



Association Between Parental Gender-Equality Attitudes and Reported Support for Girls' Education

Evidence from a Rural Indonesian Village

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ABSTRACT

Parents' gender-equality attitudes may be associated with the support they report providing for girls' education. This article presents an exploratory reanalysis of de-identified data from a 2021 cross-sectional survey of 145 parents of school-age daughters in Waleddesa Village, Indonesia. It examined the association between parental gender-equality attitudes and reported support for girls' education. Gender-equality attitudes were measured using five Likert-type items, whereas reported educational support was measured using three Likert-type items. Spearman's rank correlation was specified as the primary analysis, with Pearson correlation and simple linear regression reported as supplementary analyses. The findings showed a positive association between parental gender-equality attitudes and reported support for girls' education (Spearman's $\rho = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$; Pearson's $r = 0.552$, $p < 0.001$). The supplementary regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 143) = 62.560$, $p < 0.001$, and accounted for 30.4% of the variation in reported support. Parents strongly endorsed the importance of education for children's futures, whereas endorsement of girls' access to higher-status careers was comparatively lower. This pattern suggests that support for education may coexist with reservations about women's future social and economic roles. The findings should be interpreted as exploratory because the data were cross-sectional, self-reported, and based on short scales with limited construct-specific internal consistency. The study contributes rural Indonesian evidence that gender-equitable parental attitudes and stronger reported support for girls' education tend to co-occur.

Keywords

Gender Equality
Girls' Education
Parental Attitudes
Reported Support
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Introduction

Gender equality in and through education is embedded in the 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 [1]. Recent global monitoring shows that gains in girls' access and attainment have not removed gendered inequalities in learning, safety, transitions, digital participation, leadership, and occupational opportunity [2]–[4]. Evidence syntheses further indicate that programmes for girls' education need to address barriers to participation, learning, and completion rather than access alone [5]. Rural settings warrant particular attention because decisions about girls' schooling are often negotiated within households and communities and may be shaped by income, distance, safety, local labour arrangements, and gendered divisions of care [5].

In this article, parental gender-equality attitudes refer to parents' stated agreement with equal treatment, equal educational provision, girls' access to higher education, and girls' occupational aspirations. Reported support for girls' education refers to parents' stated intentions to provide equal educational support, finance daughters' schooling, and support continued education. These measures represent reported intentions, not observations of completed expenditure, enrolment, attendance, or retention. In Indonesia, educational trajectories should be interpreted within wider patterns of household resources, early marriage, work and care expectations, geographic access, and local gender norms [6]–[10].

The study addresses a narrow but important gap: evidence from rural Indonesian households that links stated gender-equality attitudes with stated support for girls' education at the item and index level. Its contribution is deliberately bounded. First, the article makes the questionnaire, scoring, and data-quality checks transparent. Second, it distinguishes reported intentions from actual educational behaviour. Third, because the measures contain conceptually proximate wording, it tests whether the association persists in an exploratory sensitivity analysis that reduces direct content overlap. The analytic question is whether more gender-equitable reported attitudes co-occur with stronger reported support for daughters' education in this single-village context. This focus is relevant to inclusive and gender-transformative education approaches, which regard household, school, and community norms as interconnected sites of change [11][12]. It also responds to calls for contextually grounded evidence on how education may challenge gendered power relations [13].

A. Conceptual framework and analytic question

Social Cognitive Theory proposes reciprocal relations among personal beliefs, social environments, and behavioral expectations [14]. Parents who regard girls and boys as equally entitled to educational and occupational opportunities may therefore express more supportive intentions for daughters' schooling. Bourdieu's account of social reproduction complements this explanation by showing how habitus, capital, and routine family practice may preserve gendered expectations even when education is valued in principle [15]. Kabeer's account of gender equality further highlights that agency, access to resources, and institutional conditions are interrelated rather than reducible to attitudes alone [16]. These theories guide interpretation, but the cross-sectional data cannot determine temporal order or causal mechanisms. Accordingly, the study examines an association rather than an effect.

