



# Perception of Gender Equality Among University Students: An Analytical Model Based

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of social justice that asserts that all individuals, regardless of their gender, should have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources and power. Researching this phenomenon requires a deep understanding of the dimensions and factors that constitute it. The primary objective of this study is to propose a contextualized and comprehensive analytical model for conducting research related to gender equality. To achieve this, a thorough and systematic literature review was conducted using the PRISMA methodology. From a total of 511 articles located in major databases, 58 were selected. The categorization process led to the identification of 8 dimensions: labor and/or professional, co-responsibility and family reconciliation, education, health and emotions, culture and society, economy, gender-based violence, and freedom and autonomy, along with an open dimension labeled 'other aspects.' The final model integrates these dimensions, along with the inherent factors of each, with socio-demographic and ideological variables, resulting in a comprehensive and relevant model for studies on gender equality and subsequent socio-educational interventions based on these findings.

**Keywords:** Gender, equality, analytical model, gender inequality, coeducation.

Gender equality does not mean that men and women should be treated as identical, but rather that access to opportunities and the exercise of rights should not depend on a person's sex. Therefore, the concept of "gender equality" implies ensuring that gender differences do not lead to systematic inequalities in access to education, employment, healthcare, and other resources and opportunities (UN Women, 2021).

As noted by the Organic Law amending the Organic Law of Education, education is the essential pillar for social development. Among its aims, it highlights the commitment to forming a democratic citizenry and a society where each individual has equal educational and training opportunities and where individual and collective well-being are guaranteed (LOMLOE, 2020). In this endeavor, one of the indispensable tools is undoubtedly coeducation, promoting an equitable educational environment in which all students have the same opportunities for learning and personal development. Coeducation should be understood as the educational process that promotes gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, fostering mutual respect and collaboration between genders, and empowering all students to reach their full potential, regardless of their gender. It plays a fundamental role in the path toward gender equality. Education in and for equality should be recognized as a powerful tool to combat gender discrimination and promote equity in society (Suberviola, 2023; Subirants and Anguita, 2021). By integrating the gender perspective into all aspects of the school curriculum and educational practices, coeducation helps raise students' awareness of gender inequalities and fosters an inclusive and respectful school environment. Additionally, it provides the necessary tools to challenge discrimination and promote gender justice in society at large (Tomé et al., 2021).

From the perspective that socio-educational research must have the systematic and rigorous exploration of social and educational phenomena as a fundamental pillar, seeking to generate new knowledge that can contribute to societal progress (Codina, 2020), the article presented below showcases the analytical model developed for conducting research on young people's perception of "gender equality," starting from a comprehensive bibliographic analysis. In this context, identifying and understanding the most studied

dimensions, as well as those not as prevalent but necessary, within the broader concept of "gender equality," becomes essential for developing appropriate research practices and subsequent effective educational interventions (Olaskoaga and Salaverri, 2020). Furthermore, it should be noted that the perception of these dimensions may be influenced by sociodemographic variables such as gender, age, place of residence, and the family's socio-cultural level (Martínez-García and Suberviola, 2024; Rodríguez-Soza and Ruiz-Cantero, 2022), along with other factors related to political and religious ideology.

The main objective of this study is to develop an analytical model for research on the perception of "gender equality," based on a systematic bibliographic review of documents addressing the main dimensions of this construct, as well as identifying those less present but important factors in socio-educational research concerning gender equity.

### **Study Design**

In the study presented below, a systematic bibliographic review is conducted using an explicit and rigorous methodology to identify relevant academic documents on the dimensions and factors present in the concept of "gender equality." This approach allows for a critical examination of each document and the synthesis of evidence related to the study topic, following the methodology proposed by Izaguirre et al. (2017). This method seeks to explore and analyze the main dimensions and aspects present in the concept of "gender equality" as a subject of study within a documentary corpus, with the aim of establishing relationships and statements that facilitate its understanding in the context defined by the research objective. Therefore, it is a non-experimental, theoretical design. For this purpose, data matrices and bibliographic records were developed considering the following categories: study title, authorship, year of completion, country, database from which it was obtained, the journal or medium where it was published, type of document, dimensions addressed, and finally, whether it was considered for the review based on the inclusion criteria.

