



## The Hidden Struggle: A Systematic Review of Socio-Cultural Influences on Learning Difficulties Among Gifted Children in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Gifted children in Indonesia are frequently misunderstood due to socio-cultural norms that label inquisitive behaviors as attention-seeking, strange, or arrogant. These misperceptions are compounded by gender norms that pressure gifted girls to be calm and reserved, leading to hidden potential, while gifted boys are often mislabeled as naughty for their curiosity. Such dynamics contribute to significant learning difficulties like underachievement and social isolation, which are rooted in social stigma rather than cognitive deficits. A systematic literature review of 16 studies published between 2020 and 2025 was conducted to synthesize evidence on these challenges. The analysis revealed four primary themes: consistent misidentification due to a lack of teacher training; negative social perceptions leading to stereotyping and bullying; gendered expectations causing loneliness in girls and behavioral mislabeling in boys; and resulting learning difficulties, including boredom and anxiety. The evidence indicates that these learning difficulties are predominantly socially constructed, stemming from a conflict between gifted traits and cultural norms. This highlights an urgent need for culturally responsive teacher training, gender-sensitive identification protocols, and adaptive teaching strategies to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for gifted children.

**Keywords:** Gifted children; gender differences; learning difficulties; socio-cultural influence.

### ***Pergulatan Terselubung: Tinjauan Sistematis mengenai Pengaruh Sosio-Kultural terhadap Kesulitan Belajar pada Anak Berbakat di Indonesia***

**Abstrak:** Anak-anak berbakat (*gifted*) di Indonesia sering kali disalahpahami karena norma sosial-budaya yang melabeli perilaku ingin tahu sebagai tindakan mencari perhatian, aneh, atau arogan. Kesalahpahaman ini diperkuat oleh norma gender yang menuntut anak perempuan berbakat untuk bersikap tenang dan tertutup sehingga potensinya tersembunyi, sementara anak laki-laki berbakat sering dianggap nakal karena rasa ingin tahunya. Dinamika tersebut berkontribusi pada berbagai kesulitan belajar seperti *underachievement* dan isolasi sosial, yang berakar pada stigma sosial alih-alih defisit kognitif. Sebuah tinjauan literatur sistematis terhadap 16 studi yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2020 hingga 2025 dilakukan untuk mensintesis bukti mengenai tantangan tersebut. Analisis mengungkap empat tema utama: kesalahan identifikasi yang konsisten akibat kurangnya pelatihan guru; persepsi sosial negatif yang memicu stereotip dan perundungan; ekspektasi gender yang menyebabkan kesepian pada anak perempuan dan pelabelan perilaku pada anak laki-laki; serta kesulitan belajar yang muncul, termasuk kebosanan dan kecemasan. Bukti menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan belajar ini sebagian besar merupakan konstruksi sosial yang berasal dari konflik antara karakteristik anak berbakat dan norma budaya. Temuan ini menekankan perlunya pelatihan guru yang sensitif budaya, protokol identifikasi yang peka gender, serta strategi pembelajaran yang adaptif untuk menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang lebih inklusif dan suportif bagi anak-anak berbakat.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak berbakat; perbedaan gender; kesulitan belajar; pengaruh sosio-kultural.



## 1. Introduction

Giftedness, a concept characterized by high potential in intellectual, creative, or other domains, presents unique challenges within diverse educational landscapes (Milic & Simeunovic, 2022). While global research has established the distinct developmental needs of gifted learners, their manifestation and reception are profoundly shaped by local contexts (Kanapathy et al., 2022). In Indonesia, the educational system is deeply embedded in socio-cultural values that prioritize collectivism, social harmony, and hierarchical respect, often standing in contrast to the individualistic and inquiry-driven traits associated with giftedness (Tundreng, 2025).

Consequently, behaviors typical of gifted children—such as advanced vocabulary, rapid learning, relentless questioning, emotional sensitivity, and intense curiosity—are frequently misinterpreted (Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022). This misinterpretation aligns with broader findings that many teachers evaluate student behavior through normative socio-cultural expectations rather than developmental understanding (Marianty et al., 2025). As a result, high-ability behaviors are often pathologized and labeled as disruptive, arrogant (“sombong”), strange (“aneh”), or attention-seeking (“caper”) (Afnita et al., 2021).

