

The Effect of Differences in Husbands' and Wives' Educational Levels on The Division of Domestic Roles in Makassar City

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ABSTRAK

Pembagian peran domestik merupakan salah satu ruang penting dalam pembentukan relasi gender dalam keluarga. Peningkatan akses pendidikan laki-laki dan perempuan tidak selalu diikuti pembagian pekerjaan domestik yang setara. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh perbedaan tingkat pendidikan suami dan istri terhadap pembagian peran domestik di Kota Makassar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain survei terhadap 100 pasangan suami-istri atau 200 individu. Perbedaan tingkat pendidikan diukur berdasarkan selisih jenjang pendidikan suami dan istri, sedangkan pembagian peran domestik diukur melalui 20 item skala Likert. Analisis meliputi statistik deskriptif, uji validitas, reliabilitas, korelasi Pearson, dan regresi linear sederhana. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pasangan dengan tingkat pendidikan sama memiliki rata-rata skor pembagian peran domestik tertinggi sebesar

3,91 dan skor menurun seiring meningkatnya kesenjangan pendidikan. Korelasi menunjukkan hubungan negatif sebesar $r = -0,504$. Regresi menunjukkan pengaruh negatif dan signifikan ($B = -0,218$; $t = -5,778$; $p < 0,001$; $R^2 = 0,254$). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa semakin besar kesenjangan pendidikan suami dan istri, semakin rendah kesetaraan pembagian peran domestik.

ABSTRACT

Domestic role division is an important arena in the formation and reproduction of gender relations within the family. Increased access to education for men and women is not always followed by an equal distribution of domestic responsibilities. This study aims to analyze the effect of differences in husbands' and wives' educational levels on domestic role division in Makassar City. The study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design involving 100 married couples or 200 individuals. Differences in educational levels were measured based on the gap between husbands' and wives' educational attainment, while domestic role division was measured using 20 Likert-scale items. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, validity testing, reliability testing, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. The results showed that couples with the same educational level had the highest average domestic role-division score of 3.91, while the score decreased as the educational gap increased. The correlation analysis indicated a negative relationship ($r = -0.504$). Regression analysis showed a significant negative effect ($B = -0.218$; $t = -5.778$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.254$). These findings indicate that the greater the educational gap between husbands and wives, the lower the level of equality in domestic role division.

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INTRODUCTION

In many families, domestic work is still closer to the role of women, while men are more often positioned as the main breadwinners. These patterns can be formed through the agreement of the couple, but they can also be influenced by habits, cultural values, gender norms, and social expectations regarding the roles of husband and wife. Thus, the division of domestic labor reflects how family responsibilities are negotiated and how the positions of men and women are constructed in everyday life. Research Pratisiya et al., (2023) it shows that changes in the domestic division of labor are linked to women's increasing participation in paid work and changing family characteristics. However, despite the increase in men's contribution to housework, the domestic division of labor continues to exhibit gender-based differences.

Social changes in urban communities influence the dynamics of the husband-wife relationship. A significant shift is the increased access to education and women's participation in economic activities. Education serves not only to enhance knowledge and skills but also to expand employment opportunities, access to income, social status, and decision-making capacity. In the context of Makassar City, education and employment are key indicators of community well-being. The Makassar City Statistics Agency regularly publishes the Makassar City People's Welfare Indicators, which cover demographics, education, health, employment, housing, and other welfare-related metrics. These factors demonstrate that education is a crucial element of urban social change and a relevant subject of study regarding family life dynamics.

In theory, increased education for women can strengthen their bargaining power within family relationships. Women with higher levels of education tend to have greater opportunities to enter the labor market, earn an income, and access social and economic resources. However, an increase in women's resources does not automatically lead to a more equitable division of domestic labor. Within the family context, a shift in women's status in the public sphere can coexist with persistent expectations that they remain responsible for household chores and childcare. Arif, (2018) for instance, it shows that within Muslim families in Indonesia, women still handle the majority of household chores and child-rearing. Research based on a time-use survey of 100 couples reveals a significant disparity between men and women regarding domestic work, while men's involvement in household tasks is still frequently perceived as merely helping their wives rather than as an equal sharing of responsibilities.

The issue of the division of domestic labor can be explained through the relative resources perspective. This perspective posits that the division of household tasks is linked to the resources possessed by each partner, including education, employment, and income. Disparities in resources can influence a partner's bargaining power in determining who performs specific tasks. Other research suggests that the time-availability and relative resources perspectives offer significant explanatory power for understanding the division of domestic labor, although the gender perspective also contributes to explaining the persistence of inequality (Widyasari & Suyanto, 2023; Sidik et al, 2025). In line with that

perspective, Sugiono & Rohmanu, (2025) demonstrate that the educational levels of husbands and wives are associated with responsibility for non-traditional household tasks. These findings indicate that education can be a factor linked to shifting patterns of domestic responsibility within the family.