### **Identification Phase of Information Sources**

Initially, a total of 511 documents were selected, consisting of primary sources (books, dissertations, reports from organizations and institutions, and research articles) and secondary sources (articles with literature reviews and research summaries), eliminating duplicates until a total of 386 documents remained.

Regarding doctoral theses, the following databases and repositories were used: Dialnet-theses (11), TDR (Thesis Doctorales en Red) (9), TESEO (12), DART Europe (8), and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (7). For book searches, various publishers included in the Scholarly Publishers Indicator (21) were explored. For searching articles in scientific journals, the following databases were scanned: Scopus (41), Web of Science (56), Eric (23), Education Database (6), Google Scholar (75), Journal Citation Report (40), Social Sciences Citation Index (22), and Dialnet (55). The exploration was carried out between March and June 2024, following the guidelines of the PRISMA methodology in its latest revision (Mattehew et al., 2021).

The following keyword equations were used in the bibliographic scan, both in Spanish and English: gender equality, gender equity, gender discrimination, gender violence, gender inequality, sex equality, equality between men and women. Different combinations of the terms and collected articles were used. To improve the document search, Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were utilized. Following Codina's guidelines (2020), it was not deemed necessary to use specific protocols for the development of inclusion/exclusion criteria, aside from the general good practices applicable to all academic works under the APA JARS standard. However, given the dynamic nature of the topic, it was considered appropriate to exclude documents published more than 15 years ago, as well as opinion dissertations, newspaper articles, and blog entries. Additionally, documents that, while focusing on "gender equality," did not delve into the dimensions or factors of the phenomenon or did not perform a gender analysis but rather a simple division of results by sex were excluded.

### **Information Analysis Phase**

As a preliminary step to the information analysis, duplicate documents were eliminated, resulting in  $N = 386$ . This phase is developed using the content analysis technique, which allows for the identification of theoretical elements that enable assertions and interpretations about the study subject to form the results. Initially, a title and abstract analysis is conducted, applying the previously mentioned inclusion/exclusion criteria. For the selected documents, a full reading is performed where content analysis is carried out, and the documents are subjected once again to the inclusion/exclusion criteria in this second round. Finally, a search was conducted among the bibliographic references of the included studies, reviewing cited works with potential inclusion in the final review. The following figure shows the flow analysis that summarizes the procedure developed for obtaining the selected sources (see appendix).

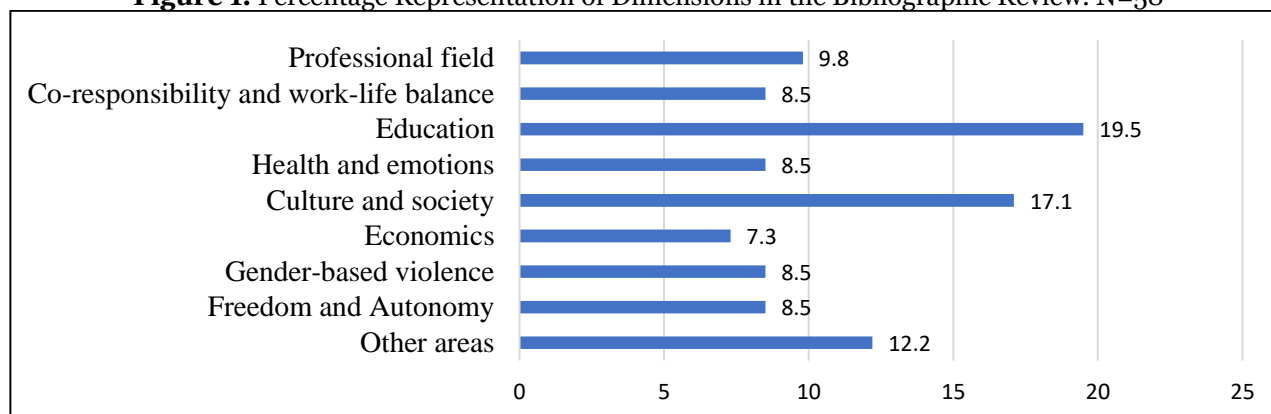
## Theoretical Framework Phase

In this third phase, based on the results found in the bibliographic analysis, inferences, interpretations, and assertions are presented, leading to the discussion of these results and the conclusions of the study. This is achieved through the development of an analytical model for research on the perception of "gender equality."