Compounding this issue, entrenched gender norms create divergent struggles for gifted children in Indonesia. Gifted boys, whose high energy and assertiveness may defy classroom expectations of order, are more likely to be mislabeled as “nakal” (naughty) and face disciplinary action. Conversely, gifted girls are often socialized to be “kalem” (calm, modest), encouraging them to suppress intellectual curiosity and leadership potential to conform to femininity norms—leading to hidden potential, perfectionism-driven anxiety, and significant underachievement (Unal & Sak, 2022). The centrality of interpersonal expectations in Indonesian schools further exacerbates these difficulties; for example, students’ social functioning and empathy strongly influence peer acceptance (Rizqi et al., 2025), increasing the vulnerability of gifted students to peer rejection when their behaviors deviate from the norm. This phenomenon contributes to non-cognitive learning difficulties such as boredom, anxiety, and loneliness (Kanapathy et al., 2022). This misunderstanding is a primary cause of bullying, where gifted children are targeted simply for their perceived differences (Febriana et al., 2024; Unal & Sak, 2022).

While international literature extensively covers these social-emotional issues, a critical gap exists in systematically synthesizing how the unique Indonesian cultural and gender contexts shape these challenges. Existing studies in Indonesia have highlighted specific issues—such as teacher unpreparedness (Medellu et al., 2022), flawed identification processes (Amka et al., 2021; Pitaloka et al., 2025), and the need for differentiated instruction (Tundreng, 2025). However, these findings remain fragmented. This fragmentation reflects broader inconsistencies in Indonesian educational settings, where students’ academic adjustment and well-being are influenced by their self-regulated learning strategies (Arifa & Jannah, 2025), psychological resilience (Husnia et al., 2024), and the school’s capacity to provide socio-emotional support (Marianty et al., 2025). Despite these emerging insights, no unified framework has yet been proposed to explain how socio-cultural values and gender norms collectively contribute to hidden learning difficulties among gifted children.

Therefore, a systematic review is necessary to consolidate these disparate findings and build a coherent understanding of the problem. This study aims to address the following research question: *How do socio-cultural and gender factors impact learning difficulties among gifted children in Indonesia?* Through this investigation, we aim to map the current state of research, synthesize evidence on how local values contribute to hidden



learning difficulties, identify gaps in culturally grounded intervention models, and propose a framework for culturally responsive and inclusive gifted education in Indonesia.

## 2. Methods

This systematic review began by formulating the research question based on the identified gap in the literature. The study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 statement (Febriana et al., 2024; Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022).

### a. Eligibility Criteria

We determined study eligibility using the Population, Exposure, Outcome, and Study Design (PEOS) framework. Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria used for study selection.

**Table 1.**  
**Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
<b>Population</b>	Gifted, talented, or high-ability children and adolescents (aged 5-18) in the Indonesian educational context or relevant international settings.	Studies not focused on gifted populations or those outside the specified age range.
<b>Exposure</b>	Studies explicitly addressing socio-cultural factors (e.g., collectivism, teacher perception, stereotypes) and/or gender influences.	Studies not addressing socio-cultural or gender factors.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Reporting on learning difficulties, including academic underachievement, social-emotional challenges (e.g., loneliness, bullying, isolation), and behavioral mislabeling.	Studies focusing only on cognitive learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia) without a link to social factors.
<b>Study Design</b>	Peer-reviewed empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods), systematic reviews, theses, and conference proceedings published between 2020–2025.	Opinion pieces, editorials, book reviews, or non-academic publications.
<b>Language</b>	Published in English or Bahasa Indonesia.	Published in languages other than English or Bahasa Indonesia.

### b. Information Sources and Search Strategy

We conducted a comprehensive search on October 15, 2025, utilizing Google Scholar and Researchgate databases. Search terms were combined using the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR", and results were limited to publications from January 2020 to October 2025. The keywords used are detailed in Table 2.



