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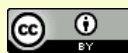
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license**THE MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL IDENTITY IN THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
AND GENDER ROLE ATTITUDE AMONG UNIVERSITY
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Jakarta Barat 1150, Indonesia²Universitas Nasional, Jl. Sawo Manila No. 61, Pejaten Barat,
Pasar Minggu, Jakarta Selatan 12520, Indonesia*Correspondence E-Mail: kamalia@esaunggul.ac.idDOI: <https://doi.org/10.30598/baileofisipvol4iss2pp334-345>**ABSTRACT**

Gender inequality remains a serious global issue, characterized by persistent stereotypes and discrimination, such as gender-based role inequality in various aspects of life. This study examines the relationship between critical awareness and attitudes toward gender roles among university students. Specifically, this study examines social identity (national identity) as a moderator variable in the relationship between critical awareness and attitudes toward gender roles, while also addressing the lack of attention to the potential role of national identity in this relationship within the Indonesian context. A non-experimental quantitative approach was used, with a correlational research method and a survey design involving a sample of 165 students aged 18–28. The analysis used was moderation regression using the Hayes PROCESS Macro (Model 1). The regression model as a whole is statistically significant and explains 5.2% of the variance in attitudes toward gender roles. National identity shows a significant negative relationship with attitudes toward traditional gender roles, whereas critical awareness and the interaction between critical awareness and national identity are not statistically significant. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the moderating role of national identity is not supported. These findings indicate that national identity is associated with attitudes toward gender roles in the sample studied, although the model has limited explanatory power. This study contributes to research on critical awareness and attitudes toward gender by empirically examining national identity.

Keywords: Critical Consciousness, Gender Inequality, Gender Role Attitudes, Social Identity, University Students

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is one of the global goals in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because this issue remains a major problem, including in Indonesia. According to the 2024 Global Gender Gap Report, Indonesia still ranks low in gender equality, particularly in the dimensions of economic participation and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2024). This disparity not only affects women but also has broader implications for the country. At the individual level, gender inequality manifests itself through the internalization of stereotypes that create an emotional burden, specifically, work-family guilt, that is far greater for working mothers

than for fathers, often leading women to sacrifice their career advancement in favor of their caregiving responsibilities (Aarntzen et al., 2023). Therefore, efforts to promote gender equality must involve all stakeholders, including the younger generation as agents of social change.

Understanding young people's attitudes toward gender roles is essential to explaining how the distribution of social roles between men and women is accepted, maintained, or challenged. Attitudes toward gender roles are related to individuals' views on the distribution of responsibilities in the public and domestic spheres, including participation in the workforce, breadwinning, and family caregiving. In the Indonesian context, research on university students indicates that preferences regarding work and marriage still reflect neo-traditional views, which position men as the primary earners and women as secondary earners (Utomo, 2012). Nevertheless, attitudes toward gender roles vary based on individual characteristics and sociocultural contexts, such as gender, family background, and the academic environment (Utomo, 2016). The importance of examining gender attitudes among college students is further reinforced by the findings of Aarntzen et al. (2023), which indicate that the early internalization of gender stereotypes has the potential to become an emotional burden in the form of "work-family guilt" in the future, thereby perpetuating career disparities between men and women. Therefore, examining attitudes toward gender roles among university students is crucial for understanding how the younger generation perceives these gender norms and stereotypes, as well as how these perspectives may relate to broader gender inequalities.

Numerous studies have identified education level as one of the most critical determinants shaping attitudes toward gender. For example, research examining the determinants of attitudes toward gender inequality in Chinese communities found a positive correlation between education and support for women in attaining more equal positions. Moreover, education level differentiated gender attitudes between rural and urban populations (Wang et al., 2024). These findings carry important policy implications, including the need to enhance educational opportunities for women in rural areas. Similarly, cross-cultural studies assessing the development and validation of measures related to gender attitudes among youth have identified education level as a key factor influencing gender-related attitudes (Sharma et al., 2025).

