

Gender representation, stereotypes, and bias in English Language textbooks: A systematic review of cross-country studies

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Article Information	Abstract:
Submitted: 2024-09-21 Revised: 2024-11-14 Published: 2024-12-21	English language textbooks play a crucial role in shaping students' gender perceptions. However, they often reproduce stereotypes and biases through linguistic, visual, and activity-based representations. Although the awareness regarding this issue has been increasing, cross-country evidence on how textbooks sustain gender norms remains fragmented, necessitating a systematic review to support gender-sensitive education. This study examines how textbooks reproduce gender norms through linguistic, visual, professional, and leisure activity representations, and how cultural and regional contexts mediate gender bias and student perceptions. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), 358 articles were screened and, 45 met the inclusion criteria. Cross-country thematic analysis revealed patterns of gender stereotypes, linguistic and visual biases, and the influence of cultural and institutional contexts. There are three main findings in this study. First, the interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity aspects simultaneously constructs gender stereotypes in textbooks. Second, cultural context and education policy are shown to mediate gender bias. Third, strategies for developing gender-sensitive textbooks require a holistic approach to textbook revision, as well as diversification of academic publication channels. This study concludes that gender bias is systemic and multidimensional, shaped by language, visual, professional, and non-formal interactions and mediated by culture and policy, requiring holistic revision, mixed methods, and multi-database research. This study contributes a quadrant interaction model of gender representation and provides holistic policy recommendations, including textbook revision, strengthening mixed-methods research, multi-database searching, training, gender audits, and cross-country research networks.

Keywords:

Gender Stereotypes and Bias; English Language; School Textbook.



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INTRODUCTION

Gender representation in English language textbooks used in schools constitutes a significant social and educational issue, given the strategic role of textbooks in shaping students' understanding of identity, social roles, and gender relations. Gender stereotypes and biases embedded in textbooks not only perpetuate harmful gender constructions but also have the potential to limit students' opportunities and aspirations (Pavlenko, 2004; Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008; Barton & Lee, 2005). As learning materials that are widely and continuously used, English textbooks function as vehicles for transmitting social values that may influence students' perceptions of gender roles, both consciously and unconsciously (Kostas, 2023; Suchana, 2024). Consequently, the issue of gender representation in textbooks remains globally relevant.

Numerous cross-national studies indicate that gender bias in English language textbooks tends to reinforce traditional gender roles (Zhou et al., 2021; Ullah et al., 2014; Halimatussakdiah et al., 2021), which affects students' self-perceptions and career choices (Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Sadker & Zittleman, 2009; Ullah & Skelton, 2013). Such stereotypes are reflected in textual content, visual illustrations, and language use, often marginalizing female students and influencing their academic performance and self-confidence (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012; Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Nousiainen et al., 2020). Furthermore, the limited representation of diverse gender identities reinforces narrow gender perspectives and excludes non-binary and transgender individuals (Pimentel, 2010; Taylor, 2003; Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Khurshid, 2016).

Despite the growing body of research on gender stereotypes and bias in English language textbooks, recent studies continue to demonstrate the persistence of such biases across diverse educational contexts (Saleem & Zubair, 2013). These biases reproduce traditional gender roles and reinforce gender inequality, even in the presence of various initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in education (Ariyanto, 2018; Sever, 2004). A substantial number of studies reveal that male characters are more frequently portrayed in active and diverse roles, whereas female characters are positioned in passive, domestic, and subordinate roles, thereby limiting women's representation in professional and leadership domains (Yazew, 2024; Howes et al., 2024). In addition, the use of pronouns and occupational terms in textbooks often prioritizes male references, further reinforcing constructions of gender superiority (Ghorbani, 2009; Suchana, 2024). However, these findings remain fragmented and predominantly focused on single-country contexts, resulting in the absence of a comprehensive cross-national perspective.

This study examines how textbooks function as ideological sites that reproduce gender norms through linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity representations. It also investigates how cultural and regional contexts mediate the intensity of gender bias. It seeks to identify causal patterns and systemic linkages between these representations and students' gender perceptions. The study contributes theoretically to a deeper understanding of social reproduction and gender ideology in education by integrating linguistic, visual, professional, and regional dimensions. Practically, the findings provide evidence to guide curriculum reform, the development of gender-sensitive textbooks, and educational strategies that promote gender equality across diverse cultural and institutional settings. Guided by this framework, the study addresses three main research questions: (1) How do linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity representations in textbooks interact to shape students' gender perceptions? (2) To what extent do cultural contexts and educational policies mediate gender bias? (3) What strategies are effective for developing gender-sensitive textbooks and educational practices across diverse contexts?

