

The Role of the Family in Recognizing Gender Identity in Children

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the role of the family in the introduction of gender identity in children. As we know, the family is the first agent of socialization for children. The role of the family is very important in the introduction of gender identity in children because the role of the family will be a pattern that shapes the character of the child, especially parents to children, which becomes the identity construction recorded in the child.

Keywords: role, family, gender identity

1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest group unit in the order of human life. Family can also be defined as the oldest community group compared to other groups of people. Through the family, children get their first and primary education (informal education). Informal education that takes place in the family is always a lifelong process of the child when he becomes part of the family. Therefore, there is a term that families, especially parents, are the first and foremost educators. Through education in the family, the moral, character, spiritual, cognitive abilities, attitudes and various aspects of the child begin to form. Therefore, education in the family can affect the formal and non-formal education of the next child.

The family also has a role in shaping the character and characteristics of children. Loving parental care and education about the values of life, both religion and socio-culture, are conducive factors for preparing children to become healthy individuals and family members. In addition, the role of the family in introducing the values and norms that exist in society is important, especially in matters relating to gender identity. Because we know that currently there are still many gaps between men and women in the opportunities for access to participation, control and utilization of development outcomes in various aspects of life, such as education participation for women, which is still low compared to men.

In addition, the family also has a role in maintaining a harmonious relationship, because the relationship between families, especially between mother and father, greatly affects the process of child development. Fulfilled or not the role of the family, especially parents as role models of children in life, can affect the development of children's personalities, especially in recognizing gender

identity. Therefore, the importance of the role of the family in introducing gender identity to children is a step so that children are able to recognize gender identity appropriately so that in the future they will be able to develop and optimize their potential appropriately.

2. GENDER IDENTITY IN CHILDREN

Gender is the difference between men and women that is built from a social and cultural perspective related to various aspects such as roles, behaviors, and traits that are suitable for men and women and are interchangeable. In the IASC Humanitarian Action Guidebook (2018) it is explained that gender is a social construction built through cultural, political and social practices that define the roles of women, girls and men as well as social definitions related to masculine and feminine.

Gender is also often defined as the duties and responsibilities expected of women and men at a certain time. Gender is also referred to as a social construction, determined by social norms, culture, attitudes, values, traditions, beliefs and practices (UNESCO, 2019). It refers to roles, responsibilities, identity or other qualities associated with people because they are male or female. Gender is also a trait inherent in humans, whether male or female, which is constructed socially and culturally. So that in general gender can be concluded as a visible difference between men and women when viewed from values and behavior.

The term gender refers to the social differences between women and men throughout the cycle that is studied, and has been rooted in every culture and can change from time to time and has differences in culture itself or between cultures. Gender determines the roles, powers and resources of men and women in different

cultures. Historically, attention to gender relations was driven by the desire to meet the needs and conditions and situations of women because of women's feelings of disadvantage compared to men.

Gender and sex are very different things in which sex is a biological reference for men and women, while gender refers more to social and cultural terms (William, 2006). Gender is not about men and women but is about the differences in social functions and roles between men and women which are formed from the environment in which they live. The long cultural process in a community environment, so that it can be different from one environment to another, also affects the formation of gender. Gender will always change from time to time, so it can also be different from one generation to another. Unger (2006) suggests several aspects to clarify the difference between gender and sex, namely:

- a. The distinguishing source aspect. Sex comes from God (natural), while the source of differentiation from gender is human (society).
- b. Vision and mission. The vision and mission of sex is equality, while the vision and mission of gender are habits.
- c. The element of distinction. The distinguishing element in gender is the reproductive (biological) tool, while cultural behavior is an element of gender differentiation.
- d. The nature of gender is natural, certain and cannot be exchanged, while gender is dignity, and can be exchanged.
- e. Sex has an impact in the form of the creation of values of perfection, peace and so on. Meanwhile, gender has an impact on the creation of provisions regarding what is appropriate or inappropriate, such as men who deserve to be leaders and women who also deserve to be leaders.
- f. Applicability. Sex is valid all the time and anywhere and knows no class differences. Meanwhile, gender can change and differ between classes.

