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Gender-Mainstreaming in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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Abstract. Gender differences should be considered in vocational high schools so women and men can develop their potentials without being inhibited by gender bias. Gender mainstreaming in vocational high schools is a strategy to integrate gender differences at all stages in teaching-learning process for achieving gender equality and equity. This research evaluates the implementation of gender mainstreaming in vocational high schools consisting of seven key components of gender mainstreaming. Four vocational high schools in Sragen Regency Indonesia have been purposively selected. The data were obtained through in-depth interviews and documentation studies. The data were analyzed using Kabeer’s model of gender analysis. The findings show that not all key components of gender mainstreaming have been implemented in vocational high schools. Most vocational high schools have implemented three of seven key components of gender mainstreaming, namely political will and leadership, policy framework and gender statistics. Meanwhile four of seven key components of gender mainstreaming, namely structure and mechanism, resources, infrastructures and civil society have not been well-implemented. In conclusion gender mainstreaming has not been implemented effectively in vocational high schools. Accordingly, the government’s education office should continue to encourage and publish guidelines on the implementation of gender-mainstreaming in vocational high schools.

1. Introduction
Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is one of the seventeen goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is a fundamental human right and necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, gender inequality practices still occur in nearly all fields of development; one of which is the education development. So, providing women and girls with equal access to education is very important and will fuel the benefits for humanity at large.

Gender differences should be considered in the implementation of education in technical vocational education and training (TVET) especially in vocational high schools so women and men can develop their potential without being inhibited by gender bias. One of the ways to overcome gender bias is implementing gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to integrate gender differences in all stages of the development and implementation of education policies, plans, programs and projects for achieving gender equality
and equity [1]. Gender mainstreaming involves individual and institutional actors, both from within and outside public bureaucracy [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8].

Gender mainstreaming in the field of education is regulated through the Regulation of the Minister of the National Education No. 84 of 2008. Gender mainstreaming does not merely supplement the ‘female’ component or ‘gender equality’ component into policy, but also encourages the realization of equitable and equal education by taking into account the differences in needs and aspirations of women and men [9] [10].

The importance of applying gender mainstreaming in this field of education due to gender differences often results in gender discrimination in the form of stereotypes, sub-ordination, marginalization, double burden, and violence. This practice is the result of gender ideologies which often reinforces male power and the idea of women’s inferiority [5] [11] [12] [13].

This research evaluates the implementation of gender mainstreaming in vocational high schools consisting of seven key components of gender mainstreaming, namely (i) political will and leadership; (ii) policy framework; (iii) structure and mechanism; (iv) resources; (v) gender statistics; (vi) infra structures; and (vii) civil society.

Vocational high school is one of the forms of formal education, which organizes the middle school level that prepares students primarily to work in a particular field [14]. Vocational high school prioritizes the preparation of students to enter employment and develop professional attitudes. In accordance with its kind, vocational secondary schools organize educational programs tailored to the types of employment[15]. Vocational high school students receive education from school on the one hand, and are consciously or unconsciously involved in society on the other hand [16].

Integrating gender mainstreaming into vocational high schools can prepare their graduates to fairly compete in the job markets and have bargaining power when gender discrimination practices take place in their work places [17], [18].

2. Methods

Sragen Regency, Indonesia has been purposively selected because it has the lowest achievement in gender equality index namely Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) based on the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children Protection 2013 and 2015 [19] [20]. Four vocational high schools in the regency are purposively selected because they have participated in trainings on Gender mainstreaming in Education, namely gender responsive school program since 2012.

The primary data are obtained through in-depth interviews with principals, students, and parents and the secondary data are gained through documentation studies, such as schools’ strategic plans and regulations. The data are then analyzed using Kabeer’s model of gender analysis classifying policies into gender-blind policies and gender-awareness policies. Within gender awareness policies, Kabeer further distinguishes into gender-neutral, gender-specific, and gender-redistributive policies. The data validity uses data-source triangulation [12].

What is meant by gender-blind policies is recognizing no distinction between sexes. They make assumptions, which leads to a bias in favor of existing gender relations. Therefore, gender-blind policies tend to exclude women. Then what is meant by gender-awareness policies is recognizing that women are development actors as well as men; that the nature of women’s involvement is determined by gender relations which make their involvement different, and often unequal; and that consequently women may have different needs, interests, and priorities which may sometimes conflict with those of men.

