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SAME DIMENSIONS, HALF THE SCORE: A COMPOSITE INDEX AND THE COMPONENTS PUBLISHED BESIDE IT

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ABSTRACT
Jambi and Jawa Timur record almost identical scores on both published dimensions of Indonesia's community literacy development index — 0.5650 against 0.5670 on the first and 0.5920 against 0.5610 on the second — and composite scores of 25.53 and 56.29, differing by a factor of 2.2. Using Central Statistics Agency figures for 2025 across the thirty-three provinces with data, this article examines the relationship between the composite and the two dimensions published alongside it. The two dimensions correlate with each other at 0.9462 on Pearson and 0.8807 on Spearman, so they carry very nearly the same information; their coefficients of variation are 0.3236 and 0.3285. The composite correlates with the first dimension at 0.8568 and the second at 0.8222, but with the simple average of the two at only 0.8506 on Pearson and 0.7574 on Spearman — less than with either dimension taken alone. Provinces move an average of 4.79 rank places of thirty-three between the composite and the average of its dimensions, and Jambi moves twenty-four. The article concludes that the composite is not a function of the components published with it, that the two dimensions are close to a single dimension, and that a user cannot reconstruct the index from the table in which it appears.

1. INTRODUCTION

A composite index is published with its components so that a reader can see what it is made of. The implicit contract is that the components explain the composite: a province scoring well on each should score well overall, and a reader should be able to reconstruct the ordering, if not the exact values, from the parts.

The Central Statistics Agency publishes the community literacy development index for thirty-three provinces together with two dimensions, described as compliance and performance. This article tests the contract on that table.

It does not hold. Jambi scores 0.5650 on the first dimension and 0.5920 on the second; Jawa Timur scores 0.5670 and 0.5610. The two provinces are within 0.0020 and 0.0310 of one another on the two published components. Their composite scores are 25.53 and 56.29.

The general pattern confirms the case. The composite correlates with the simple average of its two published dimensions at 0.8506 on Pearson and 0.7574 on Spearman, which is lower than its correlation with the first dimension alone. Provinces shift an average of 4.79 rank places of thirty-three between the two orderings.

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The research gap is that Indonesian composite educational indices are used without their internal consistency being examined, so the extent to which a published composite is recoverable from its published components is unknown. This article measures it for one index and states what a user of that index can and cannot infer.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Composite indices and their components

A first strand concerns the construction and use of composite educational measures.

Adeleke and McSharry (2022) show that a country's score on the United Nations Education Index is well predicted by a small number of indicators, which is the favourable case: the composite behaves as a summary of things that are separately measurable. Wagner, Nair, Thapa and Kumar (2025) construct a Gini-based learning inequality index designed to be comparable across contexts, and the design work is the contribution.

Doz, Bone and Felda (2026) propose a multidimensional mathematics grade using fuzzy logic, in which the aggregation rule is stated explicitly and is the object of the paper. Coates (2026) fits a diagnostic classification model to an international assessment, recovering the latent structure rather than assuming it.

Gates, Teasdale, Shim and Hubacz (2024) argue for explicit specification of evaluative criteria in education, on the ground that an unstated criterion cannot be examined. A composite index whose aggregation rule is not recoverable from its published components is an instance of exactly that problem.

2.2 Dimensionality

A second strand concerns whether a measure with several named dimensions has several.

Min and Aryadoust (2021) review item response theory in language assessment and draw out the implications for whether language ability is one dimension or many, concluding that the answer is often fewer than the instrument assumes. Stals, Isac and Claes (2024) evaluate multi-dimensionality and cross-national comparability in a measure of political trust and find both to fail in places.

Goldhaber, Grout, Wolff and Martinkova (2021) assess the dimensionality and reliability of professional reference ratings and find both weaker than their use implies. White and Maher (2024) ask what a standardised observation system adds to an existing evaluation, which is the incremental-information question this article poses for a second dimension.

O'Neill, Lauridsen, Ostengaard and Qvortrup (2023) review validity evidence for a widely used questionnaire and find its use has outrun that evidence. Nazari, Karimpour and Ranjbar (2023) examine assessment literacy as an ecology rather than a trait, which is a further caution against treating a named dimension as a thing.

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2.3 When a measure does not measure what it names

A third strand documents failures of correspondence between an educational statistic and its concept.

Fazlul, Koedel and Parsons (2023) demonstrate that free and reduced-price meal enrolment does not measure student poverty despite its universal use as that proxy. Viano, Baker, Ford and Johnston-Guerrero (2024) find racial classifications inconsistent across a single literature, and Ford, Iantosca and Cate (2025) document the variability of self-identification underlying them.

