

NIDA Development Journal

วารสารพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์

Volume 62 Number 1 (January - June 2022)

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Aims and Scope

The NIDA Development Journal (NDJ) publishes manuscripts that describe or synthesize research of direct relevance to development administration. Its main objective is to publish high quality, peer-reviewed papers using at least two referees that have not previously been published and that reflect the latest research in the area of policy, administration and development. The editors welcome a wide range of academic papers, including research articles, review articles, and book reviews.

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Message from the Editor

Dear Esteemed Readers,

Greetings and a warm welcome to Volume 62, Number 1 (January - June 2022) of the NIDA Development Journal (NDJ). In this edition, we present a rich tapestry of research articles covering diverse realms, including Business, Development Studies, Environmental Studies, and Socio-Cultural Studies. Our aim is to engage and captivate your varied interests.

In our opening exploration, Angkana Asawasakulkrai of the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, National Institute of Development Administration, delves into the intricate landscape of global gender equality in **“International Assessment and Framework for Gender Equality”**. The study critically evaluates existing frameworks, highlighting the ongoing imperative for refinement to address the nuanced realities of gender disparities.

Shifting our focus to the realm of education, Asmita Khadka, from the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, National Institute of Development Administration, unfolds the dynamic interplay within school communities shaping gender norms in her article, **“The Role of School Communities in Doing and Undoing Gender in ASEAN”**. It offers insights into the influences of individuals, schools, and policies on gender perceptions within classrooms.

The urgency of addressing gender disparities in Southeast Asian education takes center stage in **“ASEAN’s Gender Inequality in Education”** by Angkana Asawasakulkrai and Kanisorn Tubtim, also from the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, National Institute of Development Administration. The article advocates for radical reforms and gender mainstreaming policies in educational systems. Asmita Khadka returns with a poignant exploration in **“Why Girls Do Not Report School-Based Sexual Violence: A Socio-Ecological Analysis in Indonesia”**. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive support mechanisms for victims at various levels, shedding light on the complex factors hindering disclosure.

“Examining Forms and Socio-Cultural Influences of Violence Against Women and Girls: A Survey on Awareness in Thai Society” by Kanokkan Anukansai and Sutthana Vichitrananda from the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, National Institute of

Development Administration, explores various forms of violence against women. Survey findings provide valuable insights, guiding the way for enhanced strategies to combat and prevent violence.

Concluding our journey, Kosin Panyaatisin of the School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), navigates through students' awareness of gender biases in language textbooks in his article, **"Awareness of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Pronouns"**. The study underscores the importance of addressing gender stereotypes in educational materials.

We trust that this issue's diverse topics will not only capture your academic curiosity but also provide valuable insights for practical applications. Dive into these thought-provoking articles, and let the pages of NDJ accompany you on your scholarly exploration.

Warm Regards,

Patthareeya Lakpetch
Editor

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International Assessment and Framework for Gender Equality

Angkana Asawasakulkrai*

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Abstract

This study investigates the gender-related issues that impede women and girls' abilities to survive and thrive. These issues – poverty, education, employment, violence, stereotypes, and political participation – prevent women and girls from becoming a healthy and productive member of society. Despite the world's progress in all avenues, not all women and girls enjoy basic human rights and opportunities that are afforded to men and boys. In this capacity, there have been a number of international assessments, frameworks, indicators, and indices invented for the assessment of gender equality. These methods share the same purposes of assessing the status of gender equality, predicting the trajectories of future gender equality, and hopefully serving as a foundation for policy formulation to create a more inclusive society. This study therefore examines the methods and approaches used from past to present to assess the global landscape of gender equality. The examination and analysis find that while the frameworks and indices may serve as a useful lens reflecting to a certain extent the gender equality status in different countries, often times they fail to grasp contextual differences and the complexity and variability of the real gender-related issues among regions and countries. Therefore, while these assessments are well-intended, the efforts should continue to be the improvement, refinement, and expansion of areas to be included and measured. In addition, a qualitative investigation should always be considered since gender issues are rigorously context-specific and not always quantifiable.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Inequality, Gender Gap, Assessment, Framework

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กรอบความคิดและการประเมินความเท่าเทียมทางเพศ

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บทคัดย่อ

ถึงแม้ว่าโลกจะได้รับการพัฒนาไปอย่างมากในปัจจุบัน แต่ปัญหาความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศยังคงปิดกั้นสิทธิมนุษยชนและโอกาสแก่ผู้หญิง ปัจจัยและประเด็นเหล่านี้กีดกันและขัดขวางไม่ให้ผู้หญิงดำรงชีวิตได้อย่างปลอดภัยและเป็นธรรม และทำให้ประชากรเพศหญิงไม่สามารถประสบความสำเร็จในชีวิต และเป็นพลเมืองที่สร้างสรรค์ประโยชน์ให้แก่สังคมได้ ประเด็นเหล่านี้ประกอบด้วย ความยากจน การศึกษา ความรุนแรงทางเพศ ภาพพจน์และความเชื่อทางสังคม และการมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมือง ดังนั้น ประเทศและองค์กรระหว่างประเทศจึงได้มีการออกแบบและสร้างระบบการประเมินกรอบความคิดตัวชี้วัด และตรรกะต่าง ๆ เพื่อใช้ในการประเมินสถานะความเท่าเทียมทางเพศ วิธีการวัดเหล่านี้ต่างมีวัตถุประสงค์ใกล้เคียงกันประกอบด้วย การประเมินสถานภาพความเท่าเทียมทางเพศ การพยากรณ์อนาคตของสถานะความเท่าเทียมทางเพศ หรือใช้เป็นระบบพื้นฐานในการดำเนินการนโยบายสร้างสังคมที่เท่าเทียมกัน งานวิจัยฉบับนี้จึงเป็นการศึกษากระบวนการ กรอบความคิด และระบบการประเมินต่าง ๆ ที่ได้รับยอมรับและใช้กันอย่างกว้างขวางทั่วโลก ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ระบบการประเมินอาจไม่ครอบคลุมเพียงพอและไม่ได้มีการประยุกต์ใช้ให้เหมาะสมกับสภาพแวดล้อม และปัจจัยท้องถิ่นในแต่ละพื้นที่ซึ่งมีความซับซ้อนและแตกต่างกันไป ถึงแม้ว่าระบบการประเมินและตรรกะต่าง ๆ จะมีประโยชน์และเป็นจุดเริ่มต้นของการสร้างความเท่าเทียมกันทางเพศ อย่างไรก็ตาม ระบบเหล่านี้ควรได้รับการศึกษา ปรับปรุง และปรับใช้ให้เหมาะสมกับแต่ละสถานการณ์ นอกจากนี้ การประเมินความเท่าเทียมกันในเชิงคุณภาพควรได้รับความสำคัญไม่ด้อยไปกว่ากัน เพื่อให้การสร้างความเท่าเทียมกันทางเพศเป็นไปอย่างครอบคลุม

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Global Gender Inequality

Global female population in 2021 accounts for about half of total global population or approximately 3.9 billion (World Bank, 2021). This means that women and girls account for half the world's productivity and potential. Women and girls are not any less significance than men in contributing to the economy and society. If truth be told, female contribution to society might have been even more than conventionally documented due to unpaid and unrecognized work and care. Yet, in many parts of the world, women and girls are still subjected to unfair and unjust treatment.

From the first day women and girls enter into the world, being female is a predisposition afflicted by conscious and unconscious biases and prejudices. In many cultures, having a girl is a great disappointment for parents since girls are believed to be of no economic value and cannot pass on their family name. In ancient times, girls are, as tradition would dictate, a piece of property destined to be given away to care for men and children. Women and girls were almost always under the jurisdiction of a man, most often her father and then husband. Nevertheless, even though the world's progress after World War II with regard to women's rights has improved dramatically, the global statistics today still reveal disappointing and inexcusable developments. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the global gender gap has taken many steps backward. At the present rate of progress, it will take 132 years to close the gender gap around the world, which is a number that has increased from 100 in 2020 due to the pandemic (WEF, 2022). It is clear that when a crisis strikes, women and girls are more severely affected. Moreover, for the past 20 years, only 4% of gender parity has been closed. Other global statistics from countries and international organizations around the world demonstrate the same awful truths.

Women and Poverty

According to Oxfam research (2018), three-fifth of the world's one billion poorest population are women and girls. The new projections by UN Women and UNDP present that the estimated number of women and girls who will be experiencing extreme poverty is 388 million in 2022. As girls grow older, they encounter a greater chance of poverty than boys in the lower and middle-income countries (UN Women, 2021) due to higher

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adolescent fertility rates and single motherhood. When women reach the age of 25-34, they are once again more likely to be vulnerable to poverty since they are at the age of childbearing and childcare. This statistics is evident in all regions across the world. These numbers are even more pronounced in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which women have been forced to leave their employment due to disproportionate unpaid care and employers' biases and perceptions on the skills of female workforce. All these contribute to the financial struggles faced by women and girls across the world (UN Women, 2022).

Women in the Work Force

There are seemingly endless challenges women must overcome every single day. While women and girls account for half of the world population, only 39.2% of women participate in the workforce and the rate of male workforce participation is 72% (ILO, 2022). Although women and girls have the higher rates of educational attainment, a large number of highly educated women are still unemployed. Even when women are able to secure an employment, the majority are confined with vulnerable jobs within low-productivity sectors with little access to social benefits and protections (UN Women, 2018). Most women still lack decent work and have lower wages than men despite possessing the similar level of degrees and abilities. According to the global gender gap report 2020, women receive 24.4% lower wages on average than their male counterparts.

Women and Leadership

Currently, only 13 countries have seen a woman lead as Head of State and only 26% of all national parliamentarians are female (UN Women, 2022). In addition to the lack of supportive environment, career opportunities, and the glass ceiling women must try to shatter, women's career decisions are also influenced and pressured by gender norms and practices that require them to be the domestic carer in the family. In other words, women are more likely to choose careers that do not inhibit their primary role of household caring, while men are more likely to choose high-earning, high-status professions due to social perception of suitability. As a result, women are faced with the problem of double burdens because the family economics dictates women to work outside of home to earn a living and simultaneously bear domestic responsibilities such as child rearing, household

chores, and other unpaid care work, according to the research conducted by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS) under NIDA in 2021. According to McKinsey Global Institute (2018), 75% of global unpaid work, including necessary tasks such as childcare, cooking, and cleaning, is carried out by women. Even when they are young, girls bear disproportionately larger burdens in household chores than boys due to gender norms that declare females responsible for domestic responsibilities (UNICEF, 2020). Family, education, authority, healthcare, sports, media, literature, and religion are socializing agents that reinforce the cultural norms that dictate how women should behave (Thein, 2015).

Violence against Women and Girls

Another issue that needs immediate actions if gender equality is to be achieved is violence against women and girls. Gender stereotypes and expectations foster the environment where men are viewed as superior and thus have the power over women. Deeply rooted in this notion, violence against girls and women is accepted and normalized. In many countries where social structures allow for imbalanced power dynamics between men and women, men are viewed as superior and dominant, whereas women are expected to be submissive and obedient. According to UNICEF (2020), 13 million girls aged 15-19 have experienced forced sex, but most chose to keep quiet about the abuse due to social norms of male supremacy. More disturbingly, due to the same social norms, 38% of adolescent girls globally believe wife-beating is justified (UNICEF, 2020). Sexual abuse and harassment still take place every day in society and in schools, according to CPCS at NIDA (2021), including for example peer-to-peer physical and verbal harassment, teachers making rape and sexist jokes, teachers touching female students to check if they truly have periods, and incidents of domestic sexual abuse by family members.

Gender-based Stereotypes

While the roles and expectations of women have changed over the years, there are still the socially and arbitrarily constructed norms that feed into gender stereotypes that are nearly impossible to change or erase. It is the most powerful force in reinforcing the patriarchal structure that dominates every inch of the society. The images of male being stronger and more aggressive while female being weak and vulnerable are imprinted

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in our minds as we navigate through our lives as a member of the society. Children then receive, process, learn and absorb knowledge and information from experiences around them. They learn who they are, what they can do and cannot do from a very early age. They learn of their place and where they belong in the society by aligning themselves to those close to them. This is precisely why gender-stereotyped messages play such a deep-rooted role in their conscience and self-esteem.

These stereotypes are what conditions girls and women to believe, behave, and make choices in life. They grow up being conditioned to believe what they can and cannot do, not what they are capable to do. The primary school children have a diverse list of professions they aspire to be. But as the children grow older, in secondary schools, the list of jobs narrows down to a handful, especially for female students, according to CPCS at NIDA (2021). Not yet aware by gender stereotypes, primary school students, both male and female aspire to be doctors, lawyers, pilots, engineers, and many more. However, the choices become severely limited for female secondary students, many of whom now believe they would not do well in professions that require mathematical skills. These stereotypes, while some may seem harmless, create lifelong mentality that can be hard to shake off. Defying those stereotypes can also mean defying your family values and socially accepted behaviors. The pressure for young girls and women to conform to social conventions and to exhibit behaviors expected of them becomes their rationality in making life choices, rather than their capabilities.

After a few decades of progress and development, women remain the vulnerable group of population in societies. It is plain to see that there is much to be done if meaningful and inclusive development is to take place. Many countries have made a fair amount of progress in closing the gender gaps in many areas as evidenced by a number of changes in terms of laws and regulations, and educational and development policies aiming to create a more equal and equitable society for women. Most countries have built various structures to bring about change and oversee the well-being and development of women, such as offices and units embedded in relevant ministries or agencies. Some countries have officially adopted or established a commission for women or an organization specifically designed to implement women-related policies. These changes have made significant improvements in increasing women's quality of life and safety; and securing more future opportunities for girls and women across the world.

International Gender Equality Assessment and Framework

Women's rights are basic human rights. There is much to be done in order to close the gender gaps and ensure equitable and equal treatments for women and girls worldwide. It is also of utmost importance to end all forms of sexual harassment and violence against girls and women, as well as to provide access to quality education, healthcare, career opportunities, and other resources to support women and girls. In order to achieve these outcomes, there have been various gender assessments and indices that are designed to report and monitor the progress of global gender equality and all that entails.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) originated from more than 30 years of efforts by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which was created in 1946 in order to assess, monitor, and promote women's rights. After a long period of arduous work, in December 1979, CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and fully went into effect in September 1981 with the endorsement from 20 countries. Until today, CEDAW has been ratified by 189 States Parties, out of 193 UN Member States, making it one of the most internationally comprehensive gender equality frameworks worldwide. It has played a key role in advancing women's rights and uplifting women's status around the world.

CEDAW, in its document, unequivocally states that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist. Such discrimination violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity." The framework acknowledges issues and challenges concerning women's rights, what equality means, and how it can be achieved. To lay a path for implementation, CEDAW has founded an international bill of rights for women and an agenda for actions for all the countries. The bill of rights for women demands that all nation states take proper measures to ensure the right path of development and advancement of women's rights and to guarantee the fundamental freedoms for women on a basis of equality with men. In addition, the agenda for actions included in 14 articles covered in three dimensions: civil rights and legal status of women;

human reproduction; and impact of cultural factors on gender discrimination.

For the first dimension, women must be guaranteed the basic rights of political participation, which means the rights to vote, to hold public office, and to perform public functions. This dimension also encompasses non-discrimination in education, employment, and economic and social activities. Equal rights for women must be upheld regardless of choice of spouse, parenthood, marital status, and other personal rights. The second dimension emphasizes women's reproductive rights mandating that women's role should not be viewed and treated differently from that of men. This means shared responsibility for child-rearing and other family or household responsibilities. More importantly, there should be laws incorporated into areas including employment, family plan, healthcare, and education. Equally important is the women's rights to reproductive choice. Finally, the third dimension concerns the cultural influences and social norms that deprive women of their fundamental rights. These influences include for instance gender stereotypes, customs, and norms that restrict women from receiving equitable and equal treatments and opportunities.

All in all, CEDAW provides the underpinnings for the structural changes needed in order to achieve gender equality. It is rather a comprehensive framework that entails the issues to be tackled and action plans to be implemented. To ensure the progress has been made and will continue to be so, the implementation is monitored by the Committee composed of 23 experts who have been nominated by their governments and impartially elected. Every four years, a report is to be submitted to the Committee to demonstrate the measures taken to advance women's equal rights.

How Implementable is CEDAW?

While CEDAW is praised for providing a clear path of implementation, some features of the action plans, or the lack thereof, present a few challenges. Despite its comprehensive nature, the major issues with CEDAW are its lack of alignment and localization. As such, the impacts of CEDAW at a national level, as noted by several social scientists and policy implementors, might be fairly limited (Runyan & Sanders, 2021; Och, 2018; Mullins, 2018). In addition, a study by Englehart and Miller (2014) found that while CEDAW does have a moderately positive impact on women's rights in the countries that ratify it, the impact tends to be mainly the political rights, but not convincingly so for

economic and social rights. Particularly for countries with a federal system or a centralized governing body, translating an international agreement into a national policy proves to be a daunting task. For one, CEDAW sometimes does not align with the grassroots policy making, even though the agreement acknowledges the cultural and social dimension of gender discrimination. This results in the ineffective compliance and weak implementation mechanisms (Englehart & Miller, 2014; Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 2013).

The most problematic path is thus how to build a sufficient capacity in order to promote women's rights principles at the local level. Capacity building becomes a main issue for local governments as CEDAW requires more permanent laws and regulations, infrastructure, and sustainable source of funding. Moreover, effective collaboration from all levels of governing bodies is vital in the creation of common goals and the mobilization of resources. In the US for instance, due to the fact that the US still has not officially ratified CEDAW, the CEDAW principles are not publicly promoted, even though they are sometimes used as guidelines for local policy. As such, very little awareness of CEDAW is present (Runyan & Sanders, 2021). This renders state and local lawmakers unresponsive to women's issues and gender-related policies. Even when the local government is invested in the implementation, lack of infrastructure and funding resulting from both political and economic resources often lead to failure. Therefore, there has not been a consistent effort or approach to enacting CEDAW guidelines.

Despite the obstacles, CEDAW has helped many countries achieve a more equal society. Various studies have demonstrated that CEDAW has been a critical instigator for change in women's rights and well-being. Since CEDAW's inception, there has been ample evidence showing that CEDAW has generated public awareness and facilitated capacity building in the promotion of women's rights at national, regional, and international levels (Hillum & Aesen, 2015; Facio & Morgan, 2009). Nevertheless, as mentioned before, in order to effectively create change, CEDAW guidelines must be embedded within the country's infrastructure. As seen with a powerful country such as the US, when the CEDAW principles are not fully incorporated with the legal system, the implementation cannot take place. In the US case, the full ratification of CEDAW is not allowed by the US constitution (Mullins, 2018), making it an impossible task for the state and local governments to fully embody CEDAW guidelines and turn them into meaningful action plans. However, in countries where major parts of CEDAW have been incorporated into the constitution

(Ulrich, 1999), CEDAW has helped pave the ways to the establishment of national laws such as the Domestic Violence Act in South Africa or a constitutional ban on sex-based discrimination in Mauritius. Unsurprisingly, these countries that embrace CEDAW have seen great success in the advancement of women's rights. Therefore, the commitment to policy alignment, the localization process, and proper resources are the momentous components in the effectiveness of CEDAW.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA)

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) is a global initiative launched by the United Nations – a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing China in September 1995. After the two-week conference, the representatives from 189 governments agreed into the contract making the BDPfA one of the most expansive efforts in women's rights. What is also unique about the BDPfA was that during the conference, there were more than 30,000 participants attending the Forum of non-governmental organizations contributing to the highly constructive and dynamic stage for networking, advocacy, knowledge-sharing, and training. The conference itself was praised for providing a space for coalition and alliances which were urgently needed to tackle women's issues. Building upon the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 and several other women-oriented conferences including Mexico (1975), Nairobi (1985), Vienna (1993), Cairo (1994), and Copenhagen (1995), the BDPfA expressed strong commitment to women's rights as human rights, gender equality and eliminating discriminations against women (Cornwall & Edwards, 2015).

The Platform for Action comprises 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child. Each criteria contains strategic objectives as well as a detail account of actions needed to be taken by national governments and other related stakeholders at all levels. The BDPfA is also applauded for being the first of its kind in directly addressing violence against women and girls. In June 2000, the special session of the UN's General Assembly, called "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century" also known as Beijing+5, was convened in New York to review the implementation and

to recommit to the Platform. The session also intended to showcase good practices and success stories, lessons learned, and the remaining key challenges. Further actions and initiatives were also formulated in order to ensure the continuity of the efforts in the advancement of gender equality in the new millennium (UN Women, 2000).

Is Civil Society a Recipe for Success?

Over the years, the BDPfA has been praised for its many dynamic aspects. One of the most striking is the engagement and collaboration it has been able to elicit from a variety of sectors. From its very beginning, BDPfA was able to magnetize attention and participation not only from governmental entities, but business sector and more importantly civil society. The Beijing discourse was seen as an open public space for the formation of alliances and networks of solidarity for women advocates and activists worldwide. It required the contribution from women's groups and networks, non-governmental organizations, as well as community-based organizations that focus on women's issues. A number of studies attest to this success observing that the relationship formed between governmental institutions and civil society has become a significant apparatus for meaningful conversations and negotiations that allow for possibilities of gender-related reforms (Chaney, 2016; Rai, 2003).

Even though the BDPfA appears to be a catalyst for many of the international and national commitments and reforms in gender equality as seen from significant improvements in female educational enrolment, female participation in labor force, and female representations in parliaments, it is notable that the progress intended in the Platform has been rather slow and uneven across the world. For instance, while girls today are able to attend and remain in school more than before as educational enrolment has increased in most regions of the world, gender parity remains rather uneven in STEM education. Moreover, occupational segregation remains a major issue especially in high-skilled, high-paying industries (UN Women, 2020). Some of the main questions remain unanswered. For instance, although the BDPfA has actively adopted and promoted gender mainstreaming as a key strategy in overcoming gender discrimination, the translation into real-world practices and reforms are still scarce.

A study by Chaney (2016) found that the BDPfA specifically in African context from 2003 to 2015 has not achieved its goal in bringing together the state governments

and civil society organizations. The participative model of gender mainstreaming failed to capture the common policy framing, conceptual clarity, and prioritization of gender issues. The “disconnect” between government and civil society resulted in ineffective capacity building as the two sides were pursuing different agendas. As Chaney pointed out, the majority of African governmental entities relied on political elites and gender experts for gender mainstreaming, but not necessarily on civil society engagement, especially on such issues as poverty, economic inequality, and conflict resolution.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)

Introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006, the Global Gender Gap Index is designed to capture gender inequalities and track the evolution of gender parity and its progress over time. Employing altogether 14 key indicators, the index measures four key development areas, which include economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The 14 indicators are composed of labor force participation rate, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, professional and technical workers, literacy rate, enrolment in primary education, enrolment in secondary education, enrolment in tertiary education, sex ratio at birth, healthy life expectancy, women in parliament, women in ministerial positions, and years with female/male head of state (last 50). The goal of the index is to provide a metric for the assessment of gender inequality over time by comparing the gender gap between men and women across regions and individual countries. The assessment is conducted through the executive opinion survey targeting differential outcomes experienced by men and women in various aspects including gender, sexual orientation, ethnic and/or racial background, religion, income level and disability.

World Economic Forum makes clear in its methodology that the index focuses on three aspects. First is that the index measures gender-based gaps in terms of access to resources and opportunities afforded to men and women within countries, rather than the actual levels of resources available. It claims that this method is used so that each country’s level of development would not overshadow the real gender inequality issues since neither higher level of development nor more resources necessarily translate into narrower gender gaps. Second, the index aims at measuring outcomes instead of inputs because the main objective is to demonstrate where women stand in comparison with

men in terms of basic rights such as education or political participation. As such, the indicators that are understood as inputs such as culture and customs are not taken into consideration. Third, the index is designed to rank the countries based on their proximity to gender equality. The concentration is on the gap between men and women, which means women's empowerment is not factored into the evaluation.

The Global Gender Gap Index is considered the longest-standing measurement to date. The detailed descriptions of each score in each area are often used by state governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations to benchmark the policy designs and measures needed for reducing the gender gaps. The index is also famous for providing a cross-country times-series analysis with a focus on results in the above four areas and the number of years to closing gender parity.

What's in the Numbers?

The GGGI's methodology itself acknowledges the limitations in data collection and availability in certain regions of the world. This may contribute to inaccurate interpretations of data which can hinder the true reflection of gender gaps and contextual issues in the country or region. In this sense, even when the data collection and availability are poorly executed, the numbers and rankings derived from it continue to be used and conclusions continue to be drawn from them as if they are the panacea to the inequality problem. Furthermore, the index (along with several others that attempt to quantify gender inequality) is criticized for placing too much emphasis on "countability" and "ranking" which perpetuate a misleading comprehension of gender inequality, resulting in misguided policy directions and misallocation of resources (Einarsdóttir, 2020).

While the index is widely referenced, the main critique is the attempt to measure the unmeasurable. The indicators used to calculate the index are designed in a way that creates a "self-fulfilling imperative" which is to generate a set of measurable indicators and then require that work be done to achieve the levels determined by the preset indicators (Liebowitz & Zwingel, 2014). The quantification does not always reflect the real magnitude of the problem or even begin the discussion. Often times, the indicators cannot be entirely objective, mostly designed to cater to the creators. Unconscious biases as well as judgments are rampant and quantifiable measurements are likely to produce realities, rather than representing them. (Schedler, 2012). The designed indicators help produce

facts, rather than reflect them. As such, the index and its indicators may make unfounded assumptions because they almost entirely disregard the political, economic, and social implications that are deeply inherited through centuries of practices. Simplifying and quantifying the context-sensitive gender issues into the comparison of scores and rankings therefore cannot be the solution to ending gender discrimination.

The index and indicators used to calculate it are also criticized for overlooking differences among women including class, race, and other factors that contribute to gender inequality (Parisi, 2009). The measurement approach does not take into account these social and economic dimensions. For instance, the numbers for female labor force participation tell us very little about the quality of work (Chalmers, Campbell & Charlesworth, 2005). Hence, increasing female numerical statistics as a means to decrease inequality ignores the realities in which women and girls must endure every single day. Another example is the gender gap in health outcomes across the world. The GGI has demonstrated in the last decade that the world is on its path in closing this gap at almost 96% (Hausmann et al., 2012). However, as Liebowitz and Zwingel (2014) pointed out, the category for health outcomes is made up of only two indicators being female/male sex ratio at birth and female life expectancy, while gender discriminations in the quality of care and treatment or the illnesses that do not reduce life expectancy remain universally prevalent. Moreover, these two indicators have very little to no relevance to such issue as sexual violence against women and girls.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5): Gender Equality

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development adopted in 2015 by United Nations (UN) member states consists of 17 goals, also known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and 169 targets that the world leaders have agreed to strive to achieve by the year 2030. The SDGs were developed to serve as a blueprint for addressing global challenges such as inequality, poverty, and climate change among others and create a sustainable future for all. The UN member states are expected to integrate the SDGs and associated targets into their national development plans, develop their own priorities based on the country context, align policies and institutions accordingly, and create a system to track the progress. One of the key tenants of the 2030 agenda is creating a prosperous future for all, which requires constructive and inclusive cooperation among all groups of

society including the government, civil society organization, businesses, academia, and others (UNESCAP & UNU-IAS, 2018).

Among the 17 sustainable development goals, SDG5 puts forward the vision of “Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls.” The goal consists of nine targets, representing an independent goal for women’s empowerment and gender inequality. Compared to the earlier Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), which heavily focused on gender equality in education, SDG5 has a much broader scope. As women’s empowerment is a multidimensional process, their economic empowerment that was included in MDGs might be necessary, but not a sufficient condition for realizing gender equality (Bayissa et al., 2018). The MDGs had one target and three indicators devoted to gender equality, whereas the Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a sustainable development goal specifically dedicated to gender equality and 53 indicators across the 17 SDGs that specifically address gender (MacFeely et al., 2019). The targets of SDG5 address a wide range of gender concerns, including discriminatory and harmful practices, violence against women, unpaid care and domestic work, reproductive rights, access to resources, representation in leadership positions, among others. Feminist analysts of the SDGs attribute the broad scope of the targets to the inclusive and multistakeholder process by which the SDGs were developed (Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, 2017). In the light of widespread presence of gender inequality in both developed and developing worlds, SDG5 provides a much needed holistic and comprehensive framework for advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Is SDG5 the Answer?