Gender neutral is using the knowledge of gender differences in a given society to overcome biases in development interventions, in order to ensure that interventions target and benefit of both sexes effectively meet their practical gender needs. Gender-neutral policies work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities.
Gender specific is using the knowledge of gender differences in a given context to respond the practical gender needs of women or men; they work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities.

Gender-redistributive policies are to be intended to transform the existing distributions of power and resources to create a more balanced relationship between women and men, touching strategic gender interests. They may target both sexes, or women or men separately.

3. Research Findings
The first key component of gender mainstreaming is political will. The principals make up gender-awareness policies and implement gender-responsive leadership. The empirical evidence in the field indicates that (a) a school owns a female principal through competency-based selection; (b) schools open equal opportunities to both male and female students to occupy positions, such as the heads of intra-school students organization, boy scout, and teenage red-cross; (c) the schools give equal opportunities to male and female teachers and administration staffs to occupy important positions, such as principal or head of administration and to participate in teachers competition; (d) the schools give equal motivation to male and female teachers to achieve higher achievements both in or outside schools; (e) through new-students admission mechanism the schools provide equal opportunity to both male and female will-be students to select their desired department and conduct affirmative action to fill up the gender-gap of study program, for instance vocational schools provide more quota to future female-students to enter engineering department. Conversely, culinary art department provides more quota to future male-students; (f) the schools in cooperation with various construction and engineering companies appeal the companies to recruit their best graduates without considering male or female sexes. Gender-gap cases happening so far are due to the companies’ preferences to select male to female graduates in occupying vacant positions although female graduates have higher academic scores than males. Based on the findings the schools’ political will and leadership are considered gender-awareness policies, especially classified into the sub-category of gender-redistributive policies.

The second is political framework. It is manifested in the schools’ regulations. The research findings indicate that the schools regulations are not gender-bias, for examples: (a) there is no prohibition to male students to participate in fashion and office administration subjects and conversely there is no restriction to female students to occupy the head of school organizations, (b) the types of uniforms for both male and female students are similar, namely trousers; (c) the teaching and learning activities in vocational schools with more male students are more frequently adjusted with the condition of female students that are lesser in number. It can be seen when a male teacher has a class of workshop practice, he will ask the female students first whether they are having period or not. If yes, he will give time dispensation to the female student/s; (d) the schools regulate the teaching and learning activities without making one of the students treated unfairly; (e) the schools give equal awards to both male and female students having good achievements; (f) the schools make equal regulations or prohibitions to male and female students such as wearing school uniforms with the complete attributes in the school areas without triggering sex abuse and sex violence; (g) the schools give permission to male and female students who are sick to rest temporarily at the students health unit; (h) the schools prohibit male and female students to get married during their study period. Based on the findings, the political framework at schools is categorized gender-awareness policies, particularly included into the categories of gender-specific and gender-redistributive policies.

The next is gender statistics. It is defined as statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life. In term of education, gender statistics could be used to understand about gender differences and inequalities in all level of education then using these data for developing education program or activities for achieving gender equality in education. The research finds that schools already have sex-disaggregated data related to the number of teachers by rank and position, number of students by class and academic achievement, number of education personnel according to rank and position. Thus, schools have owned gender statistics.
The fourth is structure and mechanism. The research finds that schools do not have a gender-responsive organizational structure yet. This can be seen from the strong domination of male in administrative structure of the school, as well as in the organizational structure of school organizations, such as Intra-school students’ organization, Boy Scout, and teenage Red Cross. According to the informants, unequal school organizational structures happens because female teachers tend not to take the opportunity to hold important positions in the organizational structure. The reason is because they have a responsibility to take care of the family and they are afraid of not having time for their family. Nevertheless, the principals still encourage female teachers to take on more responsibility, to occupy important positions in school.

The fifth is resources. The research result finds that the schools’ human resources, i.e. teachers, administration staffs and students haven’t known and understood about gender. Although the principals and teachers have participated in gender training, they still don’t understand how to implement gender in school activities. They merely understand about how male and female should respect to each other. Their understanding hasn’t come to the divisions of authority, responsibility and just right to men and women.