Young individuals who pursue higher education, such as university studies, are afforded greater opportunities to develop their attitudes and knowledge, particularly regarding gender issues. University students, who are typically in the phase of emerging adulthood, experience significant identity development and value orientation (Arnett, 2000). During this developmental period, they are generally more open to new ideas and possess the potential to serve as agents of social change, including the advancement of gender justice. However, this potential is highly contingent upon the extent to which they are aware of the structural injustices present in their environment, a condition referred to as critical consciousness. Critical consciousness refers to an individual's ability to understand, analyze, and critique structural injustice, as well as to promote transformative action (Watts et al., 2011). Developmentally, this capacity is supported by the

cognitive maturity of university students. While Piaget identified formal operational thought as the pinnacle of cognitive development, enabling abstract reasoning (Papalia & Martorell, 2024), individuals in early adulthood typically transition toward post-formal thought (Labouvie-Vief, 2006). This cognitive characteristic is associated with higher education and is marked by cognitive flexibility in facing inconsistencies, contradictions, and social dilemmas. Such adaptive cognitive skills facilitate the deconstruction of stereotypes. Consequently, students with high levels of critical consciousness tend to exhibit more progressive attitudes toward gender equality (Diemer et al., 2017). These findings underscore that post-formal thought maturity and critical consciousness are important determinants in reconstructing attitudes toward gender roles.

Previous research has demonstrated that the process of critical reflection on structural inequality can strengthen an individual's identification with their social group, particularly among marginalized populations (Diemer et al., 2016). When individuals become aware of systemic discrimination, a cognitive motivation arises to seek collective strength through the consolidation of social identity. From a psychological standpoint, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978) posits that an individual's self-concept is largely constructed based on group membership and the emotional significance attributed to that membership. Recognition of gender-based injustice, therefore, fosters self-categorization and more robust group evaluation, which can encourage collective action. Consistent with this perspective, recent empirical studies involving emerging adults have indicated that strong internalization of social identity, such as a progressive feminist identity, acts as a critical catalyst linking critical reflection to efficacy and tangible action against gender bias (Thomas & Newell, 2023). Thus, the transformation of attitudes toward gender role equality among university students is not solely determined by individual cognitive capacity, but is also significantly moderated by the degree to which individuals integrate issues of inequality into their social identity.

Although the relationship between critical consciousness and social identity has been documented, previous studies have generally concentrated on specific group identities that may reflect a Western bias, such as feminist identity (Thomas & Newell, 2023) or other minority groups, including sexual and racial minorities (Burson et al., 2024). Even when research is conducted outside Western contexts, the primary focus remains on specific minority populations, such as marginalized communities in Asia (Chan & Mak, 2020). This limitation suggests that critical consciousness may be domain-specific, wherein individuals' interpretations of social inequality are closely tied to the anchors of group identity they experience personally (Burson et al., 2024; Diemer et al., 2016).

From the perspective of social identity, national identity may be relevant to attitudes toward gender roles because national identity provides a broader framework that individuals use to understand their membership in the national community and interpret shared social values (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In Indonesia, national identity is associated with the country's pluralistic character and the values of Pancasila, which have been discussed as the philosophical foundation for gender equality, although gender-based inequality remains a concern (Moordiningsih et al.,

2021; Soleman, 2023). At the same time, research among Indonesian university students has documented the persistence of traditional gender role preferences, including expectations regarding the roles of men and women as earners (Utomo, 2012, 2016). These findings highlight the importance of examining how national identity relates to attitudes toward gender roles in the Indonesian context. However, national identity should not automatically be assumed to be a driver of egalitarian attitudes, as its relevance may depend on how individuals interpret the values associated with national membership. Therefore, it makes theoretical sense that national identity could influence the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles, necessitating an examination of the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship

This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining whether national identity, conceptualized as a form of social identity, acts as a moderator in the relationship between critical awareness and attitudes toward gender roles among university students. By examining this interaction in the Indonesian context, this study expands the literature on critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles by testing whether identification with a broader national group is associated with the relationship between critical reflection on social inequality and attitudes toward gender roles. In particular, this study aims to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and national identity on attitudes toward gender roles, as well as to test the moderating role of national identity in the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles.

RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative, non-experimental research design was used in this study. Data collection utilized a cross-sectional approach, as all data were gathered at a single point in time. The study comprised three variables: critical consciousness as the predictor variable, social identity as the moderating variable, and attitudes toward gender roles as the outcome variable. This study aimed to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles among university students, as well as to test the moderating role of social identity in this relationship. Moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS Macro for SPSS (Hayes, Model 1) with a linear regression approach. All data analyses were performed using IBM SPSS version 25.

The participants in this study were undergraduate students aged 18 to 28 years, recruited using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Participants were recruited through a call-for-respondents poster distributed via student WhatsApp groups and through the researchers' academic networks, including contacts with faculty colleagues at other university. Participation was voluntary. The minimum required sample size was determined using G*Power 3.1. Based on a power analysis for moderation regression with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), a significance level (α) of 0.05, and statistical power of 0.95, a minimum sample size of 89

respondents was required. Ultimately, 165 out of 167 respondents passed the data screening process and were included in the analysis.

Three instruments were used for data collection. Critical consciousness was measured using the Socio-Political Awareness Scale for Indonesia (SPASI) developed by Sulaiman et al. (2022), which consists of 11 items assessing individuals' levels of critical awareness regarding social and political issues. Social identity was measured using the Social Identity (SI) scale in the context of Indonesian national identity as the relevant social group. The SI scale, adapted by Suwartono and Moningka (2017) from the Collective Self-Esteem (CSE) scale by Luthanen and Crocker, measures the extent to which individuals identify as members of the Indonesian nation. Attitudes toward gender roles were measured using an adapted version of the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GBRS) Short Version by Brown and Gladstone (2012). The adaptation process followed the guidelines for instrument adaptation proposed by Beaton et al. (2000), which includes five stages: translation, synthesis, back-translation, expert review, and try out to assess validity and reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data

Out of 167 respondents, 165 met the data cleaning criteria and were included in the final analysis. Based on demographic characteristics, the majority of respondents were female (67.7%), followed by male (22.2%), and 10.2% chose not to disclose their gender. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 28 years ($M = 21.14$; $SD = 2.69$). In terms of academic level, most respondents were in their 3rd semester (28.1%), 5th semester (23.4%), and 7th semester (25.1%). Regarding organizational involvement, the majority of respondents did not participate in student organizations or activity units (63.5%), while 12.6% were classified as active and another 12.6% as moderately active in organizations. The remaining respondents reported rarely being active, despite being registered as members. Additionally, most respondents indicated that they had never attended a class or workshop specifically addressing gender issues.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analyses were conducted on the variables of critical consciousness, social identity, and attitudes toward gender roles. Summary statistics are presented in Table 1. The analysis revealed that the mean score for critical consciousness was 53.62 ($SD = 7.33$), with a maximum score of 66, indicating a relatively high level of critical consciousness among respondents. The mean score for social identity was 63.22 ($SD = 7.50$), with a maximum score of 96, suggesting variability in the level of social identity among participants. For attitudes toward gender roles, the mean score was 29.19 ($SD = 15.58$) with a maximum of 47, reflecting variability in attitudes toward gender roles among the study population.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Research Variables

Variable	n	Min	Max	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Critical Consciousness	165	12	66	53.62	7.33	(.768)	-	
2. Social Identity	165	20	96	63.22	7.50	.265**	(.947)	-
3. Gender Role Attitude	165	12	47	29.19	15.58	-.144	-.169*	(.864)

Note: Values in parentheses indicate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient); * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Source: Authors' own data analysis (2026).

Correlation Among Variables

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships among the research variables. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between critical consciousness and social identity ($r = .265$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher critical consciousness is associated with stronger social identity. Furthermore, social identity was significantly negatively correlated with attitudes toward gender roles ($r = -.169$, $p < .05$), indicating that stronger social identity is associated with less traditional gender role attitudes. However, the correlation between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles was not significant ($r = -.144$, $p > .05$), suggesting that critical consciousness was not directly related to gender role attitudes in this sample.