**Table 2.**  
**Search strings**

Concept	Boolean Operator	Search Terms / Keywords
Population	-	("Gifted students" OR "Gifted Children")
Learning difficulties	AND	("Learning Difficulties" OR "Learning Problems")
Socio-cultural influence	AND	("Socio-cultural Influences" OR "Cultural Influences")
Phenomenon of interest	AND	("Misfit" OR "Bullying" OR "Misunderstood" OR "Underachiever")
Gender	AND	("Gender Norms" OR "gender differences")
Context	AND	("Indonesia")

Complete Search String:

("gifted students" OR "gifted children")

AND ("learning difficulties" OR "learning problems")

AND ("socio-cultural influences" OR "cultural influences")

AND ("misfit" OR "bullying" OR "misunderstood" OR "underachiever\*")

AND ("gender norms" OR "gender differences")

AND ("Indonesia")

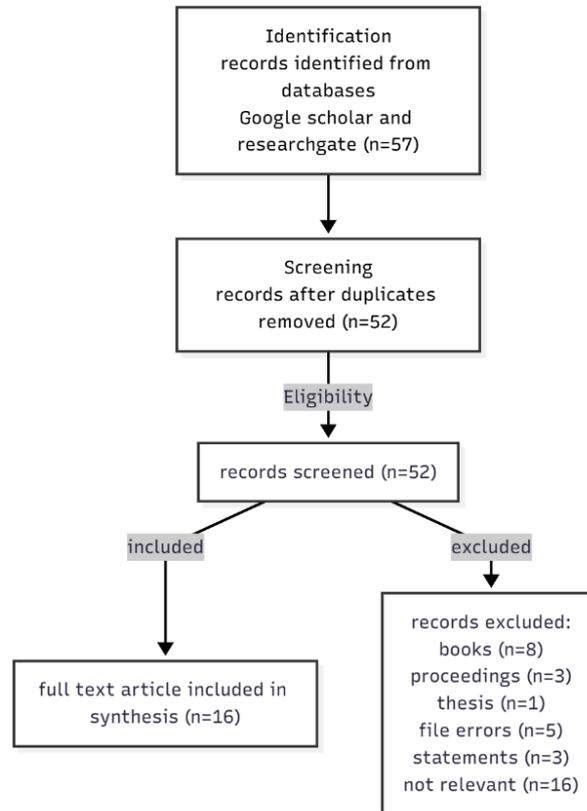
#### c. Study Selection

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 flowchart (Figure 1). We imported all records into reference management software and removed duplicates. One reviewer independently screened the titles and abstracts against the eligibility criteria. Although a single reviewer conducted the screening process, the PRISMA protocol and PEOS framework were strictly applied to ensure rigor and minimize selection bias. We then retrieved and assessed the full texts of potentially relevant articles for final inclusion. We resolved any uncertainties through discussion and consensus based on the inclusion criteria.

#### d. Data Collection and Analysis

We developed a standardized data extraction form using Microsoft Excel to collect relevant information from each included study, including author(s), year, study objective, location, methodology, sample characteristics, definition of giftedness, and key findings. We assessed the methodological quality of the included studies using an adapted Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist, as the majority of the literature was descriptive and qualitative. We employed a narrative synthesis approach, using manual thematic analysis to organize the data according to the research questions (Febriana et al., 2024; Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022).





**Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Chart 2020**

Figure 1 illustrates the study selection process. From 57 initial records, 16 studies were ultimately included in the final narrative synthesis.

### 3. Result

#### a. Study Selection and Characteristics

This systematic review included 16 studies that met the eligibility criteria. The selection process, detailed in Figure 1, began with 57 records and concluded with 16 studies for final synthesis. Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of these studies. The included studies were predominantly qualitative (n=9) or literature reviews (n=4), with a smaller number of quantitative (n=2) and mixed-methods (n=1) designs. Most research was conducted in school settings across Indonesia (Java, Sumatra), with teachers, parents, and students serving as primary informants.



**Table 3.**  
**Characteristics of included studies**

Author (s), Year	Study Aim /Objective	Location & Setting	Method	Population & Sample (N)	Definition of Giftedness	Key Findings Relevant to Review
Afnita et al., 2021	Analyze the role of character education for a gifted child.	Kerinci, Jambi; Elementary School	Qualitative Case Study	1 gifted 3rd-grade student	Advanced language skills, high egoism. Based on learning outcomes and performance, no IQ tests.	Gifted children can have personality problems (egoism, poor social skills) that hinder interaction.
Amka et al., 2021	Describe identification and learning services for gifted students in inclusive schools.	Banjarmasin; Inclusive Schools	Qualitative Descriptive	Teachers	High IQ (125-140), creativity, and task commitment.	Identification is informal; identified students do not receive special services or curriculum modifications.
Amanda et al., 2023	Review education for gifted children.	Indonesia; General	Qualitative Literature Review	N/A	N/A (Review)	Gifted children need special treatment to channel their talents; identification by teachers is key.
Febriana et al., 2024	Systematically review research on bullying in gifted children.	International (Scopus); General	Systematic Literature Review	21 articles	N/A (Review)	Gifted children are more likely to be victims of bullying due to their unique characteristics and superior cognitive functions.
Ginting & Ichan, 2021	Understand appropriate parenting patterns for gifted children.	Yogyakarta; School	Qualitative Literature Review	N/A	High IQ (130-140), Renzulli-Monks model.	Gifted children face developmental problems; they require specific parenting not comparable to normal children.
Kanapathy et al., 2022	Examine underachievement in Chemistry among gifted students.	Malaysia; Gifted Center	Mixed-Methods	63 gifted students	High-potential students in a specialized center.	Fear of failure and need for peer/teacher support are key factors in underachievement.
Khotimah & Syafril, 2024	Analyze the identification of gifted children in early childhood.	International; General	Systematic Literature Review	23 articles	N/A (Review)	Early identification is complex, involving parents and teachers, and must be holistic (cognitive, social-emotional).