METHODS

Research Approach

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine gender representation, stereotypes, and bias in English language textbooks across different countries. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009) and the systematic review framework proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003), this approach enables a comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible synthesis of existing studies. The literature search was conducted across eight databases (Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, Semantic Scholar, JSTOR, and Taylor & Francis) using standardized keywords. Strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, followed by thematic data extraction. These procedures ensured that the synthesized findings accurately reflect gender representation with minimal bias.

Literature Search Strategy

A systematic literature search was conducted using major academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, and Springer Link. These databases were selected to ensure broad coverage of high-quality and peer-reviewed literature while minimizing publication bias. The search strategy employed combinations of keywords and Boolean operators, such as: “gender stereotypes in textbooks” OR “gender bias in educational materials” AND “English textbooks and gender representation” OR “gender equality in school textbooks”. The search aimed to identify studies addressing gender representation and gender bias in educational textbooks, particularly English language textbooks at the primary and secondary school levels across diverse national contexts.

Study Selection Procedure Based on PRISMA

The selection process followed the four PRISMA stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Moher et al., 2009). During identification, all retrieved records were compiled in a spreadsheet and duplicate entries were removed. In the screening stage, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess relevance to the research focus. Potentially relevant studies proceeded to the eligibility stage, where full-text articles were examined against predefined inclusion criteria. Studies were excluded due to irrelevance, lack of full-text access, or methodological inadequacy. The final inclusion stage yielded studies that met all criteria and were included in the analysis, ensuring transparency, rigor, and consistency throughout the selection process.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Studies published between 2007 and 2024	Studies not directly related to gender stereotypes or bias in textbooks
Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and research reports	Non-peer-reviewed articles, editorials, and opinion papers
Studies focusing on gender representation in school textbooks, particularly English textbooks	Articles not available in full-text format
Articles published in English	Studies not conducted within formal educational contexts

Quality Appraisal of Studies

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, each selected study was assessed using a quality appraisal framework adapted from systematic review methodologies (Tranfield et al., 2003). The appraisal focused on evaluating the clarity of research objectives,

appropriateness of research design, rigor of data collection and analysis, transparency of reporting, and the overall contribution of each study to the field of gender representation in educational textbooks.

Table 2
Quality Appraisal Criteria

Appraisal Aspect	Evaluation Indicators
Clarity of research objectives	Explicit formulation of research aims and questions
Appropriateness of research design	Methodological alignment with gender-focused analysis
Data validity and reliability	Systematic data collection and analytical procedures
Transparency of reporting	Clear and verifiable presentation of findings
Scholarly contribution	Contribution to theoretical and empirical discussions on gender representation

Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction was conducted systematically by recording publication year, research location, study focus, methodology, and key findings related to gender stereotypes and bias in English language textbooks. A structured extraction form ensured consistency across studies. Data were analyzed using cross-country comparative thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, dominant forms of gender representation, and contextual variations across educational settings. The synthesis categorized findings into major thematic dimensions and compared regional patterns to provide a comprehensive global understanding of gender representation in English language textbooks.

Figure 1
PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process

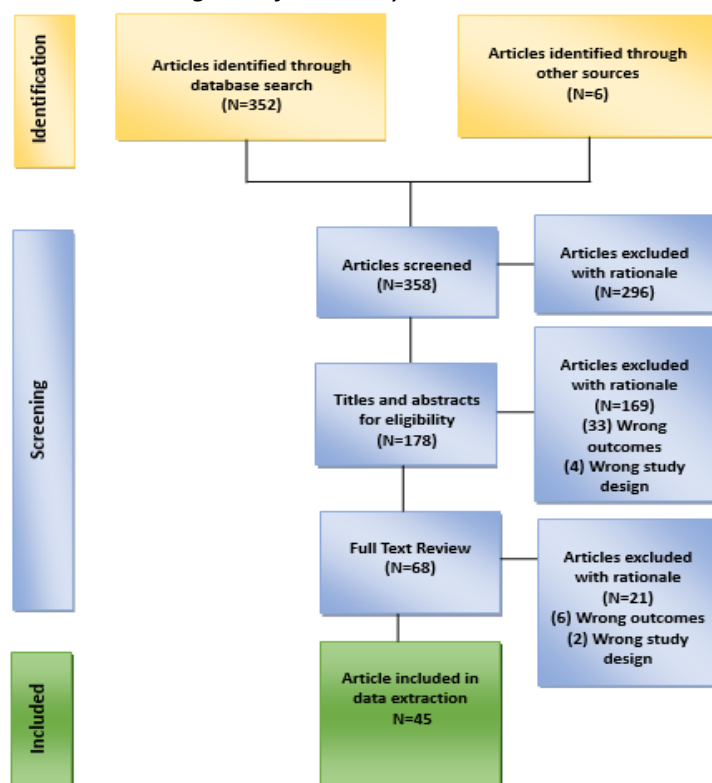


Figure 1 presents the PRISMA diagram illustrating that the total number of articles was 358. 352 which were identified through database searches and additional 6 articles were obtained from other sources. The screening identified that 296 articles did not meet the initial criteria and were excluded. The remaining 178 articles were further screened based on title and abstract to determine if any of the articles met the inclusion criteria, of which 169 articles

