
Gender Bias Analysis And Right To Fight For Gender Equality In Education Through The Children's Book "I Am Kartini"

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ABSTRACT

This study employs visual discourse analysis to reveal the visual elements within the children's book "I AM KARTINI." Its primary objective is to assess how the book conveys the interplay between gender and the pursuit of gender equality, particularly concerning education. The analysis reveals both the promotion of Gender Equality and the presence of Gender Inequality. "I AM KARTINI" strongly advocates for Gender Equality, emphasizing the critical importance of granting women equal access to education. The book communicates the idea that numerous women recognize education's pivotal role in their lives and society as a whole, championing women's inherent right to the same opportunities enjoyed by men. However, the analysis also uncovers instances of Gender Inequality depicted in the book, connecting patriarchal culture within the Indonesian educational system. The book portrays stereotypes that restrict women to domestic roles, primarily centered on family and household responsibilities. This research highlights the critical importance of examining how gender is represented in children's literature. "I AM KARTINI" serves as a powerful instrument in this endeavor, advocating for gender equality while also highlighting the ongoing challenges related to gender bias and inequality within the Indonesian educational landscape. These findings emphasize the urgent need to recognize and address these issues to foster an inclusive educational environment where every individual has an equal opportunity to thrive.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works stand out from other written forms as they articulate the portrayal of reality through the author's imaginative creation. This aligns with the perspective of Gora (2015), asserting that literary works represent the expression of thoughts in written form, presenting a series of stories to critique issues and concerns dating back to the 17th century. Addressing societal problems through literary works, particularly in the form of short story books intended for elementary school children, is a valuable endeavor aimed at fostering their cognitive development.

According to Bujuri (2018), at the elementary school level, children aged 7-12 undergo cognitive development stages that enable them to think logically about objects and events. In contemporary society, one pertinent issue is gender equality. Using storybooks to promote gender equality among children is a professional strategy to enhance their thinking and reasoning abilities, fostering the idea that women and men are equal.

The attention to gender in children's books began in the 1970s, with Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross (1972) revealing disparities in the portrayal of male and female characters. Adam et al. (2019) and Adam & Barratt-Pugh (2020) emphasized the pivotal role of books in transmitting social values, influencing children's social and academic development. This aligns with Goyal and Rose's (2020) recognition of textbooks as influential in instilling socio-cultural norms.

Considering gender equality as a crucial norm, a more explicit representation in illustrations within children's books can help children comprehend and address injustice. Children's books serve as a medium influencing their initial understanding of the surrounding environment, playing a dual role as both entertainment and a source of knowledge. Recognizing the influential role of children's books in shaping children's awareness of gender equality is essential.

The research conducted aims to enrich understanding by exploring how children's books impact children's gender perceptions. The analysis delves into how these books depict gender equality, identifies potential gender stereotypes, and examines how messages about gender equality are conveyed through stories and illustrations. By comprehending the impact of children's books on shaping perceptions of gender equality, there is an opportunity to develop more inclusive children's books, promote gender equality, and assist children in understanding the diverse roles they can play in society. The analysis of gender equality in children's books seeks to make a substantial contribution to creating a more equal world for the younger generation. This introduction underscores the importance of children's books in influencing awareness of gender equality and outlines the research's objective of analyzing its portrayal in children's literature to deepen our understanding of its impact.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study examines societal issues related to gender bias and gender equality in children's education by analyzing pertinent literature. Gender bias in education is a global concern, supported by empirical evidence on gender studies. Educational and psychological literature indicates that textbooks and educational materials can perpetuate gender stereotypes, impacting children's self-perception and perceptions of others. Conversely, efforts to promote gender equality in education positively influence children's development and societal progress. This article aims to analyze how the children's book "I AM KARTINI" either reinforces or counters gender bias in education and supports the pursuit of gender equality in the Indonesian context.

"I AM KARTINI" narrates the life and struggles of Raden Ajeng Kartini, a historical Indonesian figure known for advocating women's rights and education. Targeted at children, the book serves as a tool for understanding Kartini's efforts and the concept of gender equality. Previous literature highlights that children's books often mirror gender stereotypes, influencing child development. Some studies reveal that female characters in children's books are frequently depicted in traditional and limited roles. However, other research emphasizes children's books that successfully challenge gender bias and present a more inclusive view of gender roles.