Pitaloka et al., 2025	Analyze teacher and peer perceptions of gifted students.	Palembang; Elementary School	Qualitative Case Study	Teachers, peers, CIBI students	High IQ (120-140); exceptional potential.	Peers show jealousy and stereotyping, creating social challenges for gifted students.
Medellu et al., 2022	Raise teacher awareness about gifted children's needs via psychoeducation.	Jakarta, Junior High	Quantitative Pre-post Test	17 teachers	IQ of 125-140 with outstanding talents.	Teachers often lack understanding and believe gifted children do not need special treatment.
Milic & Simeunovic, 2022	Determine concordance between giftedness assessments by different stakeholders.	Bosnia & Herzegovina; Elementary	Quantitative Correlational	115 schoolchildren	Teacher nomination & score >110 on Raven's matrices.	Parents' assessments often differ from those of teachers and peers.
Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022	Explore learning and behavior problems based on parents' narratives.	Indonesia; Online Books	Qualitative Content Analysis	13 gifted children's narratives	Diagnosed by a psychologist; rapid, early development.	Uniqueness in emotion and intellect is seen as problematic by teachers/peers, leading to bullying and social difficulties.
Raehanun et al., 2025	Examine the effectiveness of a differentiated curriculum for gifted children.	Indonesia; General	Qualitative Literature Review	N/A	High intellectual capacity, rapid knowledge acquisition.	Differentiated instruction significantly enhances motivation and achievement for gifted students in inclusive settings.
Rahmawati & Ariffudin, 2023	Examine the self-concept of gifted children.	Malang; High School	Qualitative Phenomenological	3 gifted students	High IQ (121-132) and high achievement.	Gifted children have characteristics like leadership, curiosity, and sensitivity, but also experience anxiety.
Suhendri et al., 2020	Analyze teachers' attitudes towards gifted students with low SES from a Malay background.	Indonesia (Malay context), Rural	Systematic Literature Review	N/A	Superior capabilities, especially intelligence.	Most Malay teachers deny the existence of gifted children, especially from low SES backgrounds.
Tundreng, 2025	Investigate opportunities and challenges of implementing Differentiated Instruction (DI).	Indonesia; Secondary Schools	Qualitative Case Study	5 language teachers	N/A (focus on teacher practice)	DI is beneficial but challenged by time constraints, inconsistent student responsiveness, and limited parental support.
Unal & Sak, 2022	Explore loneliness experiences among gifted girls.	Turkey, Middle School	Qualitative Descriptive	4 gifted middle-school girls	Identified via testing.	Gifted girls experience exclusion and feel like "outlanders" due to peer reactions to their differences, leading to loneliness.



### b. Risk of Bias Assessment

Table 4 presents the quality appraisal of the 16 included studies using the adapted CASP checklist. Overall, the studies demonstrated methodological strengths in their clear statement of aims and appropriate research design. However, common weaknesses were found in the sampling strategy (often relying on convenience or small samples) and reflexivity (limited discussion of the researcher's role).