### Results of the bibliographic analysis

Figure 1 shows the most prevalent dimensions found in the bibliographic review, along with the percentages for each of them.

**Figure 1.** Percentage Representation of Dimensions in the Bibliographic Review. N=58



#### Professional field dimension

This dimension refers to achieving equal treatment and opportunities between women and men in the workplace, taking into account the needs and starting points of each individual (Montalvo, 2020). Within this realm, the most prevalent factors include: salary, ease of access to the labor market, ease of access to managerial and/or responsible positions, differentiation in access based on the professional field, that is, whether the employment falls within the construction sector; plumbing, electrical work vs. personal care sector; hairdressing, fashion, etc., and/or the caregiving or assistance sector, as well as access to support for starting a business or other business-related assistance.

#### Co-responsibility and work-life balance dimension

Co-responsibility and work-life balance refer to the shared and equitable responsibility between men and women, meaning an equal distribution of tasks and decision-making in the domestic or home environment, which also encompasses the care of family members, whether they are children or other dependent relatives (Fernández-Guerrero et al., 2022). Essentially, unpaid work, understood as the energy, time, and skill development crucial for managing household tasks and child care (Gómez and Jiménez, 2015).

In this area, the most prevalent factors include: child-rearing, household chores, ease of balancing family and professional life, maternity or paternity leave, the condition of being a parent, involvement in formal education of children, and responsibility for financial management within the household.

#### Dimension of Education

One of the most prevalent pairs in the search for references related to the study subject is gender equality and education. Promoting gender equality in the educational sphere involves equipping students with all the necessary tools to access learning, modifying the context to respond to diversity with an inclusive approach, and promoting their holistic development, regardless of the gender with which each student identifies (Suberviola, 2020). Gender equality in education provides opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, to reach their full potential and contribute to societal well-being from a respectful and equitable perspective. In this regard, Ferreiro (2017) conceptualizes co-education as an educational intervention model aimed at the comprehensive development of individuals, without restricting each person's abilities, irrespective of their sex.

Within this domain, the most prevalent factors include: favoritism in the academic sphere, training on gender equality, study opportunities, gender preparedness for certain fields (scientific-technical, human-social, etc.), and students' perceptions of gender inequality in primary, secondary, or higher education.

### **Dimension of Health and Emotions**

Gender equality in the health sector means that women and men are in equal conditions to fully exercise their rights and potential to maintain health, contribute to health development, and benefit from health outcomes. Therefore, promoting gender equality in the health sector aims to provide human, material, and economic resources to address health needs, both from a physical and psychological or emotional perspective, regardless of gender.

Within this domain, the most prevalent factors include: emotional stability based on gender, risk of substance abuse, eating disorders, and other risky behaviors, tolerance to physical pain, and absenteeism due to illness, both physical and psychological.

### **Dimension of Culture and Society**

The concept of gender equality in the social and cultural sphere refers to providing individuals, regardless of gender, with the same rights and opportunities to access the rights they hold as citizens (Jelín, 2022).

Within this domain, the most prevalent factors include: personal image management on social media, judgment or criticism of personal appearance, leadership in various sectors of society (political, business, etc.), age-related biases in fields such as cinema or music based on gender, social success, and scientific or artistic recognition.

### **Economic Dimension**

Another dimension observed in gender equality studies is that which pertains to the economic sphere, understood as equal opportunities regardless of gender concerning the production, ownership, exchange, and consumption of goods resulting from personal labor. This contributes to the economic development of a society, along with other aspects related to income, paid employment, occupational areas, unemployment, the perception of rights, and salaried work (Alvarado & Arévalo, 2024).