were excluded based on irrelevant outcome (33 articles) and irrelevant study design (4 articles). Through a series of subsequent screens, 21 more articles were excluded, 6 for irrelevant outcome and 2 for irrelevant study design. Ultimately, 45 articles met the criteria and were included in the final data extraction for the systematic review.

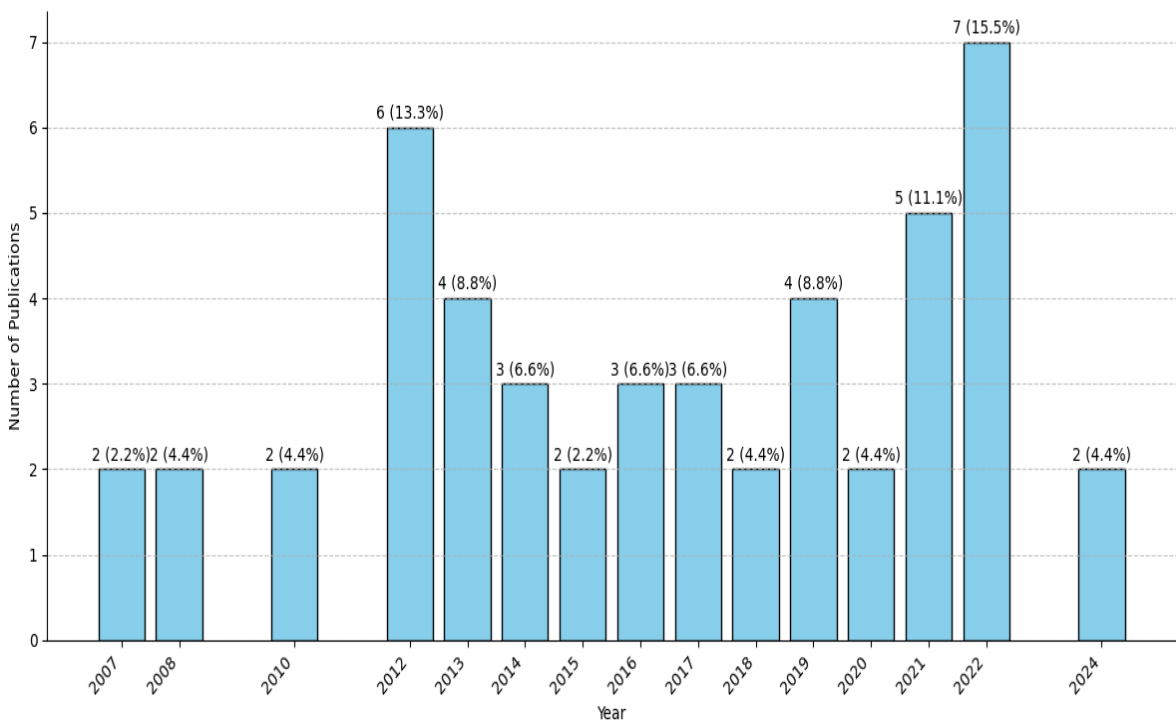
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Distribution of selected research publications per year

The data identified by the researcher indicate that the annual distribution of the 45 selected articles demonstrates an uneven pattern yet shows a gradual upward trend. In the initial period, the number of publications was very limited, for instance in 2007 and 2015, each contributing only two articles. The first peak occurred in 2012 with six articles, while the highest peak was reached in 2022 with seven articles. Subsequently, the number of publications declined again in 2024 to only two articles.

Figure 2
Year-By-Year Distribution of Selected Research Work



Source: Processed by the authors, 2024.

