



Integration of Jürgen Habermas' communicative action theory in social studies education based on gender pedagogy

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Abstract

The implementation of gender-based pedagogy often faces resistance stemming from patriarchal values and conservative religious interpretations. This study aims to reveal how such resistance arises among students and how Jürgen Habermas' communicative action theory can help transform it into a more open and reflective space for dialogue. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design at State Senior High School 1 in Depok, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of learning documents. The study's results show two main forms of student resistance: conceptual resistance, in which students understand gender equality in theory but still adhere to traditional practices, and moral resistance, a rejection of the value of equality grounded in religious and cultural teachings. Through teachers' roles as facilitators of dialogue grounded in Habermas's communicative action, this resistance gradually evolved into a more open, critical discussion of different views. This process fosters new awareness and strengthens the internalization of gender equality values. The study shows that applying Habermas' theory in social studies learning can deepen students' understanding of gender inequality issues and also foster empathy, reflection, and inclusive citizenship attitudes.

Keywords: *gender pedagogy; communicative action; social studies education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Social studies education builds a solid foundation, both theoretically through analytical skills and character through social skills. A student's analytic capacity, along with their character, needs to be multifaceted and balanced. Understanding the Social Studies disciplines of History, Geography, Economics, and Sociology in their integrated form framework, the thinking, emotional citizenship, social empathy, and responsibility of the citizenry to be aware and constructive (Safitri et al., 2024). This becomes vital as students become part of society. Aspiring to a constructivist theory with an interactive approach, Social Studies fosters active citizenship, encouraging students to understand social problems, become humanitarian issue sensitive, and adopt a civil disposition (democracy) in living (Sukardi, 2016). Social Studies learning activities motivate students to participate actively in the learning process. Social character integration becomes an objective by using social issue-focused discussions, role-playing (sociodrama), and a contextual problem-centered approach with the Sociology of the lesson. The essence of Social Studies Education stems from the character integration during learning activities, civilizing students as the younger generation to face the challenges of contemporary society. A social issue that needs serious attention in social studies learning in senior high school is gender inequality. Most relationships about gender still depend on patriarchal structures, and cultural practices and traditions that normalize inequality and discrimination. Because of its interactive and cross-disciplinary nature, social studies education provides an opportunity for the incorporation of a gender perspective for meaningful learning. In social studies, students are prompted to rethink the social structures and dare to critique socially accepted norms and the prevalence of everyday gender discrimination (Azifambayunasti, 2022; Oechsle & Wetterau, 2005). Opportunities in social studies education allow students, regardless of gender, to build consciousness and the will and competencies to advocate for justice and equity in the social distribution of resources. Students can learn to embrace cultural diversity and resist discrimination and stereotypes that encompass their social roles and positive social feedback (Stromquist, 2021; Najwa, 2023; Puspitasari, 2016). This has to be exerted effort since strong patriarchal practices and a social studies curriculum that still lacks a fully gender-sensitive approach are big challenges. The socially marginal position of teachers makes it possible to create safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive learning environments and broaden the social studies curriculum (Najwa, 2023).

This study was conducted at State Senior High School 1 in Depok, a school that reflects the socio-cultural diversity of urban communities. Through initial observations, this school was found to be very interesting to study because it is a meeting point between modern values and traditions and beliefs that are still strongly held by students. This condition makes the issue of gender equality relevant to study, especially in seeing how students understand and respond to this issue in the social studies learning environment. Students' openness to the concept of

gender equality tends to maintain traditional views in daily practice. This shows that gender-based social studies learning at State Senior High School 1 in Depok City is still marked by conceptual resistance, namely, theoretical acceptance of gender equality without real behavioral change, as well as moral resistance, in the form of rejection of the idea of equality based on religious and family cultural values. Jürgen Habermas' communicative action theory can be used as an analytical framework to understand how a dialogue process free from domination can transform students' resistance into a more open and reflective discussion space, thereby becoming a medium for internalizing gender equality values.

Furthermore, social studies education plays an important role in fostering students' critical awareness of various social issues, including gender inequality, which still often occurs in society. According to Cooks and Sun (2002), and based on social constructivism, we do not consider gender identity to be a biological or permanent attribute. Instead, it is a product of a social process. It is defined in and through social interaction and the use of language and other practices in everyday life. Studies in the social sciences not only help learners consolidate their understanding of social issues but also help nurture spaces of critical awareness toward the social values and practices of equity and justice. For instance, based on the research in the State Senior High School 1, Depok City, the hopes on the principles of dialogic communication in the absence of domination were to mitigate the distance in the disparity of students' perspectives toward empathy and to cultivate responsible, inclusive citizenship (Larasati & Ayu, 2020).

