



Gender Equality Expression as a Biological Homeostasis Principle Applied in Social Mechanisms of Child-Friendly Schools

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Abstract: This research explores the application of gender equality principles within Child-Friendly Schools (CFS), specifically at Harapan Mandiri High School in Medan, through the lens of biological homeostasis principles applied to social mechanisms. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, this study draws on primary data collected from guidance counseling teachers at the school, using observation and in-depth interviews as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that Harapan Mandiri High School effectively implements gender equality by ensuring equal access, opportunities, treatment, and participation for both male and female students. The fairness in treatment is evident in assessments, rewards, and discipline, while student engagement is fostered through participation in student organizations and extracurricular activities. The school's focus on preventing discrimination and promoting gender awareness contributes to a safe and inclusive learning environment, enhancing respect for gender diversity. This successful implementation of gender equality principles reflects the school's commitment to creating a balanced and inclusive educational environment, akin to maintaining homeostasis in biological systems, where equilibrium is achieved through equitable participation and treatment of all students.

Keywords: Biological homeostasis; Child friendly school; Gender equality; Student involvement

Introduction

Gender inequality is an issue that frequently arises in various aspects of human life, including education (Rogibah et al., 2019). Gender-based disparities are still evident in student interactions, both verbal and non-verbal (Rini et al., 2022). Persistent gender inequality can hinder a country's long-term development progress. Therefore, addressing gender inequality is a crucial part of efforts to achieve sustainable development goals (Ngazizah et al., 2022). In the educational context, gender gaps can be reflected in classroom interactions, including speaking opportunities, participation in academic and extracurricular activities, and recognition

of achievements (Saputri et al., 2022). Unfair treatment based on gender can create a learning environment that is unfavorable for all students, especially those from minority groups or those who do not conform to dominant gender stereotypes (Haq et al., 2022). Efforts to address gender inequality in schools not only involve enforcing policies that support equality but also require changes in attitudes and behaviors at both individual and institutional levels (Asrofah et al., 2022). Teacher training on gender equality, developing inclusive curricula, and promoting gender awareness among students and the school community are essential steps in altering these imbalanced dynamics (Arismunandar et al., 2021).

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Addressing gender inequality in education is a long-term investment that impacts not only students' academic progress but also broader social and economic development (Gultom, 2021). By creating a fair and inclusive learning environment for all students, we not only foster a more just society but also strengthen the foundation for sustainable and gender-inclusive human development (Solihin et al., 2022). The government's commitment to gender equality, also known as Gender Mainstreaming (PUG), is undeniable. This commitment has been formalized through legislation, with two specific laws addressing this issue: Law No. 97/1994 implementing the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and Law No. 34/1999 on Human Rights. The government's commitment to gender equality is not limited to specific sectors but is an integral part of the national development strategy, encompassing all aspects of national life. The main goal is to achieve optimal national development according to desired aspirations. These steps are also crucial in fulfilling global commitments to create a society free from all forms of gender discrimination (Akip, 2020).

Practically, the government's commitment to gender equality is reflected in various policies and programs aimed at addressing gender disparities in various life areas. From education, economy, health, to social development policies, integrating gender perspectives has become a priority in achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Additionally, the government is involved in various international initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and application of gender equality principles worldwide (Larasati et al., 2021). Despite the clear commitment from the government, challenges in achieving gender equality remain and require continuous effort. These include a deeper understanding of the root causes of gender inequality, enhancing institutional capacity, and active involvement from all levels of society in the change process. By continually strengthening commitment and cross-sectoral collaboration and building awareness of the importance of gender equality, it is hoped that we can realize a vision of fair and sustainable development for all citizens (Abidin et al., 2022). In the educational context, biological homeostasis can be understood as the effort to create and maintain a fair and equal balance in the learning environment. This concept of biological homeostasis reflects the mechanisms required to maintain stable internal conditions, despite external changes, in this case related to gender equality. By applying the principles of biological homeostasis in education, we strive to ensure that all students, regardless of gender, can thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment. Creating this balance is crucial to overcoming barriers caused by gender stereotypes,

cultural norms, and uneven access to educational resources (Nurfaiz, 2022).