Figure 2 illustrates the analysis of 45 articles, revealing that the annual distribution of research on gender representation, stereotypes, and bias in English language textbooks is highly variable. In 2007 and 2015, publication output remained very low, with only two articles in each year. Slight increases were observed in 2008, 2010, 2018, and 2020, each contributing two articles, while more substantial contributions were recorded in 2013 and 2019 with four articles per year. The first peak occurred in 2012 with six articles, followed by relatively stable outputs in 2014, 2016, and 2017, each with three articles. The highest peak was reached in 2022 with seven articles, preceded by five articles in 2021. In 2024, the number of publications declined again to two articles. Overall, this trend indicates fluctuating yet gradually increasing academic attention to the topic.

Figure 3

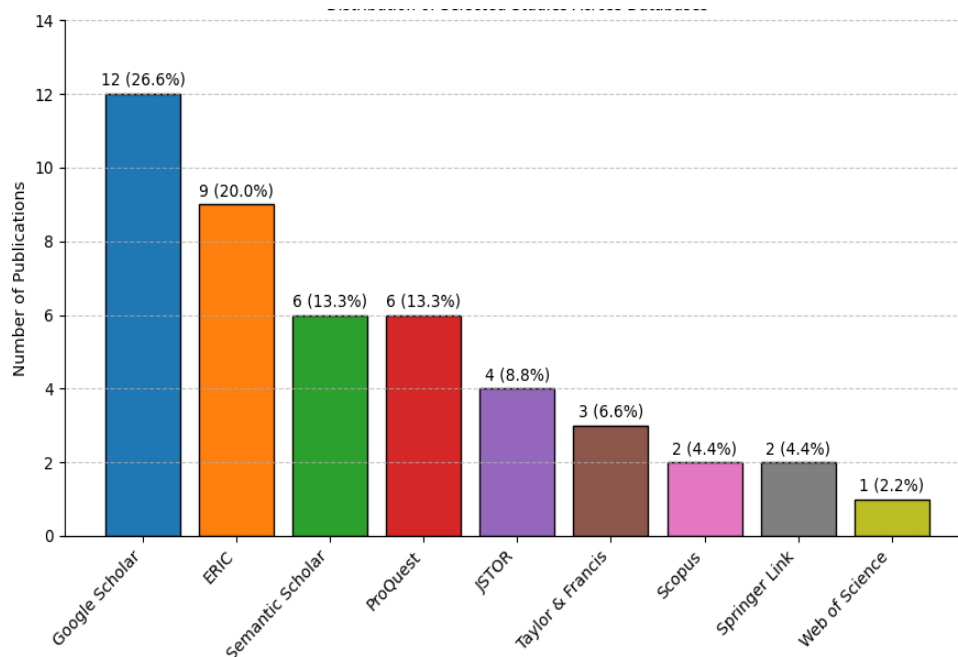
Distribution of Research Publications Across Databases

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the 45 selected studies according to their database sources. Google Scholar ranks first with 12 publications (26.6%), followed by ERIC, which contributed nine articles (20.0%). Semantic Scholar and ProQuest each accounted for six publications (13.3%), JSTOR contributed four studies (8.8%), and Taylor & Francis Online provided three articles (6.6%). Meanwhile, Scopus and Springer Link each contributed two publications (4.4%), while Web of Science recorded only one publication (2.2%). This distribution clearly demonstrates the strong dominance of Google Scholar and ERIC. This pattern indicates a potential coverage bias in the literature selection process. Therefore, these findings highlight the importance of applying search strategies across multiple databases simultaneously to ensure comprehensive literature coverage, particularly in systematic reviews of gender representation, stereotypes, and bias in English language textbooks.

Publication types and geographical distribution of selected studies

The analysis of the selected studies indicates a clear dominance of journal publications and a geographically uneven distribution of research output. Indonesia emerges as the most productive country in studies on gender representation and bias in English language textbooks.

