

Gender Equality in Education: Analysis of Global Education Policy and Its Implementation in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the influence of global policies on gender equality on the formulation and implementation of education policies in Indonesia. Using a thematic narrative review approach, this study synthesizes academic literature, global policy documents, and national implementation reports to trace the relationship between international frameworks. The type of document analysis uses UNESCO SDG 4.5 guidelines with gender-responsive policies at the national level and practices in schools. The researcher analyzed the gap between the UNESCOS SDG 4.5 that works in the Indonesian context. The analysis results show that although global policies have influenced the direction of national regulations, implementation at the school level is still uneven and does not fully reflect the principle of structural equality. Gaps exist in cultural aspects, teacher capacity, monitoring mechanisms, and the policy adaptation process. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the development of policy transfer studies in gender education and offers a conceptual model that can be used for further research and more effective policy formulation.

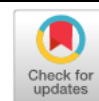
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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in education is a global priority agenda that is explicitly stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in SDG 4.5, which emphasizes the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education. This target not only highlights access and participation in learning, but also includes the dimensions of learning quality and a safe school environment for all genders. The UNESCO report (2023) shows that although many countries have achieved gender parity in basic participation indicators, the gap is more pronounced in the dimensions of learning quality, gender representation in the curriculum, and educational experiences. This confirms that gender equality cannot be measured solely by participation rates, but also by the quality and safety of educational experiences.

Efforts to achieve gender equality also receive strong support from various global institutions such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, and UN Women, which continue to promote gender-responsive education practices through frameworks, policy guidelines, and monitoring reports. UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that gender-responsive policies must include stereotype-free learning, inclusive curricula, and teacher training to reduce bias in the classroom. UNICEF (2020) also highlights the importance of ensuring a safe educational environment, given that millions of girls in various countries are still vulnerable to discrimination, gender-based violence, and limited access to quality education.

Globally, the challenge of gender equality in education remains significant. Inequality manifests itself in the form of unequal access, uneven participation rates, gender stereotypes in textbooks and curricula, and teacher bias in learning practices (OECD, 2021). In addition, school environments that are unsafe for girls continue to be a serious issue in low- and middle-income countries. These challenges indicate the need for policy approaches that are not only oriented towards increasing participation rates, but also structural transformation in the

education system. There are some research on this topic, but it is not widely directed the specific UNESCO SDG 4.5 and its implementation in the Indonesian context.

Policy transfer theory describes the process where knowledge of policies, administrative practices, or ideas from one political context—whether past or present—is consciously adopted or adapted in another setting, often through mechanisms like lesson-drawing or direct emulation. Closely related, policy diffusion theory examines how policies spread across jurisdictions, such as states or countries, via interdependent mechanisms including learning (evaluating evidence from peers), competition, coercion (external pressures), emulation (copying prestigious models), and social contagion (symbolic mimicry), occurring horizontally (same government level), vertically (across levels), or through replication within a single entity. Whereas vernacularization extends the concepts by emphasizing how transferred or diffused policies are reshaped and localized—through translation, negotiation, and hybridization with local norms, actors, and contexts—to become embedded and legitimate in receiving sites, transforming both the policy and the local environment

In Indonesia, various policies oriented towards gender equality have been adopted in national documents such as the RPJMN, the Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategic Plan, and child-friendly school programs. However, despite progress in policy formulation, the implementation gap remains wide. UNICEF data shows that there are 4.1–4.3 million children and adolescents aged 7–18 who are still out of school (UNICEF, 2020), indicating that the issues of access and equitable education services still need to be addressed systematically. Meanwhile, data from BPS (2024) shows that Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index (GII) stands at 0.421, down from 0.447 in the previous year, indicating progress but not yet reaching the ideal condition.

Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology also shows that the participation of male and female students is relatively balanced at various levels of education. However, this quantitative balance does not fully reflect gender-bias-free educational practices, especially at the school level. To provide a clearer picture of the condition of education participation based on gender, the following table shows the distribution of male and female students in Indonesia.