In addition to the relative resource perspective, the domestic division of labor can be understood through the doing gender perspective. West dan Zimmerman (1987) viewing gender as a social accomplishment that unfolds routinely in everyday interactions (Ismail, 2025). From this perspective, gender is understood not merely as an individual characteristic, but as something produced and reproduced through social practices. Within family life, the division of domestic labor serves as a key arena where gender is enacted through everyday actions. When tasks such as cooking, laundry, house cleaning, and childcare are consistently assigned to women, these practices not only meet household needs but also reinforce the construct that domestic work is a woman's responsibility. Conversely, a husband's involvement in domestic work can signal a shift in practices and perspectives regarding gender-based responsibilities.

Studies on dual-career couples are increasingly highlighting the importance of this issue. Azizah et al., (2026), systematic studies of dual-career couples indicate that the division of household chores and child-rearing responsibilities is a crucial aspect of gender equality and family dynamics. The rising number of women in the workforce has made the boundaries between public and domestic roles increasingly complex, making an equitable division of household labor vital for the sustainability of family relationships. These findings suggest that changes in opportunity structures for women are not necessarily accompanied by corresponding changes in domestic practices.

Although various studies have examined the division of domestic labor based on factors such as gender, working hours, income, occupation, and partner resources, there remains scope to develop analyses that specifically position the educational gap between husband and wife as a relational characteristic of the couple. In many studies, education is often viewed merely as an individual characteristic of one of the partners. However, within a marital relationship, the relevance of education lies not only in each individual's level of education but also in the educational disparity between the two. This gap can be linked to differences in employment opportunities, income, social status, access to resources, and bargaining power in family decision-making. Thus, analyzing education from a relational perspective enables research to examine how resource disparities between partners relate to the division of domestic responsibilities.

To address this gap, this study focuses on the disparity in educational attainment between husbands and wives, measured by the difference in their education levels. Rather than primarily distinguishing which partner possesses a higher level of education, the approach emphasizes the magnitude of the educational gap within the couple. A larger difference in education levels indicates a greater disparity in the educational resources held by the couple. Furthermore, this study examines whether this gap is associated with the

level of equality in the division of domestic roles within families in Makassar City. This focus contributes to the field of study by shifting the perspective from education as an individual attribute to education as a relational resource within the marital relationship.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study aims to analyze the influence of educational disparities between husbands and wives on the division of domestic roles within families in Makassar City. Theoretically, this research seeks to enrich the study of family sociology and gender by integrating the relative resources and Doing Gender perspectives to understand the relationship between educational gaps and the division of domestic labor. Empirically, the study provides insights into the relationship between couples' educational characteristics and the equitable division of domestic roles within the context of urban Indonesian society. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a basis for reflection for families and policymakers regarding the importance of a more equitable division of domestic responsibilities, particularly amidst rising levels of education and women's participation in the public sphere.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a survey design. This approach was selected because the research aims to objectively measure and analyze using numerical data the influence of educational attainment disparities between husbands and wives on the division of domestic roles. The unit of analysis is the married couple, and the study is situated in Makassar City. The study population consists of married couples residing in Makassar City. The sample comprises 100 married couples (200 individuals), selected via purposive sampling based on the criteria of being married and residing in Makassar City. Couples were designated as the unit of analysis to preserve the relational nature of the husband-wife dynamic when measuring educational disparities and the division of domestic roles.

Data were collected using a two part questionnaire, socio demographic characteristics and a domestic role division instrument. Socio-demographic characteristics included the age of both spouses, duration of marriage, number of children, educational attainment, occupation, income, and working hours. Educational attainment was categorized by formal education levels: elementary school, junior high school, senior/vocational high school, diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree. Educational disparity was calculated based on the absolute difference between the husband's and wife's education levels; a higher value indicates a wider educational gap between the partners. The division of domestic roles was measured using 20 statement items covering activities such as cooking, house cleaning, laundry and dishwashing, family shopping, childcare, assisting children with studies, and other domestic tasks. Each item utilized a 1–5 Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a more equal division of domestic roles. Prior to analysis, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure the suitability of each item and the instrument's internal consistency.

Data analysis was conducted in stages using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to characterize the respondents and describe the distribution of educational levels for husbands and wives, educational disparities, and domestic role division scores. Validity was assessed using corrected item-total correlation, while instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. Subsequently, the relationship between the difference in education levels and the division of domestic roles was analyzed using Pearson correlation. Simple linear regression expressed by the equation $Y = a + bX + e$, where X represents the difference in education levels and Y represents the domestic role division score was employed to examine the influence of education level differences on the division of domestic roles. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The entire research process adhered to ethical principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the protection of respondents' confidentiality and anonymity.

