

A Pathway to Reach Equity: Unearthing Gender Discourse in the Paradigm of Indonesian History Education Curriculum

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Abstract

Achieving gender equity in education is essential for national development, yet history education often reinforces gender bias. This study examines gender mainstreaming in the curriculum of Indonesian history, comparing the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum through Nancy Fraser's social justice framework on redistribution, recognition, and representation. This study aims to: (1) analyse the paradigm of history education in both curricula, (2) evaluate how gender discourse is integrated, and (3) assess the shift in historical narrative towards gender inclusivity. This study examines curriculum documents and history textbooks using a qualitative content analysis approach. The findings reveal that although both curricula emphasise national identity, the Merdeka Curriculum adopts a more progressive attitude towards gender equality by integrating feminist historiography and multidimensional narratives. This marks a shift towards redistributive justice and recognition, ensuring increased visibility of women's contributions in history education. However, the extent of curriculum implementation remains untested, raising concerns about teacher readiness and classroom implementation. The study highlights the need for ongoing curriculum reform to better integrate gender perspectives across subjects. In addition, teacher training is essential to prevent unintentional reinforcement of gender bias. Future research should explore how gender-inclusive history education affects student perceptions and how educators



Education as Change
Volume 29 | 2025 | #16986 | 22 pages



<https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/16986>
ISSN 1947-9417 (Online)
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interpret and implement these curriculum changes. Although the Merdeka Curriculum reflects progress, achieving gender justice in education requires systemic reforms in pedagogy, teacher training, and policy.

Keywords: gender discourse; history education; history textbook; Indonesian curriculum; women's history

Introduction

History education plays a pivotal role in shaping national identity and influencing students' perspectives on gender roles. However, conventional historical narratives often perpetuate gender injustice by marginalising women's contributions and experiences. This persistent gender bias remains a significant issue, as historical narratives have long portrayed men and women in distinct and unequal ways. In *The Unopposite Sex*, Elisabeth Badinter (1989) associates men with masculinity, while women are linked to femininity. Betty Friedan (1963), in her book *The Feminine Mystique*, asserts that women have been historically separated from their own narratives. Women's roles have predominantly been confined to domestic spheres, with their voices muted in public discourse, despite public spaces holding immense potential for their narratives and self-expression (Lanser 2010).

In Indonesia's context, the inequality between men and women has a long history intertwined with patriarchal culture. The history of women, coloured by patriarchal culture, positions women as the vulnerable and subjugated party (Nuryanti and Akob 2019). The phenomenon of concubinage and "Nyai" in the Dutch East Indies serves as evidence of how women were relegated to the role of domestic slaves, ranging from managing the households of European masters to serving in their beds (Hera and Wijaya 2014). Moreover, history textbooks predominantly focus on male characters and ignore women's stories and achievements (Fachrurrozi and Armiyati 2020; Kurniawan 2023). This neglect not only distorts historical understanding but also reinforces gender stereotypes, hindering progress towards gender equality in education and society.

Building gender equality in education is a cornerstone of sustainable development, as stated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, "Gender Equality", which aims to achieve equality and empowerment of women and girls (Martínez-Loza, Merma-Molina, and Gavilán-Martín 2024). The international consensus, such as the Dakar "Education for All" goals and the Millennium Development Goals, prioritises achieving gender justice in the field of education. These frameworks advocate for equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education and the elimination of gender-based disparities in educational opportunities (North 2010; Subrahmanian 2005). However, achieving gender equality requires local adaptation and specific strategies to address unique challenges and cultural contexts (Holmarsdottir, Ekne, and Augestad 2011).

In Indonesia, gender mainstreaming took root in 1984 when the government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through Law Number 7 of 1984 and Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development (Republic of Indonesia 1984, 2000). In the educational sphere, the Ministry of National Education Regulation Number 84 of 2008 explicitly calls for equal educational opportunities and the integration of gender perspectives in curriculum development. Despite these policy advancements, Indonesia continues to face significant challenges in achieving gender equality. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, which assesses gender equality across four domains—economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment—Indonesia ranks 101 out of 156 countries (Sharma, Chawla, and Karam 2021). In addition, the 2023 Annual Report of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan 2024) shows that violence against women in the age range of 25–40 years reached 1,981 cases, while 1,342 cases were documented for women aged 18–24. This data shows that gender mainstreaming in education in Indonesia needs to be encouraged more effectively.