Table 1. Student Participation Based on Gender in Indonesia

Level of Education	Male (%)	Female (%)
Elementary	52	47.86
Junior High School	51.10	48.90
High School	44.50	55.50

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture (2023)

The table shows that Indonesia has achieved a relatively balanced level of participation between men and women in primary and secondary education. However, various field studies reveal that this equality is more quantitative in nature, because in practice there is still gender bias in teaching methods, role distribution in the classroom, examples in textbooks, and the lack of gender-responsive pedagogy (UNESCO, 2023). This shows that there is a gap between policy intent and policy enactment (policy implementation).

Against this backdrop, it is important to analyze the relationship between global and national policies in the context of gender equality, as well as to examine how the values transferred from these global policies are adapted and implemented at the school level. This analysis is not only academically relevant, but can also make a practical contribution to strengthening national education policies to be more responsive to gender equality issues.

Although the issue of gender equality in education has long been a concern for international institutions such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and UN Women, studies that specifically explain how the global policy framework affects policy implementation at the school level are still relatively limited, especially in the Indonesian context. Most existing research emphasizes aspects of educational accessibility for women, such as increasing school participation rates, reducing dropout rates, or gender gaps in enrollment, but has not comprehensively examined

how these global policies are translated into concrete educational programs, regulations, and practices in schools. Thus, there is an important gap between quantitative analysis of access and qualitative studies discussing the quality of gender policy implementation in the classroom, such as gender-responsive pedagogical practices, gender representation in curricula and textbooks, and teacher behavior in addressing gender bias.

Furthermore, the literature in Indonesia tends to be fragmented between two main fields, namely public policy theory and educational theory. Policy research focuses more on the policy formulation process at the national level without discussing how these policies impact educational interactions in schools. Conversely, gender pedagogy research tends to focus on the dynamics of learning without linking it to a broader policy framework. The lack of integration between these two perspectives hinders a comprehensive understanding of how global policies on gender equality are actually implemented, adapted, or even distorted at the school level in Indonesia. This is further reinforced by the lack of narrative review studies that compare the intent of policies, namely the policy objectives as formulated in global and national documents, with the enforcement of policies, namely how these policies are realized in daily practice by educational actors such as teachers, principals, and supervisors. In the absence of an analytical synthesis discussing the flow of policy transfer from the global to the local level, this study is important to fill this gap and provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between global policies, national policy formulation, and their implementation in the context of Indonesian education.

Based on the identification of this research gap, this study seeks to answer the main question: "How do global gender equality policies in education influence national policy formulation, and to what extent are these policies effectively implemented in the Indonesian education system?" This question is formulated to evaluate the relationship between global policy standards, norms, and frameworks, including the SDG 4.5 agenda and UNESCO guidelines, and the process of formulating national policies related to gender-responsive education. Furthermore, this question emphasizes the importance of examining the extent to which policies formulated at the national level are actually implemented in Indonesian schools, thereby enabling a critical analysis of the alignment between policy objectives and actual practices in the field. With this approach, the study not only focuses on the formal adoption of policies but also examines the quality of their implementation and the factors that influence their success or failure.

The main objective of this study is to identify how global policies on gender equality in education influence the formulation of national policies in Indonesia, including how these global values, standards, and principles are translated into national education regulations and programs. This study also aims to analyze the level of effectiveness of the implementation of these policies in practice, especially in the context of primary to secondary schools, by assessing aspects such as the learning process, teacher attitudes, curriculum, and school environment. In addition, this study seeks to examine in depth the factors that encourage and hinder the implementation of gender policies at the school level, ranging from teacher capacity, school organizational culture, bureaucratic support, to broader socio-cultural factors. Ultimately, this study aims to develop a conceptual model that describes the relationship between global policies, national policies, and local implementation, thereby contributing theoretically and practically to the improvement of more gender-responsive education policies and practices in Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a narrative review design with a thematic approach to synthesize various literature sources related to gender equality policies in education at the global, national, and local levels. The narrative review approach was chosen because it allows researchers to conduct a more in-depth and flexible exploration of theoretical developments, policies, and empirical findings without the strict methodological constraints of a systematic