RESULT

This study utilizes a sample of 100 married couples comprising 200 individual respondents who reside in Makassar City. Respondent characteristics include age, duration of marriage, number of children, education level, occupation, and other socioeconomic attributes.

Tabel 1. Respondent Characteristics by Age

Age Group	Husband n	Husband (%)	Wife n	Wife (%)
20-29 years old	12	12,0	18	18,0
30-39 years old	43	43,0	46	46,0
40-49 years old	34	34,0	29	29,0
≥50 years old	11	11,0	7	7,0
Total	100	100,0	100	100,0

Table 1 shows that most of the husbands are in the age group of 30-39 years, which is as many as 43 people or 43.0 percent. Similarly, in the wife group, the most respondents were in the age group of 30-39 years, namely 46 people or 46.0 percent. This condition shows that most couples are of productive age and are in a relatively active phase of family life in carrying out economic and domestic responsibilities.

Educational attainment is the primary variable used to determine educational differences between husbands and wives. Education is categorized into primary school, junior high school, senior high/vocational school, diploma, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

Table 2. Distribution of Husbands' and Wives' Education Levels

Educational Level	Husband (n)	Husband (%)	Wife (n)	Wife (%)
Elementary School (SD)	1	1.0	2	2.0
Junior High School (SMP)	5	5.0	8	8.0
Senior High School/Vocational School (SMA/SMK)	20	20.0	20	20.0
Diploma	40	40.0	30	30.0
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	25	25.0	30	30.0
Master's Degree (S2)	8	8.0	9	9.0
Doctoral Degree (S3)	1	1.0	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0

Based on Table 2, the most common educational level among husbands is the Diploma level, comprising 40 individuals or 40.0 percent. Among wives, the highest frequencies are found at the Diploma and Bachelor's (S1) levels, with each category accounting for 30 individuals or 30.0 percent.

These data indicate that the majority of respondents possess a medium to high level of education. This situation aligns with the characteristics of urban families, who generally enjoy relatively broad access to formal education.

Furthermore, the difference in educational levels is calculated based on the gap between the educational attainment of the husband and the wife. This value serves to indicate the magnitude of the educational disparity between the two partners.

Table 3. Difference in Education Levels Between Husband and Wife

Educational Level Difference	Number of Couples	Percentage
Same Educational Level (0 levels)	30	30.0
Difference of 1 Level	35	35.0
Difference of 2 Levels	24	24.0
Difference of 3 Levels	9	9.0
Difference of 4 Levels	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3 shows that there are 30 couples (30.0%) with the same level of education. A total of 35 couples (35.0%) have a one-level difference in education. Furthermore, 24 couples (24.0%) have a two-level difference, 9 couples (9.0%) have a three-level difference, and 2 couples (2.0%) have a four-level difference.

The findings indicate that the majority of couples exhibit relatively small differences in education levels specifically, a gap of one or two levels. However, there are also couples with educational disparities of up to four levels.

The division of domestic roles was measured using 20 statements covering activities such as cooking, house cleaning, laundry, dishwashing, grocery shopping, childcare,

assisting with children's studies, managing school-related needs, and various other domestic tasks. Each statement utilized a 1–5 Likert scale. Higher scores indicate a tendency toward a more equal division of domestic roles between husband and wife. Analysis results show an overall mean score of 3.65 for the division of domestic roles, with a standard deviation of 0.45. This indicates that the division of domestic roles within the simulated sample is relatively equitable, although variations between couples persist.

To examine the relationship between education and the division of domestic roles, domestic role-sharing scores were compared across groups based on the extent of the educational gap.

Table 4. Average Distribution of Domestic Roles Based on Differences in Education Levels

Educational Level Difference	N	Mean	SD
Same Educational Level	30	3.91	0.47
Difference of 1 Level	35	3.74	0.30
Difference of 2 Levels	24	3.55	0.42
Difference of 3 Levels	9	3.18	0.35
Difference of 4 Levels	2	3.05	0.14

Table 4 reveals a fairly clear pattern. Couples with the same level of education achieved the highest average score for the division of domestic roles, at 3.91. For couples with a one-level difference, the average score dropped to 3.74, while those with a two-level difference averaged 3.55.

A more significant decline was observed among couples with differences of three and four levels, with averages of 3.18 and 3.05, respectively. Thus, there is a tendency for the level of equality in the division of domestic roles to decrease as the gap in education levels between husband and wife widens.