SDG5, as well as gender concerns related to other SDGs, have been critiqued on multiple fronts since the inception of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Feminist scholars have criticized SDGs for their lack of attention to structural power relations that disadvantage women and maintain discrimination. Esquivel (2016) argues that realizing genuine women’s empowerment requires changing unequal power relations, but the term ‘power’ is only used once in the entire 2030 Agenda. The author asserts that the agenda was shaped by power relations itself, with powerful actors including influential countries, intergovernmental institutions, and transnational corporations involved in last-minute negotiations and wording modifications with the goal of maintaining

the status quo. In addition to disregarding unequal power relations, the author also observes that the agenda has weak human rights language around gender. The ideas and discourse will continue to be important during the implementation phase of the agenda, resulting in new conflicts over interpretation and a deeply political implementation process.

UN Women and UN DESA (2021)'s review of progress on the nine targets and 18 indicators and sub-indicators of SDG5 for 2021 shows that despite some progress, data gaps continue to be a major obstacle in tracking progress. Only 47% of data required to monitor progress on SDG5 were available. Consequently, only 13 out of 18 indicators were available for a global level assessment and only three indicators for a global assessment of trends. According to the report, three areas need to be prioritized in order to get SDG5 back on track: tackling long-term structural barriers such as discriminatory norms and laws; addressing global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change; increasing national funding and global cooperation for the gender equality agenda.

Specific targets and indicators of SDG5 have also been critiqued by some scholars. According to Razavi (2016), despite failure to include reference to women's rights or human rights, SDG5 targets cover most of the focus areas espoused by women's rights groups. Still, SDG5 excludes two arenas of decision-making that are critical for women's rights. First is the intra-household sphere where inter-personal negotiations among family members are carried out over a variety of issues such as division of work, allocation of resources, and freedom from violence. Second involves women's participation in civil society and collective organizing, which is an important indicator of women's voice and influence in bringing about constructive policy change and is a crucial dimension of women's leadership.

Global Inequality Index (GII)

Introduced in 2010 by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Inequality Index (GII) was created to measure the gender disadvantages and disparities between women and men. The index is meant to reflect the loss in potential human development because of inequality. The score ranges from zero indicating perfect equality to one indicating perfect inequality. The index is measured across three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The indicators of reproductive health include maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate; the indicators for

empowerment include female and male population with at least secondary education and female and male shares of parliamentary seats; and indicators for labor market include female and male labor force participation (UNDP, 2022).

The GII additionally seeks to measure the human development cost of gender inequality (MacFeely et al., 2019; Eden and Gupta, 2017) using Human Development Index (HDI), which is an overall measure of development also published by UNDP. Furthermore, the GII was in some ways redesigned to overcome the shortcomings of GDI (Gender-related Development Index) and GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) previously created by UNDP to measure global gender inequality. But unlike GDI and GEM, GII does not take into account income levels, which had resulted in wider gender gaps mostly in developing countries, where a significant proportion of women work in the informal sector (Gutiérrez-Martínez, 2021). GII also does not let higher scores in one dimension offset a lower score in another. In addition, it includes reproductive health related variables which were not previously incorporated in the UNDP's composite indices (Permanyer, 2013).

An Index of Inequality for Human Development?

According to UNDP (2014), the GII has several limitations. First, it does not adequately portray the extent and depth of gender equality. For instance, the use of national parliamentary representation as an indicator excludes representations in the local government and other aspects of civic and community life. Second, the labor market component does not include information on incomes, occupation, and unpaid work, which is primarily and disproportionately performed by women. Third, the index does not include other crucial dimensions, such as time-use as women carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and home care responsibilities, which limits their free time and negatively impacts their mental and physical health. In addition, the index does not capture aspects such as asset ownership, gender-based violence, and participation in decision-making at the community level, mainly due to the unavailability of data.

While scholars have lauded the GII for overcoming shortcomings of the previous gender indices, they have critiqued its methodology and failure to incorporate some important gender concerns. The GII index combines female-specific indicators, such as in the area of reproductive health, with indicators that compare performance of females and males. Permanyer (2013) and Klasen (2017) argue that combining these two sets of

indicators complicates the interpretation of the index and penalizes the performance of low-income countries. For example, inequality in maternal mortality is defined as more than ten deaths per 100,000 live births, but in parliamentary representation, inequality is defined as deviations from 50%, which may wrongly imply that the majority of poor countries are not performing well in terms of gender when in fact high maternal mortality could be due to poor health services which impact both women and men (Klasen, 2017). Another criticism of the GII is that its labor market dimension misses some critical elements of gender inequality, namely gender pay gap, occupational segregation by gender, and gender stereotypes which impact women's participation in the labor market (Bartůšková & Kubelková, 2014). As a result, the GII is perceived as being narrowly formulated which should not be used to draw conclusions or interpretations. Finally, the GII also suffers from its quantitative nature as many scholars argue that quantifying socially and contextually sensitive issues such as gender inequality can neither be reliable, objective, nor truly reflective of the real problems.

Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) was developed by the OECD Development Centre in 2009 with the special aim at measuring the discrimination against women in social institutions across the world. This index is specifically created to capture the institutional discrimination faced by women and girls in the areas of formal and informal laws, attitudes and practices that limit women's and girls' access to rights, and justice and empowerment opportunities. The SIGI uses a multi-faceted approach that takes into account both qualitative and quantitative data. The main purpose of the index is to demonstrate how social institutions discriminate against women and girls throughout their lives, contributing to a never-ending cycle of poverty and restrictions of rights leading to lack of opportunities and choices in life. These social institutions sadly perpetuate gender inequalities in vital growth areas such as education, healthcare, and employment.

The SIGI is a composite index containing 12 individual variables aggregated into five subindices: discrimination in the family code, physical integrity, civil liberties, son preference, and ownership rights. With the latest edition in 2019, the SIGI's variables are quantifiably designed to capture discriminatory practices found in social institutions such as child marriage, violence against women, lack or unequal property rights, and unequal

inheritance rights. There are currently 180 countries participating and having scored on the index. Previous studies found that SIGI produces somewhat different country rankings than more commonly used indices such as World Economic Forum's GGGI or UNDP's GII (Branisa, Klasen & Ziegler, 2013).

As such, the index is praised for addressing institutional discriminations that might be neglected in other cross-country indices on gender inequality. The scores can thus be used to detect and acknowledge institutional biases against women and girls which can be difficult to identify and combat. Gender-related measures and policies can then be formulated more effectively.

Can Institutional Discriminations Be Eliminated with the Use of Index?

The OECD plainly puts forth its index's limitations stating that integrating a large amount of data into a format that can be easily comprehensible for general public is not an easy task. Most often the methodology lends itself in manipulating the data into the desired outcomes. In addition, a composite index such as SIGI presents a set of challenges in data input and the method of data aggregation, as observed by a study by Branisa, Klasen, Ziegler, Drechsler & Jütting (2014). Social institutions are a creature of culture and norms that have been cultivated over the years and thus cannot be summed up and easily translated into a quantifiable set of indicators. For example, women's political representation and empowerment cannot and should not be deduced into just the ratio of women in parliament or executive functions (Liebowitz & Zwingel, 2014). The aggregating data may also not be able to capture all the small details surrounding gender issues. As such, in certain regions of the world, the scores and henceforth rankings may be misleading since certain traits may be excluded or omitted.

In addition to the index having been perceived as narrow and insensitive to local contexts, as many other indices appear to be, one crucial critique for the SIGI is the omission of the OECD countries in the index and ranking calculation. The obvious absence is viewed as a result of what is called "neocolonialist stance" (Liebowitz & Zwingel, 2014; Narayan, 1997) which implies that discriminatory practices in social institutions in these industrially advanced countries no longer exist (OECD, 2012). For the SIGI, especially pertaining to social institutions, women are seemingly perceived as passive constituents, instead of active

participants whose collective actions are fundamental in achieving equality and creating social and political changes (Liebowitz & Zwingel, 2014).

Gender Parity Score (GPS)

Another index that captures a broader outlook of gender inequality is the Gender Parity Score (GPS) developed by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) as it encompasses the legal, financial, and digital aspects of equality in society and work. GPS measures the distance each country has journeyed toward achieving perfect gender parity, set at the score of 1.00. The score creates a connection between gender equality in society, including attitudes and beliefs about the role of women, and gender equality in work. The scores are calculated based on 15 outcome-based indicators, grouped into four categories: equality in work, essential services and enablers of economic opportunity, legal protection and political voice, and physical security and autonomy. In addition to the gender parity score at the country level, GPS report also provides gender equality lens at the regional and local levels.

The 15 indicators used in the calculation of GPS include a variety of issues concerning women's rights which have been identified and analyzed by the review of global charters and statements of principle including for instance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The indicators include the following: the ratio of labor force participation rates by gender; the ratio of men and women with professional and technical jobs; the perceived wage gap for similar work between men and women; the ratio of women and men in leadership positions; the distribution of unpaid care work among men and women; the percentage of women whose need for family planning is not met; maternal mortality rates; education levels by gender; the extent to which women have access to financial services relative to men; the extent to which women have access to cell phones and internet services relative to men; the presence of legal protections for women; the number of women in ministerial and parliamentary roles; sex ratio at birth; the percentage of girls and young women aged fifteen to nineteen who are married; and the percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives.

GPS is mainly praised for its utilization of a wide spectrum of indicators, combining the operationalization of social and political dimensions that have interconnected impacts on gender equality. Its methodology emphasizes that the dimensions that originate and perpetuate gender inequality cannot be isolated.

Combining All the Indicators?

While GPS is applauded for its innovative methodology and inclusion of legal and digital inequalities between men and women, some argue that the scoring system lacks clarity in its conceptual definition (Sander & Keller, 2021). While the 15 indicators appear to be based on CEDAW and Sustain Development Goals, there is no clear explanation or justification. Moreover, all the four categories used to produce the scores are equally weighted, while some indicators are simplified into a mere number of hours to represent the ratio of labor participation or unpaid care work. Also, for some indicators, composite indices from international organizations are used without clear connections among the variables such as education or legal protection. The conclusions or interpretations drawn from GPS can therefore be seen as not quite comprehensive or meaningful.

Conclusion

While the world has seen improvements in gender equality and women's empowerment over the years, there remain numerous challenges that need to be addressed and prioritized. Gender inequalities in many areas are still prevalent, although the majority of countries have adopted several international frameworks and assessments in their fight. In countries where major provisions of CEDAW and BDPfA have been adopted and incorporated into their constitution and thus turning into laws, cultural and social norms have also begun to positively respond to the policy efforts and changes.

As a number of regional and international indices are invented and applied, the world has been given a wake-up call in realizing the magnitude of gender inequality problem. Although those indices may overlook some key pieces of information or the true manifestation of gender biases and discriminatory practices, they are not at all useless. Achieving gender equality remains a momentous task for all to continue the endeavor to close gender gaps and eliminate gender-based discriminations and practices in all shapes and forms. The indices, while may be lacking in contextualization and localization, remain

significant tools in shedding light on many forgotten or ignored gender issues. As mistreatments pronounced and misrepresentations identified, the indices and all their indicators should be improved, refined, and expanded. They should provide an evaluative lens into the complexity and variability of gender norms that are context specific. More importantly, figures and rankings should never replace careful considerations and investigations of all the factors that may contribute to gender inequality. Equally important is that the commitment from state governments, corporations, civil society organizations, as well as general public must be aligned and promoted. Only then that the frameworks, indices, and indicators can lead to real changes.

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The Role of School Communities in Doing and Undoing Gender in ASEAN

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Abstract

Schools present an ideal setting to dismantle gender inequality in society by changing structures, norms, and practices that perpetuate gender inequality in schools. The ‘doing gender’ framework stipulates that gender is socially constructed, while the ‘undoing gender’ framework stipulates that gender can be deconstructed. This paper explores the role of schools as a site to ‘do’ and ‘undo’ gender in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Member States. It examines the deliberate efforts of school communities (teachers, students, and school administrators) in constructing or de-constructing gender in four areas-classroom practices, textbooks and other instructional materials, student leadership, and sports. Based on a secondary analysis of qualitative data collected through multiple methods, including Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), surveys, expert interviews, and school visits in the ASEAN Member States, the study identifies the processes through which school communities engage in perpetuating as well as resisting and challenging gender biases in school and classroom practices. The findings suggest that forces at individual, school, and policy levels interact dynamically to preserve as well as dismantle gender. Thus, interventions at different levels are imperative to break the cycle of reproduction of traditional gender norms and practices and attain gender equality in schools.

Keywords: Doing Gender, Undoing Gender, School, Gender Bias, Gender Stereotypes

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บทบาทของชุมชนโรงเรียนในการปลุกฝังและลบล้าง สถานะทางเพศในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

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บทคัดย่อ

โรงเรียนคือจุดเริ่มต้นในการทำลายความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศในสังคม โดยการปรับเปลี่ยนโครงสร้าง บรรทัดฐาน และพฤติกรรมที่ส่งเสริมให้เกิดความไม่เท่าเทียมกัน กรอบทางความคิดด้านการระบุเพศ (doing gender) กล่าวว่าเพศเกิดขึ้นจากการหล่อหลอมทางสังคม ในขณะที่กรอบทางความคิดด้านการท้าทายเรื่องความไม่เสมอภาคทางเพศ (undoing gender) ได้แย้งว่าการระบุเพศดังกล่าวสามารถถูกลบล้างได้ ดังนั้น งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จึงสำรวจบทบาทและอิทธิพลของโรงเรียนในการเพิกเฉยและการท้าทายความไม่เสมอภาคในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้โดยศึกษาการดำเนินการของชุมชนโรงเรียน ในการล้มล้างความคิดและพฤติกรรมใน 4 ด้าน ประกอบด้วย พฤติกรรมในห้องเรียน หนังสือและสื่อการเรียนการสอน บทบาทความเป็นผู้นำของนักเรียน และกีฬา การเก็บข้อมูลประกอบด้วย การจัดประชุม Focus group การสำรวจความคิดเห็น การสัมภาษณ์ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ และการเยี่ยมชมโรงเรียน ผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล พบว่า แรงผลักดันในระดับบุคคล โรงเรียน และนโยบายต่างมีผลเกี่ยวข้องกันในการเสริมสร้างหรือล้มล้างความเข้าใจทางเพศ ดังนั้น การแทรกแซงในระดับต่าง ๆ เหล่านี้เป็นส่วนสำคัญในการล้มล้างค่านิยมและความคิดดั้งเดิม เพื่อเสริมสร้างค่านิยมใหม่แห่งการเท่าเทียมกันทางเพศ

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Introduction

In the field of gender studies, sex and gender are generally considered to be two different constructs. While sex is considered a biological trait, gender is considered a social construct or product of daily social practices or behaviors. Sociologists West and Zimmerman (1987) developed the notion of ‘doing gender’, which refers to individuals performing daily interactions and activities deemed appropriate for one’s sex category, thus creating differences between females and males. West and Zimmerman’s “Doing Gender” publication brought new attention to the role of the forces at the socio-interactional level in constructing and maintaining the binary gender categories of femininity and masculinity in society. However, many scholars have also criticized the notion of gender for ignoring human agency and its potential to undo gender and reduce gender inequality in society. For instance, Deutsch (2007) argues that if gender can be constructed, it can also be dismantled, and calls for research on both doing and undoing gender in social interactions.

School settings play a critical role in changing gendered mindsets or, conversely, reproducing traditional gender values and attitudes in society (Stromquist, 2007; Thein, 2015). School-based dynamics shape gender beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of students and may induce determinantal effects on them. According to Aina and Cameron (2011), early gender bias experiences of children influence their attitudes and beliefs related to their formation of relationships, access to equitable educational opportunities, and participation in the workforce, and impede their physical and psychological well-being. Ultimately, the transmission of societal gender beliefs to individuals leads to enduring gender inequality across multiple societal dimensions (Eble & Hu, 2022). Thus, schools present an ideal venue to dismantle gender inequality in society by changing structures, norms, and practices that reinforce gender differences in schools. While there has been much research in the field of pedagogy to explore how gender differences are created and perpetuated in educational settings, there has not been much attention paid to the processes that eliminate gender inequities.

Studies on gender formation and the role of schools in ASEAN (e.g., Marpinjun & Ramsey, 2017; Azisah, 2012; Pattalung, 2008; Vu, 2008; Jasmani et al., 2011) show that gender bias and stereotypes remain entrenched in schools. Gender bias and stereotyping in schools may manifest in multiple and subtle ways, such as through pedagogical

methods of teachers who may carry gender prejudices, school curriculum and activities that are differentiated for girls and boys, or textbooks that promote ideals of femininity and masculinity (Erden, 2009; Aina and Cameron, 2011; Amin et al., 2018; Stromquist, 2007; Bigler, 1995). These school-based dynamics shape gender beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of girls and boys and may induce determinantal effects on them. According to Aina and Cameron (2011), early gender bias experiences of children influence their attitudes and beliefs related to their formation of relationships, access to equitable educational opportunities, and participation in the workforce, and impede their physical and psychological well-being. Ultimately, the transmission of societal gender beliefs to individuals leads to enduring gender inequality across multiple societal dimensions (Eble and Hu, 2022). Thus, schools as socio-interactional sites for gender construction or deconstruction present an opportunity to dismantle discriminatory gender norms in society.

Against these backdrops, this study aims to explore the potential of the school system as a site at the socio-interactional level to do and undo gender in ASEAN. It examines the role of school communities (teachers, students, and school administrators) in doing and undoing gender in four areas- classroom practices, textbooks and other instructional materials, sports, and student leadership. The theoretical underpinnings of the study are presented in the sections that follow. It is suggested that doing and undoing gender scholarships may provide important perspectives to explore how schools contribute to the construction and deconstruction of gender. Then, the study explores macro-level indicators of gender inequality, including in the education sector, in ASEAN to understand the broader gender equality contexts in the region. Finally, the study explores how gender ideology is reflected in school practices and how school communities, including teachers, students, and administrators, contribute to constructing and de-constructing gender in schools.

Literature Review

Doing Gender Framework

West & Zimmerman (1987)'s article on doing gender is considered to be a groundbreaking publication that established the distinction between sex and gender and underscored the significance of social interactions in the construction and maintenance of gender. The authors argue that while sex is biologically determined, gender is "the activity

of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category" (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The authors define gender as a routine and recurring accomplishment achieved through individuals continuously doing gender in all social situations, as those who don't are held accountable for their actions. The authors assert that gender is not inherently natural or essential. However, the differences between female and male that are created by repeatedly doing gender at the interactional level appear natural and essential. The resulting social order created by this process then acts as a potent reinforcer and legitimator of existing social and institutional arrangements based on sex category.

Doing gender framework suggests that both individuals and institutional forces help create and maintain binary gender distinctions. According to West & Zimmerman (1987), though individuals are the ones who 'do gender' and help create differences between females and males, these differences are expressed, legitimized, and reinforced through the creation of a variety of institutionalized frameworks and social situations. For example, institutional rules such as dress codes shape individual actions, thus enforcing gendered practices (Woehrle & Engelmann, 2008). West & Zimmerman (1987) suggest that social transformation should be pursued both at the institutional and interactional levels. However, the authors warn that "in appreciating the institutional forces that maintain distinctions between women and men, we must not lose sight of the interactional validation of those distinctions that confers upon them their sense of 'naturalness' and 'rightness'".

West & Zimmerman (1987)'s article led to numerous sociological research on doing gender, which has provided a staggering amount of evidence that women and men do gender, but their gender performance varies across time, space, ethnicity, and social institution (Risman & Davis, 2013). The article was published amidst growing criticism against the prevalent psychology and personality-focused sex role theory for overemphasizing the role of socialization during childhood in gender construction. The sex role theory has been criticized for its language use that presumes that people's gendered behaviors remain stable across their life cycle or socio-cultural contexts (Risman & Davis, 2013). It has additionally come under fire for placing too much emphasis on micro-level factors and failing to acknowledge the intricate link between micro, meso, and macro variables (Stromquist, 2007). Sex role theory assumes that people internalize the gendered norms

that were prominent when they were growing up, whereas the doing gender approach postulates that people respond to shifting contemporary norms throughout their lives, suggesting the prospect of revolutionary change within a considerably shorter time frame than suggested by sex role socialization theory (Deutsch, 2007).

Undoing Gender Framework

Following the conception of the doing gender framework, which emphasizes the role of social interactions in constructing gender, many scholars (for example, Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007; Messerschmidt, 2009) have criticized the framework for disregarding human agency in challenging gender differences and ignoring the potential for social transformation. The concept of undoing gender was first introduced by Butler (2004) in her book titled “Undoing Gender”. Without specific reference to West & Zimmerman (1987)’s article, Butler (2004) states, “Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized”. She suggests that undoing gender requires breaking the gender binary; for instance, in gender discourse, usages of the terms such as “gender blending” or “transgender” expose that the gender binary is a social construct. According to Kelan (2010), Butler’s conception of undoing gender is rooted in a poststructuralist and discursive approach.

The ethnomethodological approach, which West and Zimmerman (1987) used in their development of the doing gender framework, offers another perspective on undoing gender (Kelan, 2010; McDonald, 2013). The ethnomethodological approach to gender studies views that gender is achieved through action and interaction (Brickell, 2006). Following the ethnomethodological tradition and building on the conceptualization of doing gender framework by West and Zimmerman (1987), Deutsch (2007) offers a new conceptualization of undoing gender. According to Deutsch (2007), “doing gender” refers to social interactions that reproduce gender differences whereas “undoing gender” refers to social interactions that lessen gender differences. Expressing concern over the fact that the doing gender framework is commonly employed to study gender maintenance and conformity, Deutsch (2007) calls for more research on how gender is dismantled at the interactional level. Deutsch (2007) identifies four research topics that scholars can examine how gender can be undone at the interactional level- when and how social

interactions come to be less gendered, not merely differently gendered; the conditions under which gender is insignificant in social interactions; whether all gendered interactions perpetuate gender inequality; how structural and interactional levels can work together to bring about transformational change; interaction as the site of change. In recent years, the undoing gender framework has been used extensively to research organizations as a site to undo gender. In line with the works of West and Zimmerman (1987) and Deutch (2007), this paper examines the school system as a site to do and undo gender.

Undoing Gender in Education

There have been numerous studies on how gender is produced in work and organizations, and the undoing gender framework has been increasingly being used to study organizations as a site to undo gender in recent years (Kelen, 2010). A similar trend can be seen in gender and education scholarship as well. Scholars of gender and education highlight a number of practices targeting both educators and students that are needed to undo gender in education. Some of these practices include- training for teachers and administrators to effectively respond to gender role conflict, sex education for students that explores sexual power relations, promoting new ways of doing gender through extracurricular activities, and changing peer culture that promotes the stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity (Stromquist & Fischman, 2009). In practice, however, there is a tendency to see gender issues in education only in terms of unequal access to education for both girls and boys and the underrepresentation of women in certain fields of study (Stromquist & Fischman, 2009).

Murphy-Graham (2009) investigated how the Honduran secondary education program, *Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT), attempts to undo gender by encouraging students to reexamine gender relations in their daily lives and found that comprehensive interventions are needed to enhance females' capacity to break down gender stereotypes and norms. The SAT program, designed by a Colombian NGO in the early 1970s and currently being implemented in multiple Central American Countries, focuses on textbooks, tutors, study groups, and the community to empower students to take charge of their growth and contribute to social transformation. The comparative study of women in SAT program and women in the control group, and interviews with these women's spouses, relatives, and tutors, found that SAT participants had a higher level of gender consciousness and

a greater ability to negotiate gender relations. The key characteristics of the SAT program that makes it a transformative innovation in education to undo gender include- gender issues are incorporated in the curriculum; the concept of gender is linked with the broader concept of justice; students engage in self-reflection as well as dialogue; teachers are offered the opportunity to self-reflect in professional development sessions and; it places emphasis on change among individuals as well as in social structures to undo gender.

Bajaj (2009) uses Deutsch (2007)'s framework of undoing gender and analyzes a Zambian school's deliberate attempt to undo gender through educational policies and practices. The study compares practices related to school cleaning and human values education between the school, a low-cost private school referred to as Umutende School, and government schools to demonstrate how the school strives to reduce gender inequality and how students respond to school policies. Instead of hiring workers to clean the school as is typical in government institutions, students at Umutende were responsible for doing it themselves. In government schools, students engaged in cleaning duties either as punishment or as needed, which usually led to a gendered division of labor. In contrast, at Umutende, with separate campuses for girls and boys, all students had to participate in cleaning tasks equally. The study found that such practice at Umutende encouraged male students to carry out domestic chores at home. Similarly, Umutende's focus on values such as peace, equality, and social justice through daily interactive sessions resulted in a stronger grasp of women's rights violations among its students compared to government school students.

Hills & Croston (2012) highlight that Physical Education (PE) remains the subject in coeducational schools that is most likely to be delivered in gender-segregated sessions and argue that such practices are associated with doing gender approach that emphasizes differences in girls' and boys' attitudes, behaviors, capacities, and experiences that can limit girls' learning opportunity and reinforce gender inequality. The authors mention that problems such as teasing, harassment and exclusion may exist in coeducation. However, investigating such issues requires a different approach rather than an emphasis on gender differences. Against these backgrounds, the authors conducted ethnographic research on gender, physicality, and Physical Education (PE) in a mixed-gender school located in a city in the North of England using the undoing gender framework to understand girls' experiences of mixed-gender PE. The study conducted a narrative analysis to understand

how girls interpreted their experiences of PE and physicality. The study found evidence of undoing gender, such as girls challenging the concept of male superiority, girls' and boys' participating positively during physical activities, girls recognizing the benefits of mixed gender settings, evidence of similarities between girls and boys and shared experiences, and recognition of girls' abilities. However, the dominant narratives also positioned boys as the key instigators of teasing and exclusion and more capable and driven students. The study recommends a number of approaches to address the problems of teasing, harassment, and exclusion embedded within PE. Some of these approaches include identifying and implementing best practices based on physical educators' experiences, interventions based on an understanding of the complexity of girls' social identities in relation to PE, focusing on the individual needs of students, and encouraging girls and boys to reflect on and consider gender inclusive behaviors.

Methodology

This study performs a secondary analysis of data on the current status of gender equality in ASEAN educational systems collected in 2020 as part of the second phase of the project titled 'Elimination of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Language in Education Materials in Primary and Secondary Levels in ASEAN'. The project was initiated by Thailand's Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and implemented by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Bangkok, Thailand (Vichit-Vadakan, 2021). While the first phase of the project aimed to understand the issue of gender stereotypes and sexist language in school textbooks in the ASEAN region, the second phase of the project sought to understand a wider range of gender equality issues in the region, especially in schools. In the second phase of the project, the data were collected through expert interviews and either Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or a survey involving teachers, students, and school administrators in each ASEAN Member State with the exception of Thailand, where data were obtained through school visits that involved direct observations, on-spot interviews, and a survey (Vichit-Vadakan, 2021). This study builds on the existing dataset to explore the role of ASEAN school communities (teachers, students, and school administrators) in doing and undoing gender in four areas- classroom practices, textbooks and other instructional materials, sports, and student leadership.

Findings

Current Status of Gender Equality in ASEAN

The ASEAN and UN Women (2021)'s Global Gender Outlook report reports that the ASEAN Member States have achieved impressive strides toward gender equality in recent years, with particular successes in reducing child marriage rates, reducing maternal mortality, and enhancing access to education. However, addressing inequality continues to be a significant obstacle for countries and the region. Although the poverty rates in the ASEAN Member States have decreased over the past few decades, women in the region are still more likely than men to live in poverty, and 58 percent of women still earn less than their male partners. Moreover, men are 11.5 times as likely as women to be employed, and only 13 percent of young men are outside of education and the workforce, compared to 24% of young women. Furthermore, though more women are now participating in decision-making, with women making up 20% of parliamentarians and 24% of middle and senior managers, gender parity has not been reached. In addition, 9% of women and girls faced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months.

Global Gender Gap Report (2022), released by the World Economy Forum (WEF, 2022) ranks 140 countries according to the Global Gender Gap Index, which tracks progress towards closing gender gaps across four dimensions- Economic Participation & Opportunities, Educational Attainment, Health Survival, and Political Empowerment- in 140 countries. The overall statistics for ASEAN member countries are shown in Table 1. The data indicate important differences among ASEAN member states. The Philippines ranks first among ASEAN Member States and 19th in the global ranking, while Myanmar ranks last among ASEAN Member States and 101st in the global ranking. However, at the sub-index level, Myanmar and Lao PDR are the most advanced countries in the world on Health Survival and Economic Participation & Opportunity, respectively. On Education Attainment, the Philippines ranks first, and Lao PDR ranks last among the ASEAN Member States.

