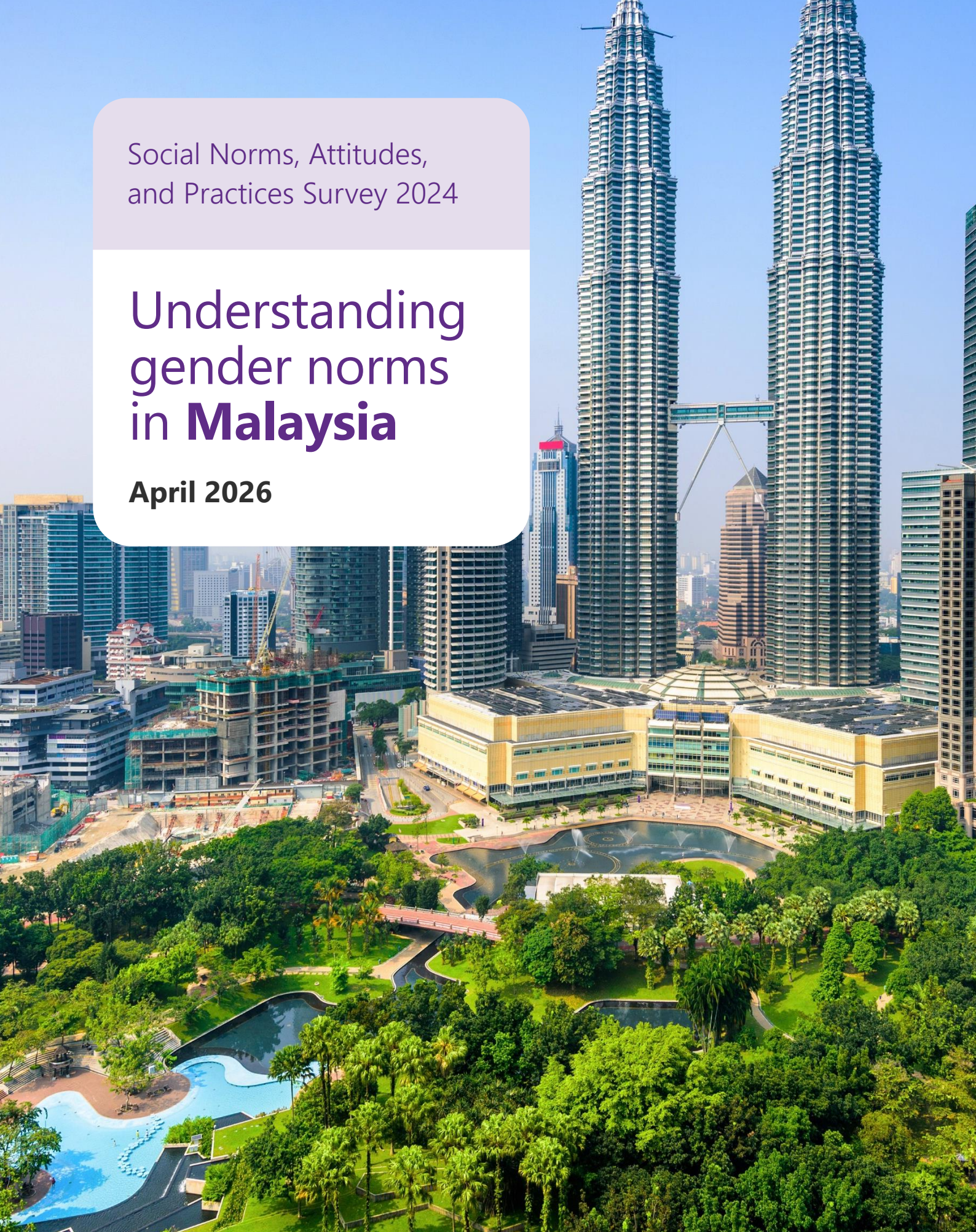


Social Norms, Attitudes,
and Practices Survey 2024

Understanding gender norms in **Malaysia**

April 2026

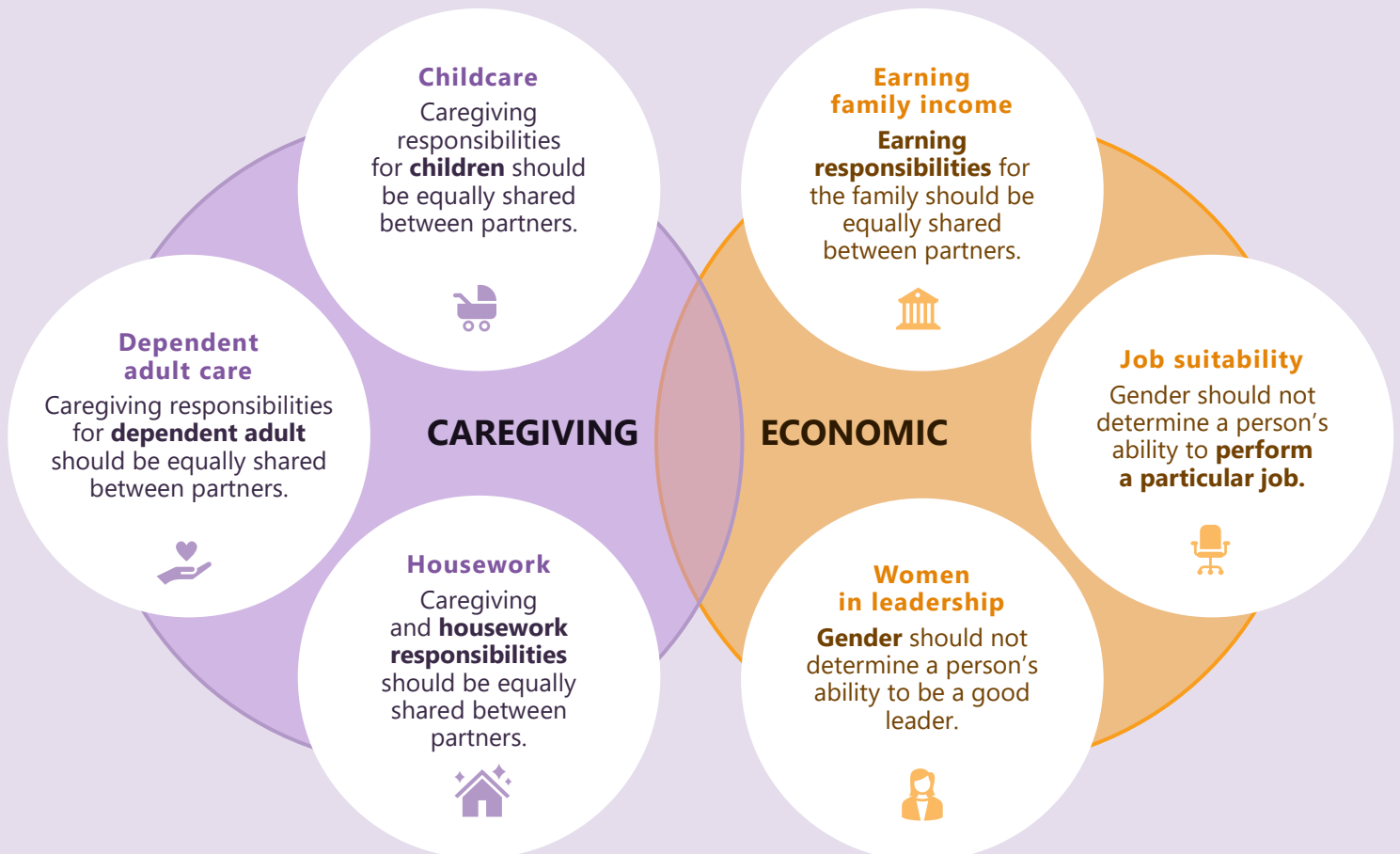


About SNAPS

This factsheet is derived from the report on the [Social Norms, Attitudes, and Practices Survey \(SNAPS\) 2024](#), which, which explores how people support, practice and advocate for gender equality in everyday life. SNAPS 2024 includes an online survey of 8,000 respondents across from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.¹ In each country, the survey includes 2,000 women and men aged 18–40 from urban areas. Survey results are complemented by qualitative interviews and validation workshops that help unpack the social norms shaping attitudes, behaviours and advocacy. The survey asked respondents about their:

- ✔ ATTITUDES | What they think
- ✔ BEHAVIOURS | What they do
- ✔ ADVOCACY | What they say
- ✔ SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS | What they think is commonly practiced and socially approved

SNAPS examines gender equality across six domains



SNAPS 2024 was carried out by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at the Australian National University in partnership with Investing in Women (IW), an initiative of the Australian Government, and was published in March 2026. The views expressed in SNAPS and derivative publications are the authors' alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government. The Australian Government neither endorses the views in these publications nor vouches for the accuracy or completeness of the information contained within the publications.

¹ This is the fourth SNAPS Report—following SNAPS 2018, 2020, and 2022. Building on previous iterations, SNAPS 2024 introduced updated and reframed survey questions to reflect evolving contexts and enable more nuanced and sophisticated analyses. Malaysia was also included in the survey for the first time in 2024.