In the social constructivism perspective, Cooks and Sun (2002) also indicate a certain gender bias in the classroom, which, through everyday interactions, is formed and reproduced in communication patterns and social routines between the teacher and students, and even among the students themselves. Gender identity is constructed through a complex process of social relations, which draws on narratives and practices that embody certain societal values and norms. It ends up being a social identity, potentially a flexible, negotiated attribute of an individual, in contrast to a permanent marker like a biological attribute. Cooks and Sun (2002) emphasize that gender interpretation is a dynamic social construct that continues to change with the times and the surrounding cultural environment. This social constructivist approach provides a deep understanding of how gender bias arises and operates in the classroom. For learning to truly become a space for equal, open, and inclusive dialogue for students, a stronger pedagogical framework oriented towards social justice is needed.

With Foucault, we understand that, alongside the formal, authoritative roles that teachers hold, power in education also flows through language, social norms, and student resistance. Through the lens of power and knowledge, one understands the social construction of gender as influential in shaping how individuals understand and come to grips with their identities. In the everyday practices of a school, power is not merely a question of hierarchy. Power also exists in moral discourse and the ways students choose to comply or defy authority. When students question dominant gender norms and expectations, this is a form of resistance to social

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order as it is sanctioned by family, religion, and school. Such resistance is not a complete repudiation; rather, it is a strategic attempt to recast what is deemed acceptable and appropriate. Classrooms can be sites of interaction between power and knowledge, thus fostering awareness of identity and the quest for gender equity (Cooks & Sun, 2002).

These findings emphasize the importance of the Foucauldian perspective in revealing the dynamics of power, resistance, and the process of gender identity formation in the field of education. By combining two perspectives, social constructivism and Foucauldianism, gender education can interpret students' narratives as the result of social constructions influenced by dominant discourse, while also revealing the power relations that operate in the classroom. This approach then encourages the emergence of critical pedagogy in the form of gender pedagogy, where teachers act as facilitators of discursive spaces so that students are able to reflect on, negotiate, and even challenge the social constructions of gender that they experience consciously and critically. Both perspectives do indeed make important contributions to understanding the dynamics that occur in the classroom, but neither offers a complete pedagogical framework for creating a truly equal space for dialogue. In this context, Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action becomes highly relevant because it emphasizes the importance of participatory communication, the achievement of mutual understanding, and the potential to strengthen the values of gender justice. Thus, the application of Habermas' theoretical principles in gender-perspective social studies learning can be seen as a step towards complementing the shortcomings of Foucauldian and social constructivist approaches in addressing gender bias issues in the classroom environment.

The Foucauldian perspective focuses on how power relations and social discourse influence the interplay of resistance and the educational system (Cooks & Sun, 2002; Almas, 2024). Applying this perspective allows one to view students in a classroom as socialised, gendered individuals whose identities are not fixed, but are altered and transformed through social and educational frameworks. This perspective can, however, lead to a passive form of resistance. Most students understand, at least socially, the construction of gender systems and relations in a given context; however, this understanding is not sufficiently deep to explain the dissent. This reveals a gap in the literature, suggesting that the understanding of the social world in relation to gender may be more conceptual than actionable (Cooks & Sun, 2002; Simoni, 2014). Social constructivism sees gender identity and interpersonal relations formation as molded almost exclusively by personal narratives and the immediate social context, which consists of social interactions and social structures (Cooks & Sun, 2002; Galbin, 2015). Within this context, the lack of engagement, or the resistance, is viewed as part of the identity negotiation process that occurs through discourse and interaction in the classroom and in the wider family or community. Still, the constructivist perspective tends to remain on the purely descriptive level in explaining the formation of gender identity, offering no guiding principles that could help steer the relationships toward a truly equal and liberating space for dialogue. As a result, learning for the development of critical awareness on the equality of the fundamental social

relations has not been adequately accomplished. A descriptive approach in pedagogical processes that explains the workings of gender constructions should be accompanied by the promise of a safe space for students to re-evaluate, in a discourse of gender equality, the experiences they have identified and constructed.