**Table 4**  
**Critical appraisal of included studies**

Author(s), Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Overall Quality
Afnita et al., 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Moderate
Amka et al., 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Moderate
Amanda et al., 2023	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Febriana et al., 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Ginting & Ichsan, 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Kanapathy et al., 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Khotimah & Syafril, 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Pitaloka et al., 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't Tell	Yes	Can't Tell	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Moderate
Medellu et al., 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Milic & Simeunovic, 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Raehanun et al., 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Rahmawati & Ariffudin, 2023	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Suhendri et al., 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Tundreng, 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't Tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Unal & Sak, 2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High



Notes: N/A (Not Applicable): Used for literature/systematic reviews where criteria related to participant recruitment, researcher relationships, and primary data ethics are not directly applicable. Can't Tell: Used when the publication provided insufficient information to make a clear judgment on a specific criterion. Overall Quality: Rated as High if most criteria were met with rigor, Moderate if some key criteria were unclear or partially met, and Low if significant methodological flaws were present (no studies were rated Low).

### c. Synthesis of Findings

Thematic analysis of the included studies revealed four primary themes:

#### a) Misidentification and Misunderstanding in a Collectivist Culture.

A dominant finding is the widespread misunderstanding of gifted traits within the Indonesian cultural context. Studies consistently show that behaviors like high curiosity, critical thinking, and rapid learning are often misinterpreted. Pujaningsih and Alfi (2022) found that parents' narratives described children's intellectual and emotional intensity as perceived as "problematic" in school, leading to labels of stubbornness or difficulty (Ginting & Ichsan, 2021; Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022). This is supported by Suhendri et al. (2020), who noted that many teachers, particularly in rural Malay communities, deny the existence of gifted children altogether, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Suhendri et al., 2020). The identification process itself is flawed; Amka et al. (2021) found that in inclusive schools in Banjarmasin, identification was based solely on academic performance without standardized tests, and no special services were provided afterward (Amka et al., 2021). This informal and often inaccurate identification process means many gifted children are never recognized.

#### b) The Double-Edged Sword of Gender Norms

Gender significantly mediates how giftedness is perceived and experienced. The findings align with the international study by Unal and Sak (2022), which found that gifted girls often feel like "outlanders" and experience profound loneliness due to exclusion from their peers. They may adopt strategies of "preferred solitude" as a coping mechanism after repeated social rejection (Unal & Sak, 2022). In the Indonesian context, this is exacerbated by the cultural expectation for girls to be kalem (calm and demure). This pressure can lead gifted girls to intentionally underachieve or hide their abilities to fit in. In contrast, gifted boys, who may exhibit high psychomotor energy or intellectual assertiveness, are often mislabeled as nakal (naughty) or aggressive. This mislabeling shifts the focus from their educational needs to behavioral management, leading to learning difficulties such as boredom and disengagement.

#### c) The Role of Stakeholders and the Consequences of Bullying

Teachers, peers, and parents play pivotal roles, yet a lack of awareness often leads them to perpetuate, rather than mitigate, learning difficulties (Ginting & Ichsan, 2021). Medellu et al. (2022) found that teachers often believe gifted children do not need special treatment, demonstrating a significant knowledge gap. This attitude results in a one-size-fits-all curriculum that fails to challenge gifted learners, leading to boredom and underachievement (Medellu et al., 2022). Peers frequently react with jealousy, stereotyping, and exclusion, which directly contributes to bullying (Pitaloka et al., 2025). Febriana et al. (2024) systematically



reviewed bullying and concluded that gifted children are more likely to be victims because their unique characteristics make them appear "different". The bullying often takes the form of insults related to their intelligence or appearance (Febriana et al., 2024). This social rejection leads to severe emotional consequences, including loneliness, anxiety, and low self-concept (Rahmawati & Ariffudin, 2023).

#### **d) Culturally Responsive Interventions as a Pathway Forward**

Despite the challenges, several studies point toward promising interventions. The most prominent strategy discussed is differentiated instruction (DI). Raehanun et al. (2025) and Tundreng (2025) both advocate for DI as an effective strategy to meet the needs of gifted learners in inclusive Indonesian classrooms by modifying content, process, and product (Raehanun et al., 2025; Tundreng, 2025). This approach enhances motivation and engagement by providing appropriate levels of challenge. However, its implementation is hampered by barriers such as the time required for preparation and a lack of parental support (Tundreng, 2025). Other effective interventions include psychoeducation for teachers (Medellu et al., 2022), character education (Afnita et al., 2021), and models of service such as enrichment and acceleration (Amanda et al., 2023).