Bokhove, Jerrim and Sims (2024) test an official inspection grade against a plausible source of bias. Atasoy and Kaya (2022) synthesise formative assessment practice across studies and find the term covering heterogeneous activity.

The present article differs from these in one respect: it does not question whether the index measures literacy, which would require an external criterion. It asks only whether the published composite follows from the published components, which is answerable from the table alone.

2.4 Literacy as an object of measurement

A fourth strand supplies the substantive context.

Min and Aryadoust (2021) address the assessment of language ability directly. Ghanbari and Abdolrezapour (2021) incorporate emotional intelligence into a writing assessment, and Sadoughi and Hejazi (2023) relate teacher support and mindset to engagement in second-language learning; both indicate that the constructs surrounding literacy are numerous and interrelated.

Serrano-Ardila, Baena-Navarro and Carriazo-Regino (2026) propose a model for digital integration in rural education, and Hall and Lundin (2024) evaluate classroom computers; the reading environment a literacy index attempts to capture increasingly includes both. Zhang and An (2026) relate perceived classroom evaluation to deep learning through motivation and self-efficacy.

None of this bears on the arithmetic question examined here, and it is cited to establish that literacy is a construct with a large surrounding literature and that an index of it is a serious undertaking rather than a formality.

2.5 Why an index gets used anyway

A fifth strand explains why the question this article asks is rarely asked, which bears on how the finding should be received.

Engel and Burch (2021) set out methodological considerations for policy sociology in a global era and observe that comparative work depends on indicators that travel, so that an available index acquires authority from its availability. Ahmed (2023) argues that the field has persistently asked the wrong questions of a perennial crisis, and one form of that is accepting an indicator because it exists rather than because it has been checked.

Armand, Herman and Honore (2024) decompose inequality of educational opportunity into circumstances a child does not choose, an exercise that requires each component to be separately meaningful; where a composite is not decomposable into its published parts, such work cannot be done with it. Yan and Pastore (2022) develop and validate a scale, and in that paper the validation is the

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contribution rather than a preliminary — which is the standard this article applies to an index already in use.

The asymmetry is the point. Constructing a measure attracts methodological scrutiny as a matter of course; using one that has already been constructed usually does not, and a published composite carries an authority its components never earned individually.

2.6 The research gap

The internal consistency of Indonesian composite educational indices has not been examined. This article tests whether one such index is recoverable from the components published with it, and finds that it is not.

3. METHOD

The data are the Central Statistics Agency table Indeks Pembangunan Literasi Masyarakat dan Dimensi Penyusunnya Menurut Provinsi for 2025, retrieved on 30 August 2026. It reports three columns for each province: the index itself, on a scale that runs in the published data from 2.74 to 56.29; a compliance dimension on a scale from 0.1010 to 0.5770; and a performance dimension from 0.1100 to 0.5980.

Five of the thirty-eight provinces carry no data in any column — Bali, Papua Barat Daya, Papua Selatan, Papua Tengah and Papua Pegunungan — leaving thirty-three provinces. A companion analysis treats the absences themselves; here they are simply excluded and the working population is thirty-three throughout.

Four relationships are computed. The two dimensions are correlated with each other. The composite is correlated with each dimension separately. The composite is correlated with the simple unweighted average of the two dimensions, which is the aggregation a reader would attempt in the absence of any other information. Both Pearson and Spearman coefficients are reported for each.

Rank displacement is computed as the absolute difference between a province's rank on the composite and its rank on the average of the two dimensions, across the thirty-three provinces, and is reported as a mean and for the largest cases.

Five limitations apply, and the first is fundamental. The published table does not state the aggregation rule, the weights, or whether the index has components beyond the two dimensions shown. This article therefore cannot say why the composite departs from its components, only that it does and by how much. Second, the scales of the composite and the dimensions differ by two orders of magnitude, so only rank and correlation comparisons are meaningful and no arithmetic reconstruction is attempted. Third, five provinces are absent. Fourth, one year is observed. Fifth, the analysis is internal to the table and uses no external criterion.

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The two dimensions are close to one

Table 1 reports the relationship between the two published dimensions.

Table 1. The two dimensions of the literacy index across 33 provinces, 2025

Quantity	Compliance	Performance	Between the two
Mean	0.3866	0.3987	—
Coefficient of variation	0.3236	0.3285	—
Minimum	0.1010 (Papua)	0.1100 (Papua)	same province
Maximum	0.5770 (Banten)	0.5980 (Banten)	same province
Pearson correlation	—	—	0.9462
Spearman correlation	—	—	0.8807

Computed by the authors from Central Statistics Agency, Indeks Pembangunan Literasi Masyarakat dan Dimensi Penyusunnya Menurut Provinsi, 2025, retrieved 30 August 2026, across the 33 provinces with data.