Several studies on gender are referenced, including one by Yonata and Yoniswan (2021) addressing stereotypes of female characters in elementary school textbooks. Wilkins explores the gendered portrayal of inanimate characters in children's books. Aulliah and Maisarah (2023) analyze gender bias in bilingual thematic children's picture storybooks. Fithriani (2022) conducts a comparative study of gender stereotypes in Indonesian and international primary English textbooks, revealing stereotypical portrayals in both. Another study by Fitriani (2022) critically analyzes gender portrayals in Indonesian and international English language textbooks for elementary students, exposing biased messages and perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Overall, this research underscores the prevalence of gender inequality and stereotypical representations in English textbooks for elementary school students, both in Indonesia and internationally.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs visual discourse analysis as its research method, focusing on analyzing and understanding messages conveyed through images, illustrations, graphics, or visual elements in various contexts like mass media, art, literary works, or visual documentation. The literary works under examination in this study are children's storybooks, specifically those published by the Asian online digital library known as The Asia Foundation's "Let's Read." The chosen book for analysis is titled "I AM KARTINI," authored by Wikan Satriati and illustrated by Fanny Santoso.

The selected children's books address societal problems, with a specific focus on gender equality. "I AM KARTINI" is chosen as the data source due to its perceived ability to represent gender bias and gender equality in social life, while also providing educational value and instilling social interaction values in children. Notably, Let's Read Asia, created by The Asia Foundation through the Book for Asia program, offers free reading resources for children through this digital platform, allowing access to downloadable PDF files at any time. To collect research data, the study adopts the concept of multimodality, as recommended by Weninger (2020). This approach considers all texts, including readings, conversations, and speech balloons, along with images that signify gender equality, as relevant data. The multimodal approach ensures a comprehensive research methodology, utilizing various methods, data sources, and theories to maintain data validity. This way, explanations are not solely reliant on one type of data but can incorporate other forms, such as images, to enhance understanding.





4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, children's storybooks undergo analysis specifically focusing on illustrations that depict various gender biases contrasting with current ideologies and the ongoing struggle for gender equality. The objective is for these books to serve as educational tools for children, addressing gender injustices, despite the longstanding presence of gender inequality in Indonesian society. The primary aim of these books is to educate children by featuring national hero figures like R.A Kartini, who championed the fight for equal rights

between genders, notably in the realm of education, as a means of resistance against the historical injustices faced by women.

Through the analysis process, the study identifies multiple forms of gender injustices perpetuated by males, prompting Kartini's role in opposing all manifestations of gender inequality. Specifically, within the story "I AM Kartini," the author highlights (1) Patriarchal culture, (2) Female stereotypes, and (3) Marginalization as evident forms of gender inequality. Conversely, the book advocates for gender equality, portraying Kartini's ideals through (1) Advocacy for equal education for women and (2) Asserting women's rights to identical societal opportunities. The subsequent section of this study will critically examine linguistic evidence found in written text and illustrations to further support these points.

Table 1. Gender Bias.

No.	Data Location	Finding	Gender Bias
1.	Picture 1.1	A teacher who only taught materials to male and children from noble families.	Patriarchal culture towards women in Indonesia in the field of education.
	 <p>Picture 1.3</p>  	Two men dragged and forced a woman out of school because they felt they had power and thought women had no right to education	
2.	Picture1.1	Women performing household chores. 1. A woman who was taking care of a child. 2. Two women were winning rice. 3. A woman was carrying a water jug.	
			





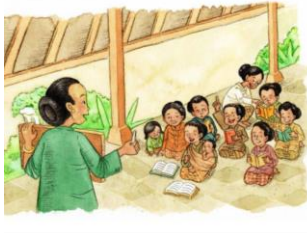
	Picture 1.2	Women performing household chores.	Stereotype of domestic social roles for women (taking care of family and home).
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The woman was pounding rice. 2. The woman was pouring rice. 3. Women carried "tampah" 	
3.	Picture 1.1	Social disparity regarding the text in the image, "Schools are for boys and for the children of rich noble families only."	Marginalization of economically disadvantaged communities, particularly women. This results in the emergence of specific societal groups deemed more powerful, who had access to education.
	Picture 1.2	Four boys were walking carrying textbooks while the girls took care of the household.	
			

Table 2. Table of Gender Equality

No.	Data Location	Finding	Gender Equality
1.	Picture 2.1	Kartini provided education to women who wanted to learn.	Equal education for women Many women are aware of the importance of education.
			
	Picture 2.3 & 2.4	By reading books, Kartini was able to create various new dishes and new stitching patterns then teach them to her friends.	
			



2. Picture 2.1



Kartini advocated for equal educational opportunities for women. (Being a homemaker or getting married at a young age doesn't hinder a woman from pursuing education; they have the right to the same societal opportunities).

1. Three women were focused on reading books.
2. One woman enthusiastically participated in the lesson by raising her hand when Kartini asked a question.
3. One woman was assisting in reading a book.
4. Two housewives were attending lessons at Kartini's class.

Women have the right to the same societal opportunities.

