

EVALUATING GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC POLICIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES IN ASEAN MEMBER**EVALUASI KEBIJAKAN PUBLIK YANG RESPONSIF GENDER: TINJAUAN SISTEMATIS TERHADAP IMPLEMENTASI DAN HASIL DI NEGARA ANGGOTA ASEAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation and outcomes of gender-responsive public policies across ASEAN member states. Despite progress in certain areas, significant challenges persist in policy execution and impact. The research systematically reviews gender-sensitive initiatives, highlighting factors such as socio-cultural influences, administrative mechanisms, and policy enforcement gaps. Using analytical tools like gender disaggregated expenditure incidence analysis (EIA), the study examines how public spending affects gender equality. Findings indicate that while policies promoting women's participation such as gender quotas show promise, entrenched patriarchal norms and systemic barriers hinder progress. Furthermore, gender disparities in healthcare and economic participation remain critical issues, especially during crises like COVID-19. The study emphasizes the need for cross-sectoral collaboration, inclusive policymaking, and continuous evaluation to enhance the effectiveness of gender-responsive policies in ASEAN. Strengthening institutional frameworks and addressing socio-cultural resistance are essential to achieving sustainable gender equality in the region.

Keywords: gender responsive policies, ASEAN, gender equality, public policy, systematic review, policy implementation.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengevaluasi implementasi dan hasil dari kebijakan publik yang responsif gender di negara-negara anggota ASEAN. Meskipun terdapat kemajuan di beberapa bidang, tantangan signifikan masih muncul dalam pelaksanaan dan dampak kebijakan. Penelitian ini secara sistematis meninjau berbagai inisiatif yang sensitif terhadap gender, dengan menyoroti faktor-faktor seperti pengaruh sosial budaya, mekanisme administratif, dan kesenjangan dalam penegakan kebijakan. Dengan menggunakan alat analisis seperti gender disaggregated expenditure incidence analysis (EIA), penelitian ini menelaah bagaimana pengeluaran publik mempengaruhi kesetaraan gender. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kebijakan yang mendorong partisipasi perempuan, seperti kuota gender, menunjukkan hasil yang menjanjikan, norma patriarki yang mengakar dan hambatan sistemik masih menghambat kemajuan. Selain itu, kesenjangan gender dalam bidang kesehatan dan partisipasi ekonomi tetap menjadi masalah krusial, terutama selama krisis seperti pandemi COVID-19. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kolaborasi lintas sektor, perumusan kebijakan yang inklusif, dan evaluasi berkelanjutan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas kebijakan publik yang responsif gender di kawasan ASEAN. Memperkuat kerangka kelembagaan dan mengatasi resistensi sosial-budaya menjadi langkah penting untuk mencapai kesetaraan gender yang berkelanjutan di wilayah tersebut.

Kata Kunci: kebijakan responsif gender, ASEAN, kesetaraan gender, kebijakan publik, tinjauan sistematis, implementasi kebijakan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-responsive public policies play a crucial role in achieving substantive gender equality, particularly within the ASEAN region. In public policy discourse, gender responsiveness refers to the ability of policies to recognize and address the distinct needs and

priorities of men and women. Such policies are designed to reduce gender disparities and empower women across various sectors, including health, education, the economy, and leadership. This study aims to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of gender-responsive public policies in ASEAN member states, aligning with the broader goal of enhancing women's participation and representation in society.

Over the past few decades, there has been growing recognition of the need to integrate gender perspectives into public policies. Carcel et al. highlight that the development and distribution of appropriate training resources can help overcome challenges in implementing gender-sensitive policies in the healthcare sector (Carcel et al., 2024). This investment in policy and resources has shown positive impacts, particularly in increasing women's participation in healthcare leadership. Similarly, Mousa et al. emphasize that collaboration between key stakeholders, including governments and health institutions, is essential in developing and implementing best practices to achieve gender equality (Mousa et al., 2021). A data-driven, collaborative approach is, therefore, critical in refining public policies aimed at gender equality.

