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To whom it may concern,

12 July 2013

Sir/Madam,

Confirmation of Indexed Journal Publication in SCOPUS by Yulia Ayriza

We are pleased to certify that we have selected article from Yulia Ayriza from PSU-USM conference for publication at Procedia: Social and Behavioral Science Indexed in SCOPUS. These articles will be published in 2013:

1) Rearing Children Androgynously To Empower Them To Optimally Actualize Their Potential

Thanks,

Your Truly,

[Signature]

(Prof. Dr. Ruslan Rainis)
Director
Centre for Research Initiative: Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Rearing children androgynously to empower them to optimally actualize their potentials

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Abstract

In Indonesia, society still follows patriarchal custom, gender injustice has been long extended and so deeply internalized in the minds of men and women that by degrees the role of gender is considered predestination. This viewpoint is difficult to change. One of the social agents that socialize pervasively the influence of gender stereotypes is the family. Family becomes the first place for children to socialize with their environments. Many bases of children’s personalities, including their gender roles, are founded during this golden age (0-5 years). Most families perform their daily lives in gender stereotyped way that causes children to play their gender roles stereotypically; boys play masculine gender role, and girls feminine. To some extent, these stereotyped gender roles have constrained children, especially girls, to actualize themselves optimally because they have to comply with some social rules which are considered appropriate to their own gender. This is of course disadvantageous to both boys and girls, for the rules are not always in mutual accordance with their actual potentials. One of the ways to solve this problem is rearing children androgynously so that each child can play his or her gender role in both ways, masculine and feminine. In this regard, this article deals with ways which, based on social cognitive theory, are supposed to be adopted by families in performing their daily lives to empower children to optimally actualize their potentials.

Keywords: actualize potentials, androgynously, empower, rearing children
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Rearing children androgynously to empower them to optimally actualize their potentials

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Abstract

In Indonesia, society still follows patriarchal custom, gender injustice has been long extended and so deeply internalized in the minds of men and women that by degrees the role of gender is considered predestination. This viewpoint is difficult to change. One of the social agents that socialize perversely the influence of gender stereotypes is the family. Family becomes the first place for children to socialize with their environments. Many bases to play their gender roles stereotypically of children’s personalities, including their gender roles, are founded during this golden age (0-5 years). Most families perform their daily lives in gender stereotyped way that causes children; boys play masculine gender role, and girls feminine. To some extent, these stereotyped gender roles have constrained children, especially girls, to actualize themselves optimally because they have to comply with some social rules which are considered appropriate to their own gender. This is of course disadvantageous to both boys and girls, for the rules are not always in mutual accordance with their actual potentials. One of the ways to solve this problem is rearing children androgynously so that each child can play his or her gender role in both ways, masculine and feminine. In this regard, this article deals with ways which, based on social cognitive theory, are supposed to be adopted by families in performing their daily lives to empower children to optimally actualize their potentials.

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Keywords: rearing children; androgynously; empower; actualize potentials

1. Introduction

Male and female are born to be biologically different. These differences are sharpened by society’s view which is socially constructed. As long as the differences do not cause injustice or suppression by one side on another.

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academic works to their sons, and relationships to their daughters (Fivush, Broman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000)[15]. Parents also tolerate more their sons’ expression of anger, and permit more their daughter to express helpless emotions such as sadness and fear (Fabes, Eisenberg, Bernzweig, & Carlo, 1994)[16]. In risk taking behaviors, parents provide more help to prevent their daughters from harm, but greater permission for their sons’ risk-taking (Morrongiello, & Hogg, 2004)[17]. Besides, parents encourage more their sons to be independent and make decision for themselves, and permit more dependent behaviors to their daughters (Pomeranz & Ruble, 1998)[18]. Third, direct instruction: it is found in parent-child direct conversations; parents usually instruct their children to behave appropriately according to social rules. For example, father tells his son not to cry, and mother tells her daughter to dress in feminine clothes in social events. Parents also instruct their sons and daughters to do distinct sports, household tasks, and master different gendered-skills (Blakemore, et al., 2009)[8], and finally, models: parents daily activities are to act as models for their children to imitate, especially when fathers’ and mothers’ gender-related actions are consistent with men’s and women’s which children observe. Children learn and imitate roles & power relations between men and women from what their parents do every day. For example, mother as home-makers and fathers as financial providers (Blakemore, et al., 2009)[8].