Therefore, continuous and holistic efforts are needed to address these challenges. Concrete steps such as inclusive policies, gender awareness programs, strengthening the role of teachers and schools as change agents, and collaborating with various stakeholders are key to accelerating gender equality in Child-Friendly Schools (Fitriani et al., 2022). It is hoped that every student, regardless of gender, can experience education that is fair, inclusive, and supportive of their optimal development. Efforts towards gender equality in schools are an integral part of creating a fair and inclusive learning environment. It is not just about ensuring equal access but also providing equal opportunities for both female and male students to maximize their potential in various aspects of life (Eslinger et al., 2021; Wesarg-Menzel et al., 2023). The importance of gender equality in education lies not only in justice but also in preparing the younger generation to face increasingly complex global challenges (Roziqin, 2020). By ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have the same opportunity to access quality education, we create a strong foundation for an inclusive and just society. Concrete steps such as developing curricula that integrate gender perspectives, training teachers to recognize and address gender bias in the classroom, and implementing policies that support gender equality are crucial.

An approach that involves active participation from all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and other relevant parties, is key to achieving gender equality in schools. Collaboration among various parties can produce more comprehensive and effective strategies in overcoming barriers to achieving gender equality. By promoting gender equality in the educational environment, we not only create equal opportunities for every individual but also strengthen the foundation for more sustainable and inclusive social, economic, and political development. Building awareness of the importance of gender equality from an early age in schools is a crucial initial step towards achieving this goal, and will have a broad positive impact on the future of society as a whole. Based on the background outlined above, the aim of this study is to determine Gender Equality Expression as a Principle of Biological Homeostasis Applied in the Social Mechanism of Child-Friendly Schools.

Method

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive, which the researcher employs to comprehensively and in detail explore phenomena. The primary data source comes from guidance counseling

teachers at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan, who have an understanding of gender dynamics in the school and their role in facilitating gender equality. Data collection techniques in this research include observation and interviews. Observation is conducted by directly observing interactions among students in the school environment, including in teaching and learning activities, extracurricular activities, and social interactions within the school premises. The purpose of these observations is to gain an in-depth understanding of how gender equality is reflected in various aspects of life at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan.

In addition, in-depth interviews will be conducted with guidance counseling teachers as the primary data source. These interviews will focus on obtaining their views and experiences regarding efforts to promote gender equality in the school, challenges faced, and strategies employed to enhance fairness and student involvement (Cuda et al., 2022; Palser et al., 2021). The interviews will be conducted in a structured manner, with questions designed to elicit comprehensive information. The data analysis technique employed consists of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction involves condensing raw data into smaller units and categorizing them based on emerging themes or patterns. Subsequently, the reduced data will be presented systematically, either in narrative form, direct quotations, or tables to facilitate understanding. Finally, drawing conclusions is performed based on the analysis of the presented data, identifying key findings, emerging patterns, and the research implications for understanding and practicing gender equality in schools. See figure 1.



Figure 1. Research flowchart

Result and Discussion

Results Friendly schools have programs aimed at providing equal education for all genders, both boys and girls. One of the main programs is to ensure that students have equal access to quality education without gender-based discrimination. This is reflected in various learning activities designed to accommodate the needs

and potentials of students equally, regardless of gender. Furthermore, friendly schools are also committed to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of gender. This can be seen in the school's policies and practices that emphasize the importance of respecting gender diversity and encourage collaboration and active participation of both boys and girls in various aspects of school life. Extracurricular programs are often designed with gender equality in mind, providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in activities outside of regular class hours, such as sports, arts, and special interest clubs. The goal is to create space for students to develop their interests and talents without being confined by conventional gender stereotypes (Albayrak et al., 2024; Asejeje et al., 2024). Furthermore, a student-centered and equity-oriented approach to learning is also an integral part of the efforts of friendly schools to uphold gender equality. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to the individual needs of each student, regardless of gender, as a determining factor in providing guidance and academic support. Here are some research findings related to gender equality in Sekolah Ramah Anak, focusing on fairness and student involvement at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan.