In the ASEAN context, analyzing the impact of gender-responsive policies across fundamental sectors has become increasingly urgent. The adoption of principles such as gender mainstreaming, as explained by Isamu, ensures that policies and programs are designed with gender differences in mind (Isamu, 2024). This approach not only addresses gender pay gaps but also enhances women's representation in leadership roles. Thus, gender-responsive policymaking has the potential to drive structural changes in society, challenging deep-seated biases and stereotypes.

Despite the importance of evaluating the impact of public policies on men and women, this aspect is often overlooked in policy practice. Campbell and Gillespie's study underscores the value of gender-disaggregated expenditure incidence analysis (EIA) in understanding how public spending affects different genders (Campbell & Gillespie, 2017). This analytical tool is essential in determining whether public budgets and policies genuinely contribute to gender equality or inadvertently exacerbate existing disparities. Similarly, in the African context, Williams-Elegbe identifies cultural and policy barriers that hinder progress in public procurement for women-owned businesses (Williams-Elegbe, 2024).

Gender-responsive budgeting has also been implemented in several ASEAN countries, with fiscal policy and expenditure reforms serving as pivotal mechanisms in advancing gender equality. Austen et al. note that while gender-responsive expenditure analysis has been introduced in budgetary decision-making, its adoption remains limited in many nations, including Timor-Leste (Austen et al., 2013). Their findings underscore the need for advocacy and training to enhance the understanding and implementation of this analysis for more effective policy decisions.

The COVID-19 crisis has presented both opportunities and challenges in advancing gender equality through public policies. Birhanu et al. investigate how policy responses to the pandemic have affected female-led enterprises differently from male-led ones, highlighting that strong policy support in the healthcare sector played a crucial role in mitigating negative impacts on women-owned businesses (Birhanu et al., 2022). This underscores the necessity of incorporating gender-sensitive considerations in crisis responses to ensure equitable outcomes.

The success of gender-responsive policies relies on continuous monitoring and evaluation. Engeli and Mazur emphasize the importance of assessing post-adoption measures to understand the actual impact of gender equality policies on society (Engeli & Mazur, 2018). Such an approach requires not only rigorous data analysis but also active participation from communities and stakeholders to ensure that implemented policies effectively address their needs.

The sustainability of gender-responsive policy initiatives also depends on systematic data collection and analysis. Previous research has shown that support for gender-sensitive policy research, particularly in the health sector, is often inadequate, as indicated by Runnels et al.

(Runnels et al., 2014). Neglecting these critical aspects can hinder efforts to develop more inclusive and effective policies. Strengthening policy frameworks with relevant data and thorough analysis is, therefore, essential in achieving balanced outcomes for all genders.

Ultimately, gender-responsive public policies are not merely a normative requirement; they are fundamental to achieving social and economic justice across ASEAN. When public policies are designed and implemented with a deep understanding of gender-specific needs and challenges, societies can experience enhanced social, economic, and political participation. By fostering collaboration, employing effective measurement tools, and committing to gender equality, the ASEAN region can move toward a more inclusive and sustainable future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evaluation of gender-responsive public policies within the ASEAN region necessitates a systematic review of both implementation mechanisms and resulting outcomes to understand the complexities of gender equality and women's empowerment in various sectors. The existing literature indicates that ASEAN member states have been making strides towards integrating gender mainstreaming into their public policies. However, persistent challenges remain in translating policy frameworks into substantial action on the ground, thus hindering meaningful outcomes.

One of the core insights derived from the studies is the importance of leadership in promoting gender equality. Chaubey and Kuknor illustrate that women's leadership roles in ASEAN countries are often attained through a delicate balance between personal responsibilities and professional aspirations, showcasing resilience in traditionally male-dominated arenas (Chaubey & Kuknor, 2024). The authors advocate for recognizing women's capabilities as essential agents of change, crucial for driving progress in governance contexts. This finding resonates with Ahl and Marlow, who argue that essential feminine qualities, such as empathy and a service-oriented approach, contribute to more robust forms of leadership that challenge existing patriarchal norms within entrepreneurial and organizational contexts (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Furthermore, research by Chikh-Amnache and Mekhzoumi supports this notion, noting that increasing female entrepreneurship, facilitated by equal remuneration for work, can enhance women's representation and leadership within the socio-economic landscape of Southeast Asia (Chikh-Amnache & Mekhzoumi, 2023).