review. The themes were identified by classifying the similar topic. By using this approach, this study compiles patterns, concepts, and relationships between themes that emerge from the literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of how global policies are transformed into national education policies and how these policies are implemented in the context of schools in Indonesia. In addition to scientific articles, this narrative review also includes policy sources such as official UNESCO documents, SDG 4.5 reports, Indonesian government regulations, and relevant program evaluation reports to ensure a holistic and practice-oriented analysis. The reliability was ensured by using expert judge.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search process was conducted systematically in several reputable academic databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Taylor & Francis Online, and Wiley Online Library. These databases were selected to ensure that the literature obtained included influential international publications, the latest empirical research, and proven theoretical documents. The search was conducted using a combination of keywords such as "gender equality in education," "global education policy," "SDG 4.5," "gender-responsive education," "implementation of Indonesian education policy," "UNESCO gender framework," and other relevant terms. The use of diverse keywords was intended to capture a broad spectrum of literature, ranging from global policy studies to implementation at the school level. The search time frame was limited to 2000 to 2025 to capture developments over the last two decades, especially when gender equality issues began to become a global priority through international initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To keep the analysis focused and relevant, this study clearly defines inclusion and exclusion criteria. The literature included covers: (1) articles or reports discussing global policies related to gender equality in education; (2) case studies from developing countries with socio-political characteristics similar to Indonesia; (3) publications that specifically examine education policy in Indonesia, both at the national and regional levels; and (4) research on the implementation of gender policy in schools, including aspects of pedagogy, school culture, and the responses of education actors. Meanwhile, literature was excluded if it was in the form of non-academic articles, popular opinions, or publications that did not undergo a peer-review process, as they were considered to lack sufficient evidentiary strength for scientific analysis. In addition, studies discussing gender issues outside the context of education, such as gender in health, employment, or politics, were also excluded to maintain the focus of the research.

Analysis Process

The analysis in this narrative review was conducted through a narrative synthesis process that emphasized the integration of descriptive and analytical findings. The process began with the systematic extraction of relevant information from each source, which was then categorized based on three levels of analysis: international policy, national policy formulation, and implementation at the school level. This tiered approach allowed researchers to trace the flow of policy from the global to the local level, assessing the consistency, changes, and adaptations that occurred at each level. After that, the researchers identified key themes that emerged, such as policy transfer mechanisms, implementation barriers, school actor responses, and gaps between policy intent and policy enforcement. Narrative synthesis was used to map the relationships between themes, identify recurring patterns, and reveal contradictions found in the literature, resulting in a richer and more comprehensive analysis than quantitative approaches.

Theoretical Framework Used

This study integrates several theoretical frameworks to strengthen cross-level analysis. First, Policy Transfer Theory (Dolowitz & Marsh) is used to examine how global norms and standards are transferred to national policies, including factors that influence success or change in the process. Second, Gender and Development (GAD) theory is used to understand the principles of gender equality, power dynamics, and how social structures influence

educational practices. Third, the Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory (Lipsky) is applied to evaluate how education actors at the school level, such as teachers and principals, interpret and implement gender policies in daily practice, which often differ from the formal policy objectives. Finally, the analysis is reinforced by UNESCO's Gender Equality Framework, which provides key indicators and dimensions for assessing the success of gender-responsive education implementation. The integration of these four frameworks allows for a simultaneous analysis of global dimensions, national policies, and local practices within a single conceptual framework.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study are presented in the form of a narrative text that describes the dynamics of the relationship between global and national policies and local implementation in the context of gender equality in education. Unlike meta-analyses or statistics-based studies, narrative synthesis allows for an in-depth conceptual analysis of how policy frameworks work at various levels and how implementation practices in schools reflect or deviate from policy objectives. Five main themes were formulated based on a review of academic literature, international agency reports, and policy implementation studies in various developing country contexts, including Indonesia.

Theme 1: Global Gender Equality Policy Framework

The Indonesian Ministry of Education regulations have been influenced by the global policy framework on gender equality in education. It includes the strongly elements by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4.5, which calls for the elimination of gender disparities in access, participation, and achievement in education systems. This framework advocates for the structured transformation of educational practices, including curriculum, pedagogical methods, and the school environment, while emphasizing the need to increase women's representation in decision-making roles. Aikman and Rao emphasize that the education framework must encompass various aspects of quality education, rather than focusing solely on metrics such as participation rates, which highlights the complexity of addressing gender disparities in education (Aikman & Rao, 2012).