Integrating gender perspectives into educational curricula is a critical step towards addressing gender disparities (Dal'igna, Klein, and Meyer 2016; Lyle-Gonga 2013). In Indonesia, history education serves as the foundational tool for shaping national identity and influencing students' perspectives on the role of gender in society. However, conventional historical narratives in education often perpetuate gender injustice by ignoring women's contributions and experiences. In Indonesian history textbooks, the significant events and historical narratives focus more on prominent male figures and ignore women's stories and achievements (Fachrurozi and Armiyati 2020; Kurniawan 2023; Sendratari and Margi 2016; Utami 2021).

Indonesia employs two primary curricula: the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum, the first of its kind, has been criticised for the lack of gender inclusivity in its historical content. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum, introduced as a more progressive alternative, claims a more inclusive approach and emphasises more diverse perspectives, including gender equality. However, there is limited research comparing how these two curricula address gender issues in history education. This study seeks to fill this gap by evaluating the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated into the history education curricula of Indonesia, with a focus on the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum.

Research Objectives and Contributions

This study evaluates the extent to which gender perspectives have been integrated into history education in Indonesia, focusing on a comparative analysis of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Analyse the paradigm of history learning in the 2013 Curriculum;

2. Analyse the paradigm of history learning in the Merdeka Curriculum;
3. Compare the discourse on gender equality in the history learning components of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum.

This study contributes to the discourse on gender mainstreaming in education by providing empirical insights into how the history curriculum in Indonesia responds to gender equality. By conducting a content analysis of history education materials, this study highlights shortcomings in gender representation and offers recommendations for more inclusive education policies. These findings are expected to support the development of gender-sensitive curricula that foster greater awareness of gender equality and contribute to Indonesia's sustainable development goals.

Literature Review

Gender is a social and cultural construct that defines social attributes between males and females. Gender is fluid and context-specific. Individuals may exhibit behaviours considered masculine or feminine depending on the social context (Harper 2006). Gender-based roles and their attributes can vary, dictated by differing cultural contexts (Chodorow 1995). Gender equality in education is a critical dimension of broader gender equality efforts. It emphasises the provision of equal access to quality education for all genders, ensuring that both men and women can take advantage of educational opportunities without discrimination (Lahelma 2018; Nhamo, Muchuru, and Nhamo 2018; Turner 2019). In discussing gender equality in education, it is essential to establish a clear theoretical foundation. This study adopts Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice as a framework for analysing gender dynamics in education, especially in the history curriculum. Fraser (2009) argues that social justice must be approached through three interrelated dimensions: redistribution, recognition, and representation.

- a. Redistribution can be achieved by addressing systemic economic and material inequalities in society. In education, redistribution demands equal access to educational resources for all genders. Fraser (2014) emphasises that economic inequality can be a significant obstacle to full participation in education. Unterhalter (2005) also highlights that equal access to education is key to achieving broader development goals, including women's empowerment and gender equality.
- b. Recognition means respecting identity and cultural differences and fighting against domination and marginalisation. This aspect emphasises the importance of inclusivity in the education curriculum. This can be achieved through integrating gender perspectives by presenting women's experiences and contributions in learning materials to combat gender bias (Fraser and Naples 2004), as well as criticising stereotypical gender representations and encouraging a more complex understanding of gender identity (Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek 2016).

- c. Representation means ensuring equal and inductive political participation in the decision-making process. Representation in education means ensuring that all genders have equal voices and participation by ensuring balanced representation in leadership structures and gender-equitable education policies (Fraser 2009).

Fraser's theory of social justice provides a structured approach to analysing gender inequality in historical education, emphasising that addressing gender bias requires more than just policy change—it requires a curriculum transformation that redistributes knowledge, acknowledges diverse narratives, and ensures equal representation. Applying this framework, this study examines how gender perspectives are integrated into the 2013 Indonesian Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, assessing their effectiveness in promoting gender equality in history education.