For this context, Habermas's theory of communicative action becomes relevant and helps broaden our comprehension of the educational phenomenon. Communication action theory, as Habermas argues, is the vehicle for reaching an emancipatory consensus when it is premised on an open dialogue and rational discourse. Such communication, however, transcends the simple exchange of messages; it is also the bedrock for the construction of the critical awareness that emanates from the understanding of and solidarity with one another. When the principles of this theory are integrated into gender pedagogy, students' resistance to the equal rights issues becomes more than a simple dismissal. Such resistance is, perhaps, a potential for a more reflective, transformative discourse to be introduced within the space. Students, through respectful dialogue, can deepen their understanding of gender equity and, at the same time, develop reflective capacities that will contribute to the social transformations for equity and inclusivity. Through the application of Habermas' dialogical approach in social studies education, students are expected not only to understand gender as a social construct but also to internalize and apply the values of gender equality in their daily interactions (Munir, 2023).

Habermas's theory of communicative action is applied in education to create a critical and emancipatory space for dialogue (Siljander, 1989; Miedema, 1994; Zhang, 2022). Meanwhile, Azifambayunasti (2022) emphasizes the importance of integrating gender equality issues into social studies. However, previous studies tend to discuss Habermas' theory and gender pedagogy separately. Therefore, this study fills the gap by examining student resistance in gender pedagogy and offering Habermas' communicative action as a counter theory to Foucauldian and social constructionism. This study aims to shift resistance into critical-reflective dialogue so that social studies learning is not only conceptual but also encourages the internalization of transformative and emancipatory gender equality values.

This study has theoretical and practical benefits for the development of gender pedagogy. Theoretically, the integration of Habermas' Communicative Action theory enriches critical pedagogy studies by offering a normative framework that differs from Foucauldianism, which emphasizes power and resistance, and social constructionism, which highlights identity negotiation. Habermas emphasizes discourse free from domination to achieve mutual understanding and consensus (Habermas, 1984; 1990), so that student resistance can be understood as an opportunity to build emancipatory critical dialogue. In practical terms, this theory provides a basis for social studies teachers to make the classroom an inclusive and equitable space for discourse, transforming student resistance into productive dialogue, reducing stereotypes, and fostering reflective awareness, empathy, and civic competence. Thus, social studies learning based on gender pedagogy not only strengthens cognitive aspects

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but also encourages equitable social transformation (Miedema, 1994; Siljander, 1989; Zhang, 2022).

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on critical pedagogy, as this approach is considered most appropriate for exploring students' experiences, forms of resistance, and the dynamics of interaction in social studies learning based on gender pedagogy (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kincheloe, 2008). This study was conducted as a case study at State Senior High School 1 in Depok City in the tenth grade, which was chosen because this school represents social and cultural diversity, a context relevant for analyzing gender construction in the classroom (Yin, 2018). The research participants consisted of five students selected through purposive sampling. The number of participants referred to the principle of information power (Malterud et al., 2016), which emphasizes that sufficient sampling in qualitative research does not depend on the number of respondents but on the depth and relevance of the information obtained to the research objectives. This study consisted of five student samples, enabling an in-depth exploration of each student's views and experiences of interaction, in line with the interpretive and critical nature that forms the basis of this study. Participants were selected based on several main criteria: (1) their level of participation in class discussions, (2) their ability to express ideas critically and reflectively based on their learning experiences, and (3) the relevance of their experiences to gender issues and social dynamics in social studies learning. Based on these criteria, five students from Senior High School 1 in Depok were selected as research participants, consisting of three female students and two male students. This composition was considered representative to see how cross-gender interactions are formed and developed in a school environment that reflects the socio-cultural diversity of urban communities. Through observation of these five students, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of how gender values are negotiated, articulated, and practiced in the social studies learning process (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, such as teaching materials, student reflection notes, and class discussion transcripts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the learning dynamics at State Senior High School 1 in Depok City, particularly in terms of how students interacted and responded to gender equality issues in the classroom. Observations were conducted during social studies lessons, while interviews were used to explore students' reflective views on their learning experiences. Document analysis reinforced the context of the findings and the learning practices applied by teachers. All data were then analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which enabled researchers to identify patterns and themes related to student resistance, power relations, and critical dialogue practices in the classroom, which were then linked to Foucault's theory, social constructivism, and Habermas' communicative action.