Table 1: Global Gender Gap Index in ASEAN

Global Ranking	Country	Sub Index Ranking			
		Economic Participation & Opportunity	Educational Attainment	Health & Survival	Political Empowerment
19 th	Philippines	16 th	46 th	30 th	35 th
49 th	Singapore	28 th	65 th	123 rd	66 th
53 rd	Lao PDR	1 st	109 th	55 th	116 th
79 th	Thailand	15 th	92 nd	37 th	130 th
83 rd	Vietnam	31 st	88 th	141 st	106 th
92 nd	Indonesia	80 th	102 nd	77 th	90 th
98 th	Cambodia	61 st	105 th	42 nd	121 st
103 rd	Malaysia	88 th	56 th	68 th	123 rd
104 th	Brunei Darussalam	49 th	48 th	104 th	144 th
106 th	Myanmar	101 st	96 th	1 st	118 th

Source: WEF (2022)

ASEAN's educational indicators suggest gender parity in some areas and gender inequality in others. In most countries, the mean years of schooling for males are higher than for females, with the exception of Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, and Myanmar (UNDP, 2018). Data on the net enrollment rate in primary education indicates no significant gender differences in the region apart from Thailand, where the net enrollment rate for males exceeds the rate for females by 7.6 percentage points (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2019). In terms of the net enrollment rate in secondary education, the rate for females exceeds the rate for males in Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Philippines by more than 5.0 percentage points. In contrast, the rate for males exceeds the rate for females in Myanmar and Thailand by 5.1 and 11.4 percentage points respectively (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019). The share of female graduates in STEM programs at the tertiary level varies among the countries. While Myanmar and Brunei Darussalam perform well with more than 50% share of female graduates, Cambodia is at the bottom, with only 16.7% of female graduates (UNDP, 2018). Although girls have higher attendance and completion rates for secondary

schools in most ASEAN member states, women and girls are less likely than men and boys to be in employment, education, or training in adolescence and early childhood due to highly differentiated gender roles that disproportionately allocate unpaid domestic and care work to women and girls (UNICEF, 2019). In addition, these quantitative indicators do not capture the gendered experiences of school communities, which may require qualitative assessment (Subrahmanian, 2005).

Persistent gender inequality across multiple domains in society is rooted in cultural norms and practices that differentiate between female and male (Jayachandran, 2015). In Southeast Asia, the dominant gender ideal for men is that of the breadwinner, warrior or political and religious leader and the dominant gender ideal for women is that of dutiful wife and mother (Roces, 2022). These ideals are reflected in and cut across the domains of politics, education, and economy as well as the social and private lives of people in the region. In the region, religion plays a significant role in defining and policing traditional gender ideals (Roces, 2022). In Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, Islamic law regulates marital matters like divorce and polygamy and women are disproportionately the aggrieved party in most cases (Devasahayam, 2009). In Thailand, where Theravada Buddhism is the dominant religion, women are not allowed to get ordained (Khuankaew, 2015), and it is widely believed that religious merits can be accumulated efficiently by becoming a monk, having a son ordained as a monk, or donating to male members of the Sanga (Seeger, 2006). Throughout Southeast Asia, there is a high prevalence of violence in the forms of marital rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. In Vietnam, 34.4% of women experience physical or sexual abuse from an intimate partner in their lifetime (General Statistics Office, 2010). Similarly, in Myanmar and Cambodia, half of the men are likely to defend beating their wives, which suggests that they support gender-based violence (UNICEF, 2019).

Doing and Undoing Gender in ASEAN Schools

Classroom practices

The study's findings indicate that teachers in ASEAN play a significant role in maintaining gender division in the classroom through punishment, praise, and guidance, negatively impacting female students' academic prospects. While teachers are found to be aware of the concept of gender equality generally, they tend to have unconscious

gender biases and stereotypes, which are reflected in their teaching practices and interactions with students. Teachers are found to perpetuate the stereotypical ideas of masculinity and femininity that dictate men should be bold, active, strong, and exhibit no feminine behavior. In contrast, women should be polite, obedient, neat, and physically attractive. Both female and male students are criticized if they attempt to go against the prevailing gender norms. Teachers also encourage male students to be outspoken in the classroom, for example, by paying more attention to their queries or encouraging them to present group work in front of the classroom. Such classroom practices limit female students' opportunities to develop their confidence as well as valuable skills such as leadership and communication. Teachers also tend to hold math-gender bias, which is shown to impact female students' potential in STEM subjects negatively. For example, in Thailand, it was found that girls' interest in mathematics and science decreases drastically as they progress up the grade levels. This suggests that teachers' gender bias may negatively impact girls' self-confidence and academic interests, especially in subjects like mathematics and science. In addition, the division of chores in classrooms is found to be along the traditional gender roles.

However, the study found instances of deliberate attempts by teachers to undo gender in the classroom. In Vietnam, teachers engage in informal exchanges and encourage each other to use gender-sensitive teaching practices. Vietnamese teachers were also found to engage in informal conversations with students about gender issues in friendship, romantic relationships, and sexual behavior. As the formal reproductive health and sex education curriculum in Vietnamese schools generally focuses on male and female physiology, reproduction, sex, hygiene, and pregnancy, such informal interactions between teachers and students help students to develop skills to effectively deal with biological and social changes associated with puberty, build respectful interpersonal relationships, and support their personal and social development.

In Lao PDR, teachers often encourage female students to express their opinions in the classroom. They also engage in classroom discussions aimed at reducing sexist behaviors among students and imparting gender-equitable values to students, even though these issues are not incorporated into the formal curriculum. However, as most teachers in ASEAN do not undergo gender-sensitivity training, they may not have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide lessons on gender equality and encourage gender-sensitive

behaviors among students, despite their awareness of the importance of teaching gender equality to students. In fact, they may unintentionally propagate gender-biased messages in the classroom. The school administration then must support teachers to undo gender in schools, according to some expert research participants. In Indonesia, it was found that an elementary school had a policy aimed at countering gender biases held by teachers and promoting gender sensitivity in teaching practices, as explained by one of the research participants:

“The school had a policy, starting from affirmative policies for female students to be encouraged to participate more actively, for example, in class. Usually, they prefer to stay silent, compared to male students. So, it is the teacher’s duty to encourage female students to talk and express their opinions. In addition, there is also encouragement for them to take part in the competitions that are being held.”

Textbooks and other instructional materials

Gender bias and stereotypes may be unintentionally reinforced in the classroom through gender-biased language use and unequal gender representation in textbooks and other reading materials. The findings from the study demonstrate the prevalence of gender bias and gender-role stereotyping in textbooks and other instructional materials in ASEAN. Many research participants observed that textbooks and other reading materials contain gender stereotypes that reduce women’s roles to mere domestic work and nurturing. Women are generally associated with professions such as receptionist, counselor, and maid and with indoor activities such as sewing, cleaning, cooking, and participating in cultural and religious events. In contrast, men are associated with professions such as doctors, engineers, and pilots and with outdoor activities such as exercising or playing sports. Textbooks and other instructional materials also promote male supremacy by portraying males as strong, independent, assertive, intelligent, technologically educated, and rational, and women as weak, dependent, passive, emotional, technologically illiterate, and talkative. According to Jasmani et al. (2011), gender stereotyping in textbooks can negatively impact students’ knowledge about gender and female students’ self-esteem.

However, the study found potential for countering gendered messages in textbooks and other instructional materials, given the high level of awareness of the problem and some efforts to address them on the part of teachers and students. The study found that teachers and students in ASEAN are generally aware of the presence of gender bias in textbooks and other reading materials. When restricted by historical texts or gender-biased educational materials, Vietnamese teachers were found to point out their gender-biased nature to students and discuss the details of the circumstances in which those documents were born. Students' unease with gender-biased instructional materials can be observed through the following statements made by two student research participants from Cambodia:

"History textbooks in high school did not include women even though they have made significant contributions to the betterment of society and the country. I used to wonder this, but I did not raise any questions."

"I talked to the principal regarding gender bias in instructional materials. I was told that the school does not have enough budget to change instructional materials."

The instances of teachers and students questioning and resisting gendered messages in textbooks and other instructional materials indicate that forces at the institutional level, such as educational policies or formal school curricula, which influence the choice of instructional materials and contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality, are resisted by the forces at the interactional level (by teachers and students). However, eliminating or significantly reducing gender bias and stereotyping in textbooks requires efforts at all levels. According to Lee & Collins (2008), addressing gender bias and stereotypes in textbooks requires developing a formal code of practice and guidelines for textbook editors that support the use of inclusive language and balanced treatment of sexes as well as incorporating lessons in teacher education programs to guide teachers on how to deal with gender biases in textbooks. An expert study participant from Vietnam notes that even while teachers are aware of gender biases in textbooks and have the skills to address and combat them, they could nevertheless be required by school policy to adhere to the formal school curriculum:

“Gender mainstreaming is not a mandatory activity, so implementation depends on the level of awareness and attitude of teachers. At the high school level, teachers’ compliance with curriculum and textbooks is a requirement. Therefore, if the curriculum and textbooks are not revised to incorporate gender-sensitive content, it is difficult for teachers to integrate gender sensitivity in their teaching practices. The fundamental problem is that the education sector does not view gender mainstreaming as important and needs to be done drastically.”

Student leadership

Regarding leadership opportunities for female students, the findings show that schools have unspoken rules that dictate that leaders must be boys. While boys are encouraged to take the lead positions, girls are expected to work as assistants and work behind the scenes. In Indonesia, for example, male students typically win the elections for the student council, whereas female students usually win the positions like secretary and treasurer. This shows that students are socialized to view males as leaders and females as diligent duty-holders. In Thailand, while most student research participants disagreed that boys make better leaders, some teacher and student research participants believed boys should be in leadership positions because they are stronger and louder, making them more effective leaders. In addition, remarks from some teachers show that there is a tendency to evaluate female leadership based on accumulated experiences and abilities. In contrast, male leadership is assumed to be inherent because of power factors associated with their physique.

However, the concept of male students being seen as ‘natural leaders’ can be broken through peer support, as observed in Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia. In Indonesia, the study found instances of female students attempting to change the gender norm that favored males in leadership positions by encouraging fellow female students to take on informal leadership roles. In Thailand, the majority of student research participants expressed that they would choose a leader based on their individual capabilities rather than biological sex. This indicates that students do not necessarily adhere to societal norms, which are even perpetuated by some teachers. A similar

tendency can be seen in Cambodia. In Cambodia, more female students are winning student leader elections because of the support they receive from their peers.

Sports

Gender bias can also be seen in the usage of school facilities and participation in extracurricular activities, limiting female students' opportunities in sports. There is a widespread belief that sports are for boys and the arts are for girls. Male students thus frequently participate in more athletic and physical activities, while female students are encouraged to participate in stereotypically feminine activities like singing, dancing, painting, embroidery, and cooking. In addition, male students tend to get priority over female students when it comes to using physical space and sports facilities. On this front, a student study participant from Myanmar remarked:

“There is normally only one big playground/football field in most schools, and it is mostly used for playing football and traditional chinlone (woven cane ball), which are group sports mostly teamed up with boys. Even though there is no official rule, these playgrounds are male-dominant areas, where most girls feel unassociated with.”

The findings indicate the role of accountability structures in preserving gender inequality in sports, as postulated by the doing gender framework. That is, female students are held accountable for not conforming to the feminine ideals of beauty and grace, as evidenced by the remarks from two research participants from Myanmar and Thailand, respectively:

“Teachers and the school administration favor boys over girls in sports. Girls are supposed to be gentle, and thus they are not encouraged to engage in physical activity.”

“As I grew older, I did not like playing sports as I was afraid of sweating and stinking.”

In some countries, however, the study found instances of institutional efforts to undo gender in sports. A Thai school was found to have a policy to promote gender inequality in sports and physical activities. Both girls' and boys' futsal and volleyball teams

were appointed to compete outside the school, and the use of the school's physical space appeared more gender equitable. In Brunei Darussalam, the Ministry of Education funds extracurricular and co-curricular activities (CCA) in secondary schools. The ministry requires every student to participate in at least three different CCA activities: one in athletics, one in clubs and societies, and one in uniformed or cultural activities. In addition, the Department of Co-Curriculum Education Brunei (DDDC) ministry frequently organizes events open to both female and male students.

However, institutional efforts to undo gender can be resisted by the school administration and teachers. In Brunei Darussalam, although macro-level policies exist to promote gender equality in extracurricular activities, schools may not necessarily echo the objectives of those policies. According to the informants from Brunei Darussalam, there exist school policies that forbid students from participating in certain activities based on sex. For example, girls are not allowed to play sports such as soccer, softball, and football, while boys are not allowed to take dance lessons. In Indonesia, it was observed that some schools have policies to encourage girls in physical activities like basketball and rock climbing. However, these policies are either half-hearted or patchy and do not necessarily result in true gender equality, as evidenced by a remark made by a research participant from Indonesia:

“The girls are given equal opportunities to join and play any sport since there are separate teams for boys and girls for each sport. If the girls want to join the basketball team, they can. However, when it comes to (inter-school) competitions, boys are the ones who often partake and compete in them.”

Discussion/Conclusion

This study investigated the role of the school system as a site at the interactional level to do and undo gender. The study first conducted a macro-level analysis of gender equality indices in ASEAN, providing an overview of the broader gender equality contexts in the region. The indices show that while the ASEAN countries have made significant progress in enhancing equitable access to education, reducing child marriages, and reducing maternal mortality, there is a persistence of gender gaps in various areas,

including labor market opportunities, wages, political empowerment, and safety, as well as intersecting gender inequalities. The gender equality indices also show that the ASEAN Member States vary in terms of gender equality rankings. The GGGI (Global Gender Gap Index) 2022 ranks the Philippines at the top, followed by Singapore and Lao PDR, whereas Myanmar ranks at the bottom in ASEAN. Countries also vary at the sub-index level. Quantitative educational indicators suggest a positive outlook for gender parity in education in the region; however, such indicators do not account for all aspects of gender disparity, such as the gendered experiences of educational communities. According to Glick et al. (2004), people from countries with lower gender equality scores, as measured by indices such as GGGI, tend to support more traditional gender ideologies. Despite national laws protecting women's rights and progress in many domains, women in ASEAN continue to face discrimination in many aspects of their lives due to deeply ingrained cultural and religious norms that continue to govern women's status in the region.

Then, the study examined how school communities in ASEAN do and undo gender in school. The study found that teachers, students, and the school leadership participate in both the processes of doing gender and undoing gender in classroom practices, textbooks and other instructional resources, and extracurricular activities. Teachers, being products of society, hold gender stereotypes and biases and transfer them to students, often unconsciously, through their disciplinary interactions with students as well as pedagogical practices. It is in line with the findings of Thasniya (2022), who found that gendered classroom practices exist in Indian schools with regard to teacher-student interaction, attention, role assignment, and disciplinary practices, which are linked to the prevalent gender norms and historical context. In this study, it was also observed that teachers understand the concept of gender equality, but many hold discriminatory gender stereotypes and gender beliefs and socialize female students into feminine behaviors. It is consistent with the findings of Marphinjun & Ramsey (2007), who found that early childhood educators in Indonesia hold contradictory principles of gender equality on the one hand and maintenance of traditional norms that uphold gender role division on the other. Students were also observed to engage in the process of doing gender, as evidenced by the fact that they tend to elect male students to student leadership positions and essentially have gender-specific interests in both their academic

and extracurricular pursuits. It was found that teachers and the school system as a whole place gender expectations on students, which are particularly unfair to female students. Consistent with the findings of Aina & Cameron (2011) and Koul et al. (2011), this study found that gender biases associated with leadership, STEM subjects, and extracurricular activities hamper female students' confidence, limiting their equal opportunities to advance their academic and non-academic skills.

The findings also show that schools have the potential to be a site for dismantling gendered beliefs and practices as school communities were found to engage in the process of undoing gender. Despite the lack of teacher sensitivity training and gender-sensitive school curricula, teachers were found to resist and challenge gender bias in schools through reflective exchanges with colleagues and students on gender bias and stereotypes in the school system and encourage female students to pursue academic and non-academic activities that are deemed masculine. ASEAN students were generally found to be aware of the presence of gender stereotypes and biases in schools and what they entail. The study found instances of students attempting to undo gender in student leadership through peer support. Furthermore, the school administration was found to engage in the process of undoing gender through affirmative school policies aimed at providing equal opportunities for both females and males. In addition, the study found attempts from the government to undo gender in schools through the gender-sensitive school curriculum.

This study highlights the importance of taking into account dynamic interrelationships among multi-level processes that produce and reproduce gender beliefs and norms. The study found that government policies for promoting gender equality in schools can be resisted by the school administration, and school policies promoting gender equality can be resisted by teachers. Furthermore, in the absence of gender equality school policies or gender-sensitive curricula, teachers and students resist and challenge gender inequality in schools. These findings are in line with West & Zimmerman (1987)'s doing gender framework and Deutsch (2007)'s undoing gender framework, which highlight the interplay between institutional forces and interactional forces in maintaining or dismantling gender. The findings of this study have important implications for undoing gender in schools. Policy and program interventions at different levels are imperative to break the cycle of reproduction of traditional gender norms and practices and attain gender equality in schools. Undoing gender in schools requires government policies for gender equality in schools,

gender-sensitive school curricula, and gender sensitivity training for teachers, along with individual and collaborative efforts from the school communities.

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ASEAN's Gender Inequality in Education

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Abstract

As education is one of the first basic human rights and schools have unparalleled abilities to educate, cultivate, and instill the value system into children as they grow and learn to become productive members of society, this study examines the overall landscape of gender inequality specifically in the educational context within Southeast Asia. The study also explores the status of gender inequality in ASEAN and investigates both explicit and implicit gender-related issues found in primary, secondary, and tertiary educations. The primary data are gathered from the school visits in Thailand, gender expert interviews, and teachers' surveys from ASEAN member countries, which were conducted by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). The results corroborate the gender situation in ASEAN in that gender inequality in education still exists in great lengths. Gender roles, norms, and stereotypes widely dictate people's way of life and practices. Gender hierarchy where males are considered superior and the patriarchal structure remain in the front row seat in almost all areas of life. In consequence, the education system in Thailand and other Southeast Asian

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countries are in serious need of a radical change and reform. It would benefit from gender mainstreaming policy, including direct policy interventions in educational curricula, textbooks, school's staff and faculty's understanding and perceptions of gender issues, and other school practices. Meanwhile, the promotion of gender equality must also be a priority.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, ASEAN, Gender Hierarchy, Education, Sexual Violence



ความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศในภูมิภาค เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจสถานภาพของความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศในสถาบันการศึกษาในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ เนื่องจากสถาบันการศึกษามีบทบาทความสำคัญในการสั่งสอนหล่อหลอม และเสริมสร้างให้เยาวชนเติบโตเป็นพลเมืองที่มีคุณภาพต่อสังคม ดังนั้นประเด็นเรื่องความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศจึงมีส่วนสำคัญในระบบการศึกษาทุกระดับ งานวิจัยนี้ใช้ข้อมูลจากทิมวิจัยของศูนย์สาธารณประโยชน์และประชาสังคม สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ ซึ่งได้เก็บข้อมูลขึ้นต้นจากประเทศในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ โดยผ่านการสัมภาษณ์ และการทำแบบสำรวจความคิดเห็นจากผู้เชี่ยวชาญทางด้านเพศศึกษา และครูอาจารย์ในสถาบันการศึกษารวมทั้งทิมวิจัยได้มีการออกเยี่ยมชมโรงเรียนในประเทศไทย เพื่อสัมภาษณ์ครูอาจารย์และนักเรียน รวมทั้งสังเกตและเก็บข้อมูลความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศที่เกิดขึ้นในโรงเรียน ซึ่งผลการวิจัยพบว่า พฤติกรรมและสถานะความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศยังคงมีพบได้อย่างกว้างขวาง รวมทั้งบทบาททางเพศ ค่านิยม และความคาดหวังทางเพศของสังคมที่เพศชายได้รับการเชิดชูและยอมรับมากกว่าเพศหญิงในเกือบทุกด้านในการดำรงชีวิต ดังนั้น ประเทศในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้จำเป็นต้องมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างเร่งด่วน โดยเฉพาะนโยบายทางด้านความเท่าเทียมทางเพศในสถาบันการศึกษาบเรียนหนังสือ กิจกรรมในโรงเรียน และมีการเสริมสร้างความรู้ความเข้าใจด้านความเท่าเทียมทางเพศให้แก่ครูอาจารย์และบุคลากรทุกระดับในสถาบัน

คำสำคัญ: ความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศ ภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ ระดับชั้นทางเพศ สถาบันการศึกษาความรุนแรงทางเพศ

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Introduction: Gender Inequality in ASEAN

While significant progress has been made in the fight against numerous gender-based issues over the last few decades in ASEAN member countries, there remains much more to be done to overcome the challenges facing women and girls across the region. According to ASEAN and UN Women Report (2021), access to quality education and healthcare, as well as labor force participation and employment opportunities are still not as readily available as the ones afforded to men. Worse yet are life threatening challenges such as sexual violence and discrimination which continue to deprive women and girls from living a secure and productive life and thriving in society. Early or forced marriages still exist and reproductive healthcare services severely limited, especially for those in rural areas. In addition, even when women and girls are allowed to enter into the workforce, they face workplace discrimination and unequal treatment, such as wage gaps and lack of social safety. Enforced into a gender stereotype, women and girls tend to be pooled in low-skilled industries with low wages such as in garment and textile industry. They also disproportionately represent informal sector and unpaid care and domestic work. These issues continue to impede women and girls' well-being and potential in every aspect of life.

While it is encouraging that ASEAN society as a whole appears to have a better understanding of the role of women and have a higher level of awareness regarding gender equality, and it is worth praising that ASEAN has done well in terms of establishing structural elements and policies designed to aid gender equality, but in practice, the policies and structures may not have been effectively implemented. More importantly, some of those policies are in direct conflict with many of the traditional norms, values, and cultures tightly held in Southeast Asian societies. According to ASEAN and UN Women (2021), women are still likelier to live in poverty and 24% of young women did not receive education or have employment, compared to 13% of young men. Moreover, 16% of women enter into marriage before the age of 18 and 9% of women and girls have experienced physical and sexual violence by intimate partners in 2020. In terms of female leadership, only 20% of women occupy parliamentary positions while 24% reach middle and upper management positions in the private sector. The Covid-19 pandemic has also set back many years of the achievements in gender equality as women and girls have been more affected by it. Since the pandemic, women are reportedly and disproportionately

burdened with domestic work and care. As a result, there is much more to be done if ASEAN were to achieve gender equality in all avenues.

Gender Inequality: A Systemic Problem

Having been deeply ingrained in people's way of life for thousands of years, the patriarchal value system takes precedence in how one believes and behaves. Women have been viewed, by both men and women themselves, as inferior to men and often times considered properties of men at varying degrees in different societies. Women generally do not enjoy the kind of political, social, and economic opportunities that are inherently available to men. The data from many internationally recognized databases, such as UN Women, UNDP, WEF, OECD, or ASEAN Secretariat, speak volumes for this unequal prospect. While ASEAN member countries may fare slightly better than other regions of the world in terms of economic participation and educational attainment according to the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2020 by World Economic Forum, huge gaps remain. Most ASEAN countries rank in the middle, except for a few countries in some categories. Even though there may be some policies and mechanisms put in place to foster a more inclusive society, the implementation has not been effective or even happened. There are many areas where ASEAN countries must improve, including a wage gap in the labor market, access to healthcare for women, and woman representation in politics.

COUNTRY	GLOBAL RANKING			
	ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE & OPPORTUNITY	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	HEALTH & SURVIVAL	POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT
Philippines	14 th	37 th	41 st	29 th
Lao PDR	3 rd	110 th	98 th	98 th
Singapore	20 th	84 th	133 rd	92 nd
Thailand	22 nd	80 th	52 nd	129 th
Indonesia	68 th	105 th	79 th	82 nd
Vietnam	31 st	93 rd	151 st	110 th
Cambodia	25 th	124 th	73 rd	119 th
Brunei	28 th	72 nd	115 th	148 th
Malaysia	97 th	86 th	84 th	117 th
Myanmar	102 nd	99 th	57 th	133 rd

Figure 1: Gender Gap: ASEAN Ranking

Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2020 (WEF, 2020) via the ASEAN Post

In education, the ASEAN countries perform well in certain aspects. The data on enrollment rates show some improvements in female student enrollment rates in most countries. Especially in primary education, there is no significant gender difference in net enrollment rate. For secondary education, the rate for female enrollment even exceeds that of male in some countries (see Figures 1 and 2). The key statistics for education from UNDP also show slight improvements in mean years of schooling. In most countries, mean years of schooling for both female and male are quite close in numbers, although the numbers for male are slightly higher in most countries.

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the figures and numbers do not in any way translate into the quality of education, the learning environment and condition, obstacles and struggles girls must face, as well as the opportunities and other resources available to girls in schools. The number of years attending school also have no predictive power whether girls and women would succeed later in career or life in general. The type of education or the field of study chosen by students also carries great significance that has not been accounted for in the enrollment statistics. The field of study in particular matters a great deal for future prospects for girls, as for instance the female number for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields is disproportionately small compared to male. Past studies show that education for girls needs to be both sufficient and of adequate quality if they are to reach the high or similar level of achievement as boys (Aslam. 2013; Kabeer, 2009).

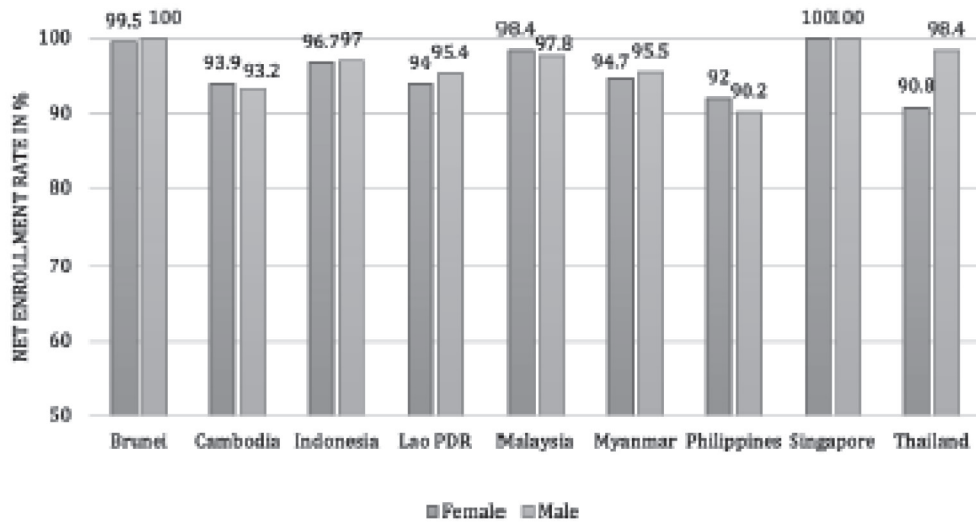


Figure 2: Net Enrollment in Primary Education by Gender, 2017

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (2019)

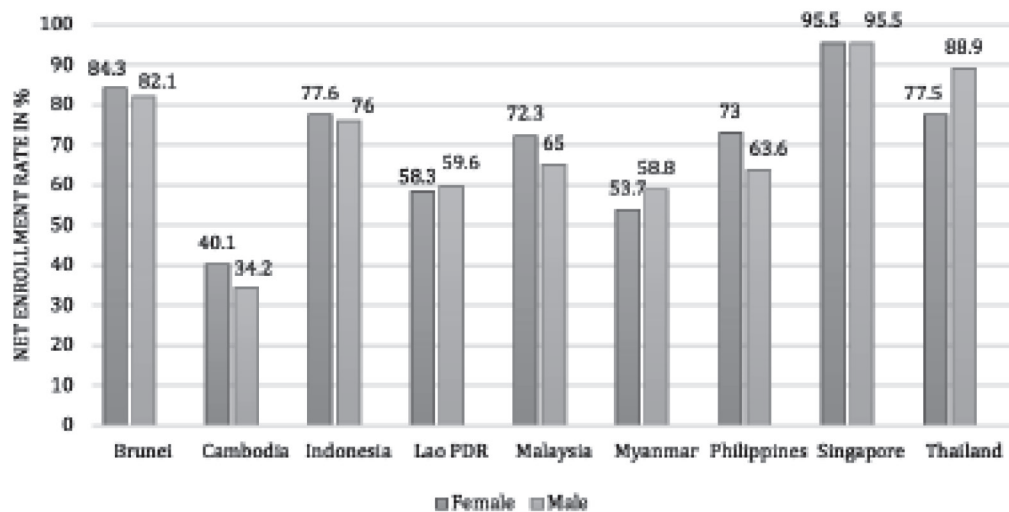


Figure 3: Net Enrollment in Secondary Education by Gender, 2017

Source: ASEAN Secretariat (2019)

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) reported by the OECD (2021) further demonstrates that in the Southeast Asian countries, social discriminations in laws, social norms and practices are indeed systemic issues as they remain prevalent. While at the score of 35 the region may fare better than West Asia at 41 and South Asia at 48, it trails behind East Asia (22), Europe (17), Northern America (18), and Latin America (27). These systemic constraints prohibit girls and women to thrive and impede human development resulting in the losses of women's capital development and in turn economic growth. The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation and the outcome for girls and women across the region since women tend to work in the most affected industries, such as retail and tourism, and thus lack social protection measures. Women and girls are also disproportionately burdened with unpaid domestic and care work due to society's perceived traditional gender roles.