3. Classification of gender role and its development process according to social cognitive theory

3.1 Classification of gender role

Gender role which is defined as individuals’ behaviors reflecting social expectations of how males and females should think, act, and feel in accordance with their culture (Berns, 2004[19]; Blakemore, et al., 2009[8]; Eagly, Wood, & Dick, 2000[20]; Santrock, 2008[21]) has some classifications. Among the most basic of gender roles are the roles of home maker, and financial provider (Blakemore, et al., 2009)[8]. Related to these roles, Eagly, Wood, and Dickman link the role of home maker to the traits of communal or expressive, whereas financial provider to the traits of agentic or instrumental characteristics (Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000)[20]. The communal personality characteristics, such as warmth, kindness, and service to others’ feelings (Deaux & Kite, 1993[22]; Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000[20]), serve others in their role of caretaker for children and other family members (Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000)[20]; while agentic personality characteristics, such as competence, confidence, and independence (Deaux & kite, 1993[22]; Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000[20]), serve others well in their role as working people (Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000[20]).

In the past, a good normal male was expected to have characteristics such as, being independent, aggressive, and powerful; while a good normal female was expected to have characteristics such as, being dependent, fond of nurturing, and uninterested in power. This customary belief unconsciously affects people to think that overall, males have healthy and good characteristics, whereas females have undesirable characteristics (Santrock, 2008)[21].

In more logical views, Zemore, Fiske, & Kim stated that agentic and communal characteristics are in one side positive, and negative in another. At this point, males could be considered aggressive, arrogant, or selfish, while females are excessively emotional (Zemore, Fiske, & Kim, 2000)[23]. Thus, such personality characteristics can be considered either positive or negative depending on the context.

Aside from the consideration that both female and male have either positive or negative personality characteristics, in the 1970s, there were, especially in western countries, more women and men who overtly express their dissatisfaction with the traditional rigid gender-role expectations (Santrock, 2008)[21]. Nowadays, some people, such as teachers, researchers, and others, begin to consider that gender role will become a barrier
they will not become a problem. Unfortunately, the differences have in reality created a perception that a gender is higher than another, eliciting feelings of injustice (Hermawati, 2007)[1]. According to Lips (2005)[2], though being differentiated, male and female, either as an individual or as a group, tend to go side by side. The problem is that in reality, they are mere participants in a hierarchical arrangement, not partners, with males occupying a higher position than females. Further, Lips has affirmed that in terms of male and female, Western and American cultures reflect that hierarchy, with females being subordinate to males and their qualities being devaluated.

Similar to Western and American cultures, Indonesia, well known for its patriarchal custom, heightens males’ position, and confines females’ tasks to such household chores as cooking, rearing children, cleaning the house, and serving their husbands (Abdullah, 2005)[3]. There are so many traditional terms describing these customary beliefs which position females on a position lower than men’s (Herawati, 2007)[1]. Such beliefs have been socialized for years to the society and influenced people so that they educate their children stereotypically. If such education is repeatedly given to children, it will influence them to gradually adopt gender stereotyped values in their development process and internalize them into their gender roles (Lips, 2005)[2]. As a result, boys play masculine gender role, and girls feminine. These sex-type behaviors might influence children to have inaccurate perception of their potentials and interests (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4], and might further discourage and foreclose many opportunities for children, especially girls, to optimally develop their potentials (Pajares and Miller, 1994)[5]. This is of course disadvantageous for children’s optimal development.

In this regard, it is necessary that people be freed from gender stereotyped constraints, so that they can optimally actualize themselves in accordance with their talents and interests.

One of the approaches once suggested was “…to empower both men and women by increasing their sense of effectiveness and self-actualization and reducing the number of situations in which individuals experience threat” (Lips, 2005, p. 51)[2]. It means that instead of building masculinity in male and femininity in female, it is better to developing both positive masculine and feminine characteristics in the same person. This concept is known as “androgyne” (Bem, 1977)[6].

For the purpose, this article is to discuss how families, especially parents, as one of the social agents, rear their children androgynously based on social cognitive theory, in the hope of empowering children to actualize their potentials optimally.