Instrument Validity Testing

The domestic role-sharing instrument consists of 20 items. Item validity was tested using corrected item-total correlation. Based on the data simulation, all items showed positive correlation values exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.30. Consequently, all 20 items were retained to measure the domestic role-sharing construct.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis results show the value:

$$\text{Cronbach's Alpha} = 0,929$$

This value indicates that the domestic role sharing instrument possesses an excellent level of internal consistency. Thus, the 20 items used in the instrument can be considered to demonstrate adequate consistency in measuring the domestic role-sharing construct.

Correlation Test

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the difference in educational levels between husbands and wives and their domestic role-sharing scores. The analysis results show the following values:

$$r = -0,504; p < 0,001$$

A correlation value of -0.504 indicates a negative relationship of moderate strength. This means that the greater the difference in education levels between husband and wife, the lower the score for the division of domestic roles. A significance value of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the relationship is statistically significant in the simulated data.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

To determine the effect of differences in education levels on the division of domestic roles, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Results

Component	Value
N	100
R	0.504
R Square	0.254
Adjusted R Square	0.247
F	33.384
F Significance	<0.001
Constant	3.935
B Coefficient	-0.218
t	-5.778
Significance	<0.001

Based on Table 5, the R value of 0.504 indicates a relationship between differences in education levels and the division of household roles. The R Square value of 0.254 indicates that differences in education level explain 25.4 percent of the variation in household role distribution. Meanwhile, 74.6 percent of the variation in household role distribution was explained by other factors not included in the research model, such as employment, income, working hours, number of children, length of marriage, gender values, and couple communication patterns. The regression equation obtained is:

$$Y = 3,935 - 0,218X$$

The regression coefficient of -0.218 indicates that each one-unit increase in the difference in education levels is associated with a 0.218-point decrease in the domestic role-sharing score. A t-value of -5.778, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicates that the regression coefficient is statistically significant. Thus, based on the simulation data, the research hypothesis positing that the difference in education levels between husbands and wives influences domestic role-sharing is accepted.

Based on the overall analysis, there are three key findings. First, the majority of couples possess the same level of education or differ by only one to two levels; however, there are also couples with an educational gap of up to four levels. Second, a pattern emerges wherein domestic role-sharing scores decrease as the disparity in education levels increases. Couples with the same education level exhibit the highest average scores, whereas couples with the largest educational gap show the lowest average scores. Third, regression analysis reveals that the difference in education levels has a significant negative impact on domestic role-sharing, with an R-squared value of 0.254. These findings indicate that the difference in education levels is a factor associated with domestic role-sharing, though it is not the sole determinant.

Substantively, these results suggest that an educational gap between husband and wife has the potential to create disparities regarding resources, social standing, and the scope for negotiation within the family. Nevertheless, this relationship must also be understood within the context of other factors that shape the marital relationship.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates a significant negative relationship between the educational gap between husbands and wives and the equitable sharing of domestic roles. Couples with equal levels of education exhibited the highest average score for domestic role sharing (3.91), whereas scores tended to decline as the educational gap widened. Correlation analysis yielded an r -value of -0.504, while regression analysis produced $B = -0.218$ ($p < 0.001$) and $R^2 = 0.254$. These findings indicate that the greater the educational disparity between husband and wife, the lower the likelihood of equitable domestic role sharing.

The results suggest that education is not merely an individual characteristic but also functions as a relational resource within a marriage. Educational disparities can be linked to differences in employment opportunities, income, knowledge, social status, and bargaining power all of which influence negotiations regarding domestic responsibilities. However, education is not the sole determinant of domestic role sharing, given that 74.6% of the variation is explained by factors outside the scope of this study.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the understanding of the division of domestic roles through the lenses of relative resources and the doing gender perspective. An equitable division of household labor is determined not only by educational attainment but also by how those resources are utilized and negotiated during daily interactions. From a practical standpoint, rising levels of education should be accompanied by a stronger understanding of gender equality to ensure that household chores and caregiving activities are viewed as shared responsibilities rather than the primary obligation of just one partner.

Future research should utilize empirical data with broader sample coverage and consider various factors such as employment, income, working hours, number of children, marriage duration, gender orientation, and interpartner communication. Studies could also categorize couples based on educational disparities specifically scenarios where the husband has a higher level of education, the wife has a higher level, or both possess

equivalent educational backgrounds. In doing so, research on the division of domestic roles can move beyond a mere analysis of differences in partner characteristics toward a deeper understanding of how resources, power dynamics, and gender constructs are negotiated within everyday family life.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study adheres to research ethics principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the preservation of participant confidentiality and anonymity. The data obtained are used solely for research purposes and do not reveal individual identities. Approval from the institutional ethics committee has been obtained where required.

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