The analysis of the data involved several stages. First, the data were simplified to concentrate on analysis, then grouped, and finally, a thematic interpretation was constructed. From State Senior High School 1, Depok City, this analysis was to discern how students' perceptions of gender equity are shaped within a school context modeled with a blend of traditional and contemporary attributes. For instance, the analysis of the sentiment of the theme of resistance was exemplified in the phrase of a student: "I agree that equality is important, but it feels strange to think that women can lead like men." It was coded as "supporting equality" in ambiguity, "doubting women's leadership." This form of analysis shows the absence of resolution in the articulation of students' thoughts, where a newly acquired critical perspective of equality is counterbalanced with the traditional and cultural paradigms of their society. These codes formed the sub-themes of ambivalence towards gender equality and the normalization of leadership stereotypes, which further developed into the main theme of 'resistance', showing the students' subtle resistance to the concept of gender equality and the gap between theoretical understanding and actual practice. To maintain data validity, the researchers used source and method triangulation, as well as member checking, to ensure that the interpretation of the analysis results was truly in line with the real experiences of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

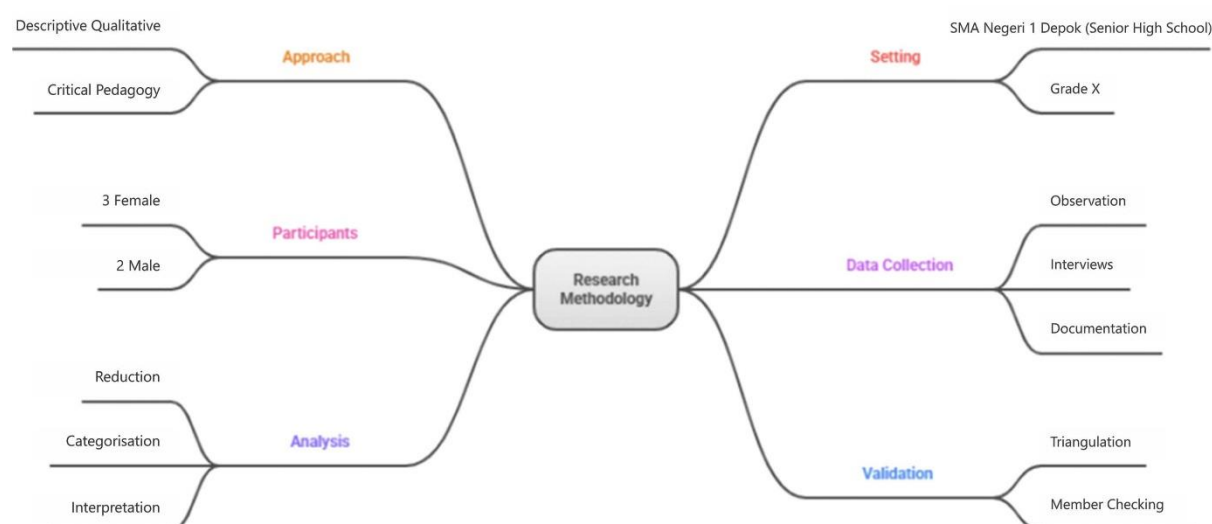


Figure 1. Research methodology framework adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006) and Lincoln & Guba (1985)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual and Moral Resistance

The results of this study reveal that the application of gender-perspective pedagogy in social studies learning elicits various forms of resistance from students, which can generally be grouped into two main types. First, conceptual resistance, namely, students who theoretically accept the idea that gender is a social construct, but still maintain traditional practices and views in their daily lives. Second, moral resistance, in which students reject the idea of gender

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equality by referring to religious and cultural values. This resistance is evident in classroom dynamics, whether through silence, changing the subject, or explicit rejection of alternative curricula that are considered contrary to their beliefs. The following data for each type of resistance is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Manifestations of conceptual and moral resistance in gender theory instruction