ASEAN's Progress on Gender Equality

Today, women's rights in ASEAN have been significantly recognized, as seen by a number of the domestic development of gender equality related laws, policies, and organizations. All countries in the region ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) in 1995. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was consequently established in 2010 and has made considerable progress in policy initiatives, planning, and implementations in many areas. Since its inception, ACWC aims to build a society in which men, women, and all humans can thrive, based on CEDAW. The BDPfA and Sustainable Development Goals are also used as a guideline for policy recommendations. At ACWC, the common core indicators for measuring women's advancing in political, economic, and social spheres include women's access to health services, women's access to education, female labor force participation, female employment rate, female average wage, percentage of women entrepreneurs and business owners, women in local and national leadership positions, and women representatives from women's social movement. ASEAN has seen some improvements in many of those indicators.

ASEAN countries further committed to ending gender inequality by adopting the Hanoi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN

Women and Children in 2010. The ASEAN member countries also committed to the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which vows to protect human rights and promote high quality of life and equitable access to opportunities for women and girls. Moreover, all the ASEAN countries demonstrate commitment in gender equality by aligning domestic policies with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2017. The policy actions that can be reflected from such effort include for instance the introduction of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive policy and budgeting. Many countries also establish a unit or a monitoring mechanism that is responsible for the protection and development of women, which serves as a national women's machinery such as Office for Women's Development in Singapore, Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development in Thailand, or Philippine Commission on Women in the Philippines. There have been several educational institutions at the tertiary level that, in accordance with guidelines provided by the national governments and international standards, have autonomy to institute a special office or unit that issues regulations and policies that protect and empower female students.

Nevertheless, despite the efforts and initiatives enacted by governing bodies and private sector alike, gender-based discrimination still widely exists across the region. Particularly in educational sector, breaking down gender barriers and eliminating gender discriminations and stereotypes need to occur from a young age. It can help prevent the negative consequences of gender inequality that persists in our society. Schools are the most powerful avenue in achieving this goal. By providing an inclusive learning environment free of gender stereotypes, expectations, and judgments, children will grow and thrive. ASEAN countries, while appearing to be improving in gender equality in several respects, are still very much far from achieving such goal.

Research Scope and Methodology

While inequalities do extend beyond the traditional gender roles today, the scope of the study remains within the realm of inequalities that exist between male and female in the educational context. The study is a qualitative examination of differences in the treatments of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools. The primary data is gathered from the school visits in Thailand, gender expert interviews, and teachers' surveys from ASEAN member countries, all of which were conducted by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).

Results and Discussion

The survey and interview results reveal an expected set of data demonstrating deeply rooted beliefs, norms, and stereotypes towards boys and girls. While some areas have seen improvements, the majority remain unchanged. The traditional gender roles and norms foster and fuel unequal treatments and expectations that are harmful and detrimental to girls' development and opportunities in schools and future potential in life.

Gender Expert Interviews and Teachers' Surveys: ASEAN Countries

The CPCS conducted several sessions of interviews with gender experts and teachers' surveys from ASEAN countries in 2021, as part of the project titled "Elimination of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Language in Education Materials in Primary and Secondary Levels." The interviews and surveys reveal the widespread gender-based stereotypes and practices across the region. The majority of responses show long-held beliefs that women are inferior to men, women are weak, and girls are not as capable as boys. While there have been some positive changes and improvements over the years, the results present a clear picture that there is a long way to go before we can achieve gender equality.

Unequal Treatments

Inside the school gates, boys and girls are still being treated differently, even though the awareness on the issue of gender equality has been steadily increasing. Many of the interviewees believed that male and female students should be treated differently due to several arbitrary measurements such as men and women have different attitudes and emotions; boys and girls have different abilities, physical behaviors, social interactions, and academic motivations. Although the different treatments may not be in official capacity, many study participants indicated that there are unwritten rules such as leaders must be boys. Some teachers even believe that female students should be treated differently because they have monthly menstruation. Some respondents believe that boys and girls should be treated differently based on cultural and religious norms. This proves to be a contentious point of discussion as some argue that while physical needs might be slightly different between male and female, a number of responses target female limitations based on religion and social norms.

It is clear that the survey responses reflect the societal gender norms that have been divisive for hundreds of years. While there have been some positive changes, there are so much more that needs to be done. Male students regularly receive more opportunities in every aspect of life. For instance, a focus group participant shared that male offspring inherits land and property from their fathers and have priority over girls in education because girls ultimately end up as housewives.

Unconscious Biases and Gender Stereotypes

Unconscious biases are ideas, assumptions, and beliefs of which we are unaware. They surface without our control or realization. These assumptions have been ingrained in us by our personal experiences, cultural background, and social influences. Often times, these are socially constructed stereotypes perpetuated within a culture or society. These gender assumptions and stereotypes are mostly based on naïve characterization. The interviews and surveys found that unconscious biases and gender stereotypes are extensively prevalent in society at large in the ASEAN countries and in schools, both public and private.

The survey responses demonstrate the typical stereotypes seen across the region. Men are stronger than women. Men are the breadwinners and women are housewives. The expert interviews echo similar perceptions. In terms of characters, typical statements such as men are natural leaders; women are natural nurturers; men must be strong, and women must be thin and beautiful, seem to be automatic responses. Some of them, however, are shockingly misogynistic and dangerous. Those include statements such as women are treated as slaves; women are a symbol of sex while men are a symbol of power; and women are losers. Although there are a few stereotypes about men that appear unfair and untrue such as all the guys are selfish or men who are not aggressive must be gay, the stereotypes about women are much more prevalent and almost all of them project negative connotations.

Viewed as more emotional and indecisive, in schools, boys are often given more priorities than girls in the leadership roles. Even when female students possess the same capabilities as their male counterparts, they would not be preferred as leaders. In addition, the survey responses by both teachers and school personnel include firmly held stereotypes that male students are better at science and technical fields and female

students are better at arts and languages. The ideal professions for boys and girls from the perspectives of both teachers and students demonstrate these similar stereotypes. Girls are good at arts and humanities, while boys are good at science and technology. Girls are good at routine tasks while boys are better at skilled tasks. The typical jobs for girls are receptionist, nurse, assistant, or housewife. The typical jobs for boys are police, pilot, engineer, and manager. These biases are a deeply misguided way of thinking since according to the UN, on average girls achieve a higher level of reading proficiency and the same level of math proficiency as boys in secondary school worldwide (UN Sustainable Goals Report, 2019).

The survey also shows that the norms expected of boys and girls are not different across the region. While boys are expected to be brave, outspoken, and confident, girls are expected to be submissive, sensitive, and quiet. Men are expected to lead, and women are expected to follow. Boys are expected to be dominant and role models. Girls are expected to be diligent and humble. Some of the survey responses observe that girls are measured against a higher standard than boys and thus would be more strongly condemned if they make mistakes.

Although in many instances, the intentions behind these assumptions might be harmless, they inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes and biases that hinder a person's aspirations and accomplishments. This is because unconscious biases affect the way people interact with each other and how girls are treated and taught. They can manifest in the form of directions and guidance given to girls. However, it is important to recognize that having an unconscious bias does not make one a sexist person. Everyone to a certain degree has various types of biases due to years of exposure to gender-stereotyped norms and patterns. This is why it is not an easy feat to eliminate these misconceptions and cultivate a society that values individual characters and abilities. Moreover, the survey reveals that gender stereotypes often stem from religious and cultural backgrounds. Both men and women of faith believe in these predetermined gender roles, making it nearly impossible to change since that would mean challenging their own faith.

Gender-biased Curriculum and Textbooks

Although curriculums in public schools in ASEAN countries have seen incremental changes over the years, they are still deeply ingrained with the culture that values male

dominance and female subservience. The interviews and surveys show that while all of the ASEAN countries are receptive of gender equality and how it plays an important role in all arenas of the country's prosperity, curriculum reforms, especially in terms of gender discrimination, inequality, stereotypes, and biases have been seriously lacking. Moreover, gender biases and stereotypes are prevalent in classroom practices, textbooks, and school activities. School textbooks still depict women in domestic roles or conventionally hierarchical roles, whereas men are depicted in diverse occupations such as engineers, doctors, or professors. While these are reflective of our societies, schools are entrusted with educating young minds and instilling in them the values of fairness and justice. Ironically however, school communities often times normalize the male superiority and marginalize female capability.

Previous literature found that in Southeast Asian countries, women are largely underrepresented in textbooks and even when they are, they are depicted in passive roles (Ena, 2013; Jasmani et al., 2011; Lee and Collins, 2008). The surveys and expert interviews produce the same results. The majority of responses assert that there are still gender stereotypical roles illustrated in textbooks and in the curriculum at large. There are more male representations when it comes to certain fields such as sports and sciences. Moreover, some comments in the surveys indicate that the characters still follow accepted gender roles in society; women serve men; leaders are men; and history lessons mostly depict male leaders. In school textbooks, it is common for girls and women to be illustrated as doing household chores while boys play sports or engage in outdoor activities. In many instances, the textbooks glaringly contain and promote the traditional masculine and feminine traits by portraying men as being assertive and decisive, and portraying women as being compassionate, weak, and emotional.

Gender biases and stereotypes in textbooks can have lasting impacts on children as they develop by promoting acceptance of gender inequalities. Although ASEAN countries have increased awareness in gender equality in many aspects, educational curriculums, textbooks, and school activities still portray and perpetuate female stereotypes that are unfair and sometimes downright dangerous.

Sex Education

Most countries in ASEAN have a well-designed curriculum that has been regularly updated which includes sexual and reproductive health. However, the topic is taught in terms of basic anatomy in a biology or science class, but not covering sexuality. In general, children are taught to be embarrassed to ask questions about or discuss sexuality. For many countries, the surveys and interviews found that sexuality is a taboo topic, especially for girls who, according to social norms, should not be interested in sex or have sexual experiences before marriage. Although in some of the ASEAN countries, the society appears to be more open to young women exploring their sexuality, they are still traditionally restricted, as opposed to boys being more encouraged to discuss the subject or engage in sexual relationships.

Abstinence is also reinforced when sex and relationship are discussed. Some schools and curriculums include sexual harassment and unwanted touches in their physical education, but these are mostly taught to female students as how to prevent and protect themselves. Many schools include this topic in their religious classes which emphasize abstinence and marriage rules. This is another divisive issue since the participants in the interviews mostly agreed that the society holds double standards against women. Men are socially praised for being promiscuous by having sexual prowess and experiences, while women are strongly condemned for the same behaviors.

Sex education can be a difficult topic to include in a curriculum due to certain cultural and religious beliefs. A number of the survey responses from teachers believed that the topic should not be brought up because it will unnecessarily feed into the students' curiosity and encourage them to explore the topic even more. A good number of responses also indicated that sex education should be the responsibility of the parents and the topic should be guided by religious values. Because sexuality is a sensitive issue, some believe that local religious organizations and communities should take an active role in teaching it.

Teenage pregnancy is not seen as part of public health issues. In many of the comments found in the surveys, unwanted pregnancies are the results of religious misdeeds or criminality. In some schools, regardless of how pregnancy occurs, the case will be reported to the police and concerned authorities. While there are some schools

that provide counselling and help with the welfare rehabilitation programs for pregnant teenagers, the majority of schools have no formal policy or procedure in helping the expectant teenage mothers, other than informing the parents and suspending or expelling the students. What's disturbing is that there are more cases in which the mothers are expelled from schools, while the fathers can continue on.

Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls

One of the most pressing matters regarding gender issues is gender-based violence. This encompasses all forms of sexual violence incidents, whether physical, verbal, or emotional. At schools in rural areas in some countries, girls are denied basic education because the schools do not have proper toilets for them. From the surveys, there are many facilities and areas inside the schools that are not safe for female students, including toilets, unused classrooms, storage rooms, locker rooms, gymnasiums, or even classrooms. For the victims and survivors, these horrific incidents undoubtedly create the kind of impact that lasts a lifetime. More than half of the survey responses state that gender-based harassment and bullying are still prevalent today and their school has experienced some degree of sexual harassment and child abuse cases. For some countries, a simple task such as walking to school is a high-risk activity for sexual harassment that would sadly force girls to drop out of school.

To many communities in ASEAN, it is still controversial how to define sexual harassment. There are a number of examples in which a female student would be dismissed for speaking up against a sexual act that would be deemed by teachers or school personnel as just a joke. Moreover, sexual harassments that do not inflict physical harm almost always get brushed off since there are no physical injuries on the victim's part. The expert interviews agree that the society pays little attention to this, and the cases rarely get resolved. In fact, this form of sexual harassment can cause an excruciating amount of pain for the victim's mental well-being which inadvertently leads to physical harm and suicidal tendencies. Verbal and emotional abuse in sexual nature is as toxic and detrimental as those physical ones. In addition, the social structures and conventions persistent in many of the ASEAN countries view certain behaviors as acceptable, such as hugging or touching others' children. These behaviors are brushed off as a customary form of affection expressed by adults to children. However, in many cases, these behaviors

are unwanted gestures that can leave girls and women feeling powerless and mortified. These sexual violations leave painful marks on girls and women instilling in them that their bodies are not their own and their feelings are not warranted.

Causes of Sexual Violence Against Girls in School

Normalizing inappropriate boy behaviors is a major cause for sexual violence and harassment. From the survey responses and interviews, there are many incidents in which certain behaviors are socially acceptable just because they come from boys. Verbal teasing, mocking, or boy talking about girls in demeaning and misogynistic ways are silently tolerated and thus seemingly encouraged. More often than not, these behaviors are viewed as the way boys exert their social muscles and learn how to become a man. All these purposely and completely disregard the receiving end of the teasing and mocking. Many examples and statements from our survey demonstrate that the phrase “boys will be boys” or “they’re just boys” are often used to excuse many of the disparaging behaviors toward girls. This may perpetrate a culture of rape and sexual harassment, when in fact these excuses and behaviors should not be encouraged or tolerated. It is disturbing that, as the surveys evidently found, victim shaming is such a disheartening issue facing girls and women today. The survey responses and interviews confirm that we still live in a society where it is a sole responsibility for girls to protect themselves and prevent sexual violence against them. An overwhelming number of statements point the finger to girls when a sexual harassment incident occurs. Girls wear provocative clothing. Girls should not go out alone. Girls should not be alone with boys. Girls must wear modest clothing if they want to be safe and respected. These sentiments come so naturally to even girls and women themselves. This misguided value is so deeply embedded in society that girls may blame themselves when something bad happens to them.

Victim silencing is also another serious issue. The comments from the surveys and focus groups echo this sentiment in the society. Girl and women are constantly being catcalled, sexualized, abused and harassed, verbally, emotionally, and physically, but most cases are not taken seriously or get resolved quietly often at the expense of the victim. Many study participants stated that these incidents are more common than they appear to be but very hard to detect because the victims are too afraid to speak up. A lot of survey responses surprisingly cite perpetrators being family members

and relatives, which may be a contributing factor to the victim silencing. Also, more than 80% of the survey respondents agree that being sexually harassed or abused is considered shameful and embarrassing by the victim's family. This is most likely the main reason why the victims do not come forward.

The educational and school system itself is a problem, especially when it comes to gender-based violence. The survey responses indicated that the majority of the schools still lack funding and resources for gender issues. Moreover, it is not news that girls and women are usually targeted due to the patriarchal structure and the sexualization of women in the society. From the surveys, however, many comments offer suggestions on how to prevent sexual harassment by educating or blaming girls. For instance, girls should be educated, so they don't get involved in sexual harassment or girls should wear proper and modest clothing to protect themselves. Most programs are focused on teaching girls how to behave and how to protect themselves in order to prevent sexual harassment. The examples from the survey include campaigns warning girls about sexual abuse and harassment, sex education seminars, moral and religious lessons for girls, and dress codes for girls. Although the programs are created to help girls, this kind of attitudes will never prevent sexual violence, but instead ends up perpetuating the female stereotypes and blaming the victims.

While these programs and seminars may have been created with good intentions, they are created for the wrong reason. While it is true that girls and women need to learn how to protect themselves, telling girls to wear proper clothing is not going to solve the problem. These programs apparently treat girls and women as a root cause of the problem who need fixing, when in fact it is the sexual predators and perpetrators that need fixing. Some survey respondents believe that students are not well-educated by their parents and families and so tend to get involved in sexual harassment. Some teachers, based on personal, cultural, or religious reasons, might not be comfortable in teaching or discussing sex-related topics at all. The survey results also show that teachers can be strongly judgmental, which discourages students in coming forward with the incidents and other sexual violence issues.

Lack of proper mechanisms for reporting and counselling exacerbates the problem. According to gender experts in many ASEAN countries, most educational institutions

lack an official structure and mechanism that facilitates the reporting of sexual violence. As mentioned earlier, most sexual violence cases are resolved quietly on a case-by-case basis between the victims and the perpetrators. Most schools do not have a comprehensive sexual violence prevention and management policy nor proper guidelines for students, parents, and school staff to report the incidents. A number of survey respondents believe that sexual violence against girls inside schools is much more common and there are many more sexual violence cases that go unreported. Even when schools or universities provide mental counselling for the victims, in most places the counsellors are teachers who lack training necessary for the job. They do not have the knowledge, the capacity, and the support they need to help the students.

Gender Sensitive Policy and Girl Empowerment

From the surveys and expert interviews, there are no concrete policies that focus on women empowerment and gender equality that have been effectively implemented. Some respondents contribute this to the lack of funding, but some contradict this notion stating that if the schools can allocate budget for male-dominant activities, then there must be enough money for women as well. But in most schools, the budget is usually prioritized for boy activities. Moreover, some study participants indicate that male teachers still receive higher pay than female teachers, despite having the same qualifications and job descriptions. The expert interviews also confirmed that the roles of women in both personal and professional life are not being recognized.

The majority of the responses in our surveys indicate their schools do not have official policies that focus on the encouragement and empowerment of female students. Only a handful of comments indicate that their schools have some forms of women empowerment initiatives, but they are not under official structure or capacity. Most are just verbal encouragements from teachers or counsellors. There are some policies that embrace non-discrimination principles such as programs encouraging female participation in STEM education. But all in all, the policies, if exist at all, have not been effectively implemented. In addition, the survey participants agreed that most schools in their counties only engage parents and families on a necessary basis and there is hardly anything relating to the promotion of gender equality. These are all indicative that gender equality is far from being on a policy agenda and school planning. Teachers' training is

one key element in creating gender equality and girl empowerment, as evidenced by many remarks and statements from the survey respondents and gender experts. In order for teachers to be aware of gender sensitivity and equality issues, they need the knowledge and the support from the schools. However, the teachers in most ASEAN countries do not receive gender-sensitivity training nor learn about gender equality during their time in universities. The majority of teachers admit that they do not have adequate skills and knowledge in recognizing and tackling hidden gender biases and stereotypes. In addition, there is no assessment on how effective the training is or whether the teachers succeed in learning and teaching. Especially in teaching sexuality and reproductive health, the issue is more complex than it seems to be since not all teachers have the right personalities to teach. Some may find this topic uncomfortable to teach.

The structural elements needed for gender sensitive policy and girl empowerment require commitment and support from leadership, such as the Ministry of Education and departments responsible for women's well-being. But according to the gender experts in all of the ASEAN countries, it is not easy to create change and engage the authorities on these issues. Often times, the issues of sex education and gender sensitivity issues cannot be directly discussed. It is difficult for the gender perspective to be blended in or integrated as part of the preventive measures. In some countries, there is a national curriculum teaching young kids about gender equality. It has been designed with a gender perspective and is being updated and revised according to UNESCO guidelines. However, the implementation has not taken place or has not been effective. The real concepts of gender equality, respect, relationship, and power balances are still absent.

Gender Inequality in Thailand's Educational System

Commissioned by Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development to investigate the current status of gender equality in ASEAN educational systems in 2021, the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS at NIDA)'s appointed research team embarked on a journey to visit a number of schools in Thailand, hoping to observe, interview, and collect data on how the Thai school environment promotes or ignores the issue of gender equality. The school visits are expected to provide empirical evidence as to how gender perspective is understood, perceived, and practiced in the educational setting, as well as how gender inequality affects the learning environment in schools

at different levels of education. Furthermore, in order to corroborate the data and information collected from the school visits, the CPCS in collaboration with NIDA Poll conducted two perception surveys on the youth perception of gender equality in the educational system in Thailand. The results from both methods – the school visits and surveys – clearly demonstrate that gender-based discrimination, biases, and stereotypes are very much the critical issues that need to be urgently dealt with if both girls and boys are to have an inclusive learning environment free of biases and prejudices.

The CPCS's research team visited a total of seven public and private schools in both primary and secondary levels. The visits proved to be an insightful experience as the team observed the school environments, peer relationships, student-teacher interactions, and engaged in meaningful conversations with students, teachers, and school administrators. The research study found that all of the schools are somewhat aware of the issue of gender inequality and what it entails. Female students are also becoming more vocal and visible. Nevertheless, a number of gender-sensitive issues still exist, many of which are so deeply ingrained in the school ecosystem they become norms and values students and teachers live by.

Change and Progress



Figure 4: More Female Students and Class Leaders

From the school visits, the study found that the awareness on gender equality has improved as the roles and expectations of women and men have become more equal, in comparison with the study conducted in 2019 by CPCS at NIDA. Girls participate and

become more opinionated in class discussions. In every school, female students are becoming more vocal as they are receiving more opportunities for various kinds of activities, both academic and extracurricular. More girls are elected or given opportunities in leadership positions. From our interviews with students, especially at the secondary level, female students are as confident and outspoken as male students, if not more. They were very vocal in what they believed in and what they aspired to be. With regards to school's student body, based on comments from both teachers and students' point of view, female candidates have comprehensive policies that take into account every group in the schools. They are more confident, decisive, and compassionate, unlike male candidates who usually focus on only one aspect of policy. Most importantly, in every school visited, girls are much more aware of the issue of gender inequality and trying to prove that girls are as capable as boys. This is indeed a promising outlook.

Gender Biases and Stereotypes

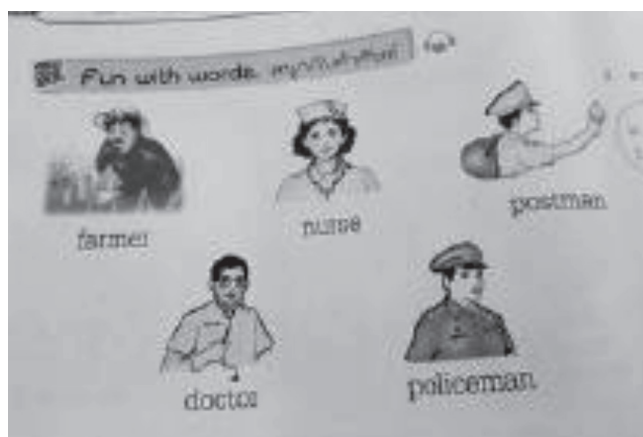


Figure 5: Gender-Biased Stereotypical Professions

Although girls today seem to be on a more equal footing with boys in schools during the visits in general, deep-rooted beliefs and gender biased stereotypes remain widespread. So often students hear such statements from their teachers as “boys have more technical abilities and potential in math and science. Even when girls may be more hard-working, boys are inherently more intelligent.” Or a teacher from one participating secondary school stated “in the student’s council, girls do most of the grunt work in policy planning and all the details. They are more responsible than boys, but boys lead the policy execution and presentation.” This kind of learning environment serves to foster and reinforce a false

assumption that can affect girls' perceptions of themselves. The visit also discovered that as girls are moving up their grade levels, according to the interviewed teachers, the level of their participation in school or class activities declines. The teachers contributed this decline to boys caring more about playing when they were young but becoming more engaging as they grew older, while girls becoming less confident and caring more about beauty and looks. This is one clear indication that the school environment might not be as supportive for girls as it is for boys.



Figure 6: Girls Traditionally Viewed as Caretakers

While it is evident from the visits that the general school atmosphere appears more accepting of girls' roles and leaderships in public spaces, gender stereotypes still abound inside the schools and school communities. Teachers and school personnel generally believe in socially constructed characterizations of gender. Exhibition boards around the schools are male- dominant, especially when it comes to academic and professional success stories. Girls are usually used as the examples or subjects of problems such as gossiping or bullying. In textbooks, girls and boys are usually portrayed in conventionally hierarchical roles. While some of these stereotypes seem harmless, some can be damaging to students' learning and development. For instance, the notion that boys are inherently smarter than girls seem to be a convention in all of the schools visited. Such belief is repeated so much so that it is viewed as a fact for some teachers. Even when girls evidently have better grades, teachers still believe boys are more intelligent. These biases are blatantly reflected through statements such as boys are smarter in general and better at calculations; even though girls have better grades, boys have better learning potential; or boys may be lazier, but smarter. The visits found that as the students move

up grade levels, girls' interest in math and science declines dramatically. This is evident that teachers' prejudice greatly impacts girls' self-confidence and academic interests.

Girls' Visibility



Figure 7: Boys Occupying Sport Fields



Figure 8: Girls Chatting During Recess

From the visits, it is virtually a consensus that the physical space is mostly occupied by male students, including gymnasiums, fields, and other open space. The teachers echo the same sentiment in that girls, as they grow older, care more about their appearances and therefore would not participate in physical activities. Because of this, many subjects and school activities are organized based on gender, which deprive girls of the chance of learning and developing. This perpetuates gender segregation and inequality between the two genders. Students often participate in activities expected of their gender, such as boys join sport and leadership activities, while girls join cultural and social activities. There are comments such as boys conquer the fields or boys and girls are not allowed to participate in the same sport at the same time. Some sports do not allow girls to participate at all. These existing practices clearly create gender biases and barriers that reinforce the arbitrarily irrational differences between boys and girls such as girls should not play sports. Moreover, boys are paid more attention and more encouraged to pursue various interests and leadership opportunities. Some teachers contended that boys should be leaders because they're stronger and louder which would make them more effective leaders. Girls are expected to be deputies and work behind the scenes. Boys are encouraged be the front man, while girls are accepted as assistants. The invisibility girls are silently forced to embrace feeds into the cycle of biases and discriminations seen rampant in schools today.

Sexual Violence Against Girls and Sex Education

The school visits shed light on the danger girls face every day at school and how important schools view the issue. While the incidents of sexual violence might not be much common these days in the visited schools, the students agreed that unwanted sexual advances and harassments are still very much part of everyday life. Boys still tease and mock girl classmates, especially their physical appearances. Even male students understand that this kind of behaviors is disrespectful and harmful to others, they still exhibit them. This signifies a deeply dysfunctional way boys learn of their place in the society. In addition, domestic sexual violence is an issue of real concern. Many interviewees indicated that domestic violence toward girls is quite common and has a great impact on girls' well-being and mental health. One example indicated that domestic violence occurred in some of the students' homes, resulting anxiety and depression on the children's part.