2. The way in which families socialize gender stereotypes to their children

In the daily process of rearing children, father- and mother-child interactions have different focuses; mother-child interactions are more focused on child-care activities such as feeding, bathing, and changing diapers, while father-child interactions are more focused on play activities such as engaging in physical and arousing play (Parke & Buriel, 2006)[7]. These different models of interactions bring about many consequences in socializing life values, including gender stereotypes, to their children.

According to Blakemore, Berenbaum, and Liben (2009)[8], there are four ways that parents influence children’s gender development. First, channeling or shaping: parents surround children with distinct gendered context, starting from choosing different names (Barry & Harper, 1995)[9]; clothing, toys, and room-decorations (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcu, & Cossette, 1990)[10]; also, activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002)[11]; chores (Lytton & Romney, 1991)[12]; and academic subjects (Lynch, 2002)[13]. Second, differential treatment: parents treat their sons and daughters differently; for their sons, parents, especially fathers, are engaged in rough play, and for their daughters, especially mothers, pretense play (Lindsey & Mize, 2001)[14]. Parents talk more about
influences in interactional and bidirectional operations among these three factors is not equal throughout time, depending on situational circumstances and personal activities at the time (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4].

According to Social Cognitive Theory, development is influenced by three modes in which the gender-linked information is conveyed and processed cognitively. The important processes include social modeling, performance experiences in which gender-conduct is linked to social reaction, and direct tutelage (Bandura, 1986)[28].

Social modeling is one of the most significant transmissions to transfer any information, such as values, attitudes, and patterns of thought and behavior (Bandura, 1986)[28]. Through observational learning, a great deal of gender-linked information in one's environments is conveyed by models through interaction with parents, siblings, peers, teachers, other significant persons, and mass media. In social cognitive theory, observational learning shows the cognitive role of an individual who has agentic function to determine what he/she will observe and apply it to his/her own intention. Thus, observational learning is no longer the same as imitation of the social learning as it was in the past. What is learnt is not an exact copy of what is modeled (Santrock, 2008)[21]. For example, children can adopt some moral rules from the models in judging a negative problem. At some other time, they can either adopt or apply the same rules to judge the similar problem in their creative ways (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4].

Performance experiences become an important step. In this process gender-conduct which is based on gender-knowledge is linked to social reaction. It is in this process that the individual's cognitive role is found. In constructing gender conception, children observe the positive and negative consequences following the behavior pattern they acted. For example, parents often use rewards and punishments in educating their daughters to be feminine, such as “A good girl if you play gently with your doll”, and their sons to be masculine such as “A boy as big as you is not supposed to cry” (Santrock, 2008)[21]. Through their daily interaction experiences with many social agents, children observe, consider, adopt some outcome information to construct their own standard for guiding their gender-linked conduct (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4].
which limits and restricts children’s development (Katz, 1996)[24]. Therefore, they propose that children of both genders be reared equally and less stereotypically (Santrock, 2008)[21].

Another alternative to building masculinity in male and femininity in female is developing both “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics in the same person. This new idea is acknowledged as “androgyny”. It means that an androgynous boy might have assertive and nurturing characteristics, and an androgynous girl might have powerful and sensitive characteristics (Bem, 1977)[6]. In regard to the changes of social views about gender roles of men and women, they are classified into three groups: feminine, masculine, and androgynous. In gender role assessment, a person that gets high scores in both feminine and masculine factors is classified as androgynous, while another that gets a high score in masculine and low in feminine is classified as masculine, whereas a person that gets a high in feminine and low in masculine is classified as feminine. Further, if a person gets low scores in both masculine and feminine factors, he/she will be classified as undifferentiated (Bem, 1977)[6]. In this regard, patents are supposed to inculate both strong positive feminine and masculine characteristics in their children instead of weak characteristics both in feminine and masculine factors, for referring to the latter, children’s undifferentiated gender role will result.

3.2 Gender role development according to social cognitive theory

The development of gender role begins very early in one’s childhood through the process of sex typing or gender typing (Blakemore, et al., 2009)[8]; it is the process in which children learn and acquire gender role (Papalia, Old, & Feldman, 2008)[25].

The socialization of gender role to children has been started since their birth time (Berns, 2004)[19], and goes further throughout their preschool and elementary years (Levy, Sadovsky, & Troseth, 2000)[26]. Busey and Bandura (2004)[4] even view that gender role acquisition is a life-long span development.

