implementation of interpretative paradigm of qualitative research, the research instruments used in it can not be based on tools or various forms of test equipments. The main instrument in qualitative research is the researcher itself (human instrument).

Data in this study the researchers drew through three ways, namely:

a) In-depth interview

According to Patton (1980: 29) in Ahmadi (2017: 119), the major way qualitative methodologists do to understand people's perceptions, feelings, and knowledge is in-depth and intensive interview. Therefore in-depth interview is the main technique used in this study.

b) Observation

Observation is one of the techniques commonly employed in qualitative research. The purpose of drawing observational data is to describe the background to be observed, the activities that occur in the setting, the people participating in activities, the meaning of the background, and the participation of people in the activities. In this research, the observation was done in the physical education learning process and social background encompassing it.

c) Focus Group discussion (FGD).

This method is often referred to as guided discussion. In this way, it is expected to obtain meaning from a multi-perspective reality. In this activity respondents were presented from various fields; they were related to the context of physical education such as teachers, stakeholders (principals and officials), and parents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Understanding of the Term "Gender"

Today the term Gender and Feminism are two words that are often discussed in the public sphere. Usually, the word "Gender" is distinguished from the word "Sex". The word "sex" is associated with the identification of the biological differences between male and female, while the term "Gender" is always associated with social and non-biological issues specifically dealing with the conversation on identity of being "masculine" and "feminine". Indeed, the explanation of the cultural dualism is not without problems, it is filled with acute problems. For example, it is important to realize that the body is formed not simply by social relations, but in fact, it is also formed on the basis of and to contribute to these relations. The biological body helps shape these relations, that is not their freedom, but according to its nature; social relationships will transform human capacities in every way they behave, but they still have a basis in human bodies. Until this moment, commentaries on gender are still influenced by simplistic notions and nuances of a single interpretation, namely, interpretations which are based on unitary conceptions of sexuality. In this context, for example, the female is envisioned as a set of characteristics that are constant and common for them as women, and it has become a distinguishing factor from a set of characteristics possessed by men both young and adult (Dawn Penney and John Evans, 2002: 13-14).

In general, the term gender in society is not so well acquainted. Although when people are asked at first they claim to understand the meaning of such terminology. However, conceptually, when traced further they still misinterpret it. Most of the meaning of the word gender is often confused with the concept of sex. While the concept of sex itself is precisely understood as a word representing the act of intercourse between the two different sexes like a husband and his wife. The misunderstanding of the meaning of the term gender is also admitted by many respondents from a higher intellectual level, including teachers.

The occurrence of much misunderstanding of the terms “sex” and “gender” is not an anomaly. Given what was historically presented by Masnhur Fakhri, the concept of gender discourse was firstly introduced in Indonesia around 1990s. During this time, in the local tradition, we are more familiar with the term emancipation than with the discourse of the gender equality struggles. The term “emancipation” is more often echoed on both the formal and informal occasions. Not to mention when trying to trace various streams that then are implicated in the gender discourse. A number of data indicate that the understanding of gender concepts is a little confused with the understanding of the evolving concept of emancipation.

At a glance, it can be seen that many respondents in this study understand that gender is a concept that is undisputed. However, there are a number of interesting things in the observed data in the field, where school construct with different social structures turned out to provide a significantly different impact on the embodiment of the concept of physical education in practice. In other words, what is expressed by the respondents is not in line with the conceptual understanding of gender in practice.

In general, the results of the interview showed that the respondents indicated their gender beliefs that can be categorized on the natural characteristics/type. This is a bit different from some of the statements regarding the concept of gender as related to the term emancipation. At the initial stage, almost all of the respondents strongly agreed that they understood the concept of equality which is identical in this regard with the growing nurture. However, when pursued further, beyond awareness they averagely appeared to understand the real difference between male and female as stated by the advocates of the theory of nature.

In the concept of reasoning power, Foucault explains that no single reality. It is always realized with all entities that surround it. This also seems to be found in an analysis of gender understanding within the scope of

education in the city of Surakarta. It is inevitable that many factors such as the characteristics of cultures, religion, social structures, and various policies have affected the ways the concept of gender is comprehended by the students, teachers, stakeholders, and society.

It is understood that the discourse of equality has become very massively ingrained in society given that one of them is due to a variety of information flowing so freely from the advancement of mass media, both printed and electronic. As an old book written by Amir Yasraf Piliang, today we live in a world that is folded. Happenings in any part of the hemisphere are at the same time can be followed by any part of the world. Consequently, we are faced with a position directly opposite each other with different kinds of cultures from everywhere. Therefore, it is only natural that native cultures which are deemed irrelevant and do not stand on a firm structure will be eroded and replaced with various new cultures. Humanists used to refer to this event as the process of acculturation.