Student	Types of Resistance	Evidence of Observation Data	Interview Data Evidence	Documentation Evidence
A	Conceptual Resistance	Nodding when the teacher explains gender theory, but giving stereotypical examples: 'At home, cooking is still the mother's job, while the father works outside.'	"I know gender is socially constructed, but in our house, we still have traditional rules."	The written assignment correctly describes gender theory, but the concrete examples remain traditional stereotypes.
A	Moral Resistance	Rejecting or interrupting the discussion: 'According to my religion, the roles of men and women are clear.'	"I disagree that women should be treated the same as men at home; that goes against our culture."	Reflections on writing rejection of gender egalitarian practices due to religion/custom.
B	Conceptual Resistance	Verbally agree with the theory, but during group discussions, women are assigned to take notes while men lead.	"In theory, women and men are equal, but at home there are still distinct roles."	The group assignment was to write a gender analysis, but the division of roles remained traditional.
B	Moral Resistance	Avoiding discussing gender equality in class: 'This topic goes against my family values.'	"I am uncomfortable discussing gender equality because it goes against my family's teachings."	Written reflections express disagreement with gender-equal practices at home.
C	Conceptual Resistance	Nodding to gender theory, but giving stereotypical job examples: 'Women are better suited to being teachers or nurses.'	"Gender is social, but ideal jobs remain traditional."	The essay assignment was to write about gender theory correctly, but the examples of work were still stereotypical.
C	Moral Resistance	Refusing to participate in gender-equal role-playing in class: 'It is not in accordance with my religion.'	"According to religion, women and men have different roles, so they should not be interchanged."	Reflections reject pedagogical practices that emphasize gender equality.
D	Conceptual Resistance	Students agree with the theory, but when debating gender, they show traditional preferences: 'Women should stay at home.'	"I know gender is a social construct, but habits at home remain the same."	Case analysis shows that the theory is correct, but practical recommendations remain traditional.
D	Moral Resistance	Refusing group discussions about equality policies at school: 'It is not in line with our culture.'	"I feel that my cultural values are being violated when discussing gender equality."	The reflection journal confirms rejection based on cultural values.

Student	Types of Resistance	Evidence of Observation Data	Interview Data Evidence	Documentation Evidence
E	Conceptual Resistance	Nodding when the teacher explains the theory, but giving stereotypical examples of family roles: 'Father works, mother takes care of the house.'	"I understand social gender, but at home there is still a traditional division."	Individual assignments demonstrate the theory correctly, but practical examples remain stereotypical.
E	Moral Resistance	Refusing to discuss equality policies in class: 'It goes against my religious teachings.'	"I disagree that women should be treated the same as men because of my religion."	The reflection notes emphasize the rejection of gender equality on religious grounds.

Empirical data show that student resistance to gender pedagogy-based social studies learning can be divided into two main forms, namely conceptual resistance and moral resistance. Conceptual resistance arises when students theoretically accept that gender is a social construct, but continue to reproduce traditional mindsets. For example, student A stated, 'I know that gender is not something natural, but rather a social construct that can change according to social and cultural contexts, but at home there are still traditional rules,' or student C, who argued, 'Gender is a fixed and natural social construct, but ideal jobs remain traditional.' This is consistent with the findings of the documentation, in which their written assignments describe the theory correctly, but the concrete examples remain stereotypical. Moral resistance, on the other hand, is demonstrated through explicit rejection on religious or cultural grounds, such as Student A's statement, 'According to my religion, the roles of men and women are clear,' or Student D's feeling that their cultural values are being violated when discussing gender equality.

Foucauldian perspectives can gain additional explanatory power when combined with social constructivism to adequately understand the interplay of power, knowledge, and social processes regarding the students' learning and the formation of their identities. From a Foucauldian perspective, the students' statements show how power relations operate through religious discourse, culture, and family practices that play a role in maintaining the boundaries between what is considered 'normal' and 'deviant' (Foucault, 1977; 1980). Thus, the form of resistance shown by students is not merely a rejection but also part of the power mechanism that maintains the dominance of traditional gender norms in the classroom. On the other hand, social constructionism explains that students' gender identities are produced and negotiated through daily interactions within the family, school, and community (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). This is evident from the interview excerpts and reflections, which show that although students are able to reproduce gender equality theory cognitively, their social interactions still reflect dominant cultural constructs.

Empirical data show that conceptual resistance describes the tension between cognitive understanding of gender theory and social practices that remain traditional, while moral resistance shows the internalization of religious and cultural power discourses that reinforce

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the rejection of equality. The integration of Foucauldianism and social constructionism shows that student resistance cannot be understood solely as a limitation of individual understanding, but rather as the result of interactions between social constructions and power operations at work in everyday life.

Thus, through the findings in the form of two types of student resistance in gender pedagogy-based social studies, namely: conceptual resistance, where students accept gender as a social construct but still reinforce traditional norms in roles, work, and leadership; and moral resistance, where rejection is based on religious or cultural values. These forms highlight the gap between theoretical understanding and everyday practice, reflecting the tension between critical awareness and prevailing norms. From a social constructivist perspective, resistance arises through the negotiation of identities shaped by social and cultural institutions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; McQuail, 2011). In Foucauldian terms, forms of resistance can be understood as part of the mechanisms of power inherent in religious, cultural, and institutional systems. This is in line with Foucault's idea that 'where there is power, there is resistance' (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Therefore, resistance is not merely an obstacle, but a product of power and discourse, offering opportunities for critical pedagogy to challenge dominant norms.