Methods

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative content analysis approach to examine the representation of gender equality in the history education curriculum in Indonesia, especially comparing the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Quantitative content analysis was chosen because it allows for systematic measurement and comparison of gender-related themes and terms in both curricula, providing objective and measurable insights into the extent of gender inclusivity (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2017).

Data Sources

The primary data sources for the study include:

1. Official curriculum documents:
 - a. 2013 Curriculum Framework (Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 59 of 2014 [Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2014]).
 - b. Merdeka Curriculum Framework (Ministerial Decree Number 56/M/2022 and Decree of the Head of the Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency Number 008/KR/2022 [Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia 2022b]).
2. History textbooks for grades 10 and 11 of both curricula.
3. Teacher guidebooks that provide instructional recommendations for history education.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process follows a structured approach:

Document Selection

The 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum were chosen as the main data sources because of their implementation that is currently taking place in Indonesian schools. Official documents were obtained from the repositories of the Ministry of Education and related educational institutions.

Keyword Identification

A predefined group of keywords related to gender equality is used to identify relevant content. These keywords include:

- a. Gender-related terms: “female”, “male”, “girl”, “boy”, “mother”, “father”, “feminine”, “masculine”, “she”, “he”, “her”, and “his”.
- b. Equity-related terms: “equity”, “equality”, “inclusive”, “justice”, and “empowerment”.

These keywords were chosen based on their relevance to gender discourse and their potential to uncover implicit or explicit gender biases.

Text Extraction and Encoding

The relevant parts of the document are extracted and encoded based on the presence of predefined keywords. Each occurrence of a keyword is recorded and categorised into thematic divisions, such as:

- a. Representation of women in historical narratives.
- b. The use of inclusive language.
- c. Emphasis on gender equality in learning goals and outcomes.

Data Analysis

This study employed comparative analysis to examine how gender discourse is integrated into the 2013 and Merdeka curricula in Indonesian history education. Comparative analysis is a method used to systematically identify similarities and differences between educational frameworks, allowing for the evaluation of policy, pedagogy, and content changes over time (Bray, Adamson, and Mason 2014). By applying this approach, the study assesses structural and thematic changes in how gender perspectives are represented in both curricula, particularly in curriculum documents, learning objectives, competency standards, and history textbooks. To

complement this comparative framework, the study also incorporates contextual interpretation to critically examine the narrative construction of gender roles in history textbooks. Contextual interpretation is a qualitative approach that focuses on the meaning contained in the text, allowing for the identification of implicit biases, omissions, and framing techniques that shape historical understanding (Krippendorff 2019).

Results

The Paradigm of History Education in the 2013 Curriculum

The 2013 Curriculum was gradually introduced during the 2013/2014 academic year and was fully implemented from the 2014/2015 academic year onwards. The improvement in 2013, compared with the curriculum before, was the inclusion of a scientific approach that trains students to engage in learning activities with clear and systematic stages of scientific enquiry. These stages encompass observing, questioning, experimenting, reasoning, and developing networks or communication. The stages within this scientific approach aim to accommodate 21st-century skills to achieve the educational direction of Indonesia, which is to create the golden generation by 2045. Overall, the paradigm of subjects in this curriculum is structured with the philosophies of social reconstruction, progressivism, and humanism, where subjects can serve as content organisations developed from various disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields of enquiry.

As described in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 59 of 2014 concerning the high school and Islamic-based senior high school curriculum, history education is designed to be rich in historical skills and historical thinking methods, promote national values, foster inspiration, and link national historical events and local historical events within the context of Indonesian history. The 2013 Curriculum recognises history education as a crucial subject for building collective national memory. Consequently, within this curriculum, history education is divided into two groups: Indonesian history as a mandatory subject at the high school and vocational school level, and history as a specialisation within the social sciences stream in the senior high school's Social Studies Programme. Indonesian history is an educational tool that emphasises developing perspectives and national values among students. Moreover, history within the specialisation places greater emphasis on the advancement of historical skills. The historical skills cultivated within the 2013 Curriculum include historical thinking skills, historical skills, and insights into historical issues.