UNESCO plays an important role by providing resources such as Gender Responsive Pedagogy and Gender Equality Strategies in Education. These guidelines offer an actionable framework for developing equitable teaching materials and promoting an inclusive school culture, with the aim of addressing systemic barriers that hinder gender equality in education (Steinþórsdóttir & Barkardóttir, 2024). (Nketsia et al., 2020) emphasize that teacher education is essential to advancing this policy by equipping educators to implement inclusive, student-centered teaching methods, which are essential for achieving gender equality in the classroom (Nketsia et al., 2020).

Countries such as Finland, Sweden, South Korea, and South Africa are successful examples of integrating gender considerations into the education agenda through comprehensive curriculum policies and ongoing teacher training. For example, Evans et al. explain how extensive education reforms in Indonesia that began in the 1970s have resulted in significant long-term benefits for both genders, demonstrating the impact of inclusive education policies (Evans et al., 2021). Additionally, Hemillan-Sacro et al. provide evidence from the Philippines illustrating that effective gender mainstreaming in education reflects sustained efforts to address historical disparities, advocating for policies that prioritize gender equality in various educational settings (Hemillan-Sacro et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Vanner underscores the importance of structural change in building equitable education systems, stating that increased access alone is not sufficient. They advocate for a framework that combines policy with actions that address systemic barriers to gender equality (Vanner, 2019). A multifaceted approach that integrates gender considerations into all levels of education policy-making has been validated by various policy analyses focusing on different national contexts (Chuang et al., 2019).

Ultimately, as Damanik notes, integrating gender-related factors into educational access, participation, and outcomes is crucial within the SDG framework. By addressing these broader issues through comprehensive education strategies, countries can strive to effectively achieve SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) (Damanik, 2025).

Theme 2: The Influence of Global Policy on the Formulation of Indonesian National Policy

The influence of global policies on the formulation of Indonesia's national policies is a significant area of study, especially regarding the integration of gender equality principles in various fields of education. Indonesia's national policies in the field of education have developed to reflect a commitment to inclusiveness and the elimination of gender bias, mainly thanks to policy transfer mechanisms and the adaptation of global norms. Strategic documents such as the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) and the Strategic Plan (Renstra) of the Ministry of Education and Culture highlight an explicit commitment to improving gender equality in the framework of education, as documented by recent studies (Ningsih et al., 2023 ; Rasidi & Subur, 2024).

The integration of a gender perspective into education policy is evident in regulatory frameworks such as the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation on Child-Friendly Schools and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. These reforms aim to create a more inclusive educational environment that recognizes the diverse needs of students, despite existing structural challenges (Rasidi & Subur, 2024), (Surtini & Herawati, 2024). For example, the Child-Friendly Schools initiative aims to create an educational environment that supports children's rights and is sensitive to gender dynamics, as highlighted in various case studies that underscore the importance of teacher training and community involvement (Rasidi & Subur, 2024) (Surtini & Herawati, 2024).

However, the implementation of global policies is fraught with challenges. Research shows significant disharmony between government ministries, which complicates the implementation of coherent policies. This is exacerbated by a lack of qualified educators capable of addressing gender issues, resulting in inconsistent implementation of targeted policies at the local level (Sani & Fathurrahman, 2023). Case studies focusing on the implementation of the Child-Friendly School framework, particularly in urban areas, show that although the policy exists, its operationalization is often less than optimal due to these systemic weaknesses (Ningsih et al., 2023) (Rasidi & Subur, 2024).

The discourse on policy transfer shows that practices observed in other countries are often adapted by Indonesian policymakers, albeit with varying degrees of success. Factors such as political commitment and regional governance capacity greatly influence the effectiveness of these policies (Sani & Fathurrahman, 2023) (Nengyanti et al., 2024). Understanding the nuances of this policy adaptation is crucial for navigating the complexities of achieving true gender inclusivity in Indonesia's educational landscape.