Material and Methods

A. Design, setting, and participants

This article reports an exploratory reanalysis of de-identified data from a cross-sectional survey collected in 2021 from parents of school-age daughters in Waledessa Village, Waled District, Cirebon Regency, Indonesia. The study population comprised 393 eligible parents, and the final sample included 145 respondents. The sample size was determined using the Isaac and Michael finite-population approach at a 5% error level (144.483, rounded to 145). The available study documentation identified simple random sampling as the sampling approach. However, the records do not include the sampling frame, selection log, response rate, exact fieldwork dates, or a record of incomplete questionnaires. Accordingly, the sampling procedure is described as documented and should be interpreted with appropriate caution.

B. Measures, questionnaire blueprint, and scoring

The study-specific questionnaire contained eight statements rated on a five-point agreement scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1), consistent with a conventional Likert-type response format [17]. Items P1-P5 formed a parental gender-equality attitude index (possible score 5-25), and P6-P8 formed a reported-support index (possible score 3-15). Table 1 presents an English translation of the original Indonesian items, their indicators, and the scoring rule. The available research documentation does not include an external source or adaptation protocol for the items, an expert-panel record, or a content-validity index. The items are therefore treated as study-specific content indicators rather than a previously validated standardised scale; formal scale development requires explicit evidence of content validity, dimensionality, and reliability [18].

Table 1. Questionnaire blueprint and scoring

Construct	Indicators	English translation of original item wording	Scoring
Parental gender-equality attitudes (P1–P5)	Equal treatment; girls’	P1 - Girls and boys should not be treated differently.	Five-point agreement scale; summed score 5–25
	occupational aspirations;	P2 - Girls may have careers or jobs of higher status than boys.	
	equal educational provision; value of education;	P3 - Girls and boys should receive equally good education.	
	girls’ access to higher education	P4 - Education is very important for children’s future.	
		P5 - Girls may pursue education as far as possible.	
Reported support for girls’ education (P6–P8)	Equal educational support;	P6 - I will provide equal education for sons and daughters.	Five-point agreement scale; summed score 3–15
	financial support; support for continued education	P7 - I will fully finance my daughter’s education.	
		P8 - I will support my daughter to pursue education as far as possible.	

Each index was calculated by summing its relevant items; no item-level values were missing in the 145 study records, and no imputation was performed. The percentage of the maximum score was calculated as $TCR = (\text{observed score} / \text{maximum possible score}) \times 100$. The descriptive classification used in this study grouped 85–100% as “very good”, 66–84% as “good”, 51–65% as “fair”, 36–50% as “low”, and 0–35% as “very low”. These labels are used only as descriptive conventions and are not validated policy or psychometric thresholds.

C. Instrument evidence and data-quality checks

A pilot item-total analysis of all eight statements was conducted with 30 parents in Waledkota, Cirebon. The item-total correlations ranged from 0.439 to 0.746 and exceeded the stated critical value of 0.361; all items were retained. The pilot analysis reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.736 for the combined eight-item questionnaire. It did not include factor analysis, content validation, or construct-specific pilot reliability. A combined reliability coefficient cannot demonstrate that two proposed indices represent distinct constructs [19]–[20]. Recalculation from the 145 study records produced $\alpha = 0.435$ for P1-P5 and $\alpha = 0.514$ for P6-P8. Alpha alone cannot establish one-dimensionality or construct validity [21]; in this case, it provides an additional reason to interpret the indices as exploratory content summaries rather than validated latent scales.

The analytic dataset contained 145 complete records across all eight items (1,160 item responses). Recalculation confirmed the item frequencies, item means, Pearson correlation, regression coefficient, F statistic, and R-squared value reported in the study analysis. One descriptive correction was identified: the perception TCR was initially reported as 85.1%, whereas the recorded five-item total is 3,066 out of 3,625 possible points, or 84.6%.