Within this domain, the most prevalent factors documented are: the risk of poverty, the risk of homelessness, presence in economic and social power spheres, desire for economic purchasing power, and economic dependency.

### **Dimension of Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence stems from an inherent situation of gender inequality. Therefore, studies on this dimension with a co-educational focus are more oriented towards preventing gender inequality through education, specifically education in and for gender equality, which is part of one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Among the primary measures for preventing gender-based violence from educational contexts, notable is the pedagogy of co-education addressed in a transversal and systemic manner, involving all educational agents, providing ongoing training for teachers, and working collaboratively with families (Gallardo & Vázquez, 2019).

In this dimension, the most represented factors are: victims of gender-based violence, false reports and unjust accusations, physical and psychological aggression, bullying or harassment from both the perspective of the perpetrator and the victim, and legislation on gender-based violence.

### **Dimension of Freedom and Autonomy**

Another recurring aspect in the literature on gender equality is related to freedom and autonomy. As Pautassi (2007) points out, women's autonomy and empowerment are essential requirements for achieving gender equality and are also part of individual and political processes for the full exercise of human rights. Consequently, a significant number of studies in this field are oriented towards the conception of gender equality as a necessary path to individual freedom and social democracy.

Within this dimension, the most representative factors include public safety (such as the risk of walking alone in the street), privacy (perception of active sexuality, etc.), freedom of expression (such as making gender-related jokes), freedom of movement, economic independence, and emotional dependency.

