

Research article

Determinants of Women's Education Level in West Java: Impact of Economic Conditions or Discriminative Policies?

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Abstract.

Various studies have shown that poor households with economic disruption have to choose their priorities. In such circumstances, expenses on girls' education tend to be sacrificed. On the other hand, the emergence of public policies which discriminate against women and minority groups threatens to reduce women's educational participation due to the psychological pressure and stigma they experience in educational institutions. This phenomenon is part of the reason why women's educational participation in Indonesia is lower than men. This research applied a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate and compare the impact of discriminative policies and economic conditions on women's education. Quantitative methods were conducted using a panel data regression model, while qualitative methods were conducted through content analysis. This study's results showed that: a) discriminative policies were barriers to women's rights for education; b) discriminative policies and economic variables had a significant influence on women at primary education level (elementary-junior high school) and at secondary education level (senior high school); c) regional income and expenditure had a significant effect on women's education at primary and secondary education levels, but had no effect at post-secondary (university) education level; and d) economic and discriminative policy variables had no effect on women's education at post-secondary (university) level.

Keywords: discriminatory policy, economy, women's education level

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the National Statistical Office (BPS), in 2015 and 2019 inflation rate affects the length of female schooling, while that of male has nothing to do with the inflation. Data show that a 1% increase in inflation leads to women losing nearly one year of schooling. [1] Other data show that the higher the education level the less participation rate of women. In 2015, women and men school participation rates at elementary school were 27.87% and 27.71% respectively. [2] At higher levels the women rate is lower than men's i.e. 20.93% and 21.95% for junior high school, 21.77% and 26.85% for senior high school (BPS). [2] In 2017 the percentage of women who completed senior high school was 22.25%, while that of men was 27.95%. [3]

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Based on data from National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), during 1999-2016 there are 421 discriminative policies at national and regional levels which are discriminative against women and minority groups.[4] There are four categories of discriminatory policies i.e.: criminalization of women, women's body control, limitation of religious rights and employment. [4]

West Java province consists of 9 cities and 18 regencies with a total population of 49,316,712, of whom 48.8% are women and 51.19% are men. [5] While the number of cities are far less than regencies, 72.5% of West Java's population live in cities. [5] In 2019 economic growth in West Java was 5.07%, lower than the previous year of 5.66%. [5] The decreasing growth affects education and health sectors, people's income and their spending rate. West Java's labor force was dominated by primary school graduates i.e. 40.3%, while those of university graduates was 11.5% only. [5]

In terms of education, West Java's population of 15 years old and older are dominated by senior high school graduates 31.99%, primary school graduates 29.72%, junior high school graduates 22.01% and those with no diploma was 7.84%. [6] Data on education based on sex reveal that the percentage of male senior high school graduates was 31.99%, while female graduates was 25.98%, which means there is a gap between male and female at this educational level. [6] This gap relates to underage marriage which mainly affects girls and a tendency that girls' education is sacrificed when their families face economic hardship. [6]

There is also a gap between men and women in the Human Development Index (HDI) in West Java, as shown in the table below.

The table shows that while women have a longer life expectancy rate than men, they are left

behind men in the human development index, especially in average length of schooling.

Based on these arguments, a more in-depth study is needed to know which factors are more prominent in affecting women's education in West Java. Due to this reason, this research aims to investigate whether it is economic conditions or discriminative policies which are more prominent in affecting women's education in West Java.

Limitation of this research lies in it focuses on two variables of economic condition and discriminative policy only. It does not discuss other factors which may also affect women's education in West Java.

Tabel 3.4. Angka Partisipasi Sekolah (APS) Penduduk berumur 7-18 Tahun menurut Daerah Tempat Tinggal, Jenis Kelamin, Formal/Non Formal, dan Kelompok Umur, 2020
 School Enrollment Ratio (SER) of Population Aged 7-18 Years by Type of Living Area, Sex, Formal/Non formal, And Age Group, 2019