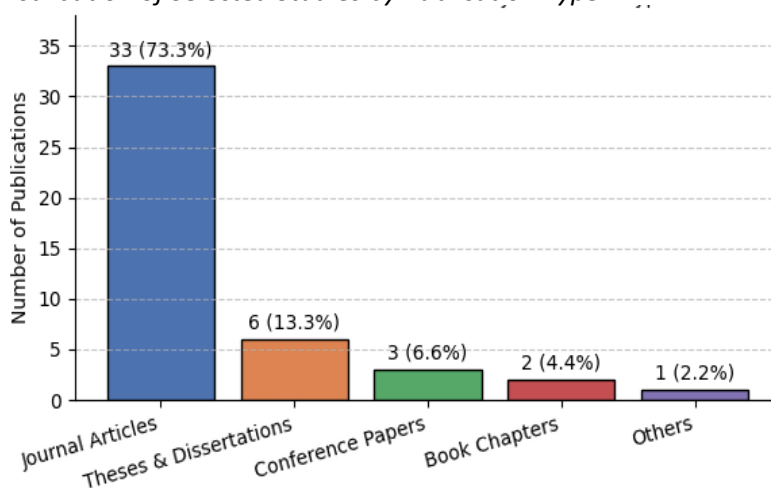
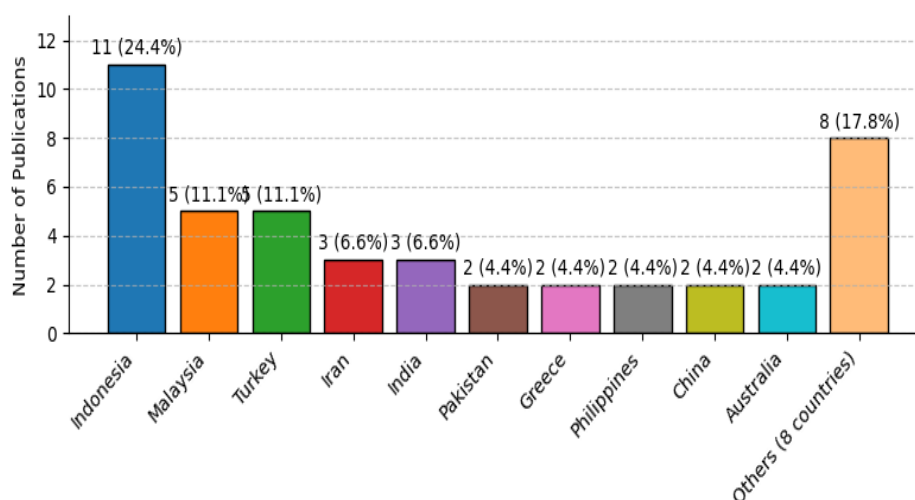
Figure 4*Distribution of Selected Studies by Publication Type*

Figure 4 presents the distribution of the selected studies by publication type. Journal articles dominate the overall corpus, with 33 publications (73.3%), indicating that scholarly discussions on gender bias and stereotypes in English language textbooks are primarily disseminated through peer-reviewed journals. Theses and dissertations make a smaller yet meaningful contribution, accounting for 6 publications (13.3%), which reflects emerging academic interest at the postgraduate level. Conference papers (3 publications; 6.6%) and book chapters (2 publications; 4.4%) represent more limited dissemination channels, while other publication types remain marginal (1 publication; 2.2%). This pattern suggests a strong reliance on journal-based scholarship, whereas alternative academic outlets are still underutilized in advancing this field of research.

Figure 5

Distribution of Publications by Country



Source: Processed by the authors, 2024.

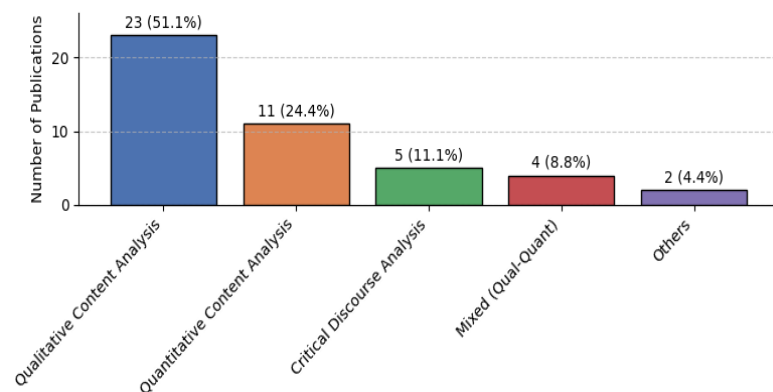
Figure 5 presents the geographical distribution of the 45 studies analysed in this literature review. Indonesia is the largest contributor, with 11 publications, representing 24.4% of the total dataset. Malaysia and Turkey follow, each contributing five studies, or 11.1%. Iran and India occupy the next position, with three publications each, equivalent to 6.7%. Pakistan, Greece, the Philippines, China, and Australia each contributed two articles, accounting for 4.4% respectively. The remaining countries—Ethiopia, Brunei, the United States, Switzerland, Lithuania, Sweden, Bangladesh, and Uganda—are each represented by only one publication, or 2.2%. Overall, this distribution pattern indicates a strong concentration of research from Indonesia, reflecting the high level of scholarly attention given to gender-related issues in Southeast Asia. Although contributions from other countries remain relatively limited, these international studies are still highly valuable because they provide comparative perspectives that enrich cross-national analysis of gender representation in textbooks across diverse cultural and educational contexts.