Table 2. Available measurement evidence

Measure	Items	Evidence available in study records	Pilot alpha	Main-data alpha	Interpretation
Combined questionnaire	8	Pilot item-total correlations 0.439–0.746; stated r-critical = 0.361; n = 30.0 No content-validity record or factor analysis.	0.736	0.651	Combined score is not evidence of two distinct validated constructs.
Attitude index	P1–P5	No separate content, factor, or construct-specific pilot evidence.	Not reported	0.435	Limited internal consistency; use as an exploratory content index.
Reported-support index	P6–P8	No separate content, factor, or construct-specific pilot evidence.	Not reported	0.514	Limited internal consistency; use as an exploratory content index.

D. Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics summarised the item and index scores. Because the indices were short, summed Likert-type measures with ceiling concentration and limited construct-specific internal consistency, Spearman's rho was specified as the primary estimate of monotonic association. Methodological guidance supports careful interpretation of analysed Likert-type data and avoidance of treating ordinal response formats as automatically interval-scaled [22][23]. Pearson correlation and a one-predictor ordinary least-squares (OLS) model were reported as supplementary analyses to compare association estimates. Correlation coefficients were interpreted as descriptive measures of association, not evidence of causation [24]. Pearson confidence intervals used Fisher's transformation; Spearman confidence intervals used 20,000 percentile-bootstrap resamples [25]. The study also examined residual normality and heteroscedasticity and calculated a grouped-score deviation-from-linearity test. The OLS model was reported as a secondary descriptive summary and interpreted with standard cautions about linear specification [26]. Finally, an explicitly exploratory sensitivity analysis compared a reduced P1/P2/P4 attitude set with P7 (financial support). This comparison reduces direct wording proximity to P3/P6 (equal education) and P5/P8 (education as far as possible). All tests were two-sided with $\alpha = 0.05$. No analysis is interpreted causally.

E. Ethics and data governance

The available research documentation includes institutional and local research-permission records but does not include a formal ethics approval number, ethics waiver, or preserved informed-consent record. All analyses used de-identified item responses only; age, occupation, and education fields were not analysed or reported. The absence of formal ethics and consent documentation remains a limitation, and the authors do not claim approval beyond the recorded permissions. This transparent reporting is particularly important in light of established ethical principles for research involving human participants [27].

Results and Discussion

A. Descriptive pattern

Table 3 shows that the gender-equality attitude index averaged 21.14 of 25 (SD = 2.14; 84.6% of the maximum), while reported support averaged 12.85 of 15 (SD = 1.50; 85.7%). The strongest endorsement concerned the general importance of education for children's futures (P4; M = 4.54; 90.8%). Lower endorsement was recorded for girls having higher-status careers than boys (P2; M = 3.91; 78.2%) and for non-differential treatment of girls and boys (P1; M = 3.99; 79.7%). The contrast is interpreted as a reported tension between broad support for education and less unequivocal support for girls' advancement; it is not evidence of actual educational deprivation or resource withholding.

Table 3. Item-level descriptive results (N = 145)

Index	Code	Statement (English translation)	M	SD	% maximum
Attitude	P1	Girls and boys should not be treated differently.	3.99	0.90	79.7
Attitude	P2	Girls may have careers or jobs of higher status than boys.	3.91	0.94	78.2
Attitude	P3	Girls and boys should receive equally good education.	4.43	0.65	88.6
Attitude	P4	Education is very important for children's future.	4.54	0.55	90.8
Attitude	P5	Girls may pursue education as far as possible.	4.28	0.74	85.7
Reported support	P6	I will provide equal education for sons and daughters.	4.38	0.51	87.6
Reported support	P7	I will fully finance my daughter's education.	4.25	0.85	85.0

Table 4. Composite-index descriptive results (N = 145)

Index	Possible score	Mean (SD)	Observed range	Mean/item	% Maximum	Descriptive label
Gender-equality attitude index	5–25	21.14 (2.14)	16–25	4.23	84.6%	Good*
Reported-support index	3–15	12.85 (1.50)	10–15	4.28	85.7%	Very good*

*The category labels reproduce the descriptive thresholds used in this study and are not validated benchmarks.