However, both Foucauldian and social constructionism have limitations. Foucauldianism tends to be trapped in an analysis of power relations that emphasizes how resistance can never be separated from power structures, while social constructionism stops at describing how gender meanings are negotiated without providing a normative direction for change. Therefore, Habermas's theory of communicative action emerges as a counter theory that offers an emancipatory framework. Habermas emphasizes that the main goal of true communication is not domination, but the achievement of mutual understanding. He asserts that 'Achieving understanding is the inherent goal of human speech' (Habermas, 1984, p. 287). Through discourse free from domination, claims of validity regarding a norm can be tested to determine whether it is comprehensible, true, normatively right, and sincere. With this mechanism, student resistance can be transformed into productive critical dialogue.

Transforming Resistance into Critical Dialogue

The process of social studies learning based on gender pedagogy shows that student resistance, both conceptual and moral, is an important starting point in building critical awareness. Students who conceptually understand that gender is a social construct but still maintain traditional practices, as well as students who reject the idea of gender equality for religious or cultural reasons, can be seen as part of the dynamics of power and identity described in Foucauldian and social constructionist perspectives. However, theoretical understanding alone is not enough; a mechanism of transformation is needed to shift resistance into productive learning.

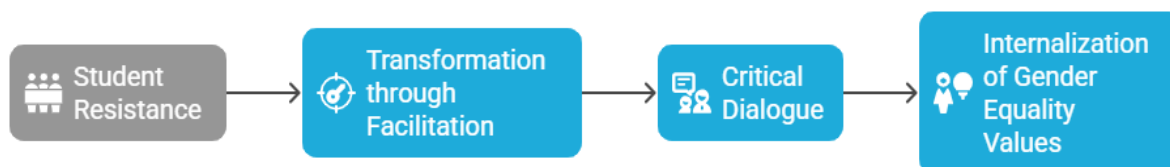


Figure 2. Integration of Habermas' communicative action theory in social studies learning based on gender pedagogy

The figure illustrates the integration of Habermas' communicative action theory in social studies learning based on gender pedagogy. The first element, student resistance, encounters initial challenges when students are confronted with the concept of gender equality. This resistance takes two main forms: conceptual resistance, where students acknowledge gender as a social construct but continue to follow traditional norms, and moral resistance, which is rooted in religious and cultural values. The next phase involves transformative facilitation, where teachers play a crucial role in creating a safe, open, and inclusive space for dialogue. Here, resistance is interpreted not as rejection, but as an opportunity for critical reflection. Teachers explore students' diverse forms of expression and act as mediators, guiding discussions constructively and ensuring that every voice is heard without domination. This process leads us to the stage of critical dialogue, where Habermas' theory of communicative action is important. At this point, the students are at the stage of the exchange of opinions to understand the meaning, rationally and equally, so that they can consensus, question normative assumptions, and seek common ground. This reflective dialogue helps students' question and develop accepted perspectives toward greater gender balance. From critical dialogue, students strive to internalize the values of gender equality, reinforced by the teacher's gender equity materials. This internalization involves more than cognition, facilitating a transformative shift in the students' behaviors to become more equitable around gender in their everyday lives.

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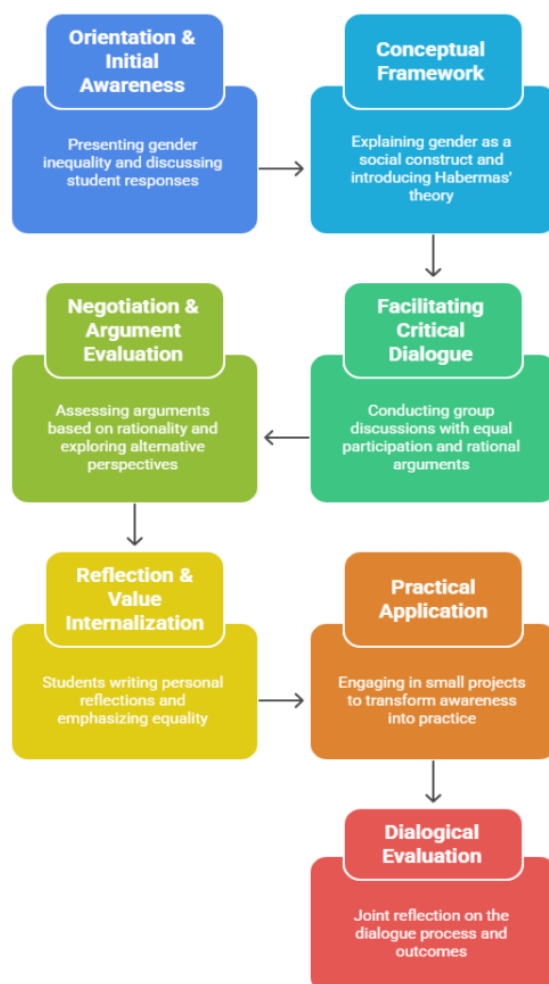