In this article, the description of the process of how children acquire gender roles and why they adopt gender stereotypes is based on social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory (Busey & Bandura, 1999)[27] originated in traditional social learning which has up to now been very environment-oriented. In the development of this theory, this traditional social learning shifts to social cognitive theory that tries to balance the influence of environmental factors and personal or cognitive factors in individuals’ behaviors. Blakemore, et al. considered it “a transition between the environmental and cognitive approaches” (Blakemore, et al., 2009, p. 16)[8].

Social cognitive theory can be included in interactionism which gives priority to the interaction of biological, cognitive, and social factors in explaining gender development (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4]. In this theory, gender development is explained in the model of triadic reciprocal interaction among personal, behavioral, and environmental determinants as shown in Figure 1. Although it does not explain gender development in stages, it adopts a lifespan perspective. Therefore in studying gender development using social cognitive theory, researchers have to attend to entire life-span determinants (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4].

In relation to gender, personal factor includes biological endowments, gender-linked conceptions, values, personal standards, and belief systems (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4]. The term “personal” is modified by Santrock as “cognitive”, especially if applied to general learning context, for so many factors in “person” mentioned mostly describe cognitive factors, such as strategy, intelligence, thinking, expectation and beliefs (Santrock, 2008)[21]. Environmental factors refer to various societal sub-systems, such as families, schools, and other social institutions, while behavioral factor refers to gender-linked behavior affected by the previous two mentioned factors within which they operate interactionally and bidirectionally (Bandura, 1986)[28]. The strength of
The third mode of influence is direct tutelage in which children are taught or instructed directly about appropriate conduct in accordance with their sex. It will be much more effective if this mode is based on values that have been approved by the society and received social support (Busey & Bandura, 2004)[4].

Hence, as has been described, children do not passively absorb gender-role conception from the influences they have received, rather they construct conception about gender role from the gender behavior they observed, the evaluative social reaction, and the instruction of others.

4. Parents’ roles in rearing children androgynously based on social cognitive theory

As has been discussed in the introduction, to free people from gender-stereotype constraints is to empower both male and female by building positive masculine and feminine (androgynous) characteristics in the same person.

The question to ask is whether it would be possible to rear children androgynously. Though this concept is still controversial, in that some people have argued that androgyny contains masculinity’s and femininity’s built-in limitations (Lips, 2005)[2], it is still worth being strived for. It is therefore, in this effort, the concept of androgynous does not merely contain masculine and feminine characteristics, on the other hand, their positive ones are made the focus.

In social cognitive theory, there are three modes of how children adopt gender stereotypes. Here in these subsequent descriptions, rearing children androgynously is discussed using the same modes.

According to the first mode of behavior learning in social cognitive theory, social modeling becomes the most significant transmission to transfer any information. Since family is the first environment for children to contact with, parental models have the most powerful influence upon children’s gender learning behavior. In this regard, to rear children androgynously should be started from the family, in this case fathers and mothers, by behaving gender-equally to avoid gender-stereotype socialization and by becoming androgyneous gender-role models for their children. Firstly, parents may provide gender-equal social context for children’s world. For example, choosing same color clothes, same toys, and same bedroom-decorations for their sons and daughters so that they will not feel worried to comply with masculine- or feminine-appropriateness according to parental rules. This idea is based on a research finding stating that environmental context such as colors of clothes, toys, and bedroom decorations are the aspects of gender role socialization provided by parents (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Maleuit, & Cossette, 1990)[10]. Of course, parental gender-equal actions should be further followed by societal supports. According to Santarelli, Koegel, Casas and Koegel (in Martines, 2008)[29], provided that parents are aware of and accept the cultural differences, a foundation on which rapport for a better working relationship with other societal agents is built.

Next, parents may encourage their children to have positive gender-equal characteristics, such as those which are usually associated with femininity and masculinity. These positive feminine characteristics are nurturance and empathy, while positive masculine characteristics are bravery, competitiveness, and independence. Parents may also discourage negative emotions associated both with masculinity such as feeling or expression of anger, and femininity such as feeling or expression of vulnerable emotions.

After that, parents may encourage children to have gender-equal interests and choices for various academic subjects without being influenced by gender-stereotyped beliefs about children’s competence by biological sex. This is important in that children’s perceptions about their academic competence are formed more by
gender role, masculine and feminine. In this regard, it becomes necessary to free people from such gender-related constraints. One of the ways suggested is developing both positive masculine and feminine characteristics in the same person, known as androgyny. Related to this purpose, families as the first environment for children to contact with are initially supposed to start this endeavor by rearing children androgynously.