In conclusion, the intersection between global policy influences and national policy formulation in Indonesia presents both opportunities and challenges. Although there have been commendable efforts to mainstream gender equality through comprehensive policies, their implementation is still hampered by structural and contextual factors. Future efforts must focus on strengthening inter-ministerial collaboration, improving educator competencies, and developing local political will to bridge the gap between policy formulation and operationalization.

Theme 3: Policy Implementation at the School Level

The implementation of gender equality policies in Indonesian schools is a multifaceted endeavor, marked by varying degrees of success and ongoing challenges. Research shows that teachers' awareness of gender-responsive pedagogy is still lacking, which affects both theoretical understanding and practical application. For example, Hanafiah et al. emphasize the important role of school principals in influencing educational management and decision-making at the school level, showing that effective leadership can encourage teacher participation and engagement in gender-responsive practices (Hanafiah et al., 2023). Furthermore, a study by Hutagalung et al. highlights the importance of school leadership

strategies in determining educational outcomes, including commitment to gender equality policies (Hutagalung et al., 2024).

Persistent gender bias in the context of education is often reflected in classroom practices and materials. Although Thabiti et al.'s research examines gender-responsive pedagogy, its focus is specifically on Tanzania, which may not be entirely relevant to the Indonesian context. The findings show that limited training in gender-responsive pedagogy can hinder student participation and academic achievement, but further research in Indonesia is needed to confirm this relationship definitively (Thabiti et al., 2024). Additionally, research by Muafiah et al. argues that understanding of gender equality in schools is influenced by the existing socio-cultural context and infrastructure, which often does not support gender equality, such as inadequate sanitation facilities, which disproportionately affect female students (Muafiah et al., 2025). The influence of school principal leadership on the implementation of gender policies is crucial, as effective leaders are more likely to allocate the necessary resources and provide training to promote gender-sensitive practices among teachers (Nasir et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the leadership style of school principals is closely related to the overall educational climate in schools, which can challenge or perpetuate gender stereotypes. Morvan and Smith discuss how inclusive leadership practices can improve school culture and support intersectionality, thereby facilitating more equitable educational practices (Heriati & Hartinah, 2019). The critical nature of the principal's influence is further emphasized by Nasir et al., who state that successful educational leadership involves a commitment to teacher professional development to improve their understanding of gender issues (Nasir et al., 2020). Thus, even though policies are in place, their effectiveness depends not only on formal regulations but also on the proactive involvement and support of school leaders, who are crucial for operationalizing these policies within the school culture (Morvan & Smith, 2020).

In short, the uneven implementation of gender equality policies in Indonesian schools reflects systemic challenges involving teacher education and institutional infrastructure. The role of school principals is particularly important, as they shape the teaching and learning environment and ensure that resources and training are aligned with inclusive education goals. These dynamics must be understood by stakeholders committed to advancing gender equality in education.

Theme 4: Drivers and Barriers to Implementation

The implementation of gender equality policies in schools is influenced by various driving factors and barriers that can facilitate or hinder progress. Supportive national regulations and strong internal school policies are important drivers for legitimizing gender mainstreaming efforts. As highlighted by Chea et al., Cambodia's initiative to embed gender equality in its national education framework is an example of how policy can bring about the systemic changes necessary for the school environment (Chea et al., 2023). In addition, training programs, such as those supported by international organizations such as UNICEF and USAID, strengthen educators' capacity to address gender issues effectively in their teaching methods (Wango, 2025). Research shows that multi-modal strategies in teacher training can increase the adoption of gender-responsive pedagogy, thereby promoting an inclusive educational climate (Wango, 2025).

However, several structural and cultural barriers remain significant obstacles to effective policy implementation. Rampant patriarchal culture can hinder transformative change in school environments, affecting teachers' professional development and students' learning experiences (Malik et al., 2025). Competence in gender-responsive pedagogy is often lacking among teachers, which significantly undermines the realization of gender equality goals, even when policies appear robust (Malik et al., 2025) (Rguibi et al., 2025). Furthermore, logistical challenges such as budget constraints, particularly prevalent in rural or remote areas, further complicate efforts to effectively implement these policies. A study by Lehmann et al. describes how living conditions and resource shortages can hinder education staff and impede the delivery of effective programs in less accessible areas (Lehmann et al., 2008). Furthermore, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms exacerbate the gap between policy and

actual practice, which causes substantial gaps to go unnoticed by policymakers and implementation teams (Lieminaro et al., 2025).