While the progress towards gender equality is notable, stark inequalities persist, particularly in terms of economic participation and opportunities. The Gender Inequality Index across ASEAN countries remains a significant barrier to women's labor market engagement (Firmansyah & Purnomo, 2024). Taufiqurrohman et al. highlight issues regarding inadequate legal frameworks addressing sexual harassment, which often thwart women's ability to participate fully in the workforce and advance in leadership positions (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2024). The ineffective implementation of statutory protections against workplace harassment leads to a culture of impunity, disproportionately affecting women and stifling their economic potential and leadership aspirations. This reality underscores the need for comprehensive policy reform that targets legal and institutional changes and seeks to transform societal attitudes towards gender roles and equality.

Moreover, effective integration of gender perspectives into public policies is crucial for achieving broader development goals, as highlighted by Purnama et al. through their analysis of Indonesia's National Development Plan and its approach to gender mainstreaming (Purnama et al., 2024). The findings reveal that while there is an established framework for gender mainstreaming, implementation remains inconsistent, and the impact is not as profound as intended. In conjunction with this, Alami discusses the stages of gender mainstreaming within ASEAN, revealing institutionalization efforts alongside ongoing constraints related to resources, data, and political commitment (Alami, 2017). These inadequacies reflect a broader trend

within the region where commitments to gender equality exist in policy documents without the requisite mechanisms for practical enforcement or evaluation.

In addition to these systemic challenges, social and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping women's experiences and prospects within the workforce. Firmansyah and Purnomo affirm that while attention to women's labor participation has increased, socio-economic factors, such as education and economic empowerment, continue to hinder full engagement (Firmansyah & Purnomo, 2024). The necessity for policies that not only promote women's inclusion but also economically empower them through educational and entrepreneurial opportunities cannot be overstated. This aligns with the findings of Victorino et al. that stress the importance of fostering an environment conducive to gender equality, which can catalyze further enhancements in women's social and economic status (Victorino et al., 2024).

Implementing gender-responsive policies requires adopting a comprehensive, multi-layered approach that addresses the structural, cultural, and individual barriers women face. The literature emphasizes that while ASEAN has made symbolic commitments towards gender equality, the challenge remains in operationalizing these commitments into actionable and effective policy frameworks (Kim et al., 2023). In reviewing ASEAN's gender-responsive initiatives, Kim et al. note that declarations and conferences have not always translated into substantive policy changes at the national level, thereby questioning the efficacy of regional collective actions (Kim et al., 2023).

The intersectionality of gender with other socio-political dynamics complicates the evaluation of gender-responsive public policies. The works of Yumarni and Amaratunga highlight that gender mainstreaming efforts encounter various facilitators and barriers, particularly within emergent post-disaster contexts requiring nuanced strategies to ensure gender-sensitive approaches (Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2018). Consequently, there is a call for policies to be not only inclusive but informed by comprehensive gender analysis that considers local contexts and addresses the specific needs and experiences of women.

In summary, the systematic review of gender-responsive public policies in ASEAN reveals a complex landscape characterized by both advancements and challenges. While substantial progress has been made with noteworthy policies and frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality, the translation of these initiatives into tangible outcomes is often hindered by cultural, legal, and institutional barriers. The need for systematic monitoring and evaluation of these policies remains critical to ensure their efficacy and to promote an environment where women can thrive in leadership positions. Ultimately, the challenge lies not just in creating policies but in fostering systemic change that upholds gender equality as a fundamental principle across all sectors of society, thereby advancing the broader goals of sustainable development within the ASEAN region.