Teenage pregnancies are another problem for girls as teachers' attitudes demonstrate that this is mostly girls' problem. Pregnancy is seen as a burden borne solely by female students. As a result, to prevent this, according to the teachers, girls must not have premarital sex and learn to protect themselves. Nowhere in the conversations from the visits was about teaching boys how to be responsible for their actions. The problem exclusively belongs to girls. One teacher stated that what they are most worried about is female students becoming pregnant and the school would try to teach girls more intensively because if a female student makes this mistake, she will be expelled or has to pause her education, but a male student can carry on as usual without consequences. This is why girls are wanted to not be easy nor engage in a sexual relationship.

Sex education does not address the topic of sexuality and relationships, but only the biological and reproductive system. Most teachers are not comfortable discussing sexuality because of embarrassment and fear that it would unnecessarily stimulate students' curiosity. These issues most likely contribute to the sexual violence toward girls and women in schools and society at large.

Pre-service Teacher Education

One of the CPCS's school visits included a visit to teachers' educational institute which provided great insights into pre-service teacher education and how student

teachers' mindset and attitudes come about. From the interviews, the study found many issues in teacher education. First, it is interesting to note that the number of female student teachers are almost three times higher than that of male, but the institute has seen 95% of elected class presidents being male in the past five years. Despite the fact that the pool of candidates would consist of more female students, the majority of class presidents have been male. This is apparently a consequence of gender stereotypes and social conventions dictating most girls' academic choices and their opportunities for leadership positions. Moreover, when choosing fields to teach, female students overwhelmingly choose language and social sciences over technical fields such as math or physical sciences. This is yet another outcome from a female stereotype that has been cultivated in the students' minds since primary schools.

The pre-service teacher education still does not realize the importance of gender sensitivity in education. The teaching curriculum does not have an official course on the subject. The topic is occasionally incorporated in other courses, mostly depending on the teachers. The textbooks and teaching materials do not have the gender perspective and the content has not been adapted with times. The teaching pedagogies are outdated and still emphasize learning by memorization without questioning. Men are still portrayed as breadwinners, while women wear apron, cook, and clean. From the interviews, the topic of gender discrimination and inequality is still at the bottom of the agenda and most view it as a nonissue.

From the interviews, student teachers shared stories of how their own teachers inspired them to become a teacher. While a positive role model inspires them to become a teacher, a negative one inspires them to become a better teacher. This demonstrates that teachers have profound impacts on children's choices and accomplishments. Therefore, teacher education is one of the most vital elements in solving gender inequality problems in schools and in society since teachers help shape how children learn and what they can accomplish. To this end, the study also discovered that student teachers all believed that gender has nothing to do with being a good quality teacher. A good teacher must not be self-centered, but rather focus on the students and should be open-minded. They must stimulate the mind of the learners and be a good role model. These aspirations are admirable and hopeful signs for Thailand's future education.

Not only do schools provide the necessary knowledge, but schools help shape who children are and what they can achieve as a productive member of society. Gender inequality is still an unrecognized issue in the Thai education's eco-system. It is a systemic issue that needs structural and cultural changes. The school visits confirm that there is much more that needs to be done if we want our children in a school free of biases, stereotypes, and sexual violence.

Conclusion

The status of gender equality in ASEAN has been gradually improved over the years, although there are still gender gaps and women continue to experience disadvantages and discriminations in various forms, in school, workplace, and community. They face all kinds of challenges from disproportionate homelife burdens to gender-based violence. Even when they are in school, they might not be able to perform well due to gender discriminations and stereotypes. These are learning gaps that still exist today. Moreover, even though gender mainstreaming policies might be well-accepted in ASEAN countries, they seem to only be on paper, but are yet to be fully incorporated in the educational curriculum and implemented. There are still contradictory policies on gender equality such as support for equal rights and the protection of customary laws that limit women's rights or perpetuate the marginalization of women. This practice of upholding customary laws over constitutional laws in some ASEAN countries contributes to gender-based violence and gender discriminations. These contradictory gender principles and policies are present in classroom practices, which reinforce gender biases and stereotypes in children.

Schools are a second home for children. They spend the majority of their time inside the school gates and interact with many different people of all ages including their peers, teachers, school administrators, and other personnel. While girls might have had an increase in attendance and completion rates in most of the ASEAN countries, equal access to education does not always spell out educational attainment or accomplishment for girls. At times, the learning environment does not always offer the same treatment and opportunities for girls the way it does for boys. The discriminations and biases girls face every day still prevent girls from reaching their full potential. Teachers themselves for the most part still lack professional training in general and especially in the subject of gender discrimination and gender equality.

Through school, young girls and women learn and experience the socially acceptable norms and behaviors. There is no doubt that teacher-student dynamics, school curriculum, school environment, peer influences, and teachers are all key actors in cultivating gender roles and expectations and gender socialization. As a result, teachers' gendered attitudes, behaviors, and treatments of girls and boys may create positive and negative impacts on girls' self-confidence, career aspiration and future success. These messages, often unconsciously conveyed, can set a tone of how girls feel about themselves and what they can achieve. In addition, the gender biases and stereotypes plaguing the ASEAN society have remained despite the region's incredible advancements in other areas. These stereotypes, while some may seem harmless, create lifelong mentality that can be hard to shake off. Defying those stereotypes can also mean defying your family values and socially accepted behaviors. The pressure for young girls and women to conform to social conventions and to exhibit behaviors expected of them becomes their rationality in making life choices, rather than their capabilities.

Having access to sexual and reproductive healthcare must also be achieved as it is a basic human right that impacts girls and women's well-being and long-term health, in turn impacting their educational attainment and future employment prospect and other life opportunities. Family planning, as part of reproductive health, is also fiercely necessary in the development of children and youth. In many ASEAN countries however, education and conversation about puberty and sexuality are considered a taboo subject. Deeply rooted in this notion, violence against girls and women is tacitly accepted and normalized. In ASEAN countries where social structures allow for imbalanced power dynamics between men and women, men are viewed as superior and dominant, whereas women are expected to be submissive and obedient. Sexual abuse and harassment still take place every day in society and in schools. To make matters worse, legal protections are severely limited. Legal protection for women in ASEAN countries is extremely low (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018).

Eliminating gender and learning gaps in education does not mean future equal productive life for girls and women since there still exist discriminations in all of the political, economic, and social spheres. It is therefore imperative that gender equality policy needs to be more actively embraced and implemented. We all need to do our part in fostering a learning environment that is free of gender stereotypes, expectations, and judgments.

We all need to do our part in breaking down gender stereotypes and barriers that trap young girls and women everywhere so that they grow and develop into a healthy and productive member of society.

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Why Girls Do Not Report School-Based Sexual Violence: A Socio-Ecological Analysis in Indonesia

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Abstract

Disclosure of sexual violence against children is often the first step to providing support to the victims. It is also essential for addressing impunity for sexual violence crimes and discouraging future violations. While there has been ample research on Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) disclosure, the focus on school-related sexual violence against children and adolescence is largely missing. This paper explores factors that prevent female students from disclosing school-related sexual violence in Indonesia using Bronfenbrenner (1977)'s ecological model. Based on a secondary analysis of the data gathered through four Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) involving high school and undergraduate students, experts, teachers, and lecturers, the factors preventing the disclosure of sexual violence at four levels of the victim's environment were identified. The findings support that nondisclosure of school-related sexual violence is a result of complex interactions between the victims and their environmental contexts.

Keywords: School-related Sexual Violence, Culture of Silence, Child Sex Abuse Disclosure, Ecological Model

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สาเหตุที่เด็กผู้หญิงไม่รายงานความรุนแรงทางเพศในโรงเรียน: การวิเคราะห์ผ่านระบบสังคมนิเวศวิทยาในประเทศอินโดนีเซีย

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บทคัดย่อ

การเปิดเผยความรุนแรงทางเพศที่เกิดขึ้นต่อเยาวชนเป็นจุดเริ่มต้นที่สำคัญในการช่วยเหลือผู้ที่ตกเป็นเหยื่อความรุนแรงทางเพศ นอกจากนี้ การแก้ไขปัญหาของอาชญากรรมทางเพศต้องได้รับความสนใจเป็นพิเศษ เพื่อป้องกันไม่ให้เกิดเหตุการณ์ดังกล่าวขึ้นอีก อย่างไรก็ตาม ถึงแม้ว่าจะมีงานวิจัยค่อนข้างมากเกี่ยวกับการเปิดเผยข้อมูลความรุนแรงและทารุณทางเพศต่อเยาวชน แต่ความรุนแรงทางเพศต่อเยาวชนที่เกิดขึ้นในโรงเรียนยังไม่ได้รับความสนใจและศึกษาเท่าที่ควร ดังนั้น งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์ที่จะศึกษาปัจจัยที่ส่งผลให้นักเรียนหญิงเลือกที่จะไม่เปิดเผยข้อมูลความรุนแรงทางเพศที่เกิดขึ้นกับตนเอง โดยใช้ Bronfenbrenner (1977)'s ecological model และข้อมูลจาก Focus Group ในระดับมัธยมปลายและระดับอุดมศึกษา ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ ครูอาจารย์ ทั้งนี้ ผลการศึกษาได้ระบุ 4 ปัจจัย ที่บ่งชี้ว่าการไม่เปิดเผยข้อมูลความรุนแรงทางเพศเป็นผลจากการปฏิสัมพันธ์ที่ซับซ้อนระหว่างผู้ที่ตกเป็นเหยื่อความรุนแรงทางเพศและสภาวะแวดล้อมรอบตัว

คำสำคัญ: ความรุนแรงทางเพศในโรงเรียน วัฒนธรรมแห่งความเงียบ การเปิดเผยการทารุณกรรมทางเพศในเด็ก รูปแบบนิเวศวิทยา

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Introduction

Sexual violence against children is pervasive yet widely underreported. UNICEF (2014) estimates that around 120 million girls (one in 10) under the age of 20 worldwide have experienced sexual violence. Sexual violence against children can occur in multiple settings, including at home, school, public spaces, or online. School-based violence against children, which includes sexual violence, is a global issue that impacts millions of children, families and communities worldwide and transcends social, cultural, and economic boundaries (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016). Most children who experience sexual violence are girls (Pedroso & Leite, 2022). Due to the stigma surrounding sexual violence, cases of sexual violence often go unreported (Davis et al., 2013; Wismayantia, 2019). Underreporting is particularly high in societies where social and gender norms make it difficult for victims to report or recognize violence (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016).

School-based violence can have detrimental effects on the health and well-being of victims. Studies on sexual violence against children identify numerous long-term adverse outcomes on victims, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, behaviour problems, and adult revictimization (Davis et al., 2013). In order to reduce the risk of these adverse outcomes, timely access to support and resources, such as mental health counselling and judicial support, is needed. Therefore, the high prevalence of nondisclosure or delayed disclosure of sexual violence may mean an increased risk of adverse outcomes for the victims and further victimization (Alaggia et al., 2017). Furthermore, silence on abuse on the part of the victims builds the confidence of the perpetrators and strengthens their impunity, further increasing the incidence of sexual violence against children.

Like in other countries, the incidence of sexual violence against children is underreported in Indonesia (Wismayanti et al., 2021). Noer et al. (2021) claim that the available data on violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, in Indonesia is not reliable as various institutions such as the National Commission on Violence Against Women, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and the UN Women produce vastly different data. According to a household survey, among children who experienced different forms of online sexual violence in Indonesia, 17% to 56% (depending on the type of violence) did not tell anyone, and those who did were more likely to tell their

peers or siblings rather than a caregiver or trusted adult (ECPAT, INTERPOL, & UNICEF, 2022). In Indonesia, which is essentially a patriarchal society, cultural taboos and stigmatization associated with discussing matters related to sex prevent children from reporting sexual abuse (Wismayanti et al., 2021). Thus, it is likely that incidents of school-based sexual violence against female students go underreported.

Furthermore, research on the prevalence, risk, and protective factors for child sex abuse in Indonesia is limited (Rumble et al., 2018). Knowledge of the factors and the processes involved in the disclosure of sexual violence against children is needed to facilitate appropriate policy interventions to support victims as well as to address barriers to timely disclosures (Alaggia et al., 2017). As sexual violence against children is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon (McKillop, 2019), the sociological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1977) may be useful in identifying factors at various dimensions of society preventing the disclosure of sexual violence against children. Against these backdrops, this paper aims to explore factors preventing female students in Indonesia from disclosing school-related sexual violence, using Bronfenbrenner (1977)'s ecological model.

Literature Review

Gender-based Sexual Violence and Culture of Silence

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides a broad definition of sexual violence. WHO & Pan American Health Organization (2012) defines sexual violence as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.”. WHO & Pan American Health Organization (2012) further note that coercion can take different forms, including psychological intimidation, blackmail, or threats. Additionally, sexual violence can occur when a victim is unable to give consent, such as when they are intoxicated or mentally ill. Furthermore, sexual violence can take different forms, such as sexual violence by intimate partners, sexual violence against men and boys, childhood sexual abuse, and sexual harassment and violence in schools and at work.

UNESCO and UN Women (2016) define school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) as “acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics”. This definition highlights that SRGBV can occur on the way to or from schools, in communities and neighbourhoods, as well as through social media. Moreover, both children and adults in the school environment can be victims or perpetrators of SRGBV. UNESCO and UN Women (2016) also note that among school children, while boys are more likely to face higher rates of corporal punishment, girls are more likely to face psychological bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence, and harassment.

In recent years, studies on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) disclosures have increased. Alaggia et al. (2018) reviewed 33 studies on CSA disclosures conducted between 2000-2016 and found five themes to be considered for practice, and future research- (1) CSA disclosure is an iterative, interactive process as opposed to a discrete event best carried out within a relational setting (2) current disclosure models reflect a sociological focus for understanding the dynamic interaction of individual, familial, contextual, and cultural factors involved in CSA disclosure; (3) age and gender predict CSA disclosure, with younger children and boys showing fewer disclosures; (4) research largely lack a life-course perspective; and (5) while there is more information available on barriers than facilitators of CSA disclosures, studies identify shame, self-blame, and fear as the factors that prevent CSA disclosures.

Hershkowitz et al. (2007) investigated how children disclosed sexual abuse by alleged perpetrators who were not family members and found that the disclosure process varied based on the age of the children, the severity and frequency of abuse, the parents’ anticipated reactions, the identities of the suspects, and the techniques they used to maintain secrecy. The study found that among thirty alleged victims of sexual abuse (18 boys and 12 girls), 53 percent of children delayed disclosure for between 1 week to 2 years, less than half came forward to their parents, and over 40 percent did not disclose spontaneously but did so only after they were encouraged. Half of the children said that they felt afraid or ashamed of their parents’ responses. While younger children preferred to confide in their parents over siblings or friends, older children tended to avoid discussing their experiences with their parents. The older children were less willing to disclose, possibly because they were more aware of societal norms and taboos. Furthermore,

the children were more likely to keep the abuse a secret or postpone reporting it if the offenders were well-known to them and when they had used “positive” emotional manipulations to seek secrecy. Additionally, children were less likely to disclose abuse when the abuse was more severe.

Though research explicitly focusing on silence and disclosure of school-based sexual violence is limited, studies on sexual violence against girls in schools identify a range of context-specific findings related to the prevalence as well as preventive policies and strategies. Klien (2007) investigated how normalized masculinity affects violence against girls in schools in the United States and found that sexual violence against girls from male peers and school employees, such as teachers, counsellors, and bus drivers, is rampant in schools, and the complaints by the victims are usually dismissed or trivialized by the school officials. The study also found that the culture of victim blaming in schools and the tendency of social institutions to deny the reality of sexual harassment against girls result in many victims resisting reporting the crimes. To address peer sexual violence against girls in schools, the author recommends implementing school-based prevention programs that focus on breaking normalized masculinity expectations and helping boys express themselves without relying on domination, power, or aggression.

Timmerman (2003) examined the differences between peer sexual harassment and sexual harassment perpetuated by teachers in secondary schools in the Netherlands using the Cultural Model and Power Model, respectively. The Cultural Model assumes that sexual harassment by peers is part of school culture because it is a public phenomenon and it is a daily occurrence, while the Power Model assumes that power hierarchy puts school employees in a position to misuse their authority and that sexual harassment by teachers is restricted to isolated incidents. The study identifies interesting findings. First, unwanted sexual behaviour by peers primarily occurs in classrooms, corridors, school yards, and other public and such behaviours are reported half of the time. Second, sexual harassment by teachers entails more physical forms and a combination of different types of harassment. Thus, students feel less comfortable when sexually harassed by teachers compared to peers and report fewer psychological health problems. Finally, the author claims that many teachers in the study exhibited unprofessional pedagogical behaviors. Hence, the author questions their role as “moral guardians” to prevent school-based sexual harassment of female students. The author suggests that interventions

should instead focus on implementing the ethical agenda of the schools.

There have been some studies that have examined factors associated with non-disclosure of Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Indonesia. Stark et al. (2012) explored the functioning of current community-based child protection mechanisms in two districts in Aceh, Indonesia and identified issues that need to be addressed for enhancing preventive and response programs for children who experience violence, abuse, and exploitation. The study found that the victims rarely report or seek support primarily due to shame, lack of agency to change their circumstances, as well as the prevalence of rigid local norms that were viewed to conflict with the national and regional legislation (Stark et al., 2012). Another study, Boothby & Stark (2011), found that Indonesia's child protection mechanism fails to identify vulnerable children and children with protection problems due to cultural factors, lack of understanding of what constitutes a child protection concern, lack of awareness of available programs, and apprehension about dealing with the police or judicial system.

Rumble et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review of research into the prevalence of Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Indonesia and found a significant risk of sexual violence impacting children at home and in schools and a research gap around non-disclosure of CSA in Indonesia. The study reveals that there has been little research on CSA in Indonesia. In addition, only a few research, according to the study, specifically addressed sexual violence in schools. From the review of studies on CSA in Indonesia, the study identified a common theme: children's and adults' unwillingness to disclose sexual violence to family members, peers, or service providers, presumably as a result of feelings of fear and shame, cultural, or societal barriers to formal reporting. According to the study, while the barriers to disclosure of CSA in Indonesia may be similar to those observed in other countries, there is a need for researchers to evaluate whether any specific barriers are more significant in the Indonesian context.

The literature review reveals that non-disclosure of CSA is a significant problem both globally and in Indonesia. Studies on CSA in Indonesia reveal that fear, shame, cultural barriers, as well as institutional and cultural barriers are associated with non-disclosure of CSA. However, a very limited number of studies have focused on the non-disclosure of school-related sexual violence against girls in Indonesia. In addition,

school-related sexual violence against girls does not occur in isolation but within complex and interconnected individual, organizational, and societal contexts. There is a dearth of studies that provide a more comprehensive understanding of multi-level factors associated with non-disclosure of school-related sexual violence against girls in Indonesia. In an effort to fill the research gaps, this study seeks to identify factors associated with non-disclosure of school-related sexual violence against girls that extend across multiple levels of an individual's ecology in Indonesia.

Socioecological Model

The socio-ecological model was first introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1977) to understand the process of child development in light of the dynamic interactions between individuals and environmental settings. The author identifies four overlapping layers of ecological systems that influence child development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem consists of a child's immediate surroundings such as family, school, and peers. The mesosystem is created when microsystems interact with each other, for example, interactions between the child's teacher and his parents. The exosystem is the environment the child does not directly interact with but still influences the child's development, such as mass media, government agencies, and informal social networks. Finally, the macrosystem is the outermost layer representing broader economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems. Bronfenbrenner highlights bidirectionality of influence, that is, not only do the environments influence individuals, but the individuals also influence the environments they operate in.

Initially conceptualized to study human development, Bronfenbrenner (1977)'s socioecological model has a wide range of applications. The model allows sociologists to investigate gender as an organizing principle and how individuals are both restricted by and defy the constraints of social structures (Michell et al., 2018). The model indicates that the flow of influence is from the structural to the individual, but that individual action can also influence change at the community and ultimately societal levels (John et al., 2017). While it has been used extensively in psychology to study child development, it has also been adapted to research various topics in sociology, such as mental health (Adu & Oudshoorn, 2020), health policy (Shtarkshall et al., 2009), pedagogy (Ivankova & Plano Clark, 2018; Swick & Williams, 2006; Michell et al., 2018), and gender-based violence

(e.g., Mootz et al., 2017; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001). It has also been used to study sexual violence in schools. For example, Skarbek et al. (2009) used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to examine sexual violence against children with disabilities in education and identify preventive strategies to be implemented at the four levels of the ecological environment.

Methodology

This study is a secondary analysis of qualitative data obtained from a prior project. The study draws on the data gathered in 2020 as part of the second phase of the project titled 'Elimination of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Language in Education Materials in Primary and Secondary Levels in ASEAN' to identify factors that inhibit female students from speaking about school-related sexual violence committed against them in Indonesia. The project was commissioned by Thailand's Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and implemented by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (CPCS), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand (Vichit-Vadakan et al., 2021a). While the second phase of the project sought to understand a wide range of gender issues in schools in ASEAN Member States, this study examines the project's data on sexual violence against female students in primary, secondary, and high schools in Indonesia collected through four Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) involving high school and undergraduate students, schoolteachers, lecturers, and experts. The credibility of the data was ensured through peer debriefing among the project researchers as well as project committee members consisting of educationalists and gender experts.

In order to collect the data, a gender expert from Indonesia was appointed as a consultant, who identified the FDG participants and conducted and transcribed the FDGs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting students and educators from both public and private schools as well as Islamic schools, and gender experts. There was a total of four focus groups. High school and college students made up Group 1's seven members, while eight teachers and lecturers made up Group 2, four gender experts made up Group 3, and four more gender experts made up Group 4.

The study used the ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1977) as a framework for analyzing the data on sexual violence against female students in Indonesia. First, the ecological model's four layers of an individual's environment were modified to fit the environments surrounding a victim of school-related sexual violence against girls. Then, a thematic data analysis approach was utilized without employing specific coding techniques. In the first step of the thematic analysis, the transcripts of the FGDs related to sexual violence against female students in Indonesia were read several times to get a deeper understanding of the participants' viewpoints. Then, the transcripts were examined inductively, allowing for the understanding of the prevalence of school-related sexual violence against girls and the identification of the factors associated with the non-disclosure of such incidents. Finally, the identified factors associated with the non-disclosure of sexual violence incidents were grouped into four pre-determined levels of influence within the ecological framework.

Findings

Prevalence of Sexual Violence Against Female Students

The findings from the FGDs indicate that sexual violence against girls is common in schools. The research participants indicated that such incidents occur in both public and private schools and at all levels of school education and are vastly underreported. Many research participants shared media-reported incidents of sexual violence, which were more severe in nature, such as rape. Some research participants also shared cases of sexual violence based on their personal experiences or the experiences of those around them. Some of the incidents that were shared include girls getting harassed by targeting their bodies when riding a bike, boys peeking at the colour of the girls' underwear using a sharpener with a mirror, and female students being groped by male teachers. A research participant shared an incident of sexual violence that occurred in the classroom:

"There was a case of a girl being made a rolling trophy. So, the friends in her class, who were boys...flaunted notes of cash and said, 'this is the 5,000 or 10,000, whoever can force a kiss or hold her breasts will win the money. And it really happened, until finally the girl felt very traumatized and did not

dare to go to school. After a long absence, she dared to report this to her school's guidance counsellor...Thank God, the teacher tried to handle the case by inviting her parents, bringing in the perpetrators, and expelling the students who committed the sexual violence."

While the school leadership appears supportive in responding to this incident of sexual harassment upon knowledge, the incident demonstrates a lack of knowledge about sexual harassment on the part of the perpetrators, as well as other students who did not report the incident. This incident also demonstrates the mental health impacts of sexual violence on the victims and that victims' suffering is prolonged and possibly heightened when such incidents are not disclosed.

Factors Preventing Victims from Reporting Sexual Violence Incidents

For this study, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model was adapted and used as a theoretical framework to identify and examine the multi-level factors that prevent victims of school-related sexual violence against girls from reporting incidents of sexual violence. The microsystem is the victim's immediate environment representing the victim's interpersonal relationships with the school communities, including teachers, peers, school administrators, and parents. The mesosystem is the school system that represents the connections between the school communities. The exosystem represents judicial structures, local policies and local media that affect the victim's and her family's decision to report sexual violence incidents. Finally, the macrosystem represents the larger societal norms and public policies that discourage reporting of sexual violence incidents.

There may be a variety of interpersonal reasons why sexual assault victims choose not to come forward, such as shame, fear of being blamed, fear of not being believed, or fear of social rejection (WHO & Pan American Health Organization, 2012). However, these feelings stem from a variety of factors and processes in both the victim's immediate and larger social environments. Based on the analysis of data from the FGDs, the factors that prevent girls from disclosing school-related sexual violence are mapped using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and discussed in the following sections.

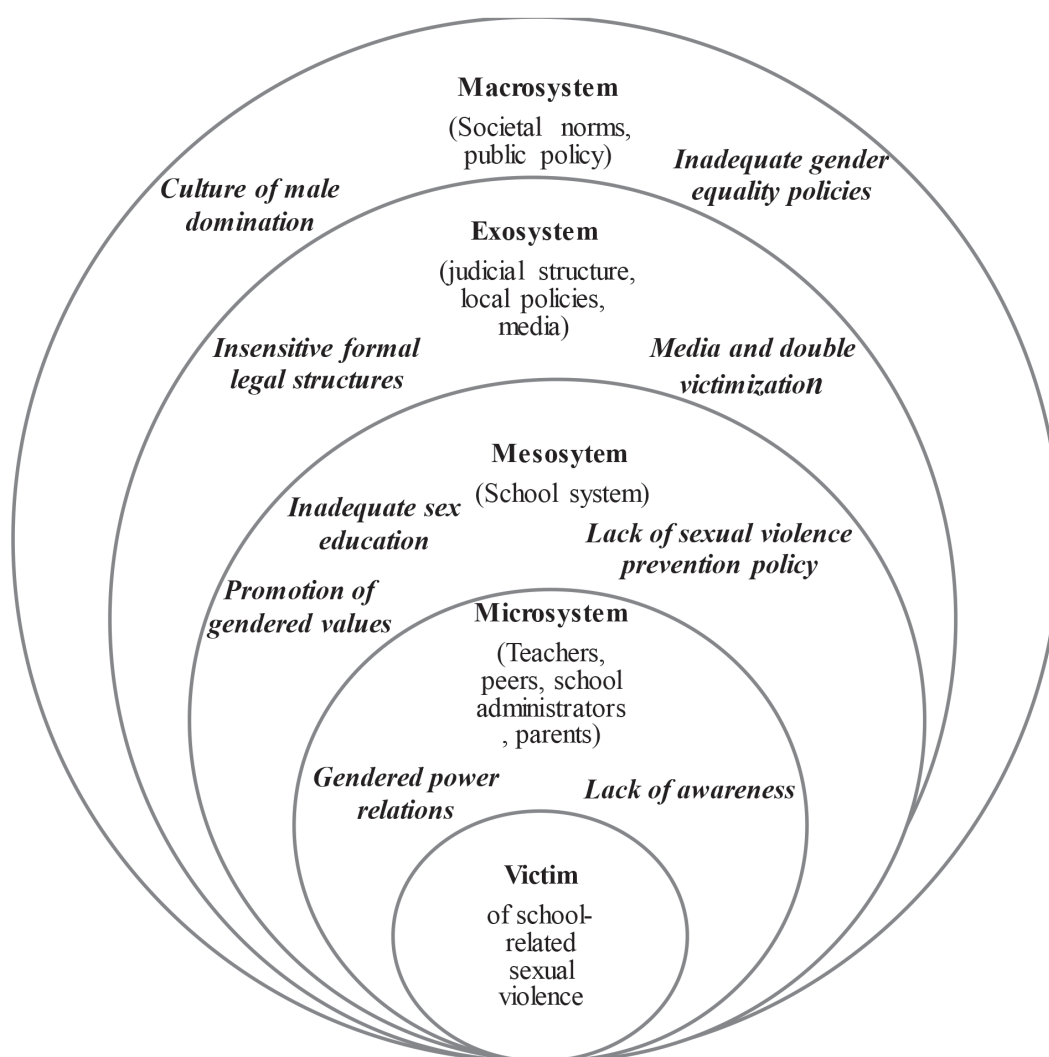


Figure 1: Factors Influencing Victims' Nondisclosure of School-related Sexual Violence. Adapted from "Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development," by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1977, *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 514-515.