B. Association estimates and robustness checks

The primary rank-based estimate showed a positive association between the full attitude and reported-support indices (Spearman's $\rho = 0.600$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.468, 0.714], $p < 0.001$). The corresponding Pearson correlation was $r = 0.552$, 95% CI [0.427, 0.656], $p < 0.001$. Thus, within this sample, higher reported equality attitudes tended to co-occur with stronger reported support. The OLS equation was Reported support = 4.679 + 0.386 (Attitude); the

model accounted for 30.4% of variance in the reported-support index. However, this is a descriptive model summary, not a causal effect estimate.

Table 5. Primary, supplementary, and sensitivity association estimates

Analysis	Estimate	95% CI / model information	<i>p</i>	Interpretation
Primary: Spearman association (P1–P5 vs P6–P8)	$\rho = 0.600$	Bootstrap CI [0.468, 0.714]	< 0.001	Positive monotonic association; <u>primary estimate</u> .
Supplementary: Pearson association (P1–P5 vs P6–P8)	$r = 0.552$	Fisher CI [0.427, 0.656]	< 0.001	Positive aggregate association.
Secondary: original OLS model	$B = 0.386$; $\beta = 0.552$	$F(1,143) = 62.560$; R-squared = 0.304; adjusted R-squared = 0.299; 95% CI for B [0.290, 0.483]	< 0.001	Supplementary OLS model; descriptive only because strict linearity was not supported.
Exploratory content-overlap sensitivity (P1+P2+P4 vs P7)	$\rho = 0.294$	Bootstrap CI [0.129, 0.451]	< 0.001	Positive but smaller association after reducing direct wording overlap.

The residual-normality result was compatible with normal residuals (Kolmogorov–Smirnov = 0.055, $p = 0.200$), and the absolute-residual regression did not indicate heteroscedasticity ($B = -0.060$, $p = 0.088$). In contrast, the grouped-score deviation-from-linearity test was significant, $F(8,135) = 4.772$, $p < 0.001$. The OLS coefficient is therefore retained for transparency but is not the primary substantive inference. Importantly, the less-overlapping sensitivity comparison of P1/P2/P4 with financial support (P7) remained positive, although smaller ($\rho = 0.294$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.129, 0.451], $p < 0.001$). This does not remove all common-method or conceptual overlap, but it indicates that the full-index association is not solely dependent on the two most closely parallel item pairings.

Table 6. Diagnostic and measurement-overlap checks

Check	Result	Interpretation
Data completeness	145 complete cases; 1,160/1,160 item responses observed	No imputation or item-level case deletion.
Residual normality	Kolmogorov–Smirnov = 0.055; $p = 0.200$	The available OLS residual output did not contradict normality.
Heteroscedasticity	Absolute-residual coefficient $B = -0.060$; $p = 0.088$	The available test did not indicate heteroscedasticity at $\alpha = 0.05$.
Linearity and item overlap	Deviation-from-linearity $F(8,135) = 4.772$; $p < .001$. P3/P6 and P5/P8 have closely parallel content.	Treat OLS as supplementary; sensitivity analysis reduces, but does not eliminate, common-source/content-overlap concerns.

C. Interpretation in relation to theory and prior evidence

The positive co-occurrence of more egalitarian attitudes and stronger reported support is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights reciprocal links among beliefs, environments, and behavioral expectations [14]. It also accords with research showing that

parental beliefs, role construction, and perceived capacity can shape the forms of educational involvement parents undertake [28]. Evidence from meta-analyses indicates that parental involvement is related to educational outcomes, although the size and meaning of that relationship depend on the type of involvement and the setting [29]. A school-family-community partnership perspective likewise supports the interpretation that parental support is embedded in relationships beyond the household [30]. Nevertheless, the present data cannot establish that changing attitudes would change financial support or school continuation, because the measures were reported by the same respondent at one time point.

The descriptive pattern is arguably the study's most useful empirical insight. Parents expressed very high agreement that education matters for children's futures, while agreement was lower when the question concerned girls' higher-status careers. Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps explain why general endorsement of schooling can coexist with constrained aspirations for women's social and occupational roles [15]. Kabeer's framework similarly suggests that gender equality depends on the interaction of resources, agency, and institutional conditions rather than on attitudinal endorsement alone [16]. The Waleddesa data do not test these mechanisms. Rather, they suggest that reported support for education may be qualified when girls' aspirations are perceived to challenge established expectations about occupational status, mobility, authority, or domestic responsibility.