Daerah Tempat Tinggal/Jenis Kelamin Type of Living Area/Sex	APS Formal / Formal SER			APS Formal+Non Formal / Formal+Non FormalSER		
	Kelompok Umur Age Group			Kelompok Umur Age Group		
	7-12	13-15	16-18	7-12	13-15	16-18
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Perkotaan/Urban						
Laki-Laki/Male	99.58	93.10	68.49	99.58	93.17	70.50
Perempuan/Female	99.73	96.67	67.49	99.85	96.67	69.53
Laki-laki+Perempuan/Male+Female	99.65	94.80	68.01	99.71	94.83	70.04
Perdesaan/Rural						
Laki-Laki/Male	99.60	91.58	58.96	99.60	91.88	60.18
Perempuan/Female	99.32	94.54	57.57	99.37	94.54	59.32
Laki-laki+Perempuan/Male+Female	99.46	93.09	58.26	99.49	93.24	59.75
Perkotaan+Perdesaan/Urban+Rural						
Laki-Laki/Male	99.58	92.75	66.46	99.58	92.88	68.29
Perempuan/Female	99.63	96.13	65.17	99.73	96.13	67.15
Laki-laki+Perempuan/Male+Female	99.61	94.39	65.84	99.66	94.45	67.74

Figure 1: School participation rate. (Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (Office of national statistics) West Java [6]).

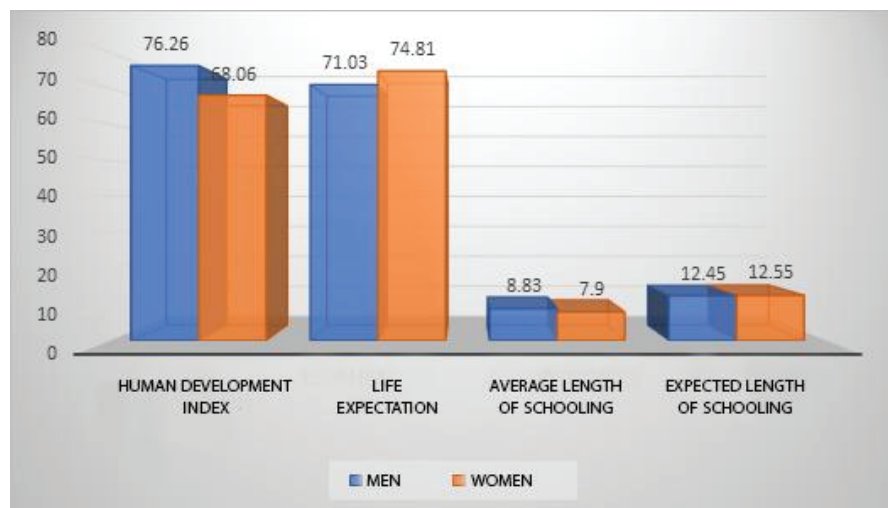


Figure 2: Human Development Index in West Java in 2019. (Source: Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia [7]).

2. METHOD

This research applies a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method aims to analyze and to compare economic and discriminative policy variables and how they affect women’s education. This research uses regression data panel as follow:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 x_{1it} + \beta_2 x_{2it} + \beta_3 x_{3it} + \beta_4 x_{4it} + \beta_5 x_{5it} + \beta_6 x_{6it} + \beta_7 x_{7it} + \beta_8 x_{8it} + \beta_9 x_{9it} + \epsilon_{it}(1)$$

γ = women education level

i = year

t = municipality/regency

x_1 = discriminatory policy

x_2 = inflation

x_3 = economic growth

x_4 = poverty level

x_5 = women's income

x_6 = women' expenses per capita

x_7 = municipality's/regency's income

x_8 = municipality's/regency's expenditure

x_9 = number of women member of parliament

This research uses panel data from 26 samples of cities and regencies in West Java during the period of 2011-2019. Estimation of parameters of multiple regression data panels is based on common effect model (CEM), fixed effect model (FEM) and random effect model (REM). In determining which model is suitable for the equation 1, Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test was conducted in providing statistical evidence, in addition to further supporting arguments.

The qualitative method uses content analysis which is according to Krippendorf *"the content analyst views data as representations not of physical events but of texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings, and must therefore be analyzed with such uses in mind"*. [8] Data could be public policy, reports, articles etc. In this research, content analysis is used to analyze content and impact of West Java's regional policies to find out if such policies are discriminatory or not.

Source of data of this research is based on the National Social and Economic Survey and monitoring results of discriminatory policies in West Java in 2011-2019.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the equation (1), Table 3 presents the statistical results of the panel data regression. The regression is also derived from REM, since the LM test presented in the appendix imply that the REM model is suitable. The LM test result can be further explained by the uses of this study sample, which are cities and regencies in West Java only. Therefore, the idiosyncratic characteristics between samples are not relatively

different. It can be assumed that the error terms are not correlated with the independent variables, which will not render the REM model inefficient. Furthermore, since this study main dependent variable is the discriminatory policy, it is not time invariant, employing FEM would render insignificant variance (time wise) of the discriminatory policy.