Figure 3. Critical dialogue and the process of value internalization within gender pedagogy based on Habermas's theory of communicative action.

The results of the study reveal that students' resistance to gender pedagogy-based social studies learning can undergo a significant transformation when facilitated through Habermas' principles of communicative action, namely through rational and critically reflective discourse that takes place without domination. The following is a summary of the interview findings that describe the changes in the form of resistance through the process of critical dialogue and internalization of gender equality values:

Table 2. Data illustrating the transformation of student resistance through critical dialogue and the internalization of gender equality values.

Types of Resistance	Change	Evidence of Transformation	Research Conclusions
Conceptual Resistance	Critical Dialogue	Providing examples of egalitarian practices (division of household tasks, group leadership, non-stereotypical jobs) - Tasks/case studies demonstrate understanding of equality	Students move from theoretical understanding to practical application through rational evaluation and critical discussion.

Types of Resistance	Change	Evidence of Transformation	Research Conclusions
Moral Resistance	Reflective Awareness	No longer refusing to participate in discussions, role-playing, and class discussions - Reflections emphasize that equality does not conflict with religion/culture	Students begin to accept equality as a principle of social justice through the internalization of values obtained from free dialogue without domination.

Source: Primary data obtained from observations, interviews, and student documentation

In general, the results of this study indicate that critical dialogue based on the principles of communicative action can transform students' resistance into openness, rational thinking skills, and internalization of gender equality values. This transformative process is clearly evident not only in deepening students' understanding of social issues but also in fostering empathy, a sense of justice, and a moral commitment to practicing gender justice in everyday life. This means that social studies education becomes a truly transformative and emancipatory experience. This theoretical approach encourages changes in mindset and the growth of critical awareness, empowering students to act as agents of change in society.

The results of this study indicate that through critical dialogue based on the principles of communicative action, students' attitudes of resistance began to change. Students who initially held traditional views or rejected the idea of gender equality gradually became more open to understanding the experiences and perspectives of others. The participatory discussions facilitated in this process fostered a reflective awareness that gender issues are not a threat, but rather an important part of social discourse that needs to be discussed on an equal footing. In the next stage, students began to internalize the values of gender equality. After going through the critical dialogue process, they not only understood gender theory conceptually but also applied it in their daily lives through more equal behavior and a reduction in gender stereotypes. Through the application of Habermas' communicative action theory in gender-based social studies learning, it is not only possible to reduce student resistance but also to encourage transformative and emancipatory change, while developing critical thinking skills and fair attitudes in their social lives.

Through gender-sensitive social studies learning practices, the results of the study show that the application of communicative action theory can transform students' resistance into a more reflective dialogue process. Teachers act as facilitators who create a safe space for students to express their views freely, while guiding them in building a common understanding. Habermas (1990) asserts that 'A norm can only be considered valid if it is agreed upon by all parties involved as participants in practical discourse'. This view emphasizes that efforts to achieve gender equality cannot be pursued solely through the authority of teachers or the delivery of curriculum material alone. To achieve true equality, it is essential to integrate principles through open, balanced, and respectful dialogue and collaboration, which encourages active participation and cooperation. It is in these community spaces that students' initial resistance can begin to transform into greater openness and empathy by reflecting on the experiences of

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others. Interactions between teachers and students show that through shared understanding, teacher-guided critical discussion, and student empathy, not only is student resistance reduced, but students are also helped to appreciate and accept that the goal of gender equality is not an identity or cultural value, but a social cause worth fighting for. The empathy and inclusivity reflected in their efforts almost always appear in their conversations, but to communicate their understanding of their peers' experiences through the right means/framework, students need guidance. For example, they recognize social injustice in unequal access to education simply by listening to discussions about domestic roles and are encouraged to appreciate the work of their female peers by sharing responsibilities within the group. They then set an example by not violating gender boundaries.