The 2016 Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 21 concerning the Content Standards of Primary and Secondary Education (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2016a) explains several competencies that students need to acquire in learning history. Compulsory history competencies include a) understanding the values embedded in a historical event, b) emulating and practising the leadership of historical figures in contemporary life, c) fostering a sense of

nationalism, unity, and solidarity, d) analysing and evaluating historical events based on cause-and-effect relationships, the authenticity of sources, and the author's interpretations, e) writing historical narratives, and f) conducting simple research on a historical event. Moreover, history competencies within the social sciences stream include a) internalising the significance of a historical event for contemporary life, b) emulating and applying attitudes and examples established by historical figures in social interactions, c) evaluating a historical event based on the authenticity of sources and historians and interpretive biases, d) studying current events based on the context of preserving historical artefacts, e) applying historical research procedures, and f) critically using historical concepts to evaluate historical work, and evaluating historical interpretations from different historians' perspectives.

Based on these competency standards, it can be understood that the goal of history education is not solely focused on cognitive abilities but is also aimed at developing historical skills (psychomotor) and shaping character by emulating historical events (affective). This aligns with the 2016 Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 concerning process standards (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2016b), emphasising the enhancement and balance between hard and soft skills in learning. History education in the 2013 Curriculum employed an active learner-centred approach. This teaching approach allows for greater opportunities to engage students in meaningful learning. Through this approach, the history learning process allows students to utilise various sources, such as textbooks, reference books, documents, guest speakers, and artefacts while offering ample opportunities to create their "her or his own histories". To accommodate this, teachers can utilise instructional models in their teaching, including problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery-based learning.

The Paradigm of History Education in the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum was enacted in educational institutions across Indonesia in the 2022/2023 academic year through Ministerial Decree Number 56/M/2022 on Curriculum Implementation Guidelines for Learning Recovery (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia 2022a). The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum was motivated by the presence of learning loss and learning gaps among students in Indonesia, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on academic studies published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the development of the Merdeka Curriculum is grounded in principles of equity and inclusivity.

According to the Decision of the Head of the Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Educational Assessment Number 008/KR/2022 regarding Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Education, Basic Education Levels, and Secondary Education Levels (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia 2022) in the Merdeka Curriculum, the rationale for the high school-level history subject is rooted in Indonesia's status as the largest archipelagic nation, strategically positioned

along global trade routes. Additionally, cultural diversity and heritage in Indonesia shape a society with an inclusive and pluralistic culture. History education aims to foster an understanding and awareness of Indonesian identity: where we come from, our current state, and Indonesia's aspirations for the future. Historical lessons are expected to transform past knowledge into contextualised insights for the present and as a projection for the future, enhancing self-identity across local, national, and global dimensions. To achieve this, history education in schools must be conveyed multidimensionally, enabling a comprehensive historical narrative. History teachers play a role in bridging the gap between the past, present, and future by stimulating students' inner thoughts and reasoning through imaginative, creative, critical, and reflective skills anchored in authentic sources. History education culminates in skill-oriented learning that encourages natural thinking and cultivates independent individuals with historical consciousness, aligned with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, the characteristics of the subject of history are intertwined with the dimensions of humanity, space, and time. The dimension of humanity is viewed as the agent that shapes history, both individually and collectively, considering aspects of thought, mental and emotional states, and the traces or works produced by humans. The dimension of space is understood in terms of the location where an event occurs, encompassing the local, national, and global contexts and depicting connections between events in different places. Finally, the dimension of time is contextual, spanning the past, present, and future, considering patterns of development, change, continuity, or repetition of historical events.

The substance of the subject of history includes various significant events that have taken place in Indonesia, ranging from local to national scales. The subject of history can be studied through various historical methods, such as diachronic (chronological) and synchronic approaches. The subject of history also provides a scientific learning experience acquired through stages of discovering sources (heuristic), critiquing and selecting sources (verification), and analysing and synthesising sources (interpretation), culminating in drawing conclusions and written reflections through historiography. The scope of competency standards in the subject of history that students need to achieve includes a) historical conceptual skills, b) historical thinking skills, c) historical consciousness, d) historical research, and e) practical historical skills.