An Indonesian interpretation must also move beyond attitudes. National and sectoral evidence indicates that gender relations intersect with rural-urban inequality, early marriage, household resources, access barriers, and gendered expectations about care and work [6]–[10]. The 69.6% of variance not described by the reproduced OLS model should not be treated as mere error; plausible unmeasured influences include household income, parents' education, transport and school access, school quality, household composition, local norms, and daughters' own aspirations. These factors were not measured in the available dataset and should not be inferred from the present association.

The measurement caveat is central rather than peripheral to this interpretation. The pilot record supports retaining the eight statements as preliminary questionnaire content, but it does not demonstrate content validity, factor structure, or reliable separate scales. The low alphas and partial overlap between several attitude and support statements may have amplified the full-index association. These limitations are consistent with the distinction between a set of locally useful questionnaire items and a validated multi-item scale [18]–[21]. The smaller, positive sensitivity estimate should therefore be read as a robustness signal, not as validation of the instrument. Future research should pre-specify theory-based measures; separately validate attitudes, intentions, expenditure, attendance, retention, and girls' own

experiences; and examine economic and normative mechanisms with larger, multi-site and longitudinal data.

D. Policy and practical implications

The analysis does not demonstrate that an intervention would cause behavioral change, but it identifies practical targets for local dialogue. First, parent-learning sessions can address the long-term social and economic value of girls' education while discussing stereotypes about women's careers and leadership. Second, school-community partnerships can involve teachers, village officials, religious and community leaders, fathers, mothers, and girls in establishing consistent expectations for continued schooling. Third, career exposure can connect families with female role models, vocational information, and feasible pathways to secondary and higher education. Fourth, scholarships, transport support, and carefully designed conditional assistance may help convert supportive intentions into sustained participation when resources are constrained. These directions are consistent with large-scale evidence on girls' education, gender-transformative education, and school-family-community partnerships [5][12][13][30]. They should be designed as part of broader efforts to improve access and completion for marginalised learners [31] and to reduce the high social and economic costs associated with inadequate investment in girls' education [32].

Conclusion

In this sample of 145 parents, more gender-equitable reported attitudes co-occurred with stronger reported support for girls' education. The positive association was evident in both full-index rank and Pearson estimates and remained, at a smaller magnitude, in an exploratory comparison designed to reduce direct item-content overlap. Parents' strong endorsement of education in general, alongside lower endorsement of girls' higher-status careers, indicates a meaningful pattern of reported ambivalence. Because the study is cross-sectional, single-source, and based on short indices with limited construct-specific internal consistency, it does not establish causal influence, actual behaviour, or broad population generalisability. Its contribution is therefore hypothesis-generating evidence that can guide more rigorous, validated research and locally grounded gender-transformative discussion.

Limitations

This study is limited by its single-village setting, the cross-sectional design, self-reported intentions, a small number of items per proposed construct, ceiling concentration, incomplete documentation of sampling and ethics procedures, and low construct-specific internal consistency. The questionnaire did not measure actual expenditure, enrolment, attendance, retention, girls' experiences, or the household characteristics that may shape support. The same respondent completed conceptually related attitude and intention items,

creating a risk of common-method and content-overlap inflation. The non-linearity check further limits the use of the OLS coefficient as a general prediction. These constraints mean that the results should inform hypothesis generation and local discussion, not causal claims or broad population estimates.

Ethical Statement

The available study documentation records institutional and local research permissions but does not contain formal ethics approval or informed-consent documentation. This article analyses de-identified 2021 survey data only and does not claim formal ethics approval beyond the recorded permissions.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The de-identified analytical dataset is held by the research team. It is not publicly posted because the underlying research record contains demographic fields; requests for access to a de-identified analytical file should be considered only subject to appropriate authorisation and confidentiality safeguards.

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