Finally, differences in understanding between central government agencies and local school authorities contribute to inconsistencies in program implementation. In Indonesia, for example, decision-making at the school level has been severely hampered by high-level bureaucratic intervention, resulting in training provision that may not be aligned with the explicit needs of schools (Gill & Berezina, 2020). This situation illustrates the need for a more localized approach that can adapt to the unique context of each school and community, ensuring that broader education policies can have an impact on practice.

In conclusion, while there are key drivers supporting the implementation of gender equality policies in educational settings, substantial barriers related to cultural norms, teacher competencies, resource allocation, and regulatory alignment remain. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to not only develop policy frameworks but also engage in meaningful training, funding, and community involvement.

Theme 5: The Gap Between Policy and Practice

The gap between policy intent and implementation in educational settings, particularly with regard to gender equality, is a crucial issue and has been widely documented. Various studies highlight that although national and global policies advocate for significant transformation in teaching practices and school structures, implementation often remains superficial. For example, McTavish and Johnston's analysis of gender representation in UK higher education emphasizes that despite inherent policies aimed at improving gender dynamics, higher education institutions often implement these initiatives symbolically, rather than promoting substantive changes in teaching and learning methods (McTavish & Johnston, 2009). This is in line with the findings of Martino et al., which show that even when policies are considered relevant, such as those supporting transgender-inclusive practices, there is a striking gap between commitment and operational implementation at the school level (Martino et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Sobri et al. argue that true metamorphosis in educational settings occurs when school leaders actively engage all stakeholders in meaningful dialogue regarding program development and implementation, a practice that is often lacking in current administrative frameworks, which prioritize bureaucratic compliance over transformative educational practices (Sobri et al., 2021). This sentiment is echoed by Madale et al., who note that conventional barriers, including entrenched gender norms and a lack of gender-sensitive pedagogical integration, continue to hinder the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives in education systems (Madale et al., 2025).

Another dimension of this issue is highlighted by Pranidhi, who examines the correlation between inclusive education policies and actual practices in Indonesia. Her findings show that policies aimed at gender equality often fail to produce meaningful support for vulnerable groups, especially girls with disabilities, due to existing structural and cultural barriers (Pranidhi, 2025). Vanner also discusses how teachers' resistance to changing established gender norms in education curricula undermines the potential for transformative efforts, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive revision of teaching practices (Vanner, 2019).

In short, these studies collectively illustrate the widespread gap between education policy and practice, pointing to the need for a stronger framework that facilitates deep and inclusive curriculum change. Initiatives driven by genuine stakeholder engagement, aligned with continuous evaluation mechanisms and training that empowers educators, have the potential to bridge this gap and bring about substantive progress toward gender equality in schools.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings from an Education Policy Perspective

The findings of this study indicate that global policies on gender equality, such as SDG 4.5 and UNESCO guidelines on gender-responsive education, have a significant influence on

the direction of Indonesian education policy, both normatively and structurally. Normatively, global values regarding gender equality are integrated into national documents such as the RPJMN, the Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategic Plan, and various regulations regarding child-friendly schools and the Merdeka Curriculum. This integration demonstrates the state's commitment to aligning national policies with the global agenda. However, structurally, the implementation of these policies is still inconsistent at the school level. The discrepancy between the intent of the policy and its implementation shows that the adoption of global values has not been fully accompanied by the strengthening of systems, resources, and evaluation mechanisms.