Spence (1985) suggest that gender identity is also called by another name, namely masculinity and femininity which refers to the extent to which people's views see themselves as feminine or masculine in accordance with their meaning of being female or male. Society also decides what it means to be male and female for example in terms of dominance or passivity, courage or emotion and many more. These things trigger the response of men or women to admit that they are masculine or feminine.

According to Stets and Burke (1988) in a sociological perspective, gender identity involves all meanings applied to oneself on the basis of one's gender identification. In turn, this self-meaning becomes a source of motivation for gender-related behavior. In accordance with some of the explanations above, gender identity affects how a person will behave and behave. As described by Ashmore, Del Boca, and Wohlers (Stets and Burke, 1988), a person with

a more masculine identity must act more masculine, that is, engage in more masculine meanings such as behaving more dominantly, competitively, and autonomously and vice versa. The concept of gender identity in society is easier to form and teach from birth with the support of several factors such as religion and education where one can understand what it means to be male or female. Gender identity is also not always reflected in behavior but the meaning of what the behavior implies.

Masculinity and femininity, which are other words for gender identity, are not influenced by innate conditions but are influenced by patterns of social and cultural life that occur around them. A healthy gender identity is a gender identity that is consistent with their biological identity. A healthy gender identity can make a person believe that he is male or female. Gender identity is awareness, including knowledge, understanding and acceptance of a person as a man or woman (Gokma, 2018). Gender identity is considered the degree to which a person can accept himself according to cultural stereotypes (Gokma, 2018).

Gender identity will appear in children when they are 3 years old because at that age the children are able to develop a sense of gender identity that is not yet perfect but are able to name their gender correctly. When they are 3 to 4 years old, children develop gender identity stability where they realize that gender does not change over time. Through actions and role models in the family, parents have an influence in shaping the gender of the child (Santrock, 2011). The mother usually has the responsibility for nurturing and caring for the child, while the father is responsible for playing interactions and ensuring that the children comply with the prevailing cultural norms.

Introduction to Gender Identity in the Family

Family is a group of people who are bound in marriage, blood ties or adoption, or any expressive sexual relationship. Where adults together financially support each other, are committed to each other in intimate and interpersonal relationships and the members see their individual identity as important to the group identity. The family is the most important microsystem because the family is the first community for individuals from birth to communicate and interact. Therefore, the family plays a role as the first education in introducing and instilling values and norms into children, one of the values instilled regarding gender.

Family is the first socialization agent that has a role in the development and growth of children both physically and psychologically, teaching children about masculine and feminine. Boys embraced masculine character as a reflection of their father's role model, while girls embraced feminine character as a reflection of their mother's role model. Gender development is influenced by three things, namely biological influences which are understood to be hereditary factors, social influences that arise from interactions between children and their environment (both family, culture, society and the media) and cognitive influences, namely the division of children's gender occurs when children begin to think that they are themselves. men

or women after they consistently realized that they were male or female by choosing consistent activities, objects and attitudes. Hurlock (2002) apart from parents, children also get a picture of gender roles from family and close relatives.

From this description, we can conclude that the role of the family in the introduction of gender identity in children is classified as a social influence. The role of the family will be a pattern that shapes the character of the child along with the behavior of the family, especially parents to children, which becomes the identity construction recorded in the child. When the child is born and the gender is known, namely male or female, the family will give different treatment. When a child is born a boy, the family hopes that the child will be able to be instrumental, which is work-oriented to earn a living (task oriented). Meanwhile, when a child is born a girl, the family hopes that the child will be able to be expressive, which is oriented to human emotions and relationships with other people (people oriented).

When children begin to recognize gender and their roles, the family's task is to support children's development to recognize their gender identity, such as providing appropriate names, toys, clothes, hair styles and colors. Through this, families can show the gender identity of the child according to their gender, for example, girls are introduced to doll toys and given pink clothes to build femininity in children. Then the family gives toys such as robots, and cars to boys to build masculine traits in children. Over time, the role of the family through these efforts can shape roles regarding women who are different from men not only biologically, but sociologically and psychologically as well.

3. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the family has a very important role in the introduction of gender identity to children. Families begin to introduce things that support the formation of a gender identity according to the sex of the child. Although there are many debates that occur between agreeing and disagreeing with the family having an important role in the introduction of gender identity to children, as we all know that the family is the first environment that the child has, so it can be ascertained that the family always plays a role in the child's development.

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