To achieve the learning objectives in the Merdeka Curriculum, the indicators of achievement are referred to as learning outcomes (LOs). Learning outcomes are formulated in a single sentence encompassing achievements in abilities, skills, attitudes, and values that need to be attained during the learning process. In history education, learning outcomes are divided into phases: Phase E for 10th grade and Phase F for grades 11 and 12. In Phase E, the learning outcomes are focused on understanding basic historical concepts (historical knowledge) related to the discipline of history, the history of ancestors, the history of Hindu-Buddhist culture, and the history of Islamic kingdoms.

Additionally, skills related to the historical process are divided into skills connected to observation, questioning, information gathering, information organisation, drawing conclusions, communication, reflection, and project planning in the context of history. Moreover, in Phase F, historically learned outcomes are emphasised to develop fundamental historical concepts for analysing historical events on local, national, and global trajectories. Therefore, the development of historical skills is focused on historical thinking skills, historical consciousness, historical research, and practical historical skills.

The Difference between Gender Discourse in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum

The discourse of gender equality in education in Indonesia has already been addressed through legal regulations in the form of Ministerial Regulation Number 84 of 2008 concerning gender mainstreaming in education. This regulation should be implemented throughout the planning, execution, and evaluation processes of education. However, within the history curriculum of the 2013 Curriculum, discussion about gender equality has not been extensively elaborated upon explicitly. For example, in Ministerial Regulation Number 59 of 2014 (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2014) regarding the Basic Competence Minimum Standards for the Subjects of Indonesian History and History (Specialisation), matters related to gender equality are not explicitly detailed.

Keywords linked to gender equality are found only in Chapter 8, which addresses teachers as school culture developers, particularly concerning the teacher-student relationship, formulated in the sentence, “Teachers act and perceive all actions of their students fairly.” However, this approach does not provide a more in-depth explanation of how it relates to history education, as this point is derived from the Indonesian Teacher Code of Ethics.

Another aspect pertaining to gender equality discourse is discernible in the characteristics of the subject of history, as mentioned below:

Project-based learning allows students to select historical events listed in a semester and work on them as project assignments for that semester. Through project-based learning, it is expected that students will produce her/his own history. (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2014)

This discourse merely acknowledges gender differences by using the phrase “her/his own history”, but it does not actively promote gender equality.

The history textbook for the 10th grade in the 2013 Curriculum also does not extensively present narratives about women, unlike the narratives about men who dominate as historical actors. The content for the 10th grade is divided into three chapters: 1) Tracing Early Civilisations in the Indonesian Archipelago; 2) Traders, Rulers, and Scholars in

the Classical Period (Hindu and Buddhist); and 3) Islamisation and Cultural Exchange in the Archipelago. Among these three topics, narratives about men still prevail in history textbooks.

The discourse about women in the 10th-grade history textbook (Restu, Lestariningsih, and Sardiman 2017b) of the 2013 Curriculum is labelled with the terms *anak perempuan* (daughter), *perempuan* (woman), and *ibu* (mother). The term *anak perempuan* refers to an individual who is the daughter of someone. Unfortunately, the narrative of the “daughter” in textbooks appears to explain subordinate subjects as a complement to the main subject’s narrative. For example, in the text:

After Mpu Sindok passed away, he was succeeded by his daughter, named Sri Isyanatunggawijaya. She ascended the throne and married Sri Lokapala.¹ (Restu, Lestariningsih, and Sardiman 2017b, 123)

Based on the narrative above, even though Sri Isyanatunggawijaya had an important position as the successor to the throne of her father who had died, the narrative stops there. There is no further explanation of the Medang Kingdom under her leadership. The term *perempuan* (woman) explains that the subject is an adult woman. This position tends to have a more positive meaning than the narrative about girls. For example, in the text:

Queen Sima ruled the Kalingga Kingdom. She was portrayed as a strong and obedient woman leader who adhered to the kingdom’s regulations. (Restu, Lestariningsih, and Sardiman 2017b, 97)

However, in another narrative, *perempuan* is described as the supporting subject of the main narrative about male actors without further explaining the role of women actors in the history that is being narrated. For example, in the text:

Before Sanjaya ruled in Ancient Mataram, in Java there was already a king named Sanna. According to the Canggal inscription dated 732 AD, it is explained that King Sanna had been replaced by Sanjaya. King Sanjaya was the son of Sanaha, the sister of Sanna. (Restu, Lestariningsih, and Sardiman 2017b, 112)

The term *ibu* (mother) refers to the supporting subject as the mother of a historical actor. For example, in the text:

Ken Arok was the child of a farmer from Pangkur Village, in the east of Mount Kawi in the Malang region. His mother’s name was Ken Endok. (Restu, Lestariningsih, and Sardiman 2017a, 129)

The narratives about women above show that the 2013 Curriculum did not adopt a gender equality perspective and tended to display gender bias. This is because the

1 All translations are provided by the authors.

narrative about men as historical actors remains dominant, while women are often depicted as supporting actors in the narrative.

Unlike the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum offers opportunities for gender mainstreaming in education due to its fundamental principles of supporting justice and inclusivity. In the context of history education within the Merdeka Curriculum, the discourse on gender equality is evident in the Decision of the Head of the Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Educational Assessment Number 008/HR/KR/2022 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia 2022b). This document highlights the necessity of conveying historical content in a multidimensional manner, encompassing local content, social content, human rights content, feminist content, maritime content, agrarian content, technological content, environmental content, mitigation content, health content, fashion content, culinary content, and other related topics, all seamlessly integrated into a single historical narrative. The multidimensional approach in history instruction provides ample space for the presence of gender equality narratives within history. Beyond revitalising gender equality narratives, the multidimensional approach in history teaching can offer comprehensive and holistic narratives to students, thus fostering the development of historical skills.

Aligned with history learning outcomes, the history textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum was developed from a justice and equality perspective. The history textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum introduces a fresh perspective on women's narratives, which have long been marginalised in history textbooks. In the 10th-grade textbook (Oktafiana et al. 2021), there is a significant focus on narratives related to women, for instance in the section about "Writing History (Historiography)", which discusses modern historiography as seen below:

Another peculiarity of modern historiography is that it is not only centred on great figures but also displays the role of the common people. You can find examples of this from many Indonesian historians, for example, the role of women in the history of the nationalist movement, the role of farmers, workers, and many more. (Oktafiana et al. 2021, 61)

The expression above represents the Merdeka Curriculum's openness to inclusive narratives, where students can delve further into how modern historiography goes beyond writing patriotic history and stories of prominent individuals. Instead, it enables them to view from different perspectives the groups historically marginalised in history, namely, women, labourers, and the lower class.

In another section, the activity sheet presents an article titled "Perempuan Bicara dalam Majalah Dunia Wanita: Kesetaraan Gender dalam Rumah Tangga di Indonesia, 1950-an" (Women speak in Women's World magazine: Gender equality in Indonesian households in the 1950s), which discusses women's voices and opinions regarding

gender equality and households in Indonesia during the 1950s. The concluding statement in the activity sheet notes the following:

The thing that was widely voiced in the *Women's World* magazine in the 1950s is that housework is not only done by women but also a shared responsibility with men. One of the messages written from this article is the role of women as an important part of progression. (Oktafiana et al. 2021, 68)

The discussion on gender equality among Indonesian households in the 1950s underscores that the history textbooks of the Merdeka Curriculum have the capacity to offer perspectives hitherto absent from Indonesian history textbooks.

The content of the history material in the 11th grade also provides a balanced narrative between women and men by positioning them equally, not as supplementary figures in historical stories. For example, in the section about the Women's Congress of 1928 in Yogyakarta, the textbook explains as follows:

The struggle for independence was not only carried out by men but also by Indonesian women. The prominent joint activity of women's organisations was the Women's Congress, marking the beginning of unity among women's organisations in the homeland. (Safitry, Utami, and Ilyas 2021, 66)

The abovementioned emphasis becomes a key point in providing students with the perspective that women have played an important role in forming the Indonesian nation.