Picture 2.2



Kartini likes reading books and continues to study to fight for justice in education because women have the right to get the same educational opportunities as men

Picture 2.5



Kartini had the opportunity to communicate with friends from abroad because she succeeded in fighting for her rights to education.

Analyzing Table 1 and 2 aids in comprehending the visual representations of gender bias and gender equality. These images are intrinsically tied to societal and cultural constructs. Table 1 presents images that often perpetuate unjust stereotypes regarding both men and women. Conversely, Table 2 features images that advocate for equity and parity between genders, challenging these stereotypical notions.

1. Gender Bias

Picture (Gender Bias)



1.1

In my country, many girls cannot go to school. Schools are for boys and for the children of rich noble families only.



1.2

In the process of analysis, it was found that there is a patriarchal culture that is quite clear. In the first figure it is found that education can only be obtained by the boys and children of noble families, while the majority of women only take care of the household and care for children which means that only a man can continue to study and they will grow to become someone with high skills. can help them achieve high positions in life. Women do not have space to practice skills and achieve the same position as men. This kind of patriarchal culture has been described by Rokhmansyah (2016) that patriarchy comes from the word patriarchate, meaning a structure that places the role of men as the sole, central ruler and everything. The patriarchal system that dominates society's culture causes inequality and gender inequality affects various aspects of human activities. Men have a role as the main control in society. while women only have little influence or it could be said to have no rights in general areas of society, whether economically, socially, politically, psychologically, even

including the institution of marriage. This causes women to be placed in a subordinate or inferior position.

Women do not have the space to practice skills and achieve the same position as men. Women are considered to play a more important role in the domestic sector, cleaning the house, cooking, washing and caring for children. If she works in the public sector, apart from having to choose a job that suits her nature, she will still be her husband's helper in meeting the family's living needs. This gives rise to the stereotype that women do have a domestic social role in taking care of the family and home. Gender injustice in the form of stereotypes against women often occurs in societies that adhere to a patriarchal culture. The labeling that occurs is usually negative, such as women being weak, sensitive, crying often, and taking care of housework. This is reinforced by opinion stating that stereotypes are labeling or standard assumptions about individuals or certain groups (Puspita, 2019; Puspitasari, et al, 2022).

Apart from patriarchy and stereotypes, there is gender bias in the form of marginalization. Marginalization is a process where women are marginalized so there are restrictions that make it difficult for women to act, express and actualize himself (Permana & Maulana, 2020). Research results from Mahira, et al. (2021), most English textbooks show an imbalance in gender representation and stereotypes of female characters in the form of the dominance of male characters, women in household roles, a narrow range of work roles for women, and stereotypical characteristics of women of femininity, masculinity and marginalization. According to Massiou (2013), marginalization is defined as an unfair, partial or biased distribution of access to learning, facilities and learning resources. If you look at (picture 1), marginalization occurs because society considers education is only appropriate for men while women do not have the right to receive education. Public opinion is that only children from the upper class can receive an education. This gives rise to certain groups of people who have more power, to be able to access education, which ultimately gives rise to gender gaps that differentiate gender in various aspects of life. Gender differences have given rise to various injustices, both for men and especially for women.

Picture (Gender Bias)

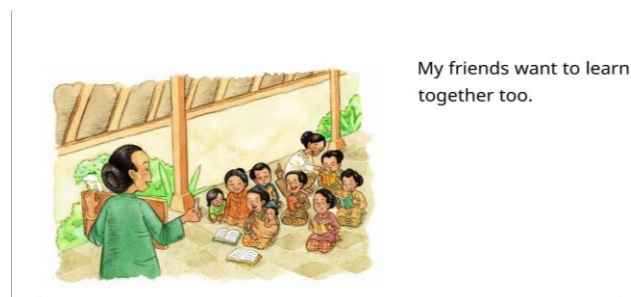


1.3

In figure 1.3 there is a picture of a father dragging or forcibly pulling his daughter out of school. In this case, the father has full control over his child's life, daughters are considered not to need higher education because they are responsible for taking care of the household. Patriarchy has now become a central and systematic form of male control over women, making it the main cause of women's subordination. So, patriarchy not only explains how society functions with dominant male power, but how men are able to control women in social life (Mashiri, 2013). This creates a view where women have a lower position under the authority of men, women are not free to make life choices. Thus, women are less capable in certain fields or that their main role is as mothers and wives.

2. Gender Equality

Picture (Gender Equality)



2.1

The picture depicts a woman studying together regardless of age. The picture above also depicts only women without any men. If defined in the figure, the role of women is not only at home being a housewife who takes care of the children but women also have the right to get education without any restrictions based on gender. Early marriage is not a reason for women to stop studying. Education provides opportunities to improve women's skills in maximizing their potential. In gender equality, everyone deserves the opportunity to improve their skills in viewing gender. Education is a key factor in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. This has the potential to provide women with knowledge, skills, and opportunities for personal and professional growth (Lagarde, 2013).