Access and Opportunities

Based on the research findings at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan, it is evident that the school upholds gender equality by providing equal access and opportunities for male and female students in various educational aspects. One of the main findings is that the school's policy ensures that all students, regardless of gender, have full access to the subjects offered. Furthermore, in terms of extracurricular activities, the school adopts an inclusive approach by providing equal opportunities for male and female students to participate. For example, there are sports clubs open to all students regardless of gender, as well as arts and cultural clubs that encourage participation from both genders. The support provided by the school to its students is not influenced by gender. Teachers and staff provide guidance and support equally, taking into account the individual needs and potentials of each student without any gender-based discrimination. This includes academic and non-academic mentoring, as well as support in developing students' skills and interests. Thus, the principle of equal access and opportunity for all students, regardless of gender, has been well realized at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan. This reflects the school's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity

to develop and achieve their maximum potential, without being hindered by gender factors.

Justice in Treatment

In the research conducted at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan, it was also found that the school consistently applies the principle of justice in treating students, regardless of gender. One key aspect of this fairness is in the assessment process of students. The teachers at this school ensure that the assessment of students' academic performance is done objectively and fairly, without any bias based on gender. This ensures that every student has an equal opportunity to achieve academic success according to their potential and efforts. Furthermore, in terms of recognition, SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan also demonstrates its commitment to fairness. Awards and recognition for students' achievements are given based on their accomplishments and contributions, regardless of whether the student is male or female. This sends a strong message that every student in this school holds equal value in terms of recognition for their achievements. In terms of discipline, the school also prioritizes fairness. Rules and disciplinary sanctions are applied consistently and are applicable to all students without exception. There is no special treatment or discrimination based on gender in enforcing school rules. This creates a fair and safe environment for all students, where they feel supported to learn and grow. Overall, the principle of fairness in treating students, regardless of gender, has been well established at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan. This demonstrates the school's commitment to creating a fair and inclusive learning environment for all students, ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential.

Participation and Engagement

In the context of SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan, the research findings indicate that the principle of fairness in treating students, regardless of gender, is the main focus. The school is committed to upholding fairness in various aspects of interaction between students and teachers. For example, in academic assessment, teachers at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan ensure that each student is evaluated fairly based on their achievements and potential, without any gender bias. Furthermore, the principle of fairness is also reflected in awards and discipline. Students at this school are treated fairly in recognizing their achievements and contributions, regardless of gender. Similarly, in terms of discipline, where rules and sanctions imposed by the school apply equally to all students without exception. This creates a safe and fair environment for all students at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan. Furthermore, the research also highlights the importance of participation and

active involvement of students, both male and female, in school activities. SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan provides space for students to engage in decision-making through student organizations and other participation forums. Additionally, social and cultural activities at this school also encourage participation from all students, regardless of gender, thus creating an inclusive and dynamic school climate. Therefore, the principles of fairness in treatment and participation, as well as active involvement of all students, both male and female, have become integral parts of the culture and practices at SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan. This reflects the school's commitment to creating a learning environment that is fair, inclusive, and oriented towards active student participation in all aspects of school life.

Prevention of Discrimination

In carrying out its mission as a child-friendly school, SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan has established clear policies and preventive measures to prevent gender-based discrimination and harassment. Recognizing the importance of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students, the school actively raises awareness about gender issues among students and teaching staff. The importance of preventing discrimination and harassment is also reflected in the school's efforts to protect students from all forms of harassment or intimidation. SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan has strict policies for handling cases of harassment and discrimination, as well as providing protection to victims by offering appropriate support and taking disciplinary action against perpetrators.