TABLE 1: Regression Results.

Variables	Elementary and Junior High Degree	High School Degree	Higher Education Degree
discriminatory policy	-3.959**	-7.035***	0.551
Inflation	0.754*	-0.234	-0.068
economic growth	-1.820**	-0.073	-0.07
poverty level	1.905***	0.197	0.344
women's income	4.978*	4.537*	0.948
women's expenses per capita	-0.002	-0.0024	0
regional income	4.560***	-1.68	6.01
regional expenditure	-1.03	2.540*	7.83
number of women in parliament	-0.17	-0.037	0.044
Constant	-64.312	-55.211	-34.937
	0	-0.114	-0.063
R-sq	0.4146	0.261	0.1619

Significant at alpha *0.1 **0.05 ***0.001 Source: Authors' calculation

Main findings of quantitative analysis are as follow:

1. Discriminative policies have significant impact on women education at primary education level (elementary and junior high school) (Y_1) and secondary education (senior high school) (Y_2)

Analysis of quantitative data reveals that discriminative policies have significant impact on women education at primary education and secondary education levels. Such policies have no impact on women's education at post-secondary (university) education.

This finding relates to Desmita who writes that children at state elementary and junior high schools are in the stage of socialization and adopting values imposed to them by the authorities, in this case the school where they study. [9] Obligation to wear a school uniform which is based on a certain religious perspective – as a result of regulation on women's clothing – may cause female students to feel uncomfortable.

Komnas Perempuan and West Java Advocacy Network (2018) found that Commission of Child Protection in Tasikmalaya received complaints from some female elementary

and junior high school students who were bullied and stigmatized by their teachers and friends at school because they do not wear the aforementioned school uniform. [10] Some of them involuntarily move to private schools which do not apply such a policy on school uniforms. In a wider context, if this problem remains it could threaten the government's 9 year compulsory education. [10]

1. *Economic variables have a significant impact on women's education at primary education level (elementary and junior high school) (Y_1) and secondary education level (senior high school) (Y_2).*

This finding shows that good economic variables have a positive impact on women's education at primary and secondary education levels. On the other hand, economic variables do not directly have a positive impact on women's education at post-secondary (university) education.

1. *Economic variables which have the most significant impact on primary education (Y_1) are poverty level and regional income, while those on secondary education (Y_2) are women's income.*

Economic variables that mostly affect women's education at primary education level are poverty rate, and regional income, while those at secondary education level are women's income. Inflation rate, economic growth and poverty level are macro variables that affect women's education at primary level, which means a disruption at these variables will lead to women unable to continue their education to a higher level.

1. *Women's primary (Y_1) and secondary education (Y_2) are significantly affected by both economic conditions and discriminative policies (x_1).*

This finding is supported by Pratikto, et. al. (2020) who found that economic disruption at micro and macro levels have a great impact on women's education in West Java . [11]

1. *Number of women in parliament (x_9) does not have a significant impact on women's education.*

This finding relate to factors such as: 1) the number of women members of regional parliament still low and there are gaps among regions; 2) women members of regional parliament do not occupy strategic position and unable to make strategic decision; 3) some women member of parliament are those with familial connection with political

elites or because they are popular public figures and have strong financial background, to some extent these background compromise their quality.

1. *Regional income (x_7) and expenses (x_8) have a significant impact on women's primary (Y_1) and secondary education only (Y_2).*

Based on quantitative data, regional income and expenses have a significant impact on women's education at primary and secondary levels. This finding is in line with Jolianis (2015) who did a research in West Sumatra where increased regional budgets on education improve school participation rate in cities and regencies across West Sumatra. [12] Meanwhile, data from the Office of National Statistics also reveal that an increased budget in the education sector has a positive impact on improvement in education quality and gross school participation rate.

1. *Women's education at post-secondary (university) education level (y_3) is not affected by economic variables and discriminative policies.*

This finding confirms the notion that there are other factors that affect women to be able or unable to access post-secondary education apart from economic conditions and discriminatory policies. How family and society perceive university education for women is one thing, mother's education level is another thing as well as geographical location.

Main findings of qualitative analysis are as follow:

1. *Women's education and policies on clothing (body control)*

During the period of 2008-2019 there are 14 out of 108 discriminatory policies in West Java which rule out how female students dress. According to the West Java advocacy network and Komnas Perempuan policies on how a woman should dress based on interpretation of certain religious teachings only. [13] These policies lead to women experience discrimination especially on freedom of expression. These policies also restrict them to fulfill their human rights.