Another intriguing discussion regarding the portrayal of women in the 11th-grade history textbook of the Merdeka Curriculum revolves around the exploration of the history of women's victimhood as war victims and prisoners. In the section "Mobilisation of Women and Labour", the curriculum delves into how women during the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia became a vulnerable group subjected to oppression through power dynamics. This is exemplified by the story of "*Jugun Ianfu*", as depicted in the following textbook excerpt:

[T]here are also many women in Indonesia who are victims of Japanese atrocities, for example in the form of *Jugun Ianfu*. Many of these deceived women will be sent to school or given jobs. Some of them were even forcibly taken or kidnapped from their villages and later made as comfort women for the Japanese.

The women known as *Jugun Ianfu* were victims of war. Their fate was truly heartbreaking, as many of them suffered both physical and mental illnesses. When the war ended, they hesitated to speak out due to various factors, ranging from trauma to shame. (Safitry, Utami, and Ilyas 2021, 114)

The reflective paragraph above prompts students to cultivate empathy for women as victims of war. Furthermore, this narrative underscores that history is not solely the

domain of groups that made significant contributions; narratives of marginalised groups are also essential components of history textbooks.

According to the history teacher's guidebook for the Merdeka Curriculum, the discourse on gender equality is evident in the guidance for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. The book explains that one of the Pancasila Student Profiles can be developed through history education by integrating issues concerning the Sustainable Development Goals. The book elaborates in detail on the 17 SDG targets, with Goal 5 aiming to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Based on the analysis of the learning outcomes document and the Merdeka Curriculum history textbooks, it can be concluded that history education has been developed with a gender-responsive pedagogical approach.

Discussion

Gender mainstreaming in education in Indonesia has been legislatively addressed through Ministerial Regulation Number 84 of 2008, a derivative of Presidential Decree Number 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. However, the implementation of gender equality in history education has faced challenges as historical narratives have long been dominated by masculine perspectives. Using Nancy Fraser's theoretical framework, this discussion critically examines the development of the history curriculum from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, focusing on the three dimensions of Fraser's justice: redistribution, recognition, and representation.

Redistribution: Expanding the Historical Narrative

Fraser's (2014) principle of redistribution addresses systemic inequalities by reallocating resources to historically marginalised groups. In history education, redistribution means ensuring that women's historical contributions are included in conjunction with men's contributions so that the narrative is no longer dominated by men. The 2013 Curriculum failed to promote redistributive justice, as history textbooks and teaching materials featured mostly male figures. Women's roles are often reduced to complementary or subordinate positions, limiting students' exposure to diverse historical perspectives. This is in line with the findings of researchers who have previously stated that history textbooks in Indonesia contain gender biases in both text and images (Fachrurozi and Armiyati 2020; Pranandari 2018; Sendratari and Margi 2016; Utami 2021), where discourse about women's narratives was quite problematic (Kurniawan 2023). In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum signals a shift towards redistributive justice, as it incorporates gender mainstreaming material and integrates women's contributions into the historical narrative. This narrative deconstructs previous male-focused curricula by introducing multidimensional historical perspectives, including discussions of gender equality, feminist movements, and women's activism. This shift aligns with Fraser's argument that redistribution must actively challenge systemic exclusion and create equal access to historical knowledge (Briffett Aktaş

2024). However, true redistributive justice in education also requires equitable access to teaching materials, resources, and teacher training. Previous research has found that even when history textbooks include gender-sensitive content, teachers may not apply it effectively due to pedagogical limitations or personal biases (Ortega-Sánchez 2019).