Moderation Analysis

Prior to conducting regression and moderation analyses, a series of classical assumption tests were performed to ensure the appropriateness of the data for statistical analysis. These included tests for residual normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for residual normality yielded a significance value of .200 ($p > .05$), indicating that the distribution of residuals met the assumption of normality. The linearity test showed a significance value of .987 ($p > .05$) for the linearity row and .188 ($p > .05$) for the deviation from linearity row, indicating linear relationships among variables without deviation from linearity. The Glejser test for heteroscedasticity revealed that all variables had significance values above .05, suggesting no heteroscedasticity problems in the regression model. Finally, the multicollinearity test showed a tolerance value of .922 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.084, both within acceptable limits (Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10). Overall, the results confirmed that the data met all necessary assumptions for regression and moderation analyses.

Moderation analysis was conducted to investigate the role of social identity as a moderator in the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles. This analysis used Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 1 with a linear regression approach. The results indicated that the overall regression model was significant, $F(3, 161) = 2.95$, $p = .034$, with an R^2 value of .052. This suggests that critical consciousness, social identity, and their interaction collectively explained 5.2% of the variance in attitudes toward gender roles. Partially, the analysis indicated that critical consciousness did not have a significant effect on attitudes toward gender roles ($b = .039$, $p = .633$). In contrast, social identity had a significant negative effect on attitudes

toward gender roles ($b = -.104$, $p = .009$), indicating that the stronger the individual's social identity, the less likely they are to endorse traditional gender role attitudes.

However, the results of the interaction analysis between critical consciousness and social identity did not indicate a significant moderating effect ($b = -.005$, $p = .234$). This finding suggests that social identity does not moderate the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles. Thus, the influence of critical consciousness on attitudes toward gender roles does not differ significantly across varying levels of social identity.

Critical Consciousness and Gender Attitudes: The limits of Cognitive Reflection Without Normative Shifts

The results of this study indicate that social identity does not act as a moderator in the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles. This finding suggests that the influence of critical consciousness on attitudes toward gender roles does not differ significantly across varying levels of social identity. In other words, the strength of the association between critical consciousness and gender attitudes remains relatively stable, regardless of the strength of an individual's social identity. Methodologically, this finding demonstrates that the moderation hypothesis is not supported, despite the adequacy of statistical assumptions and instrument reliability. This suggests that the role of social identity operates independently from students' cognitive capacity to critique structural injustice.

Nevertheless, these results do not negate the important role of social identity in shaping gender attitudes. Instead, the findings reveal that social identity has a direct and significant effect on attitudes toward gender roles, whereas critical consciousness does not have a significant direct relationship. This pattern indicates that attitudes toward gender roles are more strongly influenced by social affiliation processes and the internalization of group norms than by individual critical reflection. Within the framework of Social Identity Theory, social identity functions as a source of norms, values, and behavioral expectations that are internalized as part of an individual's self-definition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This supports the argument that, for university students, membership in social groups provides a strong foundation for moral principles.

Cross-cultural research has shown that social identity rooted in cultural and national contexts can be associated with the internalization of dominant social norms, including gender norms. Gender norms are often institutionalized within specific cultural values and national ideologies, so individuals with a stronger sense of national identity are more likely to reproduce gender views that align with existing social structures (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Minkov & Hofstede, 2014). In this context, the negative relationship between national social identity and attitudes toward gender roles found in this study may reflect a tendency toward the internalization of relatively more traditional gender norms. National narratives have historically been constructed on foundations of hegemonic masculinity and traditional reproductive gender roles. The state and national ideology frequently position women as guardians of morality and cultural continuity, while men are cast as protectors or defenders of sovereignty (Wieringa, 2003). As a

result, individuals who are strongly attached to or identify with their national identity may be more likely to internalize such collective myths, which directly reinforce support for rigid sexual divisions of labor and hierarchical gender roles.