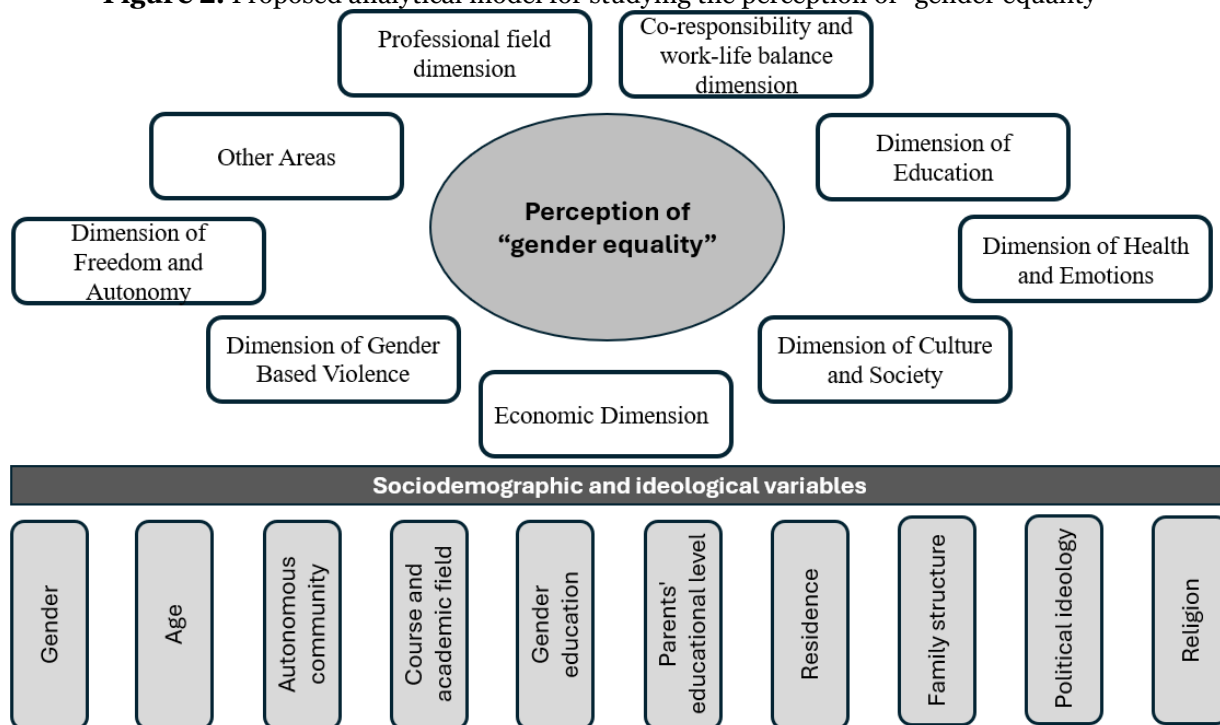
### **Other Areas**

It is essential to consider studies related to gender equality that, while not included in the dimensions described above, have relevance in contributing to gender equality from a co-educational perspective. The study has included factors such as perceptions of gender equality, legislation and equality policies, discrimination or positive action, gender in social media, gender equality and sustainable development, and institutional gender inequality, among others.

### Proposed Research Model

After conducting a literature review on the construct of 'gender equality' and identifying the main dimensions of analysis and the factors included within them, the next step is to develop an analytical model for research related to the population's perception of 'gender equality' from a coeducational perspective, taking into account the incorporation of socio-demographic and ideological variables in the analysis.

**Figure 2.** Proposed analytical model for studying the perception of “gender equality”



### Conclusion

The categorization conducted following the analysis of selected documents has led to the identification of eight dimensions that are consistently present across studies. These dimensions include: "Labor and/or Professional," which encompasses salary, access to the labor market, managerial positions, differential access based on professional field, and professional support; "Shared Responsibility and Work-Life Balance," covering parenting, household chores, work-life balance, sacrifices due to maternity or paternity, involvement in children's education, and financial management; "Education," addressing favoritism, equality training, educational opportunities, fields of study, and perceptions of inequality within the educational sphere; "Health and Emotions," including emotional stability, risk of substance abuse, eating disorders, tolerance to physical pain, and absenteeism due to illness; "Culture and Society," which involves image management on social media, criticism of personal appearance, leadership, negative portrayals in film and music, attribution of social success, and scientific or artistic recognition; "Economy," referring to poverty, risk of homelessness, power, desire for purchasing power, and economic dependency; "Gender-Based Violence," covering being a victim of gender-based violence, false accusations, physical and psychological aggression, bullying or harassment, and favoritism in gender legislation; and "Freedom and Autonomy," which includes risk of public wandering, criticism of active sexual life, freedom to make gender-based jokes, freedom of movement, economic independence, and emotional dependence. Additionally, important factors not covered by these dimensions but crucial for the conceptualization of "gender equality" are categorized under "Other Aspects," such as perception of gender equality, legislation and policies, discrimination or affirmative action, gender equality and sustainable development, institutional gender inequality, and gender equality in social media. In conclusion, this bibliographic review has clarified the most prevalent dimensions and factors linked to the global conception of "gender equality," providing a critical foundation for further research and intervention. This comprehensive analysis has enabled a better understanding of the current state of knowledge, identification of gaps, and recognition of emerging trends in gender equality studies. The integration of these dimensions with key sociodemographic and ideological variables results in a detailed, up-to-date, and contextualized analytical model for studying perceptions of gender equality, offering a robust basis for future research and intervention programs. By exploring various theoretical and methodological perspectives, the complexity and multifaceted nature of gender equality have become evident, underscoring the necessity for an integrated and holistic approach.

## Declarations

**Research Involving Human and Animals:** This research involved human subject and was approved by the La Rioja University IRB