Recognition: Challenging Cultural Bias

Fraser (2009) defines recognition justice as the need to combat cultural misrepresentation and affirm the identity of marginalised groups. In history education, recognition means challenging dominant masculine narratives and validating women's historical contributions. The 2013 Curriculum reflects a pattern of cultural misrecognition, as it does not fully acknowledge women's contributions to history. The role of women in historical narratives is often framed with male figures (e.g., as daughters, wives, or mothers) rather than as independent agents of history. This pattern also occurs in countries that identify similar biases in history textbooks, as in Europe, the United States, and East Africa (Chick 2006; Lucy et al. 2020; Russell, Namatende-Sakwa, and Lewinger 2021). In comparison, the Merdeka Curriculum actively seeks recognition justice by expanding the representation of women's history and integrating gender-sensitive historiography. The inclusion of feminist perspectives, gender-based struggles, and the role of women in nation-building helps to correct the neglect of previous history. Fraser (2009) argues that true recognition requires more than just symbolic inclusion; it demands a fundamental overhaul of cultural narratives (Van den Brink, Zala, and Theuns 2020). However, although the Merdeka Curriculum makes progress in recognition justice, the long-term impact remains uncertain. Research shows that changing textbook narratives is not enough if cultural and gender biases persist in teacher training, student assessment, and class discussions (Bu, Zhang, and Hang 2023; Lavy and Megalokonomou 2024; Mengel, Sauermann, and Zölitz 2019).

Representation: Women's Role in Curriculum Development

The third dimension of Fraser's framework, representation, refers to the political inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making processes. In education, fairness of representation means ensuring that women historians, feminist scholars, and gender advocates participate in shaping the curriculum. In the Merdeka Curriculum, the discourse of gender equality has received substantial attention, as the curriculum's development is grounded in principles of fairness and inclusivity. The process of gender mainstreaming is also integrated through the Pancasila Student Profile project, which is internalised through the learning process and school culture. This initiative increases women's representation by ensuring that gender issues become integral to education practices and policies (Bergmann, Alban Conto, and Brossard 2022). In addition, women's representation in policymaking in the Merdeka Curriculum is reflected in the significant role of women historians as history textbook writers. Women's active involvement in curriculum content development ensures that women's perspectives are authentically integrated into historical narratives. This shift aligns with Fraser's concept of participatory parity, which emphasises that marginalised groups must have equal

representation in shaping policies and institutions (Celis 2021). By embedding women's experiences and contributions directly into the curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum addresses the problem of lack of representation and understanding of women in the historical record. The presence of female educators and intellectuals in the decision-making space is essential to ensure that gender justice in education is not only symbolic but structurally embedded (Sesanti 2024).

Promoting gender equity in education, particularly in history education, is essential (Crocco 2018). Balancing the dominance of male-centric historical narratives requires including women's history. The effort that can be undertaken is the incorporation of primary history sources related to gender, feminism, and intersectionality as critical literacy in the classroom to enhance students' historical thinking (Díez-Bedmar 2022) and to amplify the visibility of women as well as their experiences in the history learning environment within the classroom (Ortega-Sánchez 2019; Ortega-Sánchez, Marolla-Gajardo, and Heras-Sevilla 2021).

Conclusion

This study has examined gender mainstreaming in Indonesian history education through an analysis of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum using Nancy Fraser's social justice framework. While both curricula recognise gender equality, the Merdeka Curriculum takes a more structured approach, integrating multidimensional historical narratives and feminist perspectives. However, its implementation in the classroom has not yet been explored. These findings have several key implications. First, curriculum revision must take place continuously to ensure balanced gender representation in all subjects. Second, teacher training is essential, as educators play a crucial role in delivering gender-sensitive content effectively. Without adequate preparation, curriculum changes can remain superficial. Finally, future research should assess how students interact with gender-inclusive historical narratives to determine whether these reforms encourage critical awareness of gender equality. The study was limited to curriculum analysis and did not investigate how gender-inclusive content was applied in classroom settings. Further research should explore teacher interpretation, student admissions, and the broader impact of gender-responsive history education. Although the Merdeka Curriculum marks progress, achieving true gender justice in education requires systemic pedagogy, policy, and practice changes.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia under the PhD Dissertation Research Grant with contract number 1280.1/UN27.22/PT.01.03/2023.

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