This educational philosophy combines communicative action theory and gender theory by attending to the cognitive and fostering the students' affective domain. Students are invited to examine and appreciate social realities through multiple lenses, including forms of gender inequity that they previously regarded as 'normal.' In these respects, the classroom operates as a 'social laboratory.' The values of equity and the norms of reflective interaction are internalized through the evaluation of relations. Due to this interaction, the learning process pivots more fully into dialogic discourse, which engages students in the critique of normative social relations and structures that shape and underpin their gendered worldview. Thus, the teacher assumes a continuous facilitating role of providing order in the safe and inclusive learning environment and ensuring that every voice and perspective is heard. The application of this philosophy to social studies classes at State Senior High School 1 in Depok allows the subjects to adequately address equality so that students think of gender as fundamental to the social practice of social relations. The integration of communicative action theory in gender-based social studies learning can not only reduce student resistance but also foster reflective awareness and build inclusive, democratic, and socially just citizenship competencies. The application of Habermas' theory in education can be practical and transformative. Sandberg (2013) emphasizes the importance of communicative action in recognizing learning experiences through inclusive dialogue, while Marojević and Milić (2017) place Habermas in connection with Freire's pedagogy, which reinforces the implications of critical pedagogy.

On the other hand, there is feminist criticism of Habermas' communicative action theory in learning as being too abstract and universalistic, thus paying little attention to concrete experiences, the body, and gender relations in communication practices. Habermas is considered to emphasize procedural rationality and consensus, but to ignore the emotional and ethical dimensions of care that are important to marginalized groups (Gilman, 2000; Pajnik, 2006). This criticism is relevant to strengthening gender pedagogy in social studies so that it does not only emphasize rational discourse but also opens space for solidarity, intersubjectivity, and marginalized voices, especially those of women. In the Indonesian context, local literature also emphasizes the importance of feminist pedagogy in social studies. Widiyanti (2022) asserts that feminist pedagogy exists as a resistance to patriarchal domination in the curriculum

and classroom, while Melinda and Supriatna (2024) emphasize the relevance of social studies as a critical space for eroding gender stereotypes and building awareness of equality.

Thus, the integration of Habermas' communicative action in gender-based social studies pedagogy has been proven to complement Foucauldian analysis and social constructionism. If the Foucauldian perspective highlights the relationship between power, resistance, and social discourse, while social constructivism emphasizes the importance of the process of identity negotiation, Habermas offers a normative direction that allows resistance to be transformed into an emancipatory space for dialogue. The findings of this study indicate that through a dialogical approach free from domination, forms of student resistance can be transformed into productive and constructive pedagogical opportunities. In this context, social studies learning is no longer understood solely as a process of understanding concepts, but also as a forum for fostering critical awareness of the importance of gender equality.

CONCLUSION

Research conducted at State Senior High School 1 Depok, found forms of resistance to social studies learning that integrate gender, including conceptual and moral resistance. Students experience conceptual resistance when they understand gender as a social construct but still hold fast to traditional values in their daily lives. Moral resistance, on the other hand, can take the form of active rejection of gender equality, often disguised as religious or cultural justifications. As an interesting location for studying these dynamics, the school is located in an urban environment that is socially and culturally diverse. By applying Jürgen Habermas' communicative action theory at State Senior High School 1 Depok, these forms of resistance can be used as a basis for safe, fair, and reflective discourse. Students are given the freedom to voice their opinions while practicing empathic engagement with opposing views. The classroom, in this dialogical construct, transforms into a space for active learning, where students critically interrogate socially constructed gender norms and appreciate social life as equity. Social studies learning in this school thus functions not only as an academic tool, but also as a vehicle for shaping moral and social awareness that encourages students to become more fair and inclusive individuals in their view of gender issues in society. Through this approach, students not only develop a conceptual understanding of gender equality but also show potential to internalize it in their daily social interactions.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The small number of participants limits the representation of broader socio-cultural diversity, and the focus remained on classroom interactions without exploring the influence of family, media, or community. Further research is therefore recommended to test the application of Habermas' communicative action theory in more diverse school contexts, to design critical dialogue-based learning involving families and communities, and to adopt longitudinal approaches for assessing the sustainability of gender equality internalization. Future research could develop this study by integrating other theories, such as intersectionality or critical discourse analysis, to enrich the Habermasian

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approach. In this way, gender pedagogy in social studies learning has the potential not only to reduce student resistance but also to shape a generation that is more reflective, inclusive, and socially just.

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