Microsystem

Gendered power relations

Unequal power relations between adults and children, as well as females and males, were identified as factors that explain the prevalence of sexual violence against girls in schools, as well as the silence on the part of victims. According to multiple research participants, victims may be intimidated or too afraid to speak up against someone in

a position of authority over them, such as teachers and Islamic school clerics. One of the gender experts from the study shared her own experience with sexual violence from a male teacher in junior high school in the late 1980s. The teacher grabbed her breast in private, and when she reported the incident to the school counsellor, they responded with, “it is you who is too emotional.” Because of the trivialization of the incident by the counsellor, she did not speak about the incident with anyone for some time. After a while, she began to gather more information about such incidents and found that more than 300 students had already been the victims of the same teacher. Many students then came forward, and the teacher was fired. However, she mentions that the entire process was not easy for her and other victims:

“In the end, the teacher was fired, but it took a very long process to prove it and the process was very painful because they didn’t position the victims in a position that seemed respectful, even though we were the victims.”

This remark suggests the tendency to treat victims based on the perceived status of the victims by the school administration. In addition, the fact that many victims remained silent until one student came forward shows the role of power disparities in their silence. While this incident occurred in the late 1980s, the research participants noted that similar incidents have occurred in Indonesian schools more recently.

Power disparities between females and males were found to influence female students’ decision to report sexual violence from male peers. The research participants noted that both females and males are socialized to accept male domination and objectification of the female body, which not only empowers boys to commit sexual harassment against girls but also enables victims to tolerate harassment quietly. Moreover, when boys engage in sexual harassment, it is often not taken seriously as it is considered acceptable masculine behaviour.

Lack of awareness

The lack of awareness of sexual violence among school communities may be influenced by factors at higher levels of the environment, such as lack of sex education for students or lack of teacher training. However, the influence of these factors plays out in the microsystem, an individual’s immediate environment. The FDGs suggest that school

communities, including students, teachers, school administrators, and parents, may not be aware of what sexual violence entails and how to respond to acts of sexual violence, or they may have misconceptions about them. While the school communities may be aware of the biological aspects of sex, they generally lack knowledge about the social dimensions of sexual relationships such as consent. As a result, acts of sexual violence may not be recognized by the victims or those who witness or are aware of such incidents. Even when they are aware of what sexual violence entails, they may lack the necessary skills to deal with such incidents or they may be reluctant to report them due to fear. On this front, an expert participant noted:

“Women sometimes do not realize that the autonomy of their body exists in them, and this is because they have not been taught from childhood since it is considered taboo. When they are (sexually) harassed, they will be reluctant to report the incident. Sometimes in a state of urgency (such as in the case of groping of breasts), not everyone can react immediately. They just keep quiet and become frozen due to shock.”

Mesosystem

Inadequate sex education

Sex education that takes into account the issues of control and consent in sexual relationships, the concept of women’s desire, and the social and ethical dimension of sex supports the development of healthy sexuality in children and young people and helps in addressing sexual violence and gender inequities (Stromquist, 2007). However, these topics are not included in the school curriculum in Indonesia as suggested by multiple expert participants, who noted:

“Although the government officially stated that sex education has been accommodated in the education curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, I think it is still inadequate.....So far, what has been conveyed about gender equality and sex education, were only limited issues, and there are many other issues that have not been included because of the culture factor.”

“What I have observed is that lessons such as biology have included concepts of sex education, for example, the anatomy and function of the reproductive organs are there. Then, religious studies, especially Islam, have also included such concepts. Maybe it is also necessary to include sex education topics in social science lessons. Prevention of sexual violence requires inclusion of topics such as which parts of the body are allowed to be touched, which manners are appropriate when men and women interact, what is appropriate and inappropriate in terms of touching.”

“Usually, when the men do their Friday prayers, the women have Keputrian (women’s lessons), but we don’t really talk about gender or encourage women. So usually, it is like a discussion about women and sensitive things, such as a discussion about menstruation”.

The FGDs show that although sex and reproductive health education have been accommodated in Indonesian schools to some extent, it primarily concentrates on teaching anatomy as a component of biology lessons and raising the reproductive health literacy of only female students through religious lessons. Sex education does not include a broad range of topics, such as consent and healthy relationships, contraception, and sexual harassment and abuse. In addition, cultural barriers prevent free discussions on sex and reproductive health issues. A gender expert noted that removing cultural barriers to sex education requires creative approaches, for example, modifying language and communication patterns that are comfortable for the instructors and students or employing informal approaches such as conveying information through group discussion or extracurricular activities, which are largely missing in Indonesian schools. As a result, students may hold false information about sex, sexuality, and issues of consent, which may indirectly influence the prevalence and nondisclosure of incidents of sexual violence.

Lack of comprehensive sexual violence prevention policy

A comprehensive school violence prevention policy is needed to build trust and confidence among the victims of sexual violence to report violations. A comprehensive

violence prevention policy consists of three key aspects: 1) *a well-written policy* with definitions of all forms of violence, clear guidance to victims to report violations and seek support services, and possible consequences for the perpetrators, 2) *preventive strategies* including creating safe physical spaces, developing code of conduct for school staff, providing life skills training to students to prevent or respond to violence, and bystander intervention among others, and 3) *response and support services* consisting of safe and easily-accessible incident reporting mechanism, confidentiality policy, and counselling and support services (Vichit-Vadakan et al., 2021b). However, the FGDs show that comprehensive school violence prevention policies are generally lacking in Indonesian schools. On this front, two expert participants noted:

“If we talk about cases of sexual violence in educational institutions, the caveat is that there are no rules that serve as the basis for handling sexual violence in educational environments.”

“If girls reported cases of sexual violence, instead of getting justice, they would be blamed for the incidents and re-victimized. Hence, many of them do not report such incidents.”

Due to the lack of comprehensive sexual violence school policy, school communities generally do not have adequate knowledge and skills or appropriate behaviors to support sexual violence prevention or facilitate reporting of sexual violence incidents. The lack of a comprehensive sexual violence policy in schools may also mean a lack of a clear confidentiality policy, which is necessary to address the victims’ and their families’ fear of stigma and judgement. As a result, victims and their families may be reluctant to disclose sexual violence incidents. Moreover, according to one of the expert participants, when victims report incidents of sexual violence, they might be at the receiving end of psychological violence and discrimination from the school personnel. For example, according to the participant, when victims attempt to report sexual violence incidents or if unwanted pregnancies occur as a result of rape, they may not be permitted to sit for exams or they may even be expelled from schools for damaging the school’s reputation. In addition, less severe forms of sexual violence against girls from their male peers are usually dismissed as minor mischief.

Promotion of gendered values in schools

Dissemination of gendered values in educational practices promotes the cultures of male domination, female subordination, and impunity of male perpetrators, which fuel the culture of silence associated with sexual violence incidents. According to the research participants, gender stereotypes and bias are rampant in teaching practices, extracurricular activities, and instructional materials. Unspoken conventions dictate that leaders must be boys, especially in Islamic and public schools, which promote the culture of male superiority. While girls are expected to display positive behaviors, it is acceptable for boys to be rowdy, lazy, and impolite, which could lead to the trivialization of sexual harassment of girls. Boys who are seen to be acting ‘feminine’ are called ‘sissy’ or ‘gay’. Girls are expected to exhibit certain behaviors considered feminine in society, such as sitting gracefully, being compassionate, and dressing neatly and modestly. Sexualization and objectification of the female body are also prevalent in schools, as remarked by one of the expert research participants:

“When a female’s body is viewed as a sexual object, whatever is inside the woman or what the woman is wearing must be covered up because it will lead to lust. And, when (sexual) violence occurs, it is the female who is wrong because of the stereotype that the woman’s body is an object.”

Furthermore, according to the FGDs, traditional gender roles are promoted through character education and Islamic education. For example, female Islamic schools have Keputrian (Women’s lessons) aimed at teaching traditionally feminine skills such as cooking, sewing, folding napkins, and embroidery to students from grades 7 through 12. Instructional materials such as textbooks also reinforce traditional gender norms. While some teacher education programs include gender sensitivity topics, others do not. Thus, many teachers are not aware of gender sensitivity issues and may unconsciously reinforce gender-biased messages in classrooms. It is then the duty of the school administration to counter unconscious gender biases teachers hold. However, according to the research participants, most schools do not focus on teacher gender sensitivity training.

Exosystem

Insensitive formal legal structures

Although the judicial process of reporting incidents of sexual violence against children has improved in recent years, the stigma associated with sexual violence and the cultures of victim-blaming and the immunity of perpetrators remain, preventing the majority of cases from being reported. One of the gender experts identified the marriage between the culture of rape and the culture of acceptance as one of the root causes of sexual violence against women in Indonesia. These two cultures normalize inappropriate behaviors such as snapping a bra strap or groping breasts as normal mischief, which may encourage perpetrators to commit such and more serious sexual violence acts. Other gender experts stressed the risk of double victimization of girls when they report sexual violence incidents. For example, the victims themselves may be at the receiving end of the blame, or their complaints may not be taken seriously. To shed light on the prevalence of victim-blaming culture, a gender expert noted that even government programs for sexual violence prevention may include aspects that promote victim-blaming culture, for example conducting training on how to wear hijabs beautifully and fashionably so that women are not prone to sexual violence.

Media and double victimization

Traditional media can play an influential role in exposing sexual violence incidents, calling out weaknesses of the formal processes, as well as shaping discourse and public perception of sexual violence. However, the research findings suggest that national and local media, including print media, broadcast news, and electronic media, are not necessarily sensitive to the issue of gender-based violence. According to some research participants, many journalists hold traditional gender ideologies and are not particularly at ease with the gender equality movement in Indonesia. Thus, their reporting on sexual violence may reinforce the cultures of victim-blaming and impunity of perpetrators. Likewise, though social media offers a powerful means for victims of sexual violence to speak up and be heard, it can also be a source of sexual harassment. According to the research participants, social media is widely used to propagate gender stereotypes and norms of masculinity and even to victimize the victims of sexual violence further. In addition, both traditional media and social media's insensitivity in protecting the privacy

of victims of sexual violence can contribute to their stress and trauma and even encourage their revictimization. According to a research participant, there have been cases where victims of sexual violence faced sexual violence again as a result of media reports on them. Thus, the media can play a significant role in victims' nondisclosure decisions by weakening their morale, stripping of their confidence and dignity, or instilling fear, stress, and anxiety, which may immobilize the victims from taking action.

Macrosystem

Broader culture of male domination

The root causes of sexual violence against women and girls include traditional societal norms that promote male supremacy, such as the notion that it is the duty of women and girls to keep men's sexual urges at bay or that sexual violence is a sign of masculinity (WHO & Pan American Health Organization, 2012). The results of the FDGs and expert interviews support that the prevalent patriarchal values rooted in Islamic traditions, as well as minority cultures and traditions in the country, influence gender norms and behaviors at the community, organizational, and individual levels. Many research participants observed that the beliefs, values, and traditions of Islam, which is the country's dominant faith, generally promote men's power and authority and women's secondary status in families and society. Muslim women are expected to uphold the standards of modesty and purity and accept men's authority and dominance unquestionably, which may inadvertently promote the culture of acceptance of sexual violence. In Islamic schools, which serve the educational needs of children from Muslim families, girls are groomed in traditional roles to become "good wives", especially in rural areas. Indonesia's minority faiths and traditions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Batak tradition, also promote values of male superiority, as indicated by some research participants who highlighted the prevalence of the son preference phenomenon and the patrilineal land tenure system in these traditions.

Unsupportive gender equality policies

The FDGs indicate that while the government has exhibited a commitment to gender equality in different sectors, including education, through various policy and legislative initiatives, such initiatives do not adequately take into account the actual

experiences and needs of women and girls. One of the expert research participants referred to a study conducted in 2016 by the National Commission on Violence Against Women, Indonesia, which found that a total of 421 public policies were discriminatory against women and other minority groups, whereas 359 public policies were conducive to the protection of women and children. There have been some commendable efforts from the Ministry of Education and Culture to reduce gender inequality in educational institutions, for example, the Mendikbud regulation, which provides a legal basis for implementing sexual violence prevention strategies in higher education, was recently drafted. The Ministry has also been active in incorporating the issue of gender inequality in the religious moderation project. Some Islamic campuses are involved in efforts to change discriminatory practices by exploring how Islamic ideas can be anchored in a more pro-gender equality framework. While the efforts to address gender inequality in higher education represent a step forward, similar efforts are needed at all levels of education, including schools.

Discussion/Conclusion

This study attempted to understand why female victims of school-related sexual violence choose to withhold information. The findings support that victims' nondisclosure decisions are influenced by their environmental contexts and interactions within them. In the victim's immediate environment (microsystem), unequal power relations between females and males and between adults and children, along with a lack of awareness regarding sexual violence on the part of school communities, including the victims, were found to impact the victims' nondisclosure decisions. At the mesosystem level, lack of adequate sex education programs, lack of comprehensive violence prevention policy, and lack of awareness of sexual violence among the school communities were found to contribute to the maintenance of the culture of male superiority, impunity, and stigma, preventing victims of sexual violence from speaking up. At the exosystem level, the formal reporting mechanisms were found to lack sensitivity to the needs of the victims and promote victim-blaming culture, and the traditional and social media were found to propagate the culture of male domination and impunity and contribute to further harassment and even revictimization of the victims. Finally, at the macro level, it was found that the country's dominant as well as minority faiths and traditions unintentionally but

inadvertently promoted the cultural and religious norms of male superiority and female subordination. In addition, the existing macro-level gender equality policies did not sufficiently address gender inequality issues. These findings are consistent with Alaggia et al. (2017)'s finding that complex interactions between individuals and their surrounding environments influence the disclosure or silence of CSA.

Disclosure of sexual violence is often the first step to providing support to the victims as they deal with their trauma. Disclosures are also vital for reducing or eliminating incidents of sexual violence as they make actual or potential perpetrators less inclined to commit such crimes. The findings of this study indicate that interventions to encourage victims of school-related sexual violence require an ecological approach that takes into account inhibiting factors at all ecological levels. While changing discriminatory gender norms at the macro level necessitates broader cultural shifts which require both long-term and short-term policies at all levels, focusing on the lower levels, including the judicial system and school ecosystem may bring about immediate outcomes in terms of encouraging reporting of sexual violence incidents. The judicial process should be victim-sensitive, and the victims should be treated with dignity and respect in all interactions with investigative authorities, legal experts, and judicial employees (UNODC, 2019). At the school level, eliminating school-related violence and encouraging sexual abuse disclosure requires a whole-school approach aimed at increasing awareness and skills of school communities, including school administrators, teachers, other staff, students, and parents (Vichit-Vadakan et al., 2021b). Comprehensive school-related violence prevention policy, gender-sensitive teacher education, gender-sensitive school curriculum, and sex education covering the social dimension of sexuality are some key strategies needed to discourage school-related sexual violence and encourage disclosure of abuse. In addition, the study found that cultural barriers influence factors associated with non-disclosure of sexual abuse at all levels of the victim's environment, suggesting the need for culturally-sensitive interventions.

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Examining Forms and Socio-cultural Influences of Violence Against Women and Girls: A Survey on Awareness in Thai Society

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Abstract

This article investigates violence against women and girls (VAWG) by classifying and examining various forms of VAWG. The analysis is informed by two secondary sources of data: existing literature and survey results conducted by NIDA Poll in 2022. The article delves into the influence of socio-cultural dimensions, with a specific focus on gender norms, on the various forms and characteristics of VAWG. These encompass a spectrum of forms, including intimate partner violence; sexual harassment; cyber violence; modern slavery; harmful traditional practices such as honor killing and female genital mutilation; and violence from community or society. The survey results on VAWG awareness within Thai society are presented in this study to enhance the comprehension of the subject matter. The survey findings revealed a notable level of awareness concerning sexual harassment, modern slavery, and harmful traditional practices. However, the perspectives diverged on certain issues such as such as romance scams and

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intimate partner violence. These insights provide a foundation for the formulation of enhanced strategies to combat and prevent violence against women and girls.

Keywords: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Gender Norms, Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Harassment, Cyber Violence, Modern Slavery, Harmful Traditional Practices, VAWG from Community or Society

การศึกษารูปแบบและอิทธิพลทางสังคมวัฒนธรรม ที่มีต่อของความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง และผลสำรวจทัศนคติในสังคมไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ศึกษาความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง โดยการรวบรวมและจำแนกรูปแบบของความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิงออกเป็นลักษณะต่าง ๆ โดยการศึกษาใช้ข้อมูลจากวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องและข้อมูลทุติยภูมิจากการสำรวจของนิด้าโพลในปี 2022 บทความยังศึกษาอิทธิพลของมิติทางสังคมวัฒนธรรมรวมทั้งบรรทัดฐานทางเพศที่ส่งผลต่อความรุนแรงแต่ละรูปแบบ ซึ่งรวมถึงความรุนแรงจากคู่ครองและคู่รัก การคุกคามทางเพศ ความรุนแรงในโลกออนไลน์ ทาสยุคใหม่ มรดกตกทอดทางประเพณีดั้งเดิมซึ่งไม่เป็นธรรมต่อสตรีและเด็กหญิง เช่น การฆ่าเพื่อปกป้องศักดิ์ศรี การตัดขลิบอวัยวะเพศหญิง และความรุนแรงจากสังคมและชุมชน นอกจากนี้ เพื่อเป็นการขยายความเข้าใจในประเด็นนี้ บทความยังนำผลการสำรวจความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิงในสังคมไทยมาประกอบการวิเคราะห์ ซึ่งจากการสำรวจบ่งชี้ว่าโดยรวมแล้วความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการคุกคามทางเพศ ทาสยุคใหม่ และมรดกตกทอดทางประเพณีดั้งเดิมซึ่งไม่เป็นธรรมต่อสตรีและเด็กหญิงนั้นอยู่ในระดับสูง อย่างไรก็ตาม ยังมีความเข้าใจแตกต่างกันในบางประเด็น เช่น การหลอกลวงให้หลงรัก และความรุนแรงจากคู่ครองและคู่รัก ความเข้าใจในฐานรากและทัศนคติของสังคมไทยของปรากฏการณ์เหล่านี้มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งในการนำไปสู่การแก้ไขและป้องกันปัญหาความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง

คำสำคัญ: ความรุนแรงต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง บรรทัดฐานทางเพศ ความรุนแรงจากคู่ครอง การคุกคามทางเพศ ความรุนแรงในโลกออนไลน์ ทาสยุคใหม่ ประเพณีปฏิบัติที่เป็นภัยต่อผู้หญิง ความรุนแรงต่อสตรีและเด็กอันมีที่มาจากชุมชนและสังคม

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Introduction

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a widespread problem that can have serious and lasting consequences for victims. It can take many forms, such as physical abuse, sexual assault, and property damage, and can have negative impacts on women's health, mental health, and overall well-being.

According to UNFPA (2016), violence against women and girls is defined as ‘*any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life*’. There are four main characteristics of violence against women and girls: (i) *physical violence*, which includes acts of physical harm or damage, such as beating, weapon use, acid attacks, burning, and imprisonment; (ii) *sexual violence*, which includes any sexual acts committed against a woman without her consent, including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and rape; (iii) *emotional and psychological abuse*, which involves actions that cause psychological trauma, such as bullying, insults, hatred, disdain, dishonesty, infidelity, humiliation, neglect, and other forms of emotional manipulation; and (iv) *economic violence*, which refers to the unfair deprivation of a woman's economic opportunities, including financial discrimination, refusal of financial assistance, property fraud, refusal to work for income, and extortion of property.

Research Scope and Methodology

This article conducts a conceptual exploration of the phenomenon of violence against women and girls (VAWG) to examine its multifaceted manifestations deeply rooted in global cultural and traditional contexts. It is aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the various forms and distinctive characteristics of VAWG.

The research methodology adopted for this study utilizes secondary data sources, with a primary focus on quantitative insights derived from the NIDA Poll¹ survey conducted in 2022. The NIDA Poll survey captures contemporary perspectives and attitudes concerning VAWG within Thai society, offering a quantitative lens for systematically

¹ The NIDA Poll was conducted in collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society.

assessing awareness and perceptions regarding various forms of violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, modern slavery, and harmful traditional practices. By synthesizing the empirical findings from this survey with the conceptual analysis, the article seeks to present a more comprehensive and well-grounded perspective on the VAWG awareness and perception within Thai society, and contributing to the development of enhanced strategies for addressing and preventing violence against women and girls.

Literature Review: Forms and Characteristics of Violence Against Women and Girls

From the literature review on violence against women and girls, there are several common types and patterns of violence that have been observed globally. This section discusses selected common types of VAWG, including intimate partner violence; sexual harassment; cyber violence, modern slavery; harmful traditional practices, and violence from community or society.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. This can include acts of physical violence, sexual violence, emotional and psychological abuse, and controlling behavior. (WHO, 2012). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) indicated that approximately 27% of women worldwide have experienced some form of intimate partner abuse, including physical and sexual violence. The incidence of violence against women and girls varies by region, ranging from 16% in Southern Europe to 51% in the Pacific Island area. WHO estimates that 38% of female murders are committed by male partners. A UN multi-country study (Fulu, Emma et al., 2013) also found that, on average, nearly 50% of men in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea admitted to physically and sexually abusing partner in the past.

Cheumchit et al. (2018) found that in Thailand, approximately 15% of women have experienced physical, sexual, and psychological violence, or one in six Thai women have been exposed to domestic violence. This violence can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and economic abuse. Physical abuse often involves

the use of weapons or other objects to cause injury, as well as physical confinement. Psychological abuse can include verbal insults and emotional manipulation, as well as infidelity, which can cause immense emotional pain for the victim. Some women even attempt suicide to escape the cycle of abuse. (Suntornpitak, Papitchaya, 2019)

Jealousy-fueled violence has led to physical harm and death in many cases. Examples of headlines are such as:

“The man, jealous of his wife, killed their entire family in a fit of rage.”

“A 16-year-old girl was attacked by her boyfriend, causing brain swelling and ultimately leading to her death. The boyfriend claimed that he was jealous at the time of the attack.”

“A man, motivated by jealousy, broke into a woman’s house, and killed her by stomping on her. The violence was brutal.”

The above headlines illustrate the extent of domestic violence against women and girls, including the tragic case of a 3-year-old girl who was hanged, believed to be caused by her mother’s jealousy².

According to the study by Cheumchit et al. in 2018, the root cause of domestic violence found in Thailand is often the desire of men to control women, which can manifest in various behaviors such as demanding to know a woman’s whereabouts at all times, becoming angry when a woman talks to another man, and suspecting infidelity. Other controlling behaviors may include cold indifference, restricting a woman’s social connections and contact with family, and expecting women to ask for permission before leaving the home. In a study by Oxfam (2018), both female and male adolescents reported that it is normal for male adolescents to monitor and control their partner’s phone use.

Marriage can also involve violence that harms a woman’s mental well-being, even if it does not cause physical injury. According to a study by Cheumchit et al. (2018), women who have experienced violence often report the highest levels of mental violence perpetrated by their spouses, including acts of humiliation, threats, and

² News headlines from Thai Post, October 2021; PPTV Online, 22 August 2021; and Daily News, 8 November 2021.

intimidation. These behaviors can cause psychological trauma and fear, and may involve threatening to harm or hurt loved ones.

Infidelity and adultery

Male infidelity in marriage is another major cause of violence that can cause trauma for women. The phenomenon of having a mistress has long existed in society, but has not been thoroughly studied. Infidelity is one factor that has been identified as contributing to unstable marital relationships and an increased risk of intimate partner violence (WHO, 2019).

However, society often does not view male infidelity as a serious offense and may even accept it as normal due to patriarchal cultural attitudes that allow men to engage in unfaithful behavior. Studies have found that sexist attitudes can influence the acceptance of infidelity and non-committal casual relationships (Davoudian, Teni, 2014) and may be considered a private family matter that should not be disclosed to outsiders. Despite this, infidelity can have significant negative impacts on the quality of life and relationships of women, including feelings of bitterness, shame, loneliness, paranoia, and lack of happiness. It can also lead to a loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as health problems and stress for the family, including children. Economic violence, such as men failing to take responsibility for family finances or extorting money, can also be a form of violence that occurs within the context of infidelity. Physical and emotional violence, such as angry outbursts or verbal insults, may also occur as a result of infidelity and the resulting conflict.

Studies in Thailand have found that women may try to cope with the mental and emotional effects of infidelity by tolerating their partner's behavior, in order to keep the family together and ensure that their children grow up with both parents. They may also turn to stress-reducing practices such as meditation and seek inner peace, as well as seeking the advice of friends and relatives. However, it has been observed that women may only seek counseling from public health services when physical violence is also present (Apanantikul, Manee, 2010).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment and abuse are non-consensual sexual acts, including rape, touching without consent, and forced viewing of sexual material or activity. Verbal, visual, or other harassing behaviors also fall under this category (UN Women, 2018). Globally, an average of 6% of women reported experiencing sexual harassment from a non-partner or partner (WHO, 2021), and UNICEF (2022) found that in one-third of countries worldwide, at least 5% of women reported experiencing sexual abuse as children. A study in Asia-Pacific countries found that one in four men in a sample of 10,000 admitted to sexually harassing women and girls, with rates ranging from 10% in countries with the lowest rates to 63% in countries with the highest rates (Fulu, Emma et al., 2013). According to the Fundamental Rights Survey (2019) 39% of women reported experiencing sexual harassment in the past five years, with nearly half of the victims being women with physical or intellectual disabilities.

Girls and women may face risks of crime, harassment, and sexual harassment in various settings, including their homes, public areas, and while traveling (Prachatai, Nov. 11, 2019; UN Women UK, 2021). However, only a small number of women report such incidents, due to a variety of reasons. Many women did not believe that the incident was serious enough to report or did not think that reporting would lead to any change. They may also fear not being believed or being blamed for the incident, or worry about being stigmatized as a result. In Thailand, victims may choose not to speak out due to shame, fear of not being believed or helped, or fear of retaliation or bullying. These factors reflect the influence of gender norms on how society tolerates and accepts sexual harassment, and how women may feel the need to take precautions to avoid such incidents, such as covering up, avoiding certain behaviors or situations, and staying in safe places. (UN Women UK, 2021)

Sexual harassment and abuse are also prevalent in schools and educational institutions. A study in Thailand found that 72% of youth believe that there is a risk of sexual harassment in school or while traveling to school (Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, 2021). This is supported by news reports of sexual harassment incidents in Thai educational institutions from 2019-2021, which showed that most of the perpetrators were male teachers, followed by senior male students with more power and influence.

Most of the female students who experienced such incidents tended to keep them secret, fearing that they would not be believed or that they would be blamed. This can lead to stress, depression, and even thoughts of suicide (Thairath online, 2021).

A survey conducted by Insight (2021) in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore found that one-third of respondents in Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and over half of respondents in Singapore, reported experiencing sexual harassment at work. Telling sexual jokes was the most common form of harassment reported in all countries. The survey also found that victims were more likely to turn to friends for support rather than seeking help from colleagues or their company.

Date rape and corrective rape

There are also specific types of sexual harassment or rape that are driven by gender norms, such as the ‘corrective rape’ of LGBT women. This type of rape is motivated by a desire to correct or punish women who do not conform to traditional gender roles, or to “teach” them how to be “real” women (Doan-Minh, S., 2019). Date rape, which is often perpetrated by a man who is flirting with or is friends with a woman, is another example. This type of rape involves coercing the victim into having sex through the use of force, words, authority, or other forms of intimidation (Dude, A., 2022). According to a qualitative study by Elle (2021) in Thailand, female college students often do not perceive couple rape as a serious offense, both legally and morally, but rather as a less violent form of sexual abuse that is justified within a relationship between people who love each other. This perspective reflects the cultural acceptance of men’s power and the belief that women must be careful to avoid causing such incidents.

Society’s tolerance for sexual harassment and abuse, even when it is life-threatening, is also due to gender norms that discourage complaints and accountability for offenders. Studies of incidents of sexual harassment within male-dominated military and forestry institutions (Grubbström, A. and Powell, S., 2020; Alvinus, A. and Holmberg, A., 2019) found that other women and men in these organizations often remain silent about the abuse. This is especially true when the authority or leader of the group does not take any action, causing the rest of the members to do nothing as well, and assume that others will do the same to avoid conflicts and maintain social relationships. Victims may also fear being excluded or not being accepted by the group, or believe that their

complaints will have no effect. This indicates that these organizations are more tolerant of sexual harassment and abuse than they are of standing up for victims and holding perpetrators accountable.