On the other hand, the nonsignificant relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles provides an important theoretical contribution. Although critical consciousness is related to an individual's ability to recognize structural injustice and reflect on power relations (Freire, 1970; Watts et al., 2011), deeply internalized normative attitudes tend to have considerable strength and stability, making them relatively resistant to change (Krosnick & Telhami, 1995). In the context of gender, attitudes toward gender roles are shaped through long-term socialization processes and cognitive schemas rooted in social role structures (Bem, 1981; Diekman & Eagly, 2000). Furthermore, from a general psychological perspective, evaluative responses that are repeatedly learned in certain social contexts can become relatively automatic and may not easily change through short-term cognitive reflection alone (Wood & Neal, 2007). Therefore, cognitive-level critical consciousness does not necessarily lead directly to changes in gender attitudes without accompanying shifts in social context and sustained normative experiences.

The findings of this study align with existing literature, which indicates that critical consciousness is more closely linked to action orientation and social engagement than to changes in latent normative attitudes. Multiple studies have demonstrated that critical consciousness primarily facilitates agency, collective participation, and transformative behavior, while its influence on social attitudes is often indirect or contingent upon specific ideological contexts and social experiences (Diemer et al., 2016; Watts et al., 2011). Rather than remaining solely at the level of cognitive understanding, critical consciousness constitutes a praxis process that entails a commitment to concrete action against oppressive elements in social reality. This perspective is supported by recent research showing that university students with high levels of critical consciousness, particularly those engaged in sustained community organizations, exhibit significant increases in collective action and political activism over time (Pinedo et al., 2024).

The absence of a moderating effect of social identity in this study suggests that critical consciousness and social identity function through distinct psychological mechanisms in shaping gender attitudes. Critical consciousness focuses on analyzing power structures and the potential for transformative action, while social identity is primarily associated with self-evaluation and collective self-esteem derived from group membership. Additionally, the literature indicates that critical consciousness exhibits domain specificity; for instance, critical reflection on economic injustice (Sulaiman et al., 2022) may not necessarily influence attitudes toward gender roles unless the relevant social identity, such as national identity, is specifically politicized in relation to gender issues.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore the significance of social identity as a key predictor of attitudes toward gender roles, whereas critical consciousness does not exhibit either a direct or moderating effect in this context. These results highlight avenues for future research

to investigate the potential mediating roles of variables such as the internalization of gender norms, value orientation, or concrete social experiences in elucidating the complex relationships among critical consciousness, social identity, and attitudes toward gender roles. Thus, the present study offers an empirical contribution to the social psychology literature by emphasizing the necessity of accounting for the interplay between identity dynamics and social norms in the examination of gender attitudes among university students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between critical consciousness and attitudes toward gender roles among university students, with social identity as a moderating variable. The results indicate that social identity does not moderate this relationship. However, social identity has a significant direct association with attitudes toward gender roles, whereas critical consciousness does not show a significant relationship. Although social identity was significantly associated with gender role attitudes in this sample, the overall model explained only 5.2% of the variance. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted cautiously and do not establish that social identity is generally more influential than critical consciousness in shaping gender role attitudes. Rather, these findings suggest that social identity may be a factor significantly associated with attitudes toward gender roles in the sample and context under study. These findings should not be generalized to all university students in Indonesia without further research. This study has several limitations. First, social identity was operationalized through national identity, which may not adequately capture identities directly related to experiences of marginalization or gender inequality. Second, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences. Future research could examine social identities more directly related to experiences of inequality, such as gender identity, ethnic identity, or minority group identity. It could also investigate other relevant psychological variables, including the internalization of gender norms and egalitarian values. Furthermore, longitudinal or experimental designs may help clarify the relationships among critical consciousness, social identity, and gender role attitudes. Studies involving more diverse samples of university students across different Indonesian contexts are also needed to assess the extent to which these findings can be generalized.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The authors used ChatGPT and Grammarly to assist with language editing, improving academic writing style,

and enhancing the clarity and readability of the manuscript. The authors reviewed and edited all AI-generated content and take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the final manuscript. No generative AI was used in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of the research data. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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