3. METHODS

This study employs a systematic review approach to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of gender-responsive public policies in ASEAN member states. A systematic review enables a structured and comprehensive synthesis of existing literature, ensuring a rigorous analysis of policy frameworks, their effectiveness, and the challenges associated with their implementation. The methodology comprises the following key components:

1. Data Collection

The study utilizes secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, policy briefs, and official documents published by ASEAN bodies, international organizations, and research institutions. The data collection process follows these steps:

- a. Database Selection: Sources are retrieved from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and institutional repositories.

- b. Search Strategy: Keywords used for data retrieval include “gender-responsive public policy,” “ASEAN gender equality,” “gender mainstreaming,” and “policy impact analysis.” Boolean operators (AND, OR) are applied to refine the search.
- c. Inclusion Criteria: Studies published between 2010 and 2024, written in English, and directly related to gender-responsive policy implementation in ASEAN countries are considered.
- d. Exclusion Criteria: Articles that do not focus on ASEAN nations, lack empirical analysis, or contain outdated policy discussions are excluded.

2. Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis method is employed to assess the selected studies. The analysis involves:

- a. Thematic Categorization: Policies are grouped into themes such as gender budgeting, women’s political participation, labor market policies, and social protection programs.
- b. Evaluation Framework: The effectiveness of policies is measured using predefined indicators, including policy adoption, resource allocation, implementation mechanisms, and impact on gender equality outcomes.
- c. Comparative Analysis: Findings are compared across ASEAN nations to identify best practices, policy gaps, and areas for improvement.

3. Quality Assessment

To ensure the credibility of the selected studies, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework is applied. The quality of each study is assessed based on:

- a. Relevance to gender-responsive policy research.
- b. Robustness of research methodology (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).
- c. Validity and reliability of findings.

4. Ethical Considerations

Since this research relies on publicly available secondary data, ethical concerns related to human subjects do not apply. However, all sources are appropriately cited to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

5. Limitations

While this systematic review provides a broad perspective on gender-responsive policy implementation in ASEAN, some limitations exist:

- a. Potential Bias: The reliance on published studies may introduce publication bias, as unsuccessful or less-documented policies may not be widely reported.
- b. Data Availability: Some ASEAN nations may have limited publicly available data on gender-responsive policies, affecting the comprehensiveness of the review.

By employing this methodology, the study aims to provide a well-structured analysis of gender-responsive public policies in ASEAN, highlighting their impact, challenges, and areas for future development.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Research Studies Used in This Analysis

1. OECD (2021). Promoting Gender Equality Through Public Procurement.
This study explores how public procurement policies can be leveraged to advance gender equality. Its findings are relevant to analyzing gender-responsive governance in ASEAN.

2. Anestaki, A., Sabharwal, M., Connelly, K., & Cayer, N. (2016). Race and Gender Representation in Presidential Appointments, SES, and GS Levels During Clinton, Bush, and Obama Administrations.
This research examines gender representation in leadership positions, providing insights into the effectiveness of gender quotas in ASEAN policymaking.
3. Austen, S., Costa, M., Sharp, R., & Elson, D. (2013). Expenditure Incidence Analysis: A Gender-Responsive Budgeting Tool for Educational Expenditure in Timor-Leste?
This study evaluates gender-responsive budgeting in Timor-Leste, offering a case study on how financial policies impact gender equity across ASEAN.
4. Lim, J., Dickens, B., Choo, E., Chew, L., Koo, J., Tam, C., & Cook, A. (2020). Revealing Regional Disparities in the Transmission Potential of SARS-CoV-2 from Interventions in Southeast Asia.
This research highlights gender disparities in public health policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, relevant for assessing the effectiveness of gender-responsive crisis interventions.
5. Lindkvist, C. (2024). Gendered Mobility Strategies and Challenges to Sustainable Travel—Patriarchal Norms Controlling Women's Everyday Transportation.
This study examines the influence of patriarchal norms on women's mobility, contributing to discussions on gender-sensitive transportation policies in ASEAN.
6. Lépinard, É. (2015). From Breaking the Rule to Making the Rules: The Adoption, Entrenchment, and Diffusion of Gender Quotas in France.
This research analyzes the adoption and institutionalization of gender quotas in France, serving as a comparative framework for ASEAN's gender policies.
7. Riccucci, N., Ryzin, G., & Li, H. (2015). Representative Bureaucracy and the Willingness to Coproduce: An Experimental Study.
This study explores the impact of gender representation in bureaucracies on policy outcomes, relevant to ASEAN's public sector reforms.
8. Viswanath, S., & Mullins, L. (2020). Gender-Responsive Budgeting and the COVID-19 Pandemic Response: A Feminist Standpoint.
This research examines gender-responsive budgeting during the pandemic, offering insights into economic policy frameworks in ASEAN.