MALAYSIA HIGHLIGHTS

Malaysia data from SNAPS 2024 highlight a context where gender-equal attitudes exist but are tempered by strong cultural and religious expectations around women-caregiver and men-breadwinner norms.

Respondents frequently describe daily life as shaped by beliefs that women should prioritise family care—even when employed—and that men should remain principal earners.

These expectations are reinforced through family networks, religious practices and workplace cultures that assign care to women by default.

Qualitative findings indicate that many individuals navigate these norms quietly, making incremental adjustments within households, often without framing their actions as gender-equality efforts. Financial pressures are leading to more dual-income households but have not significantly shifted the division of unpaid care, creating friction between necessity and norms. This produces an environment characterised by slow, internally negotiated change, influenced heavily by family dynamics, cultural values, and perceived community expectations.

Gender Equal Attitudes

In Malaysia, support for gender equality ranges from 57–87%, with stronger higher levels of gender-equal attitudes among women (8–11 percentage higher).

Support is strongest in Job Suitability (72-86%) and Leadership (74-86%), where many endorse the idea that competence is not dictated by gender.



Support is weakest in Earning Family Income with only 63% of women and 57% of men reporting gender-equal attitudes.



Malaysia registered the lowest levels of gender-equal attitudes than other countries in both women and men and across all domains except Earning Family Income.

Gender-Equal Behaviour

In some domains, gender-equal behaviours are higher in Malaysia than other countries, particularly in caregiving and domestic roles, despite relatively lower gender-equal attitudes.



Malaysia registered the **highest levels of gender-equal behaviours** across the four countries surveyed in Dependent Adult Care (80-86%) and Childcare (64-72%).

Gender-equal behaviours are weakest in the economic domains: 55% in Women's Leadership, 55-59% in Earning Family Income, and 61-63% in Job Suitability.

Dual-income pressures have increased women's paid work, but **unpaid care has not shifted proportionately.**



Attitude-Behaviour Gap



The attitude-behaviour gap is **widest among women in the domains of Housework** (36 percentage points) **and Leadership** (31 percentage points).

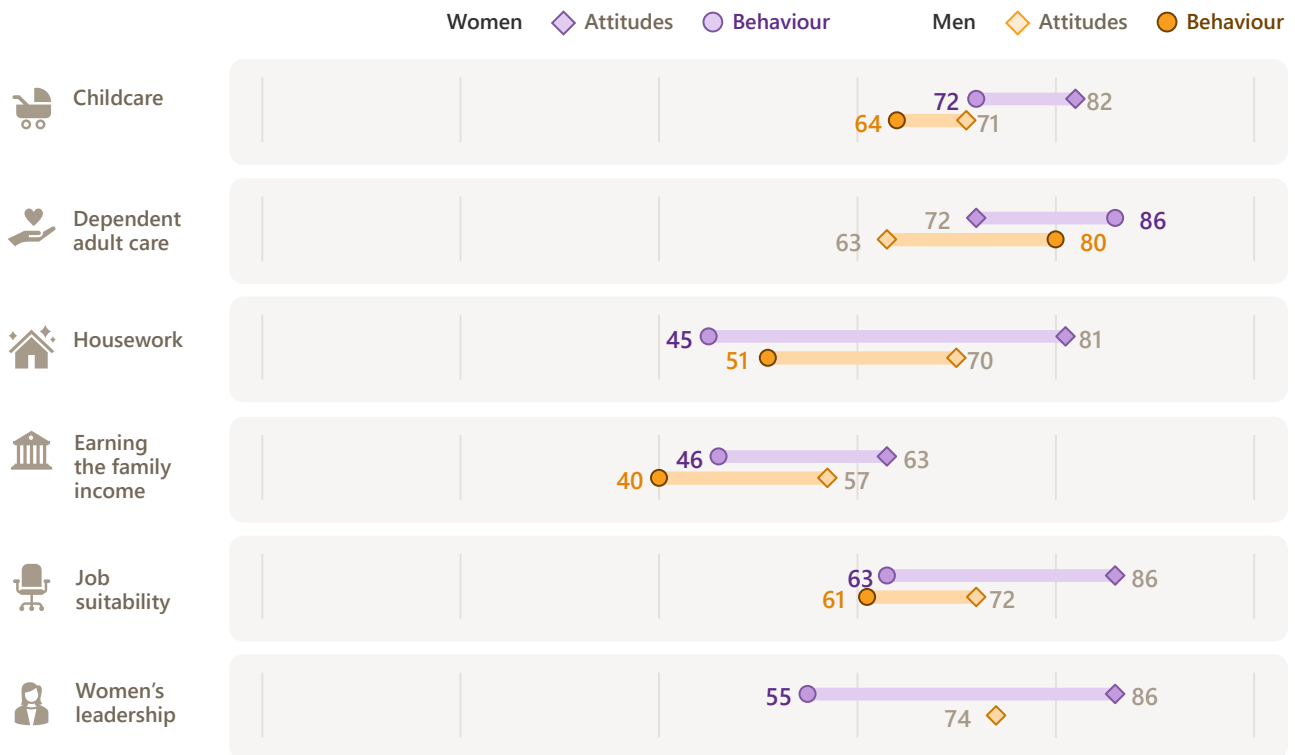
In **Childcare and Housework**, most participants say responsibilities should be shared, but a sizeable proportion still report women doing most of the work.