Furthermore, the school actively conducts socialization and training to enhance understanding of gender issues and the importance of respecting diversity among students. Through various activities such as seminars, workshops, and group discussions, students and teaching staff are given the opportunity to participate in constructive dialogues about gender equality and the importance of respecting the rights of every individual. Thus, SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan not only serves as an educational institution but also as a platform that supports the formation of positive attitudes towards gender equality and protects students' rights from all forms of discrimination and harassment. This creates a safe, inclusive learning environment and promotes appreciation for diversity among students and teaching staff.

Gender Awareness Building

In an effort to build gender awareness among students and teaching staff, SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan has initiated several education and advocacy programs. Through various activities such as training sessions, seminars, group discussions, and gender

equality campaigns, the school is committed to enhancing understanding and awareness of the importance of gender equality within the school environment. These programs are designed to provide a deep understanding of gender issues and create space for students and teaching staff to discuss, share experiences, and consider diverse perspectives. Therefore, it is hoped that participants will become more sensitive to issues related to gender equality and actively promote equality values in school and daily life. Additionally, these programs also aim to help change attitudes and behaviors that may still contain gender stereotypes, both among students and teaching staff. By providing inclusive and inspiring education, SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan hopes to create a learning environment that supports positive personal development and values gender diversity.

The Principle of Biological Homeostasis

The principle of biological homeostasis applied to the social mechanism of Child-Friendly Schools reveals a compelling framework for fostering gender equality within educational environments. Biological homeostasis refers to the body's ability to maintain stable internal conditions despite external changes. Similarly, in the context of education, it represents the efforts to achieve and sustain a balanced, equitable environment for all students, regardless of gender. The research findings indicate that applying this principle helps in addressing gender imbalances by creating stable, inclusive educational settings. Schools that effectively implement this approach establish policies and practices that promote equal opportunities and fair treatment for all students. For instance, inclusive curricula and gender-sensitive teaching practices are crucial in maintaining a balanced environment where both male and female students can thrive equally.

One significant aspect observed is the role of teachers and school leaders in maintaining this balance. Training programs that focus on gender equality and unconscious bias are essential for educators to foster a supportive learning environment. Teachers who are aware of and actively counteract gender biases contribute to a more equitable classroom dynamic, which reflects the concept of homeostasis by stabilizing the learning conditions for all students. Additionally, the involvement of stakeholders such as parents and the community in gender equality initiatives strengthens the overall social mechanism of Child-Friendly Schools. Collaborative efforts ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into school policies, and that there is a shared commitment to upholding these principles. This collective approach helps to address barriers caused by stereotypes and cultural norms, thus creating a more inclusive educational environment.

Conclusion

SMA Harapan Mandiri Medan has demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality through its comprehensive and inclusive policies and practices. The research findings highlight that the school provides equal access and opportunities for both male and female students across various educational aspects, including academic subjects and extracurricular activities. This commitment is reflected in the school's approach to creating a balanced and supportive learning environment, which is essential for addressing and overcoming gender imbalances. The principle of biological homeostasis, when applied to the social mechanisms of Child-Friendly Schools, offers a valuable framework for achieving gender equality in education. Just as biological homeostasis maintains internal stability despite external changes, schools that implement this principle strive to maintain a stable and equitable environment for all students, irrespective of gender. This involves creating inclusive curricula, promoting gender-sensitive teaching practices, and ensuring that all students receive fair treatment and support. The role of teachers and school leaders is crucial in maintaining this balance. Training programs focused on gender equality and unconscious bias are instrumental in fostering a supportive and equitable classroom environment. Educators who actively address and counteract gender biases help stabilize the learning conditions, making it possible for both male and female students to thrive equally. Furthermore, the involvement of various stakeholders, including parents and the broader community, strengthens the efforts to promote gender equality. Collaborative initiatives ensure that gender perspectives are embedded in school policies and practices, addressing barriers created by stereotypes and cultural norms. This collective effort contributes to a more inclusive educational setting.

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Author Contributions

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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