Although this case did not appear too often in the stage of collecting data in this study, the issue of religion became something that is important enough to be taken into account. As has already been elaborated in the previous section, the demographic data showed that the percentage of Muslims in Surakarta reached approximately 80 percent. The interpretation of the Islamic law regarding the concealed part of the body is different from one group of people and the other ones. There are groups of people interpreting this teaching with a strict interpretation, but there are also groups who are relatively flexible. However, somehow the varieties of interpretation tend to require a relatively accommodative learning condition.

### **Implication of Gender Understanding in Physical Education**

Based on the observation it shows at a glance that the understanding of gender ideology brings a form of clear behavior on the implementation process of physical education in the field. This is, of course, a concept that is unavoidable; the concept of thought will

influence the practical phase carried out by someone. Such a situation would actually appear in this study. What type of gender concept is manifested something clearly visible in a causal relation? In addition, the social composition of the students tends to show a different effect on the different behavior associated with the students' gender roles. The results of the field data withdrawn from the results of research in the field which were related to the implications of the understanding of gender and the composition of social constructs are described as the following.

#### **Male students are different from female ones**

When questioned about how the teachers' understanding of the concept of gender is, it seems that the respondents' statements tend to be nurture. That is when talking about the concept of gender what appears is the concept of equality that is promoted by the ideology which is always aggressively voiced as all fields of emancipation. Nevertheless, based on the more in-depth pursuance as well as observation results on the practice in the field, it is indicated that there is a concept of recognition on fundamental differences that appears within male and female in substantial terms. To be more concrete it is in the area of the biological realm that finally involves the problem of roles. When traced further, this refers more to the concept of nature. Based on that issue, it ultimately brings a significant influence on how physical education is realized in practice in learning processes. Some of the aspects that show the different concepts appeared in the field are as follows.

#### **The male dominance in the learning process.**

The discourse on real masculinity is unavoidable in the discourse on physical education Indonesia. Moreover, it is supported by many experts' opinion stating that the Indonesian cultural pattern is characterized by patriarchy. Associated with physical activity, the different treatments between male and female have already started since of upbringing of children in the family. The shapes and patterns of the games provided to our children differ according to the sex of the child. Toy cars, rifles

and pistols, and swords are familiar forms of the game given to boys. Meanwhile, dolls, cookware-dishes, as well as a variety of games such as dakon tools, jacks, and meonce are more prevalent to be given to girls.

The process of distinguishing the roles of male and female is even made more systematic even though it is a step involuntarily committed by parents to their children. For example, even in choosing color there is a significant distinction for male and female. Soft colors such as pink, blue sea as well as floral and round patterns are chosen as the style of clothes for girls. Meanwhile, the dress with patterns of lines, boxes, and firmed colors like black, navy blue, and red is reserved for boys. Sometimes, even shirts for boys resemble a uniform of professionals requiring physical strength, firmness, and courage such as costumes for police, soldiers, or pilots which are generally produced for boys.

It is the result of the massive acculturation and internalization since the childhood that becomes the subject to strong protests from feminists who claimed that it is the beginning of the lengthy process of gender inequality. They assume that if boys and girls are given exactly the same treatment since they are young, then they will grow up with the exact same potential. However in this study, the researchers will not prove whether the assumption is correct or not. However, this becomes a reflection on the form of male and female students' behavior that is then implicated in physical education learning judged from the cultural background.

#### **The application of different standards between male and female**

In fact, gender issues appear to be a specific factor associated with the implementation of evaluation process in physical education. The debate on the differences in the ability possessed by male and female emerged as a problem is not simple to solve. Some considered that in learning, male and female students are entitled to receive the same standard in the evaluation process. However some others assume differently and thus needs a different standard. The amount of data collected in this

study show that most of the students and teachers gave a statement supporting the distinction of ability between male and female, so that the evaluation process should also be distinguished.

#### **Male's grouping and turning patterns that are different from those of female**

Related to gender discourse, which is related to an attempt to perform an optimal presentation of physical education based on the element of students' engagement, this seems to be a problem on its own. Although the discourse of emancipation has been echoed and understood by many teachers and students, not all of them are able to translate it to an equality frame. The concept of the distinction between male and female still consistently appears, and even relatively dominating in the various facts as already discussed.

The real data recorded in this study shows that considering the place and the existence of gender, the learning materials for male students are separated from those for female ones. The students were either separated by location or by the forms of the game; however, they might also be separated by assigning them in turns.