#### **4. Discussion**

This systematic review confirms that the learning difficulties experienced by many gifted children in Indonesia are not inherent cognitive deficits but are largely socially constructed (Suhendri et al., 2020). The findings consistently demonstrate a fundamental conflict between the characteristic traits of giftedness—such as curiosity, creativity, and autonomy—and the prevailing socio-cultural norms in Indonesian education that favor conformity and deference to authority. This cultural mismatch, as framed by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, creates a learning environment where gifted students are misunderstood, leading to negative social, emotional, and academic outcomes, including underachievement, isolation, and diminished self-concept (Rahmawati & Ariffudin, 2023; Febriana et al., 2024; Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022).

This review's synthesis of Indonesian-specific and relevant international studies provides a novel contribution by systematically linking these cultural factors, gender norms, and social perceptions to learning difficulties. Compared to other national contexts, the Indonesian situation appears uniquely challenging due to the combination of limited resources, lack of formal identification policies, and strong collectivist norms. For instance, while gifted girls in Turkey also experience loneliness (Unal & Sak, 2022) and gifted students in Malaysia face underachievement due to fear of failure (Kanapathy et al., 2022), the Indonesian context adds a foundational layer of teacher and peer non-recognition, and even denial, of giftedness itself (Amka et al., 2021; Suhendri et al., 2020).

The findings challenge a homogenous application of Western-centric gifted models, such as Renzulli's, without cultural adaptation. The model's "task commitment" component, for example, may be stifled in a classroom where "task commitment" is misinterpreted as non-conformist or arrogant behavior (Pujaningsih & Alfi, 2022). The promotion of differentiated instruction (DI) is a positive step, but as Tundreng (2025) note, its success is contingent on overcoming practical challenges (Tundreng, 2025). This implies that for strategies like DI to be effective, they must be supported by systemic changes (Amanda et al., 2023).



**a. Implications for Practice and Policy**

The synthesis of findings points to several critical implications. First, there is an urgent need for policy reform. A national policy for gifted education in Indonesia is required to mandate and fund standardized, multi-dimensional identification protocols (Khotimah & Syafril, 2024). Second, teacher training is paramount. Pre-service and in-service professional development, such as the psychoeducation model described by Medellu et al. (2022), is necessary to reframe "problematic" gifted behaviors as strengths and equip teachers with practical, culturally responsive strategies like DI (Medellu et al., 2022; Raehanun et al., 2025). Third, school-level interventions must address the social-emotional needs of gifted children through counseling, character education (Afnita et al., 2021), and anti-bullying programs that specifically address intellectual and social differences (Febriana et al., 2024).

**b. Limitations**

This review has several limitations. First, the body of available literature, particularly empirical studies from Indonesia, is sparse. Many of the included studies are literature reviews or small-scale qualitative inquiries concentrated on the island of Java, limiting generalizability. Second, there is a lack of longitudinal research to understand the long-term impacts of socio-cultural pressures on gifted children's development. Third, the definitions of "giftedness" were inconsistent across studies, ranging from formal IQ testing to informal teacher nominations, which complicates cross-study comparisons (Amanda et al., 2023; Amka et al., 2021; Khotimah & Syafril, 2024). Finally, the screening and extraction were conducted by a single reviewer, which could introduce potential bias, though a systematic process was followed to ensure rigor.

**5. Conclusion**

This systematic review reveals that gifted children in Indonesia face a unique set of "hidden struggles" where their learning difficulties are primarily shaped by a misalignment between their innate characteristics and prevailing socio-cultural and gender norms. The cultural emphasis on conformity often leads to the misinterpretation of gifted traits as behavioral problems, while gender stereotypes create divergent pressures that can stifle the potential of both boys and girls. The resulting challenges—underachievement, social isolation, and bullying—are not reflections of inability but are outcomes of an educational environment ill-equipped to recognize and nurture their exceptional potential.

The findings underscore an urgent need for a paradigm shift in Indonesian gifted education. Based on the evidence synthesized, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. Policy: Development of a national policy that mandates equitable, multi-dimensional identification protocols for gifted students, moving beyond informal academic assessment.
- b. Practice: Widespread implementation of teacher professional development focused on culturally responsive pedagogy, particularly differentiated instruction (DI), and psychoeducation to de-stigmatize gifted traits.
- c. Future Research: A need for larger-scale, longitudinal, and geographically diverse research within Indonesia to understand the long-term impacts of these socio-cultural factors and to validate effective, culturally-adapted intervention models.

By building a more robust, context-sensitive evidence base, Indonesia can move towards an educational system that not only recognizes but truly celebrates and cultivates the potential of its most able learners, ensuring their struggles no longer remain hidden.



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