Impacts of the policies are female students who do not dress as required by the policies are bullied at schools and stigmatized which causes them stress and lead to students from minority groups to "drop out" and being "excluded" from state schools which are supposed to accommodate students from all religions. In long terms this may affect the Gender Development Index especially on the average length of schooling.

1. *Women's education and policies on prostitution and night curfew*

During the period of 2008-2019 there are 16 out of 108 discriminative policies in West Java which are within the category of criminalizing women because of policies on prostitution and night curfew. Arief and Muladi as quoted by Yentriyani et. al. defines criminalization as a process to make an act which previously was not a criminal act becomes a criminal one. [14] Meanwhile Komnas Perempuan defines criminalization against women as a restriction of women's protection and legal certainty as (some rules) criminalize or punish them. [14] Criminalization applies regardless of a policy intentionally or unintentionally aimed to criminalize women or other groups. [14]

While on surface policies on prostitution and night curfews seems to have a good intention to protect women and the society from negative impacts of prostitution and the danger of being out at night, in fact these policies stigmatize women who have nothing to do with prostitution, stigmatize them as a bad woman and punish them simply because they are being out on their own at night due to for example work or study. While the policies do not explicitly mention "women", in practice women are the main target as the term "prostitutes" almost automatically refers to them. Social construction on women also dictates them to be at home after dark.

1. *Women's education and bylaws on religion, morality, freedom of religion*

During the period of 2008-2019 there are 72 out of 108 discriminatory policies in West Java which concern with morality and limits freedom of religion. Some of these policies restrict religious minority groups such Ahmadiyah, Syiah, Protestantism to worship.

Such policies among others require students to be able to read or memorize some verses of a holy book of a certain religion or to require female students to wear a school uniform which is based on a certain religion. These make students from other religions feel excluded. Female students who do not follow the rule on the aforementioned school uniform are also excluded, stigmatized and bullied.

The above research findings show that economic conditions and discriminative policies affect women's education in West Java, especially at primary and secondary education levels. Women's education at post-secondary (university) level is not affected by economic conditions and discriminative policies.

4. Conclusion

Based on the main findings as previously discussed, this study concludes:

1. A policy is discriminative because of the following factors: 1) It is against the principle of non-discrimination, substantive equality and state's responsibility; b) It

is against juridical principle and potentially violate constitutional rights as stipulated in Indonesian constitution; c) It does not acknowledge similar rights, opportunities and advantages to all citizens regardless of race, religion, ethnicity and sex.

2. Discriminative policy limits women's access to education, employment and other basic services as well as causing psychological pressure and stigma. The two last factors lead to some girls involuntarily stop studying or move to other schools. Discriminative policy also threatens women's sustainability to earn income. Nonetheless, the impact of discriminatory policy diverse among women of different social-economic background, including educational level, religion and place of residence. Women from poor families and minority groups face greater impact of such policy than those from a better social and economic background.
3. Discriminative policy has a significant impact on women to complete their primary and secondary education. Psychological pressure they face at school leads some women to stop studying.
4. Economic variables - which include economic growth, inflation rate and poverty – have a significant impact on women's education at primary and secondary education. Women's income in the family has a significant impact in supporting daughters to complete secondary education as most of the income are spent to finance children's education. On the other hand, qualitative findings indicate that discriminatory policy lead to some women lost their job which may further reduce their opportunity to earn income, increase poverty and affect daughters' education.
5. Regional income and expenses have a significant impact on women's education at primary and secondary level, but no impact at post-secondary level. Regional government's budget covers free education at primary and secondary education only.
6. Post-secondary (university) education is not impacted by discriminative policy and economic variables. Improvement in economic conditions does not automatically enable a woman to access university education. Discriminative policy has no direct impact on female university students. Other factors are more likely to affect a woman to access or not access university education, such as strong patriarchal culture that prioritizes men over women to study at university, parents' education background, personal motivation, geographical condition, gender-responsive policy, learning system, marital status etc.

7. Women representatives in parliament have no positive impact on women's education at primary education. There has been relatively low representation of women in parliament, even fewer of those who occupy strategic positions and understand gender issues.
8. Discriminative policy has a great impact on women's education at secondary level, while that at primary level is affected mostly by regional income.

It is expected that this research provides newness and gives contribution to science. More specifically, such newness lies in the fact that to the best of the authors' knowledge there are not yet many studies which compare economic conditions and discriminative policies on one hand and women's education on the other hand.

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