In addition, traditional and cultural practices, like marriage, ordination, and ceremonial events asking for forgiveness, are sometimes used in place of legal punishment for male offenders of sexual violence (Suchada Taweessit, 2019). These traditional and cultural practices may be seen as a way to resolve conflicts or restore balance in the community, but they do not adequately address the harm caused by sexual violence and may even serve to protect the offender and force the victim to accept the violence. Furthermore, by failing to hold offenders accountable through the legal system, these practices can allow sexual violence to go unchecked and may even encourage further incidents of abuse.

Cyber Violence

Online violence and abuse against women is a significant problem in the virtual world, where people around the world are connected by the internet. While this problem has existed for a while, there has been little in-depth study on it. In 2017, the European Union estimated that 10% of women aged 15 and over in Europe had experienced an incident of online harassment (EIGE, 2017), and a survey in England in 2022 found that 39% of women and 31% of respondents had experienced online violence, cyberstalking, and cyber flashing (Storey M. and Poppleton, S., 2022). A 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center found that women have also experienced incidents of online sexual harassment.

Online violence can take many forms, including sexual harassment, cyberstalking, and cyber flashing. Online violence can also include the use of sexually harassing messages on social media and public forums, unauthorized use of private photos, and the blackmailing of women and girls by threatening to release their nude photos if they do not meet certain demands, which can cause significant stress and even suicidal thoughts.

Romance scams

Online violence against women and girls can also take the form of romance scams or deception to fall in love. In many parts of the world, such as in the United States, it has been reported that over the past five years, citizens have reported over \$1.3 billion in complaints related to love scams. In England, the majority of victims of love and property scams are women. In Thailand, from 2017 to 2018, 332 victims were reported, with damages amounting to 193 million baht, and more than 85% of the victims were women. The perpetrators often forge their personal information, get acquainted with the victim through the internet, and build a romantic relationship before committing property fraud, such as fraudulent solicitation for investments in the projects that do not exist or borrowing money on the pretext of needing help in an emergency situation. These behaviors can cause significant financial and psychological harm to the victims, who may also face issues of access to justice and the attitudes of justice officials.

The deception of falling in love can be a particularly insidious form of violence against women, as perpetrators often use tactics such as showing love and bonding, invoking sympathy, and creating a sense of urgency to convince their victims to act according to their will. These tactics exploit the sexual characteristics that perpetrators see as vulnerable in women, such as tenderness, compassion, and trust in true love. The perpetrator may pretend to want to establish a permanent relationship with the victim, even going so far as to propose marriage, while all along having ulterior motives. They may also tell stories about their own miserable lives, such as failures in marriage or the loss of a spouse or child, in order to invoke sympathy from their victim. In some cases, the perpetrator may create a sense of urgency or a deadline, threatening that if their demands are not met, there will be no future meetings or contact (Coluccia, A., 2020). It is important to recognize these manipulative tactics and the impact they can have on the psychological well-being of women.

Modern Slavery

According to the ILO (2022), modern slavery encompasses forced labor (including human trafficking for sexual exploitation, other forms of human trafficking, and debt slavery), as well as forced marriage. This definition applies when the victim is unable to refuse or withdraw due to threats, acts of violence, coercion, deceit, and abuse of

power. The forms of modern slavery and include the followings:

Forced labor

The ILO (2022) estimates that up to 6 million women and girls are subjected to forced labor exploitation, with the majority of these individuals working in the service, manufacturing, and household sectors. This form of modern slavery is more likely to occur among migrant workers than among local workers.

Sex trafficking

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation involves coercing individuals, including children, into prostitution and engaging in activities such as child pornography. According to ILO estimate, in 2021, there were 6.3 million adult victims and 1.7 million child victims of sex trafficking crimes. Four out of every five victims of these crimes are women and girls.

Many women and girls are victims of forced labor and sex trafficking due to societal gender norms that assign responsibility for the family to women and girls. These norms often lead women and girls to seek employment, even in difficult or exploitative circumstances, in order to provide financial support for their families and pay off debts. In some societies, such as Thai society, women and girls may be lured or forced into the sex industry in exchange for the promise of a better life for their parents or siblings. In some cases, parents or relatives may even act as intermediaries in these situations. In other societies, such as those in Africa, there is a power structure in the family that views children as the property of their parents, with men holding the most power and daughters being seen as less valuable than sons. As a result, women and girls may be sold or given away by their fathers or husbands based on their preferences (Warria, A. and Chandamboka, C., 2019). These societal gender norms contribute to the exploitation of women and girls and must be challenged in order to combat forced labor and sex trafficking.

Forced marriage and child marriage

Forced marriage and child marriage are forms of modern slavery in which victims are forced to marry without consent or the right to refuse, often through the use of force, emotional coercion, financial pressure, threats of harm or exclusion from their family

or community, and other forms of pressure from parents, guardians, and relatives. In some cases, these marriages may also involve servile arrangements, such as performing contracts or offering property in exchange for the marriage. These practices are often rooted in societal traditions that view women as transferable family assets and may involve early marriage that binds children to the institution of marriage (Warria, A. and Chadamboka, C., 2019). It is estimated that by 2021, there will be 22 million people living in forced marriages, with more than 68% (14.9 million) being women and girls. Of these, 7.8 million are child marriages (under the age of 16) of girls (ILO, 2022).

In many traditional, patriarchal societies, forcing daughters into marriage is a common practice. The value placed on women and girls is often limited to their roles as mothers and wives, and families with fewer economic resources may prioritize the education and advancement of their sons over their daughters. In some cases, daughters may even be sold as brides to help the family financially. In some societies, having a daughter is viewed as a burden, and forcing them into marriage is seen as a way to reduce the risk of damage and shame to the family. This practice may be exacerbated by legal principles that do not grant daughters the right to inherit from their original family, and by religious rules that stigmatize premarital sex and restrict women's sexual behavior. Forced marriage may also be used as a substitute for legal mechanisms to compensate victims of sexual abuse and violence (ILO, 2022; Suchada Taweessit, 2019; Warria, A. and Chandambaka, C., 2019)

Harmful Traditional Practices

CEDAW (1979) indicated that some traditional practices pose a danger to the lives of women and girls. These traditional practices may include:

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a traditional practice performed by some cultural groups that involves the cutting or injury of the female genitalia. This practice can cause physical harm, including infection, difficulty with urination and menstruation, and mental health and sexual/emotional problems for women. According to UNICEF (2022), it is estimated that globally, there are over 200 million women in 31 countries who have undergone FGM. In some societies, FGM is justified on the grounds of being morally

correct, clean, and creating beauty, as well as regulating women's sexual desires and preserving sexual purity, preventing premarital sex, and enabling marriage. However, it is important to recognize that FGM is a harmful practice that poses risks to the physical and mental health of women and girls.

Honor killings

Honor killings are the murders of women and girls committed by male family members due to the belief that the women or girls have engaged in behaviors that bring shame or dishonor upon the family. These behaviors may include things like having sex outside of marriage, even if the woman or girl was raped, refusing an arranged marriage, engaging in cross-caste or cross-religious marriages, or seeking a divorce. In some societies with specific cultural values, it is believed that men within the family, including fathers, brothers, and husbands, have a duty to protect the family's reputation by ensuring that women and girls adhere to certain social norms. As a result, women and girls who are perceived to have violated these norms may be beaten, burned, shot, stabbed, or otherwise killed in order to restore the family's honor. It is estimated that approximately 5,000 honor killings occur annually worldwide, with particularly high rates in the Middle East and South Asia (Dailey, J. Douglas and Singh, Raghu N., 2016). These killings are a serious human rights violation and must be condemned and actively prevented.

Dowry related violence

Dowry death is a form of violence against women and girls in certain cultures. In this practice, a woman's family gives a dowry to the family of the man she is marrying, which may include cash, valuable items, and property such as houses or land. These dowries are considered a condition of the marriage and may be demanded by the man's family even after the marriage has taken place. The dowry tradition is a cultural tool used by male families to negotiate economic terms with female counterparts, and women and their families may be pressured to give more dowry in order to marry a qualified man. The social condition of dowry can lead to domestic violence, including physical and emotional abuse, and even suicide and murder (Bloch and Rao, 2000; ALMOSAED, N., 2004).

Bloch and Rao (2000) conducted a study of villages in rural India and found that the dowry tradition is a cultural tool used by male families to negotiate economic terms with female counterparts in order for women to be able to marry, particularly if the man is considered a qualified match. When a woman marries, her family may be obligated to give more dowry, and if negotiations over the dowry fail, there is a high risk that women may be subjected to violence, including physical and emotional abuse, which can even lead to death. In India, it is estimated that there are up to 7,000 dowry deaths per year (Times of India, 2022).

Violence from Community or Society

Violence against women and girls can also be perpetrated by community and social power structures that oppress women. For example, in the case of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, political leaders attempted to kill her in order to send a message to society that women's education and deviance from traditional gender roles were unacceptable (The Global Women's Institute, N.D.). More recently, the murder of a 22-year-old Iranian woman by the moral police due to her disheveled hair received widespread media attention (BBC, Sept. 16, 2022). The media also reported on the beating and torture of a 16-year-old teenage girl who demanded justice for the deceased, leading to her death, as well as the forced disappearance of another teenage girl who spoke out about the incident (The Guardian, Oct. 7, 2022). These cases illustrate the ways in which violence against women and girls can be perpetrated by those in positions of power and influence within communities and societies.

Violence against women in political and other public roles is a serious issue that reflects the social rejection of women's leadership roles. A survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (cited in George, R., 2021) found that 81.8% of women in Congress had experienced emotional or psychological violence, 44.4% had been threatened with rape, kidnapping, or assault, and 25.5% had been physically assaulted. It is important to recognize and challenge the underlying biases and prejudices that contribute to such violence and to create a more supportive environment for women in leadership positions.

Survey Results: Perception Survey on Awareness of Violence Against Women and Girls

Understanding the diverse forms of violence experienced by women and girls is important due to the distinct dynamics and consequences associated with each type. For instance, physical violence and sexual violence necessitate distinct support and prevention strategies. A comprehensive comprehension of these specific manifestations of violence facilitates the development of more tailored interventions for effective mitigation and prevention. Furthermore, fostering awareness of these distinctions serves as a pivotal mechanism for challenging entrenched stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding violence, thereby fostering a more accurate comprehension of the issue. This provides a foundation for the formulation of enhanced strategies to combat and prevent violence against women and girls. To enhance the insight into societal perceptions, this section presents analysis of a secondary data derived from the survey conducted by the NIDA Poll in collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society. The survey was conducted in November 2022, to assess the level of awareness about VAWG among the Thai population. It presented interesting data of awareness of different types of VAWG and views on what actions are considered a VAWG among diverse respondents. A total of 1,311 participants, approximately half of whom were female (51.64%) and half male (48.36%), participated in the survey. The respondents had a range of educational backgrounds, with 37.22% having completed secondary school, 25.40% holding a bachelor's degree, and 25.02% having completed elementary school. The survey included the issues of sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, cyber violence, and modern slavery.

Sexual harassment

On the issue of sexual harassment, the survey results indicated that there is generally a high level of awareness. This includes issues of: (i) experiencing unwanted touching, kissing, or sexual advances; (ii) attempting date rape; (iii) being forced to view explicit sexual photos in the workplace; and (iv) having one's private photos shared or being subject to derogatory comments.

Sexual harassment in the form of unwelcomed touching, kissing, or sexual advances can be particularly confusing and difficult to handle for young girls. In this survey, a higher

percentage of both male (66.25%) and female (76.07%) respondents agreed that this type of behavior is considered violence against women and girls (VAWG). However, there is still a significant number of people who do not view this as VAWG (male 33.75%, female 23.93%), indicating that there is a need for ongoing education and awareness efforts to challenge harmful attitudes and promote understanding of the negative impact of this type of behavior. It is also important to note that both the perpetrators of this type of harassment and society as a whole may still mistakenly view it as a loving or acceptable behavior.

In a survey on the issue of date rape, respondents were asked about their views on the attempted rape, given the power dynamic and perceived consent in situations where a girl is known to like the boy. The results showed a high level of awareness about this behavior being considered violence against women and girls (VAWG) among both male (97.48%) and female (98.23%) respondents, indicating a strong belief that rape is VAWG regardless of the perceived feelings of the victim towards the perpetrator. This is an important finding, as it shows the understanding of the importance of consent in sexual interactions and respect in the relationship.

Forced viewing of explicit sexual photos is considered a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) because it is a way to demean and objectify women. In the workplace, sharing of sexually offensive pictures is a form of sexual harassment and can have serious psychological and emotional effects on the people who are subjected to it. Forced viewing of explicit sexual photos can also contribute to a culture of tolerance for sexual harassment. On the issue of forced viewing of explicit sexual photos in the workplace, 75.39% of male and 78.14% of female respondents considered it as VAWG.

Having one's private photos shared or being subject to derogatory comments is a form of sexual harassment, however, it is common for women who are dressed provocatively to be blamed for such behavior. In this survey, a high number of respondents agreed that this is a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG), with 75.39% of male respondents and 77.70% of female respondents viewing it as such. This indicates a good understanding of this type of sexual harassment of this behavior and the importance of not blaming the victim.

Table 1: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Sexual Harassment

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A young girl being unhappy with a male relative who likes to hug and kiss her (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	420	515	935
		66.25%	76.07%	71.32%
	not considered VAWG	214	162	376
		33.75%	23.93%	28.68%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
An older male student attempting to rape a younger female student who he thinks likes him. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	618	665	1,283
		97.48%	98.23%	97.86%
	not considered VAWG	16	12	28
		2.52%	1.77%	2.14%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
An employee feeling uncomfortable by the frequent sharing of sexually explicit stories and naked pictures by management, including derogatory comments about women's appearances. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	478	529	1,007
		75.39%	78.14%	76.81%
	not considered VAWG	156	148	304
		24.61%	21.86%	23.19%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
A woman dressing provocatively and being secretly photographed and having the pictures shared on social media and being subject to ridicule and criticism, causing her to feel humiliated. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	481	526	1,007
		75.87%	77.70%	76.81%
	is not considered VAWG	153	151	304
		24.13%	22.30%	23.19%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Intimate partner violence

In a survey on intimate partner violence, the issue of adultery was explored through a question about “a husband or wife being unfaithful, causing the other party to feel sad and distressed.” The responses were split on whether this constituted violence against women and girls (VAWG), with 52.17% of respondents feeling that it was VAWG and 47.83% feeling that it was not. Slightly more number of male (50.47%) viewed that it was not a VAWG. This suggests that in Thai society, there is still a low understanding of this type of violence and infidelity may be viewed as a normal or acceptable behavior. These findings highlight the need for more education and awareness about the various forms of VAWG and the importance of respect in relationships.

Table 2: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Intimate Partner Violence

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A husband or wife being unfaithful, causing the other party to feel sad and distressed (<i>intimate partner violence</i>)	considered VAWG	314	370	684
		49.53%	54.65%	52.17%
	not considered VAWG	320	307	627
		50.47%	45.35%	47.83%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
News event from the headline: “Beautiful girl killed by boyfriend, blaming on jealousy ” (<i>intimate partner violence</i>)	considered VAWG	514	576	1,090
		81.07%	85.08%	83.14%
	not considered VAWG	120	101	221
		18.93%	14.92%	16.86%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Intimate Partner Violence (cont.)

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A husband forcing his wife to have sexual activities against her will. (<i>couple rape</i>)	considered VAWG	423	525	948
		66.72%	77.55%	72.31%
	not considered VAWG	211	152	363
		33.28%	22.45%	27.69%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Awareness of VAWG was, however, much higher for the physical violence such as in question about a man killing a woman due to jealousy where over 80% of male and female viewed that such incident was a VAWG.

On the issue of couple rape, the survey addressed it through question about a husband forcing his wife to engage in sexual activity against her will. The results showed that a higher percentage of respondents viewed this as a form of VAWG (66.72% of male respondents and 77.55% of female respondents). However, there are quite a significant number of respondents who do not consider this behavior as VAWG, which indicated that couple rape can be difficult to understand as VAWG, as some people may believe that spouses are expected to have sexual relations and therefore consent is not necessary. This highlights the need for education and awareness about the importance of consent in all sexual interactions and the need to challenge harmful gender norms that normalize the non-consensual sexual activity.

Cyber violence

The survey addressed the issue of cyber violence through two questions. The first question, which dealt with cyberbullying through the threat of spreading naked pictures of a woman unless she pays money, was viewed as a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) by a high percentage of respondents (84.9%). The second question, which concerned online romance scams, elicited a more divided response, with approximately half of the respondents (48.9% of males and 52.73% of females)

viewing it as VAWG, while the other half (51.1% of males and 47.27% of females) did not. Those who did not view the online romance scam as VAWG viewed it as a scam, but not a form of gender-based violence. This indicates the need to better understand the nature of cyber violence, particularly in cases like romance scams that may be difficult to comprehend as VAWG, and to raise awareness about the ways in which such crimes can be associated with VAWG and how it can be prevented.

Table 3: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Cyber Violence

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
Cyberbullying by threatening to spread naked pictures of a woman unless she pays money. (<i>cyber violence</i>)	considered VAWG	525	588	1,113
		82.81%	86.85%	84.90%
	not considered VAWG	109	89	198
		17.19%	13.15%	15.10%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Online scams involving the manipulation of victims into falling in love and tricking them into transferring money (<i>cyber violence</i>)	considered VAWG	310	357	667
		48.90%	52.73%	50.88%
	not considered VAWG	324	320	644
		51.10%	47.27%	49.12%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Modern slavery – forced labor

On the issue of modern slavery, the survey specifically focused on the example of a husband forcing his wife to engage in sex work, as well as the issue of economic violence, or the deprivation or refusal of financial and basic needs. The results showed that a high percentage of respondents (91.01% of male and 91.58% of female) viewed these issues as constituting violence against women and girls (VAWG). This indicates a good level of awareness about the ways in which modern slavery and economic violence can be forms of VAWG.

Table 4: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Forced Labor

A husband forcing his wife (who does not have a job or income) to engage in sex work, threatening to kick her out of the house if she does not comply. (forced labor)	considered VAWG	577	620	1,197
		91.01%	91.58%	91.30%
	not considered VAWG	57	57	114
		8.99%	8.42%	8.70%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Synthesis of Literature Review and Survey Results

The literature review provides valuable insights into the various forms and characteristics of violence against women and girls (VAWG) observed globally. These forms encompass intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, modern slavery, harmful traditional practices, and violence in the communities or society. The survey results from NIDA Poll conducted in 2022 shed light on the awareness and perceptions of VAWG within Thai society, providing a context-specific perspective on these issues. This synthesis section aims bridge the insights from the literature review with the survey findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the forms within the specific context of Thai society and providing a foundation for enhanced strategies and interventions.

Intimate Partner Violence

The literature review highlights that intimate partner violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, and controlling behaviors within intimate relationships, and it is a pervasive issue worldwide. The survey from Thailand by Cheumchit et al. (2018) mirrors these findings, revealing that approximately 15% of Thai women have experienced various forms of domestic violence. The root cause of intimate partner violence in Thailand often lies in the desire of men to control women, manifesting in behaviors like monitoring, suspicion, and restricting social connections. The survey data from NIDA Poll (2022) aligns with this by showing that awareness about jealous-fueled violence leading to physical harm is relatively low, indicating a need for education and awareness to challenge harmful attitude and norms in Thai society.

Sexual Harassment

Both the literature review and survey results underscore the prevalence of sexual harassment as a concerning issue, with varying levels of awareness. The survey results from Thailand indicate a relatively high level of awareness regarding sexual harassment. However, the literature emphasizes that women in Thailand and globally often choose not to report such incidents due to fear, the associated stigma, and societal tolerance of such behavior. These findings highlight the significance of measures to improve reporting. While raising awareness is important, it is equally crucial to establish a safe and supportive environment for reporting. Furthermore, addressing societal attitudes that tolerate sexual harassment is important for cultivating a culture where such behavior is not condoned. This shift in attitude will encourage reporting and help to deter future incidents of sexual harassment.

Cyber Violence

Online violence and abuse have grown in significance globally as online connectivity has become more widespread. The survey conducted in Thailand specifically explores the awareness of cyber violence, encompassing cyberbullying and online romance scams. The results indicated that awareness varies among respondents, with some recognizing certain forms of cyber violence as VAWG while others perceiving them as scams. This suggests the need for increased understanding of complexities of forms of cyber violence and its association with VAWG.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses various forms of exploitation including forced labor, sex trafficking, and forced or child marriages. Gender norms often play a significant role in pushing women and girls into these exploitative situations. The literature underscores how deeply ingrained societal norms contribute to perpetuation of these practices. The survey data from Thailand indicate that awareness about forced labor and sex trafficking as forms of VAWG is relatively high, indicating that to address the issue of modern slavery the targeted measures to combat modern slavery should be focused, such as the strengthening of legal framework and law enforcement, victim support, and reporting mechanisms.

Harmful Traditional Practices

Harmful practices like female genital mutilation, honor killings, and dowry-related violence pose threats to the well-being of women and girls in some societies. Research in these areas remains limited in Thailand, possibly due to the lower prevalence of these practices within the country. However, there is a need for future research to delve into this issue within the Thai context, exploring how traditional practices may lead to violence or be interconnected to other forms of VAWG.

Violence from Community or Society

VAWG extends beyond individual acts, often manifesting as systemic oppression within broader community and social power structures. The literature review has highlighted numerous tragic cases, including instances of violence against women in leadership roles when they deviate from traditional gender norms. Effectively addressing this issue requires confronting deeply ingrained biases and prejudices to cultivate a more supportive environment for women.

Conclusion

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) can have serious and lasting consequences for victims, including physical injuries, emotional trauma, and long-term health problems. These consequences are particularly pronounced when women and girls experience multiple forms of VAWG, such as physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. In Thai society, there exists a commendable level of awareness about different types of VAWG, particularly physical violence. However, awareness is lower when it comes to violence that inflicts emotional and mental harm. Further research is needed to unravel the intricate relationship between awareness of VAWG and the factors that drive behavioral change, ultimately contributing to the elimination of VAWG.

The primary challenge in addressing violence against women lies in the established social norms, including the pervasive gender norm that defines women's status as inferior to men, leading to gender discrimination and resulting in women and girls being subjected to violence, whether within their families and as victims of abuse and sexual assault from others outside their families. This gender norm has a widespread impact on individuals, communities, and society. To eliminate violence against women and girls,

a fundamental shift is required to challenge and transform the gender norm that contributes to violence. This transformation must occur at multiple levels, encompassing changes in individual attitudes, community beliefs, and societal structures. Key components of this transformation include promoting the gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, and changing laws and policies to protect women's rights and ensure justice for victims of violence.

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Awareness of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Pronouns

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Abstract

Gender inequality is firmly entrenched in every society. We learn how each person should be treated through language socialization. Early in life, one is implanted with ideas that women and men are different and should be treated differently. Stereotypic characteristics are baselessly assigned to women who, as a consequence, are constrained from attaining their maximum potential. Language in textbooks, without our realization, turns out to be the channel through which wrong ideas get passed on to our young. This study investigates language in textbooks which are loaded with gender stereotypes and sexist language to find out if the students are aware of them. It also interviews the instructors to see if they consider gender stereotypes and sexist language detrimental to the mind of their learners. Through questionnaire administration and interviews, the findings revealed that learners were indeed aware of the existence of gender biases. However, a notable inclination among lecturers can be observed whereby they tended to downplay the issue as relatively inconsequential and disconnected from the learning materials.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, Bias, Equality, Textbook, Pronoun

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รับวันที่ 17 เมษายน 2566 ส่งแก้ไขวันที่ 23 มิถุนายน 2566 ตอปรับตีพิมพ์วันที่ 13 กรกฎาคม 2566

บทคัดย่อ

เป็นที่ทราบกันดีว่าความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศได้หยั่งรากลึกในทุกสังคม มนุษย์ล้วนปฏิบัติต่อกันผ่านการขัดเกลาทางสังคมโดยใช้ภาษาเป็นเครื่องมือ เมื่อครั้งเยาว์วัยเราต่างถูกปลูกฝังว่าความเป็นหญิงชายนั้นแสนแตกต่างกัน ด้วยเหตุนี้ผู้หญิงและผู้ชายก็ควรได้รับการปฏิบัติที่แตกต่างกันโดยปริยาย อย่างไรก็ตาม ลักษณะตายตัวแบบเหมารวมอันไร้เหตุผลนี้กำหนดให้ผู้หญิงไม่อาจแสดงศักยภาพสูงสุดของตนได้ ภาษาในตำราเรียนก็เป็นเครื่องมือกีดกันอย่างหนึ่ง เราอาจมีได้ระแวงระวังเลยว่าภาษาเป็นช่องทางถ่ายทอดมโนทัศน์ที่ผิดมากมายต่อไปยังเยาวชน ด้วยสาเหตุดังกล่าวงานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อตรวจสอบการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในตำราเรียนที่อาจมีข้อความและประเภททางไวยากรณ์ที่แสดงการเหมารวมและความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศ และมุ่งสำรวจว่าผู้เรียนตระหนักรู้ถึงประเด็นเหล่านี้มากน้อยเพียงใด นอกจากนี้ยังสัมภาษณ์ผู้สอนเกี่ยวกับความเห็นว่าการใช้ภาษาในตำราดังกล่าวมีผลกระทบต่อผู้เรียนหรือไม่ ผลการวิจัย พบว่า ทั้งในแบบสอบถาม เนื้อหาในตำรา และการสัมภาษณ์ ผู้เรียนตระหนักถึงการเหมารวมและความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศในขณะที่ผู้สอนเห็นว่าอาจไม่ได้เป็นประเด็นหลักที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเรียนการสอนมากนัก

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Introduction

Gender Stereotypes in Our Lives

Nowadays, gender equality is something that the international community is interested in (United Nations, 2022). All sectors of society strive to make their society a society in which all genders receive equality. In academic circles, numerous studies have attempted to shed light on the factors contributing to gender inequality. Different cultures have different attitudes about gender. What they have in common is that all cultures view women as not equal to men. We are all classified from the first moments of life. Arranging everything around us into categories allows humans to manage their lives systematically. Each culture creates rules for its members to treat each type of person and thing. The bases for classification are numerous. We are classified into various categories according to our economic status, ethnicity, skin color, profession, and gender, to name just a few. Often, there are presumed ideas about each type of people and things we classified. So-called stereotypes, these presumptions are drawn from a few cases and are made continuous by generations of people. While some stereotypes are positive (e.g., Germans are industrious), many are false statements which can damage the ones being labelled. Among the many negative stereotypes, gender stereotypes are present in all cultures. Being stereotypes implies that there typically is a great deal of consensus about them, and such consensus gets propagated by socialization (most of the times by means of language). Young boys and girls learn about gender stereotypes from their immediate environment and the media, and they learn how to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998). These socialization experiences no doubt continue to exert influence later in life and, indeed, research has shown that men's and women's self-characterizations differ in ways that are stereotype-consistent (Bem, 1974; Spence & Buckner, 2000). So, whether they are true or false, stereotypes touch and affect all lives. Growing up with them, we take them as natural and never doubt their validity. As to where gender stereotypes came from, social role theory proposes that gender stereotypes derive from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and at work (Eagly, 1987). Engrained in our lives, gender stereotypes, if negative, can cause damage. United Nations Office of The High Commissioner and Women's human rights and gender equality (2020) reminds us:

“Wrongful gender stereotyping is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. It is a contributing factor in violations of a vast array of rights such as the right to health, adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relations, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence”.
(United Nations, 2020)

Literature Review

Being Aware of Gender Stereotypes

Being social animals, we have been socialized to get on well with our physical and social-cultural environment. Not all ideas (including stereotypes) implanted in us are bad. Devine and Sharp (2009) indicate that stereotypes can serve an adaptive function. They at least enable us allowing people to simplify what they observe and to make prediction about others. Devine and Sharp (2009), however, warn that stereotypes also can (and often) lead us to induce faulty assessments of people. We presumptuously make generalization from just one known case. As far as gender stereotypes are concerned, Heilman (2012) reminds us that gender stereotypes can lead us to make bias expectations about performance of others. This, in turn, will lead us to make unfair decision which will impact opportunities of the person being evaluated by us. Warning that gender stereotypes are especially influential, Fiske et al. (1991) state that as gender is an aspect of a person that is readily noticed and remembered, it is prone to stereotypic thinking.

