



# The Association Between Education Level and Support for Environmental Policies

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## Introduction

- Previous studies have been done to analyze the association between various demographic factors and environmental attitudes (Cottrell, 2003).
- The Coyle (2005) showed that there was a positive association between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behaviors.
- Different personal experiences regarding climate change have led to different perceptions about the issue, yet many people recognize how climate change will heavily impact the environmental services they depend on (Cornell, 2019).
- Development of industries and global trading sectors have led to side effects that negatively impact the environment and contribute to climate change.
- A possible association between education level and environmental policy support score could help to emphasize the importance of environmental education.

## Research Questions

- Is there an association between education level and environmental policy support score?
- Is there still an association between education level and environmental policy support score after controlling gender?

## Methods

### Sample

- NSEE (National Surveys on Energy and Environment) dataset from 2017 provided the data from adults (18+ older) who reside in the United States.

### Measures

- Education level was measured with the question "What your highest level of education?" and responses are coded into 1: "Less than HS graduate", 2: "HS Graduate", 3: "Some college or technical school", 4: "College graduate", 5: "Grad or professional degree"
- Environmental policies score was the summation of responses to 5 questions, responses to those questions are coded into 5 categories (0: "Not sure", 1: "Strongly Oppose", 2: "Somewhat Oppose", 3: "Neutral", 4: "Somewhat Support", 5: "Strongly Support"

## Results

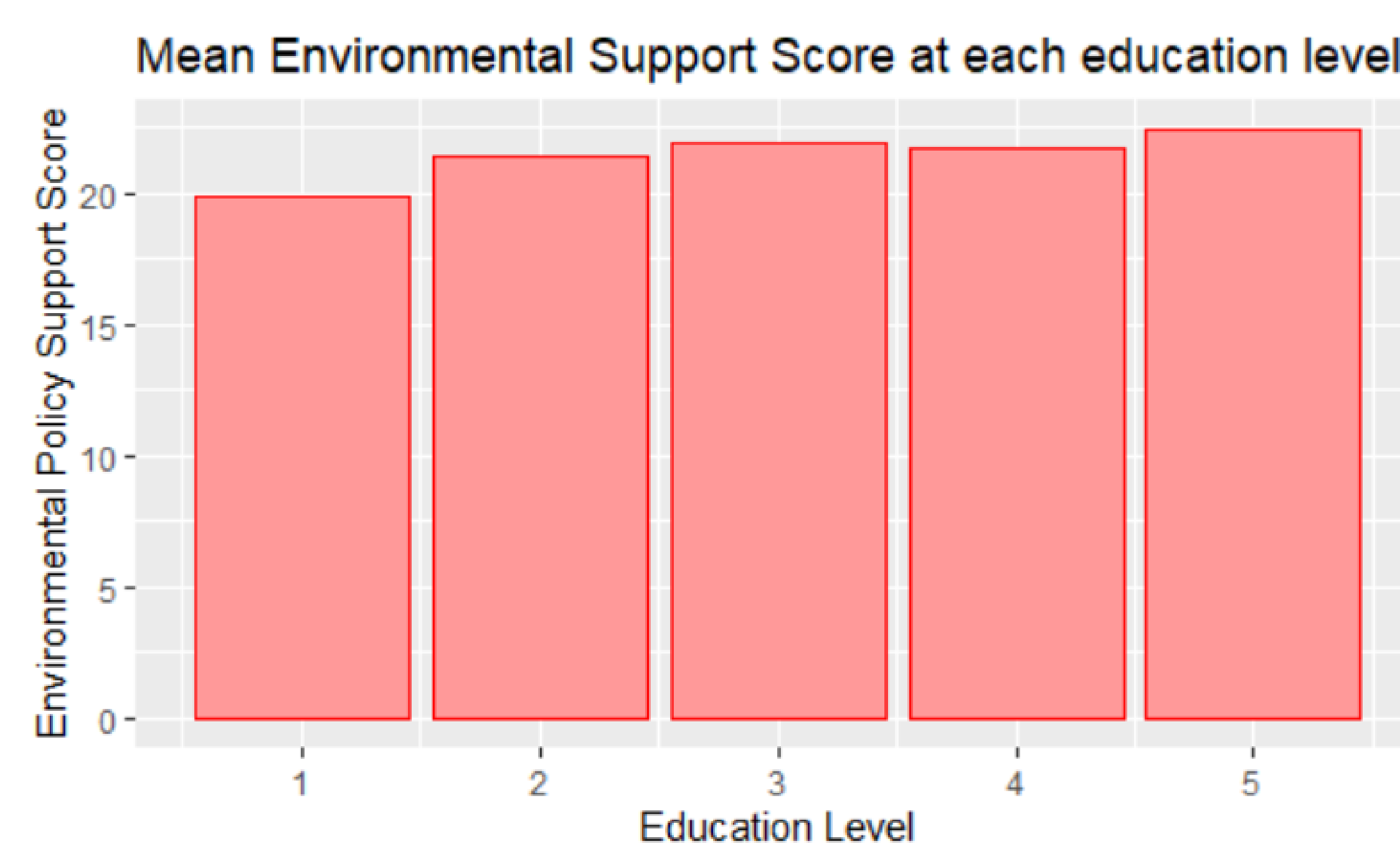
### Univariate

- 22.574% of the participants had an education level of high school and below.

### Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis revealed that among adults living in the US (my sample), **education level and the Environmental policies support were significantly associated**, ( $F: 6.259, p=.0000541$ ).

Figure 1. Environmental Policy Support Score and Education level



- Post hoc comparisons of the Environmental Policy Support score by each education level revealed that those **who have the education level of grad or professional degree reported significantly more environmental support** score than those who have **education level less than high school graduate**.

### Multivariate

- As shown in figure 2, **Gender doesn't appear to be a moderating variable** affecting the association between Environmental Policy support score. Yet, **male do appear to have higher environmental policy support score than female at each education level**.
- After controlling for gender, education level is still significantly associated with environmental policy support score ( $B=0.36, p<0.0000879$ ).

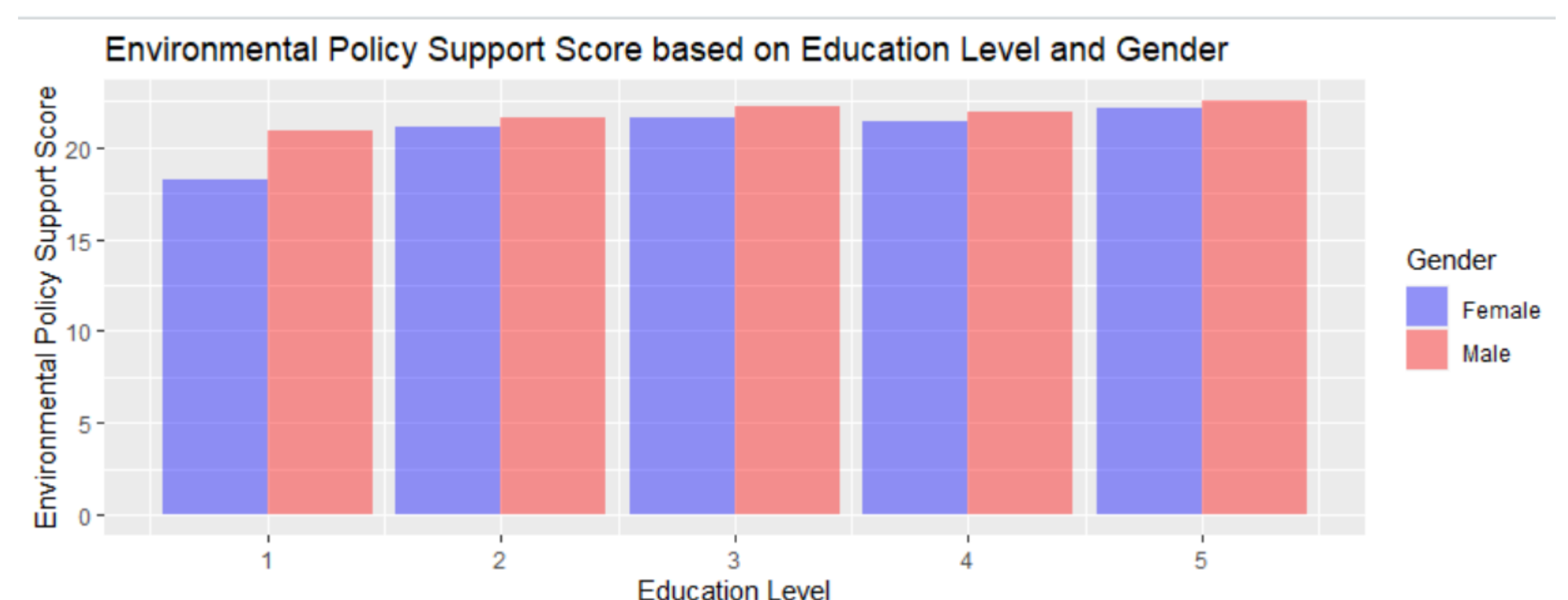


Figure 2. Environmental Support Policy score vs. Education Level and Gender

## Discussion

- Higher education level is associated with higher environmental knowledge, thus affecting the supports regarding environmental policy. The more people are aware about environmental problems, the more likely they are willing to do more to help protect the environment.
- This can help emphasize the importance of environmental education in schools specifically at various education levels. Educators and school administration can prioritize environmental education in their curriculums.
- Future research could be done to look at whether specific environmental policies influence people's concerns regarding environmental issues. For instance, it would be interesting to look at whether policies that deal closely with economic factors will gain support from people versus policies that can affect fuel consumptions.
- Additionally, future research could be done to see why there is a gender difference for environmental support score.

Coyle, K. (2005). Environmental Literacy in America: What Ten Years of NEETF/Roper Research and Related Studies Say about Environmental Literacy in the U.S. *National Environmental Education & Training Foundation*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED522820.pdf>

Cottrell, S. P. (2003). Influence of Sociodemographics and Environmental Attitudes on General Responsible Environmental Behavior among Recreational Boaters. *Environment and Behavior*, 35(3), 347-375. doi:10.1177/0013916503035003003

Joseph D. Cornell, C. Q.-S., Katrina Running, Antonio J. Castro. (2019). Examining concern about climate change and local environmental changes from an ecosystem service perspective in the Western U.S. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 101, 221-231. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.08.021>