Distribution of research methodologies in selected studies

A review of the overall methodologies employed in the 45 selected studies reveals a strong dominance of qualitative content analysis. This tendency clearly reflects the preference of most researchers for qualitative approaches, which are considered particularly effective in exploring meaning in depth and remaining sensitive to local contexts. Through this approach, researchers can examine carefully gender representation, stereotypes, and implicit biases

embedded in English language textbooks. In addition, qualitative approaches are considered capable of supporting cross-nationally relevant analysis while accommodating the diversity of cultural, social, and educational conditions across different national contexts.

Figure 6
Distribution of Research Methodologies



Source: Processed by the authors, 2024.

Figure 6 shows a strong dominance of qualitative methodological approaches. Qualitative Content Analysis is the most widely used method, applied in 23 publications (51.1%). This is followed by Quantitative Content Analysis in 11 studies (24.4%), and Critical Discourse Analysis in 5 publications (11.1%). A combination of qualitative and quantitative content analysis is used in 4 publications (8.8%), while other methods account for only 2 studies (4.4%). Overall, these findings confirm a strong tendency toward qualitative approaches in research on gender representation in English language textbooks.

Thematic distribution of gender representation in reviewed studies

Based on the research analysis, the 45 reviewed publications can be thematically classified by grouping the studies according to their research focus and publication type. This mapping provides a comprehensive overview of the main themes of gender representation most frequently examined in English language textbooks.

Table 3
Summary of Thematic Distribution of Gender Representation

Main Theme	Category of Theme	Journal Articles	Conference Paper	Book Chapter	Thesis	Others
Interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity representations	Language & terminology representation	E8, E11, E1, E6, E18, E19, E23, E33, E34, E22, E16, E36	–	E15	E37, E12, E30	–
	Visual representation	E27, E4, E21, E32, E34, E14, E29, E31, E35, E33, E22, E25, E28, E24	E26, E9	–	E3, E13, E30, E12, E24	E33, E14
	Professional/occupational roles	E17, E18, E33, E34, E22, E30, E12, E14, E6, E19, E39	–	E20, E2	E33, E14	–

	Games and leisure activities	E10, E22, E32, E34, E21, E27, E4, E3, E13, E38, E40, E42, E44, E45	E5	E15, E7	E30, E12, E24	E14
The role of cultural context and education policy as a mediator of gender bias	Cultural and regional differences in gender representation	E29, E31, E35, E23, E41, E43	–	–	E30, E12	–
Strategies for developing gender-sensitive textbooks	Methodological and policy-oriented development studies	(included across thematic methodological discussions; not directly categorized in dataset)	–	–	–	–

Note: “E” is a code used to categorize each of the research work included in the review
Source: Processed by the authors, 2024.

Based on the data presented in Table 3, of the 45 reviewed publications, 18 studies (40%) address the portrayal of gender in linguistic and terminological aspects. A total of 25 publications (55.5%) focus on the portrayal of gender in visual representations, while 17 studies (37.7%) examine gender representation in professional, occupational, and working roles. In addition, 22 publications (48.8%) explore the portrayal of gender in games and leisure time activities. Cultural and regional differences in gender portrayal in textbooks are discussed in 8 publications (17.7%).

The analysis further indicates that most of the reviewed articles were published between 2007 and 2024, with journal articles accounting for the majority (70.4%) and the remainder comprising literature review studies (29.6%). Research on gender stereotypes and bias in textbooks emerges as the most extensively examined theme in this review. These findings suggest that the review was conducted comprehensively using recent and relevant publications. Nevertheless, the results also reveal that most of the countries examined continue to reflect gender stereotypes and biases in English language textbooks.

Three themes of gender representation in English Language textbooks

Based on the analysis of 45 reviewed publications, three main themes were identified as central patterns in research on gender representation in English textbooks. These themes reflect (1) the interaction of various dimensions of gender representation, (2) the role of cultural context and educational policies, and (3) strategies for developing more gender-sensitive textbooks. To clarify the relationships between these themes and their supporting data, the findings are summarized in the following Thematic Analysis Table.

Table 4
Gender Representation in English Textbooks

No.	Main Theme	Findings Description	Implications
1	Interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity representations	The four dimensions (language, visual elements, professions, and non-formal activities) simultaneously construct gender representation in textbooks. Visual representation is the most dominant, followed by recreational activities, language, and professional roles.	Textbook revision should be holistic across all dimensions, as gender bias is systemic rather than isolated.