In **Earning Family Income**, support for equal sharing is relatively high, yet a large proportion of respondents still report the man as primary earner.



In the **Dependent Adult Care** domain, gender-equal behaviours appear more commonly reported than attitudes, indicating other drivers of behaviour change.



Only women were asked the behaviour question on women's leadership.

Gender Equality Advocacy

- **Advocacy levels in Malaysia were lower** compared to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, especially among men.
- **Some people with gender-equal attitudes do not engage in advocacy** because of a perceived hostile or unsupportive sociopolitical environment.
- **Women tend to negotiate more equal roles quietly** within the household but do not identify as advocates or participate in public campaigns, to avoid conflict or backlash.
- Where advocacy appears, it often focuses on **workplace equality and protection from discrimination**.

Support for Gender Equality is Underestimated

Malaysian respondents **underestimate attitudes and behaviour across domains**, but more so around equal sharing of caregiving and domestic roles.

Underestimation of behaviours was highest in the Dependent Adult Care domain (23 percentage points for women and 17 percentage points for men).



Women underestimate equal attitudes more strongly than men. This underestimation was most pronounced in Job Suitability and Women's Leadership (15 percentage points each).



In Earning Family Income, **women and men overestimate the prevalence of gender-equal attitudes and behaviours** among their peers by 1–8 percentage points.

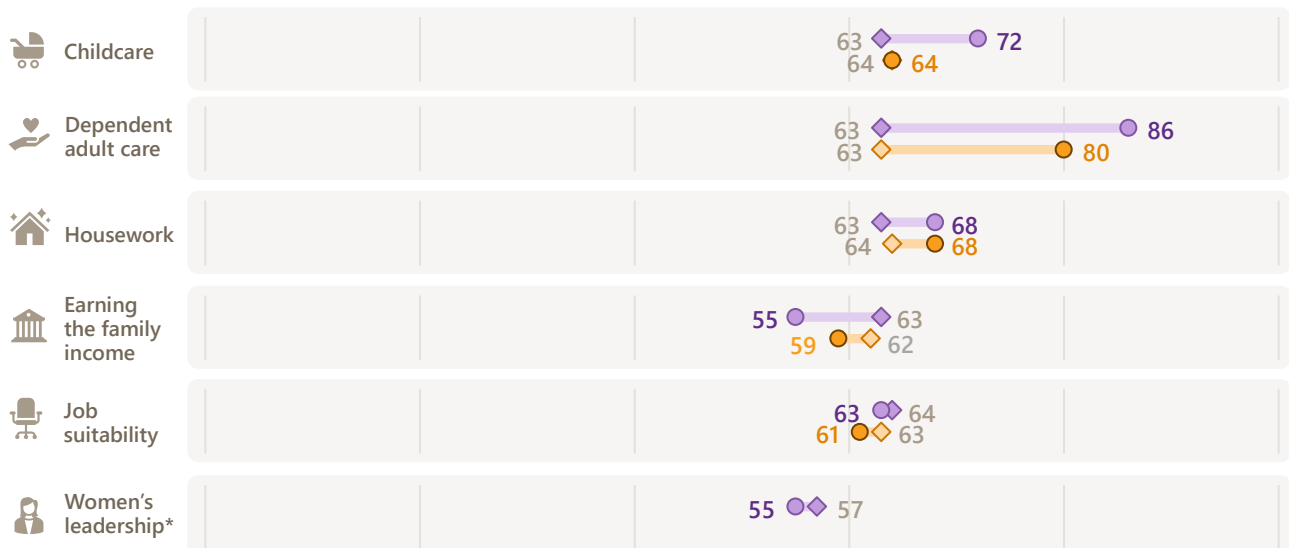
These are favourable overestimates: People think others are slightly more supportive and more egalitarian in their earning patterns than they actually are.