4.2. Data Collection and Sources

This study systematically reviews and analyzes gender-responsive public policies in ASEAN member states using secondary data from academic journals, government reports, and policy documents. The primary sources of data include peer-reviewed articles that focus on gender equality in public policy, budgeting, governance, and socio-economic outcomes.

4.3. Characteristics of the Selected Studies

The selected literature spans a range of topics relevant to gender-responsive policymaking, with specific attention to public procurement, gender representation, expenditure analysis, mobility strategies, and bureaucratic engagement. The key characteristics of these studies are:

- a. Timeframe: The studies range from 2013 to 2024, ensuring a combination of historical and contemporary perspectives.
- b. Geographic Scope: While some studies focus on ASEAN or Southeast Asia (e.g., Lim et al., 2020; Austen et al., 2013), others offer insights from broader global or regional contexts that provide comparative perspectives.
- c. Thematic Coverage: The selected works cover aspects such as:
 1. Gender-responsive budgeting and public finance (Austen et al., 2013; Viswanath & Mullins, 2020)

2. Gender quotas and bureaucratic representation (Anestaki et al., 2016; Lépinard, 2015)
3. Impact of socio-cultural norms on women's mobility (Lindkvist, 2024)
4. Public procurement policies promoting gender equality (OECD, 2021)

4.4. Data Analysis Methods

A qualitative synthesis approach is employed to integrate findings from the selected sources. The analytical framework consists of the following components:

- a. Thematic Analysis: Identifying recurring themes in gender-responsive policy implementation, such as institutional challenges, funding mechanisms, and enforcement gaps.
- b. Comparative Analysis: Evaluating the differences and similarities in gender policy adoption across ASEAN nations by referencing global best practices.
- c. Expenditure Incidence Analysis (EIA): Applying insights from Austen et al. (2013) to assess how public spending impacts gender equality in specific policy areas, particularly education and health.
- d. Impact Assessment of Crises on Gender Equality: Using findings from Viswanath & Mullins (2020) and Lim et al. (2020) to evaluate how external shocks (e.g., COVID-19) have influenced gender disparities in policy effectiveness.

4.5. Findings from Literature Review

The synthesis of these studies reveals key findings, including:

1. Effectiveness of Gender-Responsive Budgeting: While tools like EIA improve gender-sensitive allocations, political commitment and institutional capacity remain barriers.
2. Challenges in Gender Representation: Bureaucratic and electoral gender quotas (Lépinard, 2015; Anestaki et al., 2016) have increased representation but face resistance due to entrenched patriarchal norms.
3. Public Procurement as a Gender Equity Tool: OECD (2021) highlights the potential of procurement policies to drive gender inclusion but notes the need for enforcement mechanisms.
4. Mobility and Socio-Cultural Constraints: Lindkvist (2024) underscores how patriarchal norms restrict women's access to transportation, limiting economic opportunities.
5. Crisis Response and Gender Inequality: Lim et al. (2020) and Viswanath & Mullins (2020) illustrate how policy responses to COVID-19 exacerbated existing gender disparities in employment and social services.

The evaluation of gender-responsive public policies within the ASEAN context reveals that while progress has been made in certain aspects, significant challenges persist in their implementation and outcomes. This study aims to assess how these policies are applied and their impact on gender equality among ASEAN member states. The findings indicate that gaps in the implementation of gender-responsive policies are often driven by social, cultural, and administrative factors. Using analytical tools such as gender-disaggregated expenditure incidence analysis (EIA), public expenditure and its impact can be better evaluated, although its implementation remains limited in many countries (Austen et al., 2013).