**Competing interests:** The authors declare they have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest.

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Title	Authors	Year	Database	Journal/Medium	Document Type*						Dimensions**								
					A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Living with Others and/or Living for Others: Autonomy, Relationships, and Feminist Ethics	Palmero, M. J. G.	2009	Eric	Dilemata						x								x	
Student Attitudes Towards Gender Equality	García Pérez, R., Rebollo Catalán, M. A., Buzón García, O., González-Piñal, R., Barragán Sánchez, R. & Ruíz Pinto, E.	2010	Dialnet	Journal of Educational Research			x						x						
Gender Equality in Schools	Venegas, M.	2010	Dialnet	Journal of the Sociology of Education Association			x						x						
Gender Equality Laws in Spain and Europe: Towards a New Citizenship?	Bodelón, E.	2010	Dialnet	Yearbook of Legal Philosophy			x								x				
Effective Institutional Communication on Gender Equality. Raising Awareness on Co-responsibility: Key Points and Recommendations (Guide)	Papí-Gálvez, N. & Orbea Mira, J.	2011	ResearchGate	University of Alicante Repository			x					x			x				
Work-Family Balance and Gender Co-responsibility	Cabeza Pereiro, J., Fernández Docampo, M. B. & Ballester Pastor, M. A.	2011	Dialnet	University of Valencia Institutional Repository for Scientific Productio					x	x	x								
Diagnosis of Gender Culture in Education: Teachers' Attitudes Towards Equality	Rebollo Catalán, M. A., García Pérez, R., Piedra de la Cuadra, J. & Vega Caro, L.	2011	ResearchGate	Journal of Education				x					x		x				
Proposal for Effective Management of Gender-Based Violence	Bandrés Goldáraz, E.	2011	Dialnet	IC Scientific Journal of Information and Communication			x											x	
Protection, Equality, Dignity, Freedom, and Non-Discrimination	Uriarte, O. E.	2011	Dialnet	Law & Society			x												x
The Path Towards Gender Mainstreaming, Empowerment, and Co-responsibility in Gender Equality Policies	de Castro, P. F.	2012	ResearchGate	Universitas: Journal of Philosophy, Law, and Politics			x					x							
**Gender Gap and Digital Inclusion: The Potential of Social Media in Education	Barragán Sánchez, R. & Ruiz Pinto, E.	2013	Dialnet	Profesorado: Journal of Curriculum and Teacher Training			x						x		x				
Gender Labor Inequalities, Temporal Availability, and Social Normativity	Prieto, C. & Pérez de Guzmán, S.	2013	Dialnet	Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas (REIS)			x				x				x				
Presence and Absence of the Female Gender on the Front Pages of Print Media in Spain Before, During, and After the Ministry of Equality and in the Context of the Equality Law (2007-2011)	Mula Grau, J.	2013	Dialnet Thesis	University of Miguel Hernández de Elche	x										x				x
Family Co-responsibility and Work-Family Balance: Means to Improve Gender Equity	Gómez Urrutia, V. & Jiménez Figueroa, A.	2015	Dialnet	Polis, Revista de la University of Bolivariana			x				x	x							
Gender-Based Violence: An Obstacle to Equality	Hernández, G. R.	2015	Dialnet	Trabajo social UNAM						x								x	
Perception of Gender-Based Violence by Adolescents and Young Adults	Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality	2015	Dialnet	Journal Metamorfosis			x											x	
Body and Senses: The Sociological Analysis of Perception	Sabido Ramos, O.	2016	Dialnet	Feminist debate			x						x	x					
The Institutionalization of Gender Equality Policies at the University of Española: Progress and Challenges	Pastor Gosálbez, I. & Acosta Sarmiento, A.	2016	ResearchGate	Feminist Research			x						x						x





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					A	B	C	D	E	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
the University																			
Public Policies from a Gender Perspective for Incarcerated Women: Strategies for Their Rehabilitation	Caguana, E. H. & Martínez, M. C.	2024	Dialnet	Digital Publisher CEIT				x											x
Presence of the Gender Equality Principle in the Teaching Guides for the Primary Education Degree in Spain	Velasco, E., Meza, P. y Hurtado-Reina, J.	2024	ResearchGate	Complutense Journal of Education		x							x						

Source: Own elaboration\*\*

Note. The table only includes the documents selected for the review, so the included/excluded checkbox present in the complete document has been removed.

\* A (Thesis); B (Qualitative Research Article); C (Quantitative Research Article); D (Mixed-Methods Research Article); E (Research Report); F (Essay/Literature Review)

\*\* 1 (Work and Professional Field); 2 (Co-responsibility and Work-Life Balance); 3 (Education); 4 (Health and Emotions); 5 (Culture and Society); 6 (Economy); 7 (Gender-Based Violence); 8 (Freedom and Autonomy); 9 (Others)