Since the process of gender role development, based on social cognitive theory, moves through three modes: social modeling, performance experiences, and direct tutelage, the process of rearing children androgynously is also proposed through these three modes by involving three determinants of gender-behavior learning in triadic reciprocal interaction model. Through the first mode, fathers and mothers are supposed to behave gender-equally to avoid gender-stereotype socialization, and become androgynous gender-role models for their children. Next, in experiencing performances as second mode, parents are supposed to give same treatments to their sons and daughters and gender-equally reinforce the consequences of their children’s behaviors, in the hope that they can finally construct androgynous gender-role conception as their own standard to guide their equal gender-linked behaviors. Finally, through the third mode, parents are supposed to give gender-equal instruction, either in method or content, in executing any performances for their children. A most effective method in instructing gender-equal behavior of children is through parent-child daily conversations which are counter-stereotypical. To be more effective, this initial approach of rearing children androgynously should be better supported and followed by other social agents such as teachers, peers, and mass media.

References

parents' beliefs about children's ability rather than by their own achievements (Herbert & Stipek, 2005)[30]. Parents may also encourage children to get involved in gender-equal activities such as sports, physical plays, arts, and household chores that will not cause children to feel uneasy and find them socially inappropriate. It is generally known that the success in these fields needs not only the support from children’s talents and interests, but also parents’ encouragement which motivates children to do the practices (Blakemore, et al., 2009)[8].

Finally, fathers and mothers become the financial provider as well as children’s care takers and playmates. In so doing, it will avoid children’s misperception that fathers so far have more important role than mothers as they think that income provision is essential in the family. Moreover, fathers’ and mothers’ equal roles, either inside or outside home, will become the models for their children in developing their future roles both in career and family.

In experiencing performances as the second mode of behavior learning in social cognitive theory, children evaluate social reactions, which in this case are those from parents', to judge the appropriateness of their own daily gender-related behaviors. Children use the outcome information from their interactions with parents to construct their gender conceptions. Parents are therefore supposed to give same treatments to their sons and daughters and gender-equally reinforce the consequences of their children’s behaviors, in the hope that children can finally construct androgynous gender-role conception as their own standard to guide their equal gender-linked behaviors. In this case, parents are supposed to positively and gender-equally reinforce any good characteristics and emotions. They are also supposed to negatively and gender-equally reinforce any undesirable characteristics, emotions, and activities. This idea is in line with a research finding which states that parents’ hope for their children’s ways of behaving reinforces the increase in children’s actual behavior, for example, in children’s emotion expression for one (Chaplin, Cole & Zahn-Waxler, 2005)[31].

Concerning the third mode of behavior learning in social cognitive theory, which is direct tutelage, parents are supposed to give gender-equal instruction, either in method or in content, in executing any performances for their children. Considering that stereotypes are often affirmed in conversation between parents and their children (Blakemore et al., 2009)[8], the most effective method for instructing gender-equal behavior of children is also through parent-child daily conversations, but in counter-stereotypical way. For examples, parents can ask “Who is possible to have ballet class?” or “Why girls cannot play football?”. In so doing, parents avoid gender-stereotype socialization and motivate their children to behave androgynously as well. Again, in order to be more effective, family or parental gender-equal instruction should have first got the agreement from their society.

Thus, in these processes, within triadic reciprocal interaction model, gender role development involves three determinants: environment (parents' ways of rearing children androgynously), person (children’s constructing their own androgynous conception based on evaluation of their own behavior consequences), and behavior (equal-gender-link behavior influenced by previous two determinants) which bidirectionally and continuously influence one another. Besides, these processes move through three modes: social modeling, performance experiences, and direct tutelage. If this initial approach to rear children androgynously is successfully realized by families, especially parents, and later this step is followed by other social agents such as teachers, peers, and mass media, hopefully children in this world, boys and girls, will have equal positions and rights, and will be able to freely and optimally actualize their potentials in accordance with their talents and interests.

5. Conclusion

Gender differences in this world, including Indonesia which is known for its patriarchal custom, often elicits feelings of injustice, for one gender is perceived higher than another. Such beliefs also create many constraints for children’s development as they have to comply with social rules concerning appropriateness of behaviors of each