Of the two options, the teachers separated them, that is by location or activities as well as by assigning them in turns, at a glance it looks like a solution to the problem. On the other hand, in fact, it invites a new problem that threatens the nature of physical education teaching program itself. The first option contains the weaknesses if viewed from the supervision perspective. The physical education learning process in the field is a risky situation with its possibility of accidents and injuries. Therefore, in a variety of physical education learning processes, the teachers are expected to have full control and supervision on the whole of the learning processes. Thus, in case anything went wrong, there is no reason for the teacher not to know and for them to blame. There have been a lot number of accidents in the physical education learning process. Therefore, nearly all LPTK preparing physical education teachers offer safety educational materials as one of the subjects being taught.

#### **The difference between communication and concept of sanctions.**

Teachers' communication pattern is one of the critical factors for the success of the learning processes. The effective communication pattern will make the students feel comfortable, deferred, and become relatively more enthusiastic in conducting the learning processes. Related to the gender discourse, the communication pattern also becomes a determinant factor of how fair gender-equitable learning processes can be realized well.

According to the existing data, the fact shows that the majority of physical education teachers are male while the high school students existing in the district of Surakarta (besides SMK which is a change of STM) today are mostly female. This is the very reason why the communication patterns are considered to be important to be revealed in this present study.

In general, the communication patterns reflected through the various data in the present study basically does not cause any problem. However, when observed in depth some of the communication processes, one of which is the process of applying sanctions, it is possible to bring about gender bias.

#### **Gender behavior and roles in physical education teaching to students in heterogeneous and dominant composition**

Sub-ordinate Reality in female students appeared in a heterogeneous student composition (normal composition). Meanwhile, some of the interesting things are that the observed reality emerged in the dominant setting, whether it is the dominant male or female. In terms of quantity learning classes dominated by female, it occurs a reverse phenomenon compared to a heterogeneous condition of the students. It is undeniable that in the condition of dominant female students, the theory of mass psychology operates. Under the condition of the dominant female students, the stereotype of female beings who tend to be smooth and timid is reduced significantly. Female students tend to become relatively more



active and dominant in physical education learning activities.

Anomaly also occurred within the composition of the minor female. The research results show that the condition of a relatively small quantity in a community, it proves that female students can also take parts more actively and can blend in better physical education learning processes. This is made possible because prior to getting into the structure they have anticipated the social condition that they would enter.

An interesting aspect also appeared in the room where the female is the minority within the community. This happens at SMK 5 Surakarta. In this school, the average number of female students in a class is 3 to 4 people. Unlike the mentioned case, in a heterogeneous condition in which the female students are generally placed in a subordinate condition due to the quantity female students that are minority they can even be more egalitarian than male students. Such things become a relatively unique phenomenon that must be viewed more carefully.

These facts might emerge as a measure that relatively differs from the general hypothesis. This is made possible because the schools which are relatively full of male students might have been predicted early by the female students before they enroll there. Therefore, the consequences of the attitude that should be taken have also been realized since the beginning. Furthermore, it is apparent that the school has also conditioned it.

#### **Implementation of the gender-fair concept-based physical education learning in the stakeholders' perspective**

Although the formal policy that appears when categorizing the students is that it emphasizes more on the perspective of equality between male and female, in the field, there are a few things that were applied with some tolerance and modifications with the hope to accommodate differences of gender belief and cultural background that appear in the field. This is, in fact, a good thing. It does not mean that

there has been a deviation from the existing policy; this is a step that is carried out to accommodate differences in understanding and belief held by each student.

The considerations as the basis for policy implementation in the field are more adjusted on the basis of ethical values and adjustment with the cultural norms. In addition, security consideration is also made against any form of harassment or other sexual acts that are not expected to happen in the schools.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The results of the research show that the variety of gender concepts in teachers, students, as well as stakeholders and related communities in SMA/equivalent in the city of Surakarta is natural. Although the spirit of equality is often expressed, after being traced further it turns out to be a form of cooptation of the jargon of emancipation captured and manifested on the surface only. This is strongly influenced by the cultural setting that surrounds it. The cultural variations of patriarchal nuances in Surakarta, both historically and in the current context, can not be avoided as one of the roles leading to the formation of community perspective of the gender concept.

This perspective has a definite impact on the embodiment of physical education learning practices. In a normal heterogeneous context, male students look very strongly dominating in the learning process. Various forms of discrimination in the form of the provision of opportunities and communication systems, sanctions, and evaluations show the clarity of a variety of strong nature. Some of the anomalous conditions actually appear in the conditions of unequal social composition (the dominance of male/female). In both minor and dominant contexts, female students tend to be more active. This is one thing that should be a concern for teachers or other stakeholders related in formulating all forms of policy and strategy in physical education learning. Hopefully, gender-based learning can be expected to materialize.

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