Picture (Gender Equality)



Even if I cannot go to
school, I will not give up.
I want to keep learning.
I want to. I can do it.

2.2

In picture 2.2 the readers can see a woman (Kartini) who is reading a book. The existence of gender inequality does not prevent Kartini from seeking knowledge. She believes that if someone does not give up on their goal, that person will definitely be able to do it. Kartini is a hard learner in achieving her dreams. She realizes that education is the key to empowering women. Therefore, Kartini was persistent in studying and pursuing education. Kartini did not have access to formal education like men of her time. However, his determination to learn was unstoppable. He studied autodidactically, diligently reading books and materials he could access. In seeking knowledge, it can be obtained from anyone at any time, therefore intention is the key that must be possessed. UNESCO states that education gives girls knowledge and skills that are very useful in everyday life. This helps

them learn how to make wise decisions, build strong self-esteem, develop critical thinking skills, and become better at negotiating for their rights and well-being. (UNESCO, 2017) In the analysis here, Kartini fought hard to uphold justice for women to receive education. Education has long been recognized as important in efforts to promote gender equality and empower women. It is a basic right that enables individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to challenge social and political norms.

Picture (Gender Equality)



By reading books, I can
create new dishes.

2.3

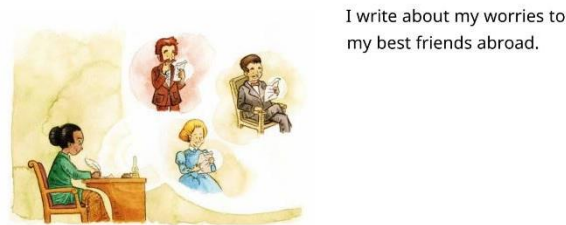


By reading books, I can
create new stitching
patterns.

2.4

In the picture above, Kartini is doing something new that she got from a book and she is also showing it to her friends. Her friends seemed enthusiastic and curious to see Kartini. Kartini is known as an autodidact who diligently reads books. She told her friends that she learned many things from books. Books were a window for Kartini to explore the wide world. Kartini relies on reading to develop her knowledge. Through her determination to read and learn from books, Kartini explored the potential of her intelligence abilities, which ultimately motivated and inspired the people around her. Kartini is a real example of how a strong desire to learn and the knowledge gained through reading books can change a person's destiny. Here the role of knowledge is very important for women. With the wealth of knowledge that women know, they can learn many things to hone their skills on an equal footing with men so that they are not looked down upon. This is linear to the statement that education gives women the skills to engage in civic and political activities to develop their leadership potential (DiPrete & Buchmann 2013).

Picture (Gender Equality)



2.5

In the picture above, Kartini is seen sitting writing a letter. At that moment, Kartini wrote about her worries to send to her friends. It can be seen in the picture that the friends who read Kartini's letters come from different countries. Her letters are a means of sharing ideas, information and stories, seeking support from her friends. Kartini used letters as a medium to understand her thoughts about women's rights and gender equality. He explained his views on the importance of women's independence from traditional confines and giving them equal rights in society. Buchmann said that deep-rooted and traditional socio-cultural norms on gender roles often prioritize the education of boys over girls. Gender bias and stereotypes can occur, causing the devaluation of women's education because they are expected to prioritize household work, childcare responsibilities, or early marriage over pursuing education (DiPrete & Buchmann 2013).

5. CONCLUSION

Examining the children's book "I AM KARTINI" through a visual discourse lens reveals a complex story about gender dynamics and the quest for gender equality in Indonesian education. This study, using visual discourse analysis, provides important insights into how gender is portrayed in children's literature. The book strongly advocates for gender equality, emphasizing the need for women to have the same educational opportunities as men. It showcases women who recognize the crucial role of education in their lives and society, championing women's innate right to equal opportunities.

However, the analysis also uncovers instances of gender inequality in the book, reflecting deep-rooted issues of gender bias and a patriarchal culture in the Indonesian educational system. The book depicts women being confined to domestic roles and economically disadvantaged communities, especially women, facing marginalization, contributing to unequal access to education.

This research highlights the influential role of educational materials like "I AM KARTINI" in shaping societal views on gender roles and opportunities. It emphasizes the urgent need to address and rectify gender biases and disparities in education, understanding their significant impact on the well-being of women and society. "I AM KARTINI" symbolizes progress but also mirrors the ongoing work needed for gender equality in education. This analysis calls for continuous efforts to challenge stereotypes, break down barriers, and establish an inclusive educational environment where individuals of all genders have fair access to opportunities.

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