Studies like that of Austen et al. highlight how gender-disaggregated EIA provides deep insights into the impact of public spending on education in Timor-Leste, underscoring the need for a broader application of such tools across ASEAN (Austen et al., 2013). This research emphasizes the importance of collecting gender-segregated data to ensure that public policies are not only formulated but also executed with consideration for the differing needs of men and women. Moreover, further studies suggest that despite integrating gender perspectives

into policies, collaboration between governments and civil society remains crucial in the evaluation process to overcome biases and discrimination (Anestaki et al., 2016).

Policies promoting women's participation across various sectors, particularly in leadership roles, demonstrate that initiatives such as gender quotas—when effectively implemented—can reduce gender gaps in political representation and public administration. Research by Lépinard shows that the adoption of gender quotas in France has been sustainable and could be adapted in other countries, including ASEAN members (Lépinard, 2015). This suggests that compared to traditional approaches, quota-based policies can yield more inclusive outcomes and amplify women's voices in decision-making processes.

However, despite such initiatives, resistance to change often stems from dominant patriarchal norms, which influence women's mobility and access to resources. Lindkvist notes that although Sweden has policies that create space for women, the social environment still shaped by patriarchal norms results in women feeling unsafe when using public transportation (Lindkvist, 2024). The persistence of such traditional norms can slow the successful implementation of policies designed to foster gender equality. Thus, it is essential not only to formulate robust policies but also to drive cultural shifts to ensure their sustainable and unhindered implementation.

Gender disparities in healthcare have also become more pronounced during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in differing expectations for men and women. Viswanath and Mullins discuss how the pandemic underscored the lack of female participation in decision-making related to healthcare policies and the necessity of gender-responsive budgeting to address inequalities exacerbated by global health crises (Viswanath & Mullins, 2020). This underscores the critical need for women's participation in decision-making to ensure that healthcare policies reflect diverse gender needs and realities.

From a public administration perspective, gender representation in the public sector is a key issue linked to policy inclusivity. Riccucci et al. highlight the significance of bureaucratic representation in fostering collaboration in public service delivery, demonstrating that the presence of women in policy positions can drive more responsive outcomes to community needs, particularly concerning gender-based violence (Riccucci et al., 2015). Enhancing gender representation in public bureaucracy should be a priority to create more inclusive and effective policy processes.

The challenges in implementing gender-responsive policies are also evident in public procurement, where gender-responsive procurement can serve as a tool to economically empower women. Research by the OECD recommends better management of procurement cycles to ensure that policies promote gender inclusivity and support women-owned businesses (OECD, 2021). Emphasizing effective management in this phase is crucial to accelerating female participation in the formal economy.

Based on this analysis, the successful implementation of gender-responsive policies in ASEAN requires the active engagement of all stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society organizations, and the general public. Broader discussions on societal gender norms are also necessary to ensure that policy-driven changes are well-received and not hindered by cultural and social resistance (Lim et al., 2020). Establishing multilevel communication forums and collaboration mechanisms will facilitate the articulation of women's aspirations and provide them with platforms to participate in decision-making processes.

5. CONCLUSION

The studies analyzed in this review highlight the critical role of gender-responsive policies in promoting equity across various sectors, including governance, budgeting, transportation, and public health. Research on gender representation in leadership and bureaucracy demonstrates that inclusive policymaking leads to more equitable outcomes, reinforcing the need for gender quotas and representative governance in ASEAN. Additionally,

gender-responsive budgeting studies, particularly in Timor-Leste and during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscore the importance of financial policies that address gender disparities in economic opportunities and social welfare.

Furthermore, mobility and public procurement studies reveal how deeply embedded patriarchal norms influence women's access to resources and opportunities, necessitating policy reforms that foster inclusivity. Comparative analyses, such as those on gender quotas in France, provide valuable lessons for ASEAN countries seeking to institutionalize gender equity. Collectively, these findings emphasize that effective gender-responsive policies require both structural and cultural shifts, ensuring that governance frameworks actively dismantle systemic barriers to equality.

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