2	The role of cultural context and education policy as a mediator of gender bias	Gender bias in textbooks is not universal but mediated by local cultural factors and national education policies. The concentration of studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, along with publication fluctuations, reflects sensitivity to socio-political moments.	Cross-national analysis is needed along with adaptive education policies that consider local cultural contexts. Continuous research is required beyond momentary policy or global campaigns.
3	Strategies for developing gender-sensitive textbooks	The dominance of qualitative approaches (62.2%) limits generalizability and causal inference, although it provides depth of interpretation. In addition, database and publication-type biases indicate the need for methodological and source diversification.	Key strategies: (1) Strengthening mixed-methods research; (2) multi-database literature search; (3) Holistic textbook revision approaches; (4) Diversification of academic publication sources.

Source: Processed by the authors, 2024.

Table 4 confirms that gender bias in English textbooks is systemic and multidimensional, arising from the interaction of language, visual elements, professional roles, and non-formal activities, with visual representation as the most dominant channel shaping gender stereotypes. Local cultural contexts and national education policies mediate the emergence and study of this bias, as reflected in research concentration in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey. However, fluctuations in annual publication trends suggest that scholarly attention remains episodic rather than sustained. Methodologically, the dominance of qualitative approaches provides interpretive depth but limits generalizability and causal inference. Therefore, advancing gender-sensitive education requires strengthening mixed-methods research, conducting cross-database searches, and adopting holistic textbook revision strategies to support more robust, comprehensive, and evidence-based educational policy development.

Three main findings emerge. First, visual representation most dominantly shapes gender stereotypes, followed by leisure activities, language, and professional roles. These four dimensions operate simultaneously, requiring holistic textbook revision. Second, most studies originate from Indonesia, then Malaysia and Turkey, while other countries contribute little. Publication trends show sharp fluctuations with two peaks then decline, indicating scholarly attention is reactive to specific moments rather than sustained. Local cultural contexts and educational policies mediate gender bias. Third, qualitative approaches dominate but lack generalizability and causal inference. Databases concentrate on few sources, with minimal high-repute database representation. Journal articles heavily dominate publication types, while other forms are underrepresented. Key strategies include strengthening mixed-methods, expanding multi-database searches, implementing holistic textbook revisions, and diversifying publication outputs.

Discussion

Based on a systematic review of cross-country studies on gender representation in English textbooks, three main findings were identified. First, the interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity aspects simultaneously constructs gender stereotypes in textbooks, with visual representation as the most dominant dimension. Second, cultural context and education policy are shown to mediate gender bias, as reflected in the concentration of studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, as well as fluctuations in academic attention that are responsive to specific moments. Third, strategies for developing gender-sensitive textbooks require strengthening research through a holistic approach to textbook revision and diversification of academic publication channels. Overall, gender bias in

English textbooks is systemic and multidimensional, shaped by cultural and policy contexts and dominated by visual representation; therefore, it requires a holistic approach, mixed-methods research, and diversification of databases and academic sources.

This study is relevant to global challenges concerning gender equality in education. Dominant visual representations, together with language use, depictions of occupations, and recreational activities, simultaneously shape gender stereotypes from an early age (Shamsuddin et al., 2015; Fruehwirth et al., 2024). In several countries, cultural contexts and educational policies mediate these biases, reflecting deeply entrenched patriarchal values (Cho & Jang, 2021; Hossain & Islam, 2024). Fluctuations in publication trends indicate that this issue tends to receive attention only during periods of global campaigns or curriculum reform, rather than being treated as a sustained research agenda. Yet textbooks are used daily by millions of learners, and the biases embedded within them contribute to shaping children's career aspirations, activity choices, and social perceptions (Malik & Courtney, 2011; Huang & Liu, 2024). In the digital era, textbooks that are not gender-sensitive constitute a serious obstacle to achieving equality (De la Torre-Sierra & Guichot-Reina, 2022; Tabatadze, 2023). Therefore, these findings underscore the need for a holistic strategy that includes the revision of language, visuals, occupational portrayals, and recreational representations, the strengthening of mixed-methods research, the diversification of publications, and the reform of gender-responsive policies to realise inclusive and equitable education.

Theoretically, this finding reinforces the view that textbooks function as ideological systems that shape gender construction. Language influences perceptions of gender roles, while visual elements reinforce them through symbolic repetition (Link et al., 2015; Heine et al., 2024). The simultaneous interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity dimensions dominated by visual representation indicates gender bias as a self-reinforcing closed system. Cultural factors and social norms act as moderating variables, while education policy either reinforces or sustains such bias (Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Boring, 2017). The concentration of studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, along with fluctuations in academic attention, further confirms the mediating role of culture and policy. This study proposes a new theoretical framework: a quadrant interaction model of gender representation (linguistic, visual, professional, and recreational) operating simultaneously, while also highlighting the need to strengthen mixed-methods research and diversify publications to support gender-sensitive textbook revision.