But we should keep in mind that gender stereotypes are beliefs that affect the believers themselves also. According to Wood and Eagly (2015), self-stereotyping can occur that will make a person have a special view about oneself. Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2021) finds out that endorsing the stereotype that Malaysian women, endorsing gender stereotype that women belong at home to take care of their families, feel compelled to put their families before their careers. These women, without any doubt, identify themselves according to the stereotype. Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2021) points out that the harm caused by stereotypes goes beyond the individual. To them, women are stigmatized and have been deprived of educational training and sufficient healthcare in societies which consider them equal to men. Likewise, Gerdeman (2019) indicates that one reason women might be shying away from certain

professions (namely careers in STEM) because they lack confidence in their ability to compete in fields that stereotypically belong to men. Coffman (cited in Gerdeman, 2019) attributes that this lack of confidence leads women to think that they cannot excel in these professions despite their competence.

When people are taught gender stereotypes since childhood, those stereotypes are deeply rooted in us. Not realizing that they are wrong, we fail to doubt and challenge them. We do not recognize that they lead us to have wrong attitudes about ourselves and others. As such, being aware that we are cultivated by false stereotypes is the first step toward correcting our attitudes resulting from them. We need to know what gender stereotypes are and what forms they take. This awareness will prompt us to question what we consider to be natural (such as the assumption that women are indecisive). As being aware of gender stereotypes and endorsing them affect lives of women, awareness that they are false can prompt women to change their mindset which will, in turn, leads them to fight for equality. In other words, people need to be aware that these gender stereotypes are not based on facts. Being passed from generation to generation does not mean that they are true. And if they negatively affect someone, it is our job to debunk them. In short, if we want to correct wrong attitudes, we must be aware of them.

European Institute for Gender Equality (2015), stressing that Gender awareness raising plays an important role in informing women and men about gender equality, emphasizes that “Awareness raising is a process which helps to facilitate the exchange of ideas, improve mutual understanding and develop competencies and skills necessary for societal change.” Finding that in ASEAN countries are too few women leaders and role models, Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2019) reiterates that campaign to make people aware of gender inequality needs to be put forth to encourage girls to participate actively in activities and careers which gender stereotypes restrain them from doing.

Creating awareness on gender stereotypes requires knowing where they originated and how they are transmitted to the mind of people. Early in life, all of us are socialized into many ideologies. According to Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2019), socialization is an element inseparable from culture which provides content for the socialization process. The very tool for socializing is language which is an integral part of our lives. Through language, we learn about what our society values, how we should

feel, think, and behave. Embedded in language are various (gender) stereotypes. Gender stereotypes subtly disguise in language. As such, they sound so natural that we fail to doubt them. Worse yet is the language in textbooks which students unquestioningly absorb. As this study focuses on investigating the students' awareness of gender stereotypes present in their English textbook, the section that follows will discuss different types of gender stereotypes found in them.

Gender Stereotypes in Textbooks

As indicated above, no channel for perpetuating stereotypes is more subtle than language, particularly language in textbooks. We now turn to investigate the language forms in which gender stereotypes are embedded. Discussing gender stereotypes in textbooks in Armenia, Ghazaryan (2022) states that they come in the form of underrepresentation. According to Ghazaryan (2022), women are underrepresented in textbooks of all subjects. Similarly, in Indonesia, research reveals that in English textbooks males are more frequently presented in the selected readings than female (Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, 2019). Another form of stereotyping women in textbooks is the stereotypic portrayal of women. Lee & Collins (2008) find that such portrayals (being weak, having domestic roles, suitable to specific careers) of women still exist in recently published English textbooks. As far as language use is concerned, Jasmani et al. (2011) analyzing secondary school textbooks in Malaysia, find that men are more associated with action verbs while women with passive verbs. Another potent form of gender stereotype lies in language rules or grammar. Internalizing grammar, we seldom scrutinize its logic. Given that language is arbitrary, we let go of many nonsensical things (generic male and specific female). We never question why the terms denoting female must have an additional morpheme (e.g., male lion vs. female lioness). Often, the terms denoting males do not have bad connotation. A single man is called a bachelor while a single woman is known as a spinster. And the most illogical of all is the use of pronouns. In English, noun-pronoun agreement is important. We are taught to use male singular pronoun “he” with the singular noun of which the gender is unspecified. Thus, we see a sentence “The guest should bring his own chair.” While one might think that generic masculine pronoun use has done no harm, Snizek and Jazwinski (1986) find in their study that “the use of “generic” masculine and even other grammatically neutral terms in effect serves to exclude women from the English language. The resulting masculine bias in our language reflects and reinforces

the pattern of male dominance in society.” Attempting to find out whether our graduate students are aware of gender stereotypes that are present in their textbooks, this study focuses on the use of masculine generic pronouns (henceforth sexist pronouns), which is the most subtle forms in which gender stereotype is embedded. The section that follows provides detail on the structure of the textbook under investigation.

Structure of the English Textbook

The target textbook entitled “Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Students” in question has been used in English for Graduate Studies at the National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand for decades; however, as of 2023, this in-house textbook is no longer in use. Any students who are not exempted from the English entrance examination are required to enroll in this course. Essentially, contents in the textbook revolve around reading skills development, in particular academic English. Given this emphasis, the course is intended to equip students with the ability to read textbooks, research and academic articles in their respective fields of studies. The textbook consists of three units. The content ranges from sentence structures, vocabulary, sentence paraphrases, paragraph readings and article reading. Not a commercial textbook, it consists of sentences (examples) and reading passages taken from authentic sources (newspaper, articles, etc.). As such, the language in it is original in the sense that the compilers did not screen out what they considered inappropriate (e.g., gender insensitive language).

Given the underrepresented gender issues and observations arising from such English textbook, it is intriguing to examine the textbook’s characteristics, overviews of perceptions, and gender awareness as reflected by both students and lecturers in charge of this course. With the aforementioned emphasis, research questions that this study attempts to answer are as follows.

Research Questions

- (1) To what extent are learners aware of gender stereotypes that may emerge in the textbook?
- (2) Does the textbook contain any examples or terms of gender stereotypes? In terms of what characteristics?
- (3) Given the textbook’s content, are instructors aware of gender stereotypes?

Research Methodology

This study utilized a triangulation methodology. This method was designed to maximize the validity and dependability of the data analysis (Noble & Heale, 2019). It encouraged cross-checking and balancing of data and results from multiple perspectives and devices. Consequently, based on the research questions, this study included 3 major sections, (3.1) an online survey, (3.2) a text analysis, and (3.3) an instructors' interview, as the figure shows below. After analyzing all these steps, all results were synthesized and interpreted accordingly.

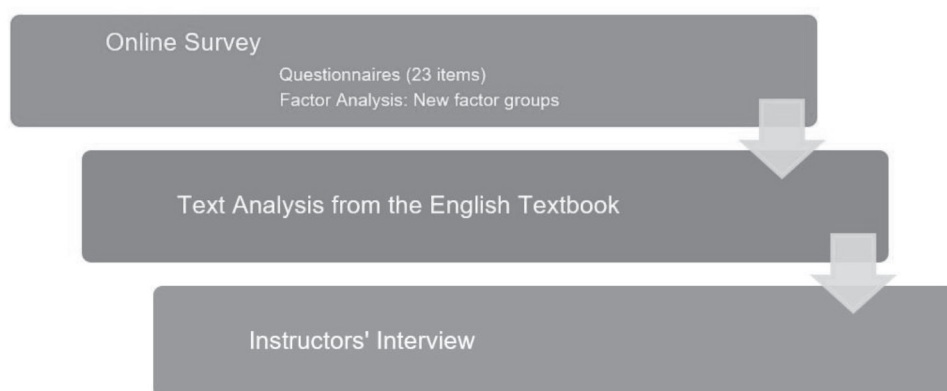


Figure 1: Research Methods

An Online Survey and Related Analyses

In the first phase, students who used the target English textbook were invited to participate, with their approval, to complete an online survey. It consists of two major analyses: the questionnaires section pertaining to students' viewpoints on gender inequality in the textbook, and the factor analysis section for reducing the number of questionnaire items, conflating them, and interpreting how these question items can make sense to us. These two sub-sections are explained below.

Questionnaires section

The questionnaires specifically featured gender stereotypes and bias observation. Based on the evidence from the textbook, most questions stressed attributes of masculinity,

with a few highlighting the inferiority domains of femininity. Various socio-economic and cultural aspects of gender issues, including gender stereotypes and linguistic referents to gender discrimination and stigma, were reflected in the question items. The following questionnaires (in Table 1.) were subjected to a reliability test using the Index of item objective congruence (IOC) from 2 inter-raters; the resulting score is 0.90 (acceptable). Inter-raters noted that these questionnaires were sufficient for the task since they were detail-oriented and mainly focused on linguistic forms, as opposed to asking inquiring too broad questions, which may cause difficulties in data elicitation from participants.

There were 23 question items which employed a 5-point Likert scale in this study. Respondents were required to assign a degree of agreement to each statement. A stimulus question of all questionnaires was, *“To what extent do you agree with the following textbook-related statements?”* The Likert scale spans from 1 to 5, namely, 1 = “Strongly disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither agree nor disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, and 5 = “Strongly agree”, respectively. By carrying out this sub-section, the research question no. 1 can be falsified.

Factor analysis section

Hypothetically, the number of questionnaire items (23 items in table 1) would be overwhelming and challenging to comprehend as a whole. By lowering the number of questionnaire items, factor analysis will play a crucial role in understanding the findings. Creating new, smaller factor/ variable groupings can help us comprehend the significance of such questionnaire items. Instead of examining each question individually, we can screen and bundle similar questions (based on their semantic relations/senses and statistical evidence) into the same group. In practice, factor analysis (using IBM SPSS version 21) can be done following the completion of the regular surveys. In order to answer the first research question, this sub-section can promote a more understanding explanation.

A Text Analysis in the Target Textbook

This part sought to respond to the second research question from the text book entitled “Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Students.” Analyzing, decoding, and interpreting the meaning of written or spoken linguistic data is a text-analytical process. The analysis included essential phrases and highlighted linguistic signals indicating

gender disparity. It may also involve qualitative techniques such as contextualizing language use and sociocultural factors, which were salient and deserved to scrutinize. Text analysis also investigates linguistic variation, change, and social identity (Widdowson, 2000).

Instructors' Interview

This part was used to maintain a balance among research questions 1 and 2. To elaborate, sections 3.1 and 3.2 largely depended on quantitative analysis and the data retrieved from students and the textbook itself empirically, whereas section 3.3 utilized qualitative methods from the other stakeholders. We conducted a casual interview with 3 professional instructors with decades of experience who use this target material. The conversational topics ranged from an overview of the course to thoughts on gender stereotyping observation in the textbook. Consequently, by conducting this section, the third research question can be examined.

Findings

Demographic Data

This study's samples comprised students who participated in the foundational English reading skill course for graduate students at NIDA, Thailand. The ages of the 47 responders spanned from 19 to 28 years old (minimum = 19 years old and maximum = 28 years old). The average age was 23.8 years. The ratio of male to female participants was proportional. Males accounted for 48.94% (23 persons), while females totaled 51.06% (24 persons). Only 3 of the samples obtained MA degrees. 28 students were enrolled in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, while the remaining 19 were in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. The sample size is considered reliable as far as this study is concerned. Out of 210 students, approximately 31% (65 students) were included, exceeding the minimum requirement of around 20% to ensure the robustness of the analysis. However, a caveat is in order here: since the textbook was used the last time during the previous academic year, it was only reasonable to collect the data that were available at the time.

Questionnaires: Descriptive Statistic Reports

RQ1: To what extent are learners aware of gender stereotypes that may emerge in the textbook?

47 persons voluntarily submitted 23 questions via an online GOOGLE FORM. The 5-point Likert scale ranges from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree”, accordingly. The average score ($\bar{x}$) was 3.11. This indicates that the amount of gender stereotypes in such English textbook can range between moderate and high. The S.D. score is extremely low (S.D. = 0.3376), suggesting that the score distribution across all 23 items is converged, and not well-distributed.

Question: To what extent do you agree with the following textbook-related statements?

Table 1: Questionnaire Items and Score Reports (n = 47)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
1	The likelihood of referring to generic things is disproportionately higher for men than for women. “He”, “his”, “male(s),” and “man/men” are the male-gendered pronominal pronouns and related referents can be found in the textbook.	3.23*
2	In the textbook, male images, icons, or figures are favored over female ones when presenting images, icons, or figures.	2.57
3	In the textbook, males are depicted as public figures or play essential roles in events or histories.	3.81*
4	When referring to men in the textbook, they are described as outstanding, high leadership, decisive, and uncompromising.	3.43*
5	In the textbook, outdoor activities are recommended for men, while interior hobbies are reserved for women.	3.02*
6	In the textbook, vocations associated with women are limited and gender-stereotyped, such as nurses, midwives, teachers, and maids, but diverse and challenging careers, such as physicians, firefighters, prime ministers, information technology officers, and presidents, are exclusive to men.	3.55*

Table 1: Questionnaire Items and Score Reports (n = 47) (cont.)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
7	Most of the textbook's exemplary achievers and idealized role models are men.	3.43*
8	The textbook relates female daily activities to household responsibilities and domestic lives.	3.32*
9	In the textbook, males play more critical roles as writers or orators than their counterparts.	2.79
10	In the textbook, males are portrayed as having higher education levels than females.	2.79
11	In the textbook, males' socio-economic status is likely higher than their female counterparts.	3.17*
12	In the textbook, males are primarily cast as heroes or have more prominent roles in narratives. Males receive more space and content compared to their counterparts.	3.49*
13	In the textbook, men are shown as speaking less frequently than women.	2.77
14	According to the textbook, males are less empathetic than females.	2.79
15	Males are less likely to take things personally, overthink, and be worried, according to the textbook.	2.7
16	In the textbook, females are portrayed as inferior to males.	2.79
17	An illocutionary speech act of matrimony as "Man and Wife" are mentioned in the textbook.	3.06*
18	When referring to children in general, the word "boy(s)" appears more frequently in the textbook than "girl(s)."	2.79
19	The textbook uses blue or darker hue spectrums, which indicate masculinity, more often than soft or pastel-like hue spectrums, conveying femininity.	2.85
20	According to the textbook, men are more likely to be involved in political matters.	3.57*
21	Males are more inclined to be initiative and creative in the textbook.	3.11*

Table 1: Questionnaire items and score reports (n = 47) (cont.)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
22	Males exhibit higher bravery than their textbook counterparts.	3.49*
23	Men's names/ last-names appear before females' names as a basis, regardless of alphabetical orders.	3.06*

Remarks: The scores marked by (*) are above 3 out of 5, denoting a moderate to a high level of agreement.

According to table 1., the 3 question items out of 23 items with the highest scores include variable no. 3 “according to the textbook, men are more likely to be involved in political matters” ($\bar{x} = 3.57$); variable no. 20 “in the textbook, males are depicted as public figures or play a critical role in histories” ($\bar{x} = 3.81$); and variable no. 6 “in the textbook, vocations associated with women are limited and gender-stereotyped, such as teachers, housewives, and secretaries” ($\bar{x} = 3.55$). Observable interdependence and congruency exist between these 3 variables in nature found in this textbook usage. Interestingly, male agents were inclined to tackle political matters and have domineering roles for men probably involved in important history events. By contrast, females’ responsibilities were stereotypically based on their respective suppressive social positions.

Factor Analysis: New Factor/ Variable Groups

Due to the 23 dispersed questionnaire items as seen in table 1, we could refine them into new smaller conflated groups with less number. Factor analysis enabled us to get more comprehensible result’s senses and led to appropriate interpretation (IBM SPSS, version 21).

The Cronbach’s alpha for the internal content reliability was found to be excellent ($\alpha \leq .938$). The KMO and Bartlett’s Test accounted for 0.765, $df = 253$, and $p < 0.0001$ in the subsequent stage. Thus, these preliminary test operations were appropriate to proceed to the Varimax rotation axis in the Factor Analysis.

All 23 items (shown in Table 1) passed the factor analysis test, resulting in creating the new four groups of factors to explain the trend; however, this study removed those irrelevant questions according to the statistical analysis result, as seen below:

1) *Due to their socioeconomic advantage, males might be portrayed as less empathetic and take things personally.* Factor 1 was conflated from 6 items taken from questionnaires no. 14, 15, 16, 10, 13, and 11.

2) *Men are potentially portrayed intellectually and socially idealistic or as public figures.* Factor 2 included 5 items retrieved from questionnaires no. 7, 20, 21, 12, and 3.

3) *Males are considered trailblazers associated with risk-taking/leadership positions to some extent, while females are associated with domestic life and stereotypically feminine/risk-averse careers.* Factor 3 was comprised of 4 items from questionnaires no. 4, 5, 8, and 6.

4) *Masculine pronouns and referents relating to generic items can predominate throughout the textbook.* Factor 4 was consisted of only 2 items based on questionnaires no. 1 and 9.

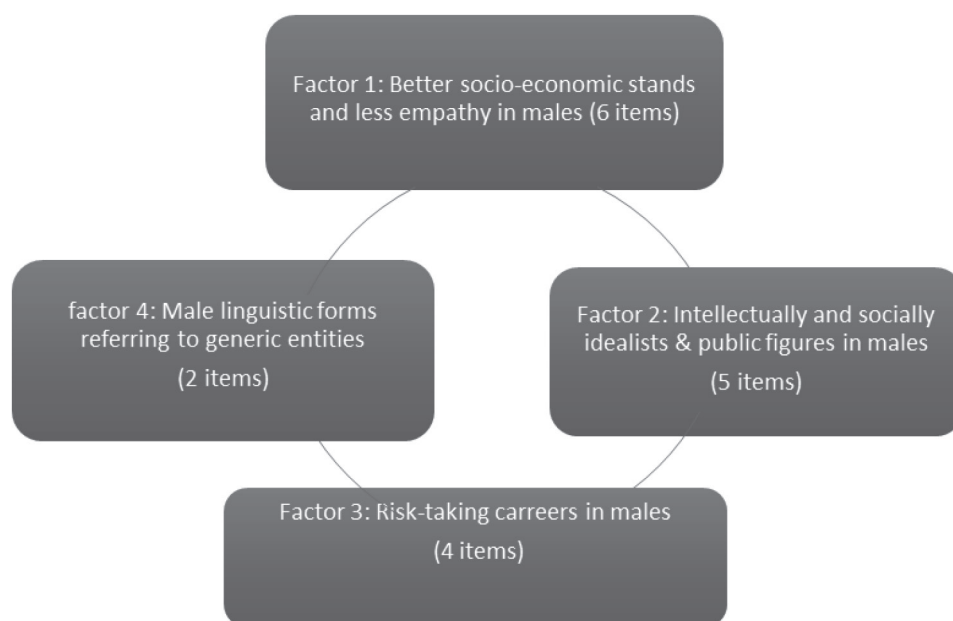


Figure 2: Four Major Factor Groups Reveal the Interrelation among All Variables

It should be noted that the reliability of the data analysis might suffer as a result of time constraints and the relatively small size of the student sample. Although a sufficiently large number of respondents ($n = 100$) is typically required to augment

reliability, only 47 respondents took part in this factor analysis study. This is because this group was the only intact group available at the time. Readers are cautioned against this limitation in terms of interpretation of the data and the analytical robustness.

Some Observations from the Textbook's Excerpts

RQ2: Does the textbook contain any examples or terms of gender stereotypes? In terms of what characteristics?

This section of the analysis focuses on pronoun usage in the textbook, specifically examining the usage of the generic masculine pronoun, such as “he” or “him.” In linguistics, pronouns are words or groups of words that replace nouns or phrases in sentences. They prevent repetitive use of the head noun and facilitate anaphora (referring back to a preceding entity) and cataphora (referring forward to a subsequent entity) within the context. Pronouns play a crucial role in referring to entities without relying on gender-specific pronouns such as “she,” “he,” or “it,” etc.

Regarding the generic masculine pronoun, pronouns “he” or “him” have been used as a generic or gender-neutral pronoun in certain contexts, serving as a default pronoun. However, the use of “he” has faced criticism due to its inherent gender bias and exclusion of non-male individuals and others (Gastil, 1990). As a result, the prevalent use of this pronoun in the textbook has been observed and warrants investigation.

According to the textbook's content, it comprised 3 units, based on the 2019 edition. There were 37,073 words total in the document. This textbook aimed to empower their academic English reading skills. The subject matter embraced a variety of academic contexts and genres based on the context of applied sciences and social sciences, which corresponded to the NIDA's interdisciplinary contexts. The learning topics included immediate constituent analysis (IC-analysis), core-part (head and modifier), which were extracted from sentences or discourses, how to use context clues, useful vocabularies and their components (related affixes and stems), how to consult dictionaries, understanding forms of writing, reading comprehension mechanics, writer's movements of thought and purposes, and reading passage drills.

This English textbook comprised 173 pages with 37,037 words. There were 15 pages containing 1,350 words associated with gender issues which we could observe, accounting

for 3.64%. These evidentiary supports were taken from their key terms/ phrases, and their contexts found. The contexts referred to the co-occurrence between key terms adjacent by their co-texts, namely, the sentences preceding the key terms, the sentences following the key terms, and the entire paragraphs that elaborated gender inequality likelihood and their linguistic forms in use. We found a few data of both overt and covert linguistic forms of gender imbalance, particularly pronominal assignments, namely, “he”, “his”, “she” and “her” and other terms “man” and “woman” to indicate generic characters and entities across the textbook as shown in the following excerpts.

(1)

*“A secretary must know how to type; furthermore, **she** should have some knowledge of shorthand.” (Page 4)*

The author employed the pronoun “she” for specific jobs and tasks associated with women. For example, knowing shorthand and being a secretary were linked with stereotypical feminine employment rather than their male counterparts. This was in accordance with Garg et al. (2017), which demonstrate a substantial corpus of beliefs and occupation’s history related to gender. For decades, the study discovers that the secretary is closely associated with female occupations.

(2)

*“When a person can read and write **his** own language, we say that **he** is literate.” (Page 13)*

The pronominal pronoun “he” and the possessive adjective “his” could correlate with a greater degree of education, knowledge, and literacy. Furthermore, men could serve as examples of generic entities.

(3)

*“The Prime Minister had received the details of the disaster.
He ordered that assistance be sent immediately.” (Page 31)*

Referring to excerpt (3), students were expected to analyze and combine an adjectival clause in a complex sentence, consisting of a matrix clause and its subordinate clause. “He” referred to the generic noun “Prime Minister.” It could be deduced that the likelihood of success, high-ranking careers, and a high social position was tied to

males. Men were frequently referred to political power or holding significant positions in the state. Furthermore, this article discussed the decisiveness of men in positions of authority.

(4)

*“Susan is a hypocrite because **she** never tells us what **she** really believes in.”*

(Page 74)

In this regard, a woman known as “Susan” was represented negatively as hypocritical, deceitful, and inclined to conceal her beliefs and convictions. The author used the word “she” and the feminine name “Susan,” which could be perceived as favoring women in this context.

Instructors’ Interviews

RQ3: Given the textbook’s content, are instructors aware of gender stereotypes?

In the third section, data collection through interviews with lecturers was considered as one aspects of the triangulation process. The researcher interviewed instructors who had used this textbook for at least a decade. First, the lecturers offered an overview of the material and methods utilized to teach English following the course outline and the textbook. The lecturers then commented on the book’s nature as follows.

“First of all, this course aims to help NIDA students to develop their English reading skills. It’s like helping them to be able to dissect sentence elements. When they study at NIDA, they will be assigned to read texts and journal articles in English. Most of the time, the English language they get to read in those stuff tends to be complicated. In fact, they must read long sentences—up to five lines at a time sometimes. Therefore, the ability to break apart those long sentences is important. Analyzing sentences is the first part of the textbook though. The second part deals with academic vocabulary development. The third part has to do with reading at paragraph and multi-paragraph levels. In a way, it’s a bottom-up approach whereby students work their way up from phrases, clauses, and sentences up to paragraphs and long passages.”

(Lecturer Tanjiro)

Next, the instructor clarified the challenging teaching technique in the following paragraph. Utilizing this reading material and operationalizing such training may be difficult and demanding for some graduate students who need to enhance their English skills a great deal, as shown in the interview below.

“Many students are not ready to read English texts and articles due to their limited English proficiency. One of the initial difficulties I’ve encountered over the years is to convince them that it is necessary to first understand the sentence mechanisms—to be able to identify types of sentences, of subordinate clauses, of phrases and whatnot. Another difficulty is how to get them to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. And when it comes to sentence interpretation, where they are supposed to read between the lines, I think giving them lots of exercises and explicit explanation from the teacher could help. As for the reading section, certain techniques help e.g., skimming and scanning.”

(Lecturer Chang-Right)

The final point in the study inquired whether any issues with pronoun usage were connected to gender bias and stereotypes which might be present in the textbook. As indicated below, the interviewee mentioned this.

“As far as I’m concerned, the use of pronouns has never been a problem in teaching reading. I think there is a passage where a country is referred to by the pronoun “she” but that doesn’t really bother me or my students. I mean they have not complained about the gender issue that might have been involved here. Some of the complaints I’ve heard from students are that the vocabulary is difficult, that reading passages contain information that is not relevant to their fields of study. In all honesty, I don’t see any problems teaching those passages, especially as regards sexist language.”

(Lecturer Triceratops)

To sum up, while the pronominal pronouns “he” or “she” were sporadically assigned in the sentences and narratives, they should not be blatantly presupposed to be

sexist, gender-biased, or stereotyped. This textbook's contents were challenging because they required advanced academic reading skills and linguistic analytical skills. As a result, the main objective of teaching and using this textbook was independent of any agenda. The intention was not to provoke any concerns about such sensitive issues.

Conclusions and Discussions

To date, our society is far from being a brave new world for women. With the effort to achieve gender equality, we all agree that people need to de-learn what have been taught to them and relearn the idea that men and women are created equal. Education, for this reason, becomes an important platform on which people, especially the young, can be taught the right thing. We need to look at the place where our students obtain their knowledge and ideas. We need to ensure that our teachers come to class with gender sensitivity so that they can teach and treat their students well. Additionally, we must make sure that our textbooks are free from gender biases and stereotypes so that our students do not absorb the wrong ideas.

In this study, triangulation was employed in this research to maximize the validity and reliability of the analyses. This study included a questionnaire, a text analysis, and an instructor interview pertaining to issues of gender stereotypes. According to the findings, most questionnaire agreement scores were moderate to high ($x = 3.11$). Thus, respondents commonly accepted that gender imbalance appeared in the target textbook, particularly males were more concerned with political vocations, superiority, and political issues and events.

When the researcher minimized the size of all 23 variables/questionnaire items and conducted a factor analysis, there were four new factor groups, namely, 1) Males could be portrayed as having less empathy and associated with higher socioeconomic standing. 2) Males were viewed as social and intellectual idealists or as public figures. 3) Males were considered trailblazers associated with risk-taking/ leadership positions to some extent, whereas females were involved in domestic lives and stereotypically feminine/risk-averse professions. And finally, 4) pronominal pronouns and referents relating to males referring to generic entities could be predominantly utilized across the textbook.

A good consistency was observed between questionnaires, factor analysis, and text analysis (key terms and gender linguistic forms). However, the findings of the interviews with the lecturers were not in line with the previous questionnaire and text analysis sections. Given the examples of gender stereotype evidences, the lecturers in charge of this course did not believe that using such linguistic forms could trigger undesirable consequences leading to gender stereotypes, bias, or anything else. Sadly, the textbook's creators had no intention of revising textbooks to eliminate sexist language and gender stereotypes.

As the result indicates, our students are aware and appear to be informed by the social climate that women are not treated as equally as men. Our result shows that they agreed that women are underrepresented and not justly portrayed. Instances of sexist pronouns in the text caught their attention. But should we be satisfied with this level of awareness among our students? We need to be reminded again that being aware of something and believing that it is not right are two separate issues. One can be aware of a problem without intending to rectify it. The interview with the instructors in this study reminds us that there are those who view gender issues in textbooks as secondary. As one teacher points out that the aim of the book is to teach English, so the gender issues are not important. Implicit in this thinking is that it is not essential for the instructor to spend time discussing it with the students. The result of this study, therefore, delighting and disheartening. It is delighting that the students are aware of the existing unfairness, while it is disheartening that the instructors still do not deem the issue a serious one that needs to be fixed. Ultimately, we still have a long rocky road to go before we make people see the importance of making our textbooks free of gender biases.

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Examples of Translated Thai References

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