The sixth is infrastructures. The research result finds that schools’ infra-structures have not been gender-responsive. This can be seen from (a) there is no male and female notices at the toilets; (b) there is no separate room for male and female students at the school health unit; (c) the desks for female students have no front cover. This potentially raises the exploitation of female students’ body, which can lead to sexual exploitation.

The last is civil society. The research result indicates that the society, particularly the students’ parents haven’t fully known and understood about the importance of gender-perspective integration into the educational field, both formal and informal education within families. This potentially causes discriminative treatment and tends to harm one the sexes, especially female.

4. Discussion
Implementing gender mainstreaming in education, especially in vocational high school is not a matter of ease although the socialization and training on how to integrate gender perspective has been conducted. Only a part of all key components of gender mainstreaming can be successfully implemented at schools. The difficulty of implementing all the key components of gender mainstreaming at schools is because gender-responsive schools cannot be actualized without well-organized efforts, starting from policies, programs and activities. Therefore, principals’ political will and leadership are very necessary, so that schools are able to grow the values of gender responsiveness. Furthermore, gender-responsive schools can be conducted through four aspects, namely internal, institutional, interpersonal and instructional [21]. The four aspects focus on the teachers’ understanding about gender and then they implement gender-responsive education to all academics. The difficulties to implement gender mainstreaming also happened in another country because of the misunderstanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming (cases in EU & USA) [8] [22]. The implementation of gender mainstreaming tends to be technocracies and using improper concept of gender mainstreaming (cases in Canada) [23]. At schools, although teachers have been taught about gender they have not fully understood how gender is implemented in schools’ life and it is still considered complicated [24]. To support the political will, political framework is required as a foundation in implementing gender-responsive schools.

Political will, leadership and political framework can run optimally if they are supported with gender-statistics. Gender-statistics can become a foundation to formulate policies and used as evaluation towards gender-responsive actions. Gender statistics has important role in wiping out stereotypes, policy formulation and monitoring on the progress of gender-responsive education. Statistics on women and men are needed to raise consciousness, persuade policy makers & promote changes; inspire measures for changes; provide an unbiased basis for policies & measures and monitor and evaluate policies and measures [25]. The low representation of women in the schools’ authority structure inhibits the efforts to actualize gender-responsive schools [26].
The availability of separate male and female toilets and the provision of more female toilets than that of male is caused by different biological structures between women and men. Women have period, have pregnancy and usually have to accompany children or old women, so that the time to be spent in toilets is usually longer. Unfortunately, the difference of the needs is not well responded \[^{27}\][\(^{28}\)]. Whereas toilets for women were set up to enable women and girls to enter public space safely in the system of male domination, in which the female sex caste is subjugated and made vulnerable to sexual assault and harassment on the basis of sex \[^{27}\][\(^{28}\)]. Eventually, support from the society is important to make the schools capable of providing their students’ needs based on their gender identities. Families with children of four years old should help their children choose their sex before entering elementary schools. This becomes a school reference in providing needs fulfillment suitable with the gender identity they have chosen \[^{29}\].

5. Conclusion
In conclusion gender-mainstreaming has not been effectively implemented in vocational high schools. There are merely three of seven key components of gender mainstreaming which can be implemented well, i.e. political will and leadership, political framework and gender statistics. However, the other four components, i.e. structure and mechanism, resources, infrastructures and civil society, were not well implemented.

Political will and leadership are considered gender-awareness policies, (which is classified as gender-redistributive policies), the political framework at schools is categorized gender-awareness policies, particularly included into the categories of gender-specific and gender redistributive policies, and schools already have owned gender statistics. Whilst the schools do not have a gender-responsive organizational structure yet, the schools’ human resources haven’t known and understood about gender, schools’ infra-structure have not been gender-responsive and the society particularly the students’ parents haven’t fully known and understood about the importance of gender-perspective integration into the educational field, both formal and informal education within families.

Accordingly, Sragen Regency government, especially the Education Institution should continue to encourage and publish guidelines on the implementation of gender-mainstreaming in vocational high schools.

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