Women ◆ Estimated ● Reported Men ◆ Estimated ● Reported

Misperceptions of Gender-Equal Attitudes (%)



Misperceptions of Gender-Equal Behaviours (%)



* Only women were asked the behaviour question on women's leadership.



Socio Demographic Influences



Age

Younger cohorts appear more open to equal sharing. Older generations are still perceived as endorsing more traditional arrangements.



Education

Post-secondary education strongly correlates to gender-equal attitudes and practices. Qualitative findings show tertiary education broadens expectations for equality.



Media

Media serves as both enabler (showing role models, solidarity) and constraint (misogynistic backlash, unintended messaging about “doing it all”).



Social economic pressures

Rising living costs, gig work, and dual-income necessity increase women’s labour participation but risk deepening the double burden when care norms remain unchanged.



Geography and ethnicity

Attitudes and behaviours vary by region and ethnicity; for example, attitudes and behaviours differ between Malay, Chinese and Indian communities, reflecting distinct cultural traditions.



Religion

For some groups, religious practice can reinforce traditional household role assignments, though some religious men report more willingness to share housework.

Patterns across Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam



Strong support for gender equality across all countries, with women consistently more supportive than men. Attitudes are especially positive for job suitability and leadership.



Gender-equal behaviours fall behind attitudes, especially in the Childcare and Housework domains. Equal sharing is most common in Dependent Adult Care, but remains uneven across contexts and other domains in domestic roles.



Advocacy does not always translate into public action due to social or political constraints. The alignment is clearer between advocacy and attitudes, than between behaviours and attitudes. Women advocate for gender equality more than men.



People underestimate how supportive others are, particularly in domestic roles. These misperceptions highlight the opportunity to strengthen gender-equal attitudes and behaviours within the communities by correcting misperceptions.



Gender-equal behaviours vary by gender, age, education, religion, region and role-model exposure. Women's behaviours are shaped more by upbringing and work status; men's behaviours reflect the expectations of their reference networks.



Structural supports and reference networks can help shift gender attitudes and practices. Access to flexible work arrangements, affordable care services and supportive partners and peer networks can enable equality in both caregiving and economic roles.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

SNAPS is grounded in Cristina Bicchieri's theory of social norms. This theory distinguishes between independent preferences and conditional preferences, which are affected by social expectations. It helps identify where individuals' personal beliefs diverge from their behaviours.

The framework integrates the IW Women's Economic Equality (WEE) Model, which recognises that gender norms do not operate in isolation but intersect with structural and institutional factors such as labour market constraints, care infrastructure, workplace policies and cultural environments. When these structural enablers and constraints interact with norms, they shape how gender-equal attitudes translate—or fail to translate—into behaviour.

The analysis also incorporates concepts of pluralistic ignorance, where individuals misperceive the extent to which others support or practice gender equality, and positive deviance, which focuses on identifying and amplifying examples of gender-equal behaviour already present within communities. These concepts help reveal opportunities to shift expectations by showcasing visible, relatable examples of gender equality in action.

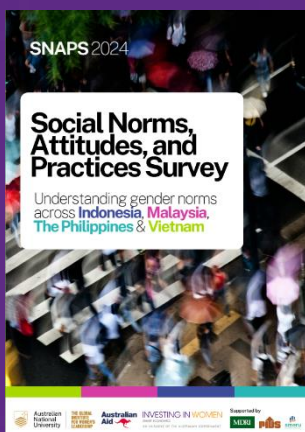
METHODOLOGY

SNAPS 2024 uses a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture both the prevalence and the underlying drivers of gender norms. The quantitative component consists of an online survey of 8,000 urban respondents aged 18–40 across four countries. Samples were quota-balanced by gender. Representativeness quotas were used on age and region based on the latest population census per country.

In each country, the survey included 2,000 respondents, with questions covering gender-equal attitudes, behaviours, advocacy and social expectations related to caregiving and economic roles.

The qualitative component includes interviews, focus groups, and validation workshops with the general public, experts and stakeholders. These insights help contextualise quantitative findings and highlight nuance in how norms are understood and enacted.

Analyses include descriptive statistics, difference-of-means tests to identify misperceptions, and multivariate regressions to explore factors linked with gender-equal attitudes, behaviours, and advocacy. Latent profile analysis was used to reveal the interconnectedness between attitudes, behaviours, and advocacy, highlighting the complexity of these dimensions.



Click [here](#) or scan the code to download **SNAPS 2024**.



Click [here](#) or scan the code to download a related report on the **Future Demand for Care**.