This study provides the understanding that education is never gender neutral. Textbooks that appear neutral in fact contain ideological content through the interaction of language, visual elements, professional roles, and non-formal activities, with a dominance of visual representation that simultaneously constructs gender stereotypes. This bias is often concealed in subtle language, normalized visuals, and taken-for-granted role divisions, making it more dangerous as it goes unnoticed by teachers, parents, and policymakers. The concentration of studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, along with fluctuations in academic attention, highlights the strong influence of cultural and education policy contexts. Therefore, critical reflection must become a continuous practice. Cross-country and multi-database approaches strengthened mixed-methods research, as well as diversified publications and holistic textbook revision are needed to produce more robust, generalizable findings and enable causal validation (Mancuso et al., 2023; Pickering et al., 2023).

Previous studies identified gender stereotypes in professions and recreational activities in Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey (Habib et al., 2020; Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2022), but they analyzed domains separately (Khurshid, 2016) and focused on bias without explaining mediating mechanisms (Foroutan, 2012; Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Orfan, 2023).

Earlier reviews are predominantly qualitative (Shallaita et al., 2021; Santoniccolo et al., 2023). In contrast, this study makes three contributions. First, it emphasizes the simultaneous interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity dimensions with visual representation as most dominant as a unified discourse system. Second, it demonstrates cultural context and education policy as mediating factors, reflected in study concentration in Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, and fluctuations in academic attention. Third, it highlights limited generalizability due to minimal mixed methods use, requiring holistic textbook revision and publication diversification. This study positions itself as an integrative synthesis toward systemic understanding and actionable policy recommendations.

Based on the findings, this study proposes several practical actions. First, holistic textbook revision covering language, visual elements, professional roles, and recreational content simultaneously, supported by gender impact assessment. Second, strengthening mixed-methods research to improve generalizability and causal inference, supported by funding and training programs. Third, implementing multi-database searches (Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, ProQuest) to reduce coverage bias. Fourth, diversifying academic outputs into book chapters, conference proceedings, and policy reports. Fifth, providing gender bias detection training for teachers and curriculum developers using evaluation checklists. Sixth, establishing sustainable national policies through routine gender audits in textbook procurement, accompanied by sanctions for non-compliant publishers. Seventh, fostering cross-country collaboration among Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey to build a research network for developing culturally adaptive gender-sensitive textbook models.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that gender bias in English language textbooks is systemic and multidimensional, shaped by the simultaneous interaction of linguistic, visual, professional, and non-formal activity dimensions, with visual representation as the most dominant. These four dimensions do not operate independently but form a closed system that mutually reinforces gender stereotypes from early education. Furthermore, cultural context and national education policies are shown to be important mediating factors, reflected in the concentration of studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, as well as sharp fluctuations in academic attention that respond to global campaigns or curriculum reforms rather than constituting a sustained research agenda. This condition is further exacerbated by the dominance of qualitative approaches, which limit generalizability and causal inference. Therefore, the development of gender-sensitive textbooks requires a holistic strategy, including integrated revision of all four representational dimensions, strengthening mixed-methods research, multi-database searching, and diversification of academic publication channels.

This study contributes a quadrant interaction model of gender representation (linguistic, visual, professional, and recreational), operating simultaneously as a closed ideological system and moving beyond separated domain-based analyses. Its practical contributions include seven policy recommendations: holistic textbook revision with gender impact assessment; strengthening mixed-methods research through funding and training; mandatory multi-database searching to reduce coverage bias; diversification of publications into book chapters, proceedings, and policy reports; training programs for teachers and curriculum developers on gender bias detection; integration of routine gender audits in textbook procurement with sanctions; and establishment of cross-country research networks (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey) to develop adaptive textbook models.

This study has a primary limitation in its reliance on secondary data from published literature, which does not fully capture the empirical complexity of classroom contexts. The dominance of qualitative approaches in the reviewed studies also limits the generalizability of findings and prevents the examination of causal relationships between variables. In addition, database coverage bias, due to overreliance on Google Scholar and ERIC, may exclude relevant studies indexed in high-impact databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. Future research directions include field-based studies using mixed-methods designs, more representative cross-cultural comparative studies, the development of standardized instruments for detecting gender bias, and longitudinal research to assess the long-term impact of gender-sensitive textbooks on students' perceptions and career aspirations.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ankur Nandi: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Software; Visualization; Writing Original Draft. **Tarini Halder:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Supervision; Writing Review & Editing. **Tapash Das:** Formal Analysis; Methodology; Validation; Writing Review & Editing.

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