This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of borrowing and lending policies, whereby countries "borrow" global frameworks to strengthen the legitimacy of national policies, but the adaptation process does not always take local realities into account. In the Indonesian context, gender-responsive policies often undergo a process of translation that is administrative but not transformational. For example, schools may adopt the label "child-friendly school" or fill in gender-responsive indicators without actually changing the school culture or pedagogical practices. Thus, while the mechanism for adopting global policies works well at the formal level, its effectiveness in the field still faces challenges in terms of actor capacity, cultural resistance, and budget constraints.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes an important theoretical contribution to the development of policy transfer theory in the context of education and gender equality. The findings show that policy transfer is not linear, but is influenced by local adaptation dynamics that reflect social and cultural values and institutional capacity. Thus, this study reinforces the argument that policy transfer theory needs to consider the interaction between global norms and national structures, as well as the level of agency of local actors, especially in the education sector, which is highly influenced by the socio-cultural context.

Furthermore, the integration of Gender and Development (GAD) theory in the analysis clarifies that gender equality cannot be adequately measured based on access and participation alone. GAD emphasizes the importance of structural change, power relations, and gender representation in the curriculum and learning processes. The results of this study support this perspective by showing that although women's access to education in Indonesia has improved, disparities remain in the form of teacher bias, stereotypes in teaching materials, and a lack of safe and inclusive school environments.

The findings also reinforce the relevance of Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy theory, which highlights the role of policy implementers, such as teachers and principals, in determining the success of implementation. Teachers as "street-level bureaucrats" have considerable discretion in interpreting and implementing gender-responsive policies. The lack of training and low awareness of gender issues among teachers are key factors causing the gap between policy and practice. Therefore, this theory is highly relevant for understanding the patterns of gender policy implementation in Indonesian schools.

Practical Implications

In practical terms, the results of this study provide a number of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of gender equality policy implementation in education. First, it is necessary to increase teacher capacity through systematic training on gender-responsive pedagogy, including how to overcome gender stereotypes in learning, the use of inclusive language, and strategies for creating safe and non-discriminatory classrooms. This training needs to be carried out continuously and not only be administrative in nature.

Second, the development of community-based gender-friendly school models needs to be strengthened through collaboration between schools, parents, local governments, and civil society organizations. This model should not only focus on infrastructure but also on creating a school culture that values equality and safety for all genders. With a community-based approach, the process of cultural change can be more effective and sustainable.

Third, there is a need for integration of gender-based policy evaluation systems, both at the school and local government levels. These indicators can include aspects such as gender

representation in teaching materials, students' perceptions of school safety, levels of teacher bias, and female student participation in academic and non-academic activities. Systematic evaluation will help ensure that policies are not only formally adopted, but also have a real impact on students' learning experiences.

Limitations of Narrative Review

This study has several limitations that are important to note. As a narrative review, the analysis is highly dependent on available and accessible literature. This potentially makes some findings dependent on the results of studies that are dominant in international publications, while unindexed local literature may be underrepresented. This study also does not use primary empirical data, so it does not provide a direct picture of practices in schools, but rather relies on a synthesis of previous studies. In addition, publication bias may arise because studies with positive or innovative results tend to be published more often, while implementation failures in many regions may not be adequately documented. Nevertheless, narrative reviews still make an important contribution by providing a comprehensive, policy-oriented conceptual mapping.

CONCLUSIONS

This research makes an important contribution by offering a comprehensive review of the relationship between global and national policies and their local implementation in the context of gender-responsive education in Indonesia. Through thematic synthesis, it clarifies how global values are translated into national policies and identifies key factors influencing their success at the school level, thereby enriching understanding of policy transfer and adaptation across global, national, and local dimensions. The study further highlights critical enabling and constraining factors, including teacher capacity, school culture, inter-agency coordination, and budgetary support, providing both theoretical and practical foundations for more context-sensitive policy implementation strategies. In addition, it proposes a conceptual model of the global-national-local relationship in gender-responsive education policy implementation, which can guide future research and policymaking. However, considering the limitations of a narrative review, this study recommends several directions for further research: empirical investigations into teachers' perceptions and practices of gender-responsive pedagogy to better understand implementation challenges and opportunities; the development of comprehensive policy evaluation frameworks combining qualitative and quantitative indicators, such as curriculum bias, school safety, and behavioral changes among teachers and students; and comparative studies between Indonesia and other ASEAN countries to identify best practices, shared challenges, and adaptive strategies that can strengthen gender equality in the education sector.

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