The two dimensions have almost the same mean, 0.3866 and 0.3987, and almost the same dispersion, with coefficients of variation of 0.3236 and 0.3285. The same province holds the minimum on both and the same province the maximum on both.

They correlate at 0.9462, so the first accounts for 89.5 per cent of the variance in the second. The Spearman coefficient of 0.8807 is lower but still high, and the divergence of 0.0655 is within the range that ordinary curvature produces.

On this evidence the two named dimensions carry very nearly the same information across Indonesian provinces. Whatever the conceptual distinction between compliance and performance in the index design, the two do not separate provinces differently. Min and Aryadoust (2021) reach the same kind of conclusion for language assessment instruments with more named dimensions than the data support.

4.2 The composite does not follow from them

Table 2 relates the composite to the dimensions published beside it.

Table 2. The composite index against its published dimensions, 33 provinces

Relationship	Pearson	Spearman	Shared variance (Pearson)
Index vs compliance dimension	0.8568	—	73.4%
Index vs performance dimension	0.8222	—	67.6%
Index vs average of the two	0.8506	0.7574	72.4%

Computed by the authors from the series named at Table 1. The average of the two dimensions is their unweighted arithmetic mean, which is the aggregation available to a reader with no further information. Shared variance is the square of the Pearson coefficient.

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The composite correlates with the average of its own two published dimensions at 0.8506, which is lower than its correlation with the compliance dimension taken alone at 0.8568. Adding the second dimension to the first makes the combination a slightly worse predictor of the published composite than the first dimension by itself.

This is the article's central arithmetic point. If the composite were any positively weighted combination of the two dimensions, the average would predict it at least as well as either component alone, and generally better. That it does not means the composite contains information not present in the two columns published with it.

The Spearman coefficient of 0.7574 against a Pearson of 0.8506 adds that the ordering diverges more than the values do. Twenty-six per cent of the variance in the composite is unexplained by the average of its dimensions on the linear measure and 43 per cent on the rank measure.

4.3 The provinces that move

Table 3 identifies the provinces whose position changes most between the composite and the average of its dimensions.

Table 3. Largest rank displacements between the index and the average of its dimensions

Province	Rank on index	Rank on average	Index value	Displacement
Jambi	8	32	25.53	24 places
Papua Barat	16	29	34.64	13 places
Sulawesi Barat	9	19	25.72	10 places
Nusa Tenggara Timur	25	16	40.56	9 places
Kepulauan Riau	19	27	36.04	8 places
Kalimantan Utara	18	10	35.87	8 places

Computed by the authors from the series named at Table 1. Rank 1 is the lowest value; ranks run to 33. The mean absolute displacement across all 33 provinces is 4.79 places.

The mean absolute displacement is 4.79 places of thirty-three, which is 14.5 per cent of the range of ranks. A reader constructing an ordering from the published dimensions would place the average province almost five positions away from where the published index places it.

Jambi moves twenty-four places, from eighth on the index to thirty-second on the average of the dimensions. Its dimension scores of 0.5650 and 0.5920 are the third- and second-highest in the country; its index value of 25.53 is the eighth-lowest of thirty-three.

The reverse cases exist too. Nusa Tenggara Timur ranks twenty-fifth on the index and sixteenth on the average, and Kalimantan Utara eighteenth and tenth. The displacement is not a systematic shift in one direction; it is a reordering.

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4.4 The Jambi and Jawa Timur comparison

One pair of provinces states the problem as compactly as it can be stated, and Table 4 sets it out.

Table 4. Two provinces with near-identical dimension scores

Province	Compliance	Performance	Composite index
Jambi	0.5650	0.5920	25.53
Jawa Timur	0.5670	0.5610	56.29
Difference	0.0020	0.0310	30.76
Jawa Barat, for contrast	0.1930	0.1750	18.07

Computed by the authors from the series named at Table 1. Jawa Barat is shown because it holds the lowest dimension scores of the three provinces and an index value between the other two, which no monotone function of the dimensions produces.

Jambi and Jawa Timur differ by 0.0020 on the compliance dimension and 0.0310 on the performance dimension — on scales whose full observed ranges are 0.4760 and 0.4880, so the two provinces are within 0.4 and 6.4 per cent of the range of one another. Their composite scores are 25.53 and 56.29, differing by 30.76 points on a scale whose full observed range is 53.55.

Jambi is in fact the higher of the two on the performance dimension. On any weighted average of the two published components, Jambi and Jawa Timur would be adjacent and Jambi would plausibly be above.

The fourth row completes the demonstration. Jawa Barat scores 0.1930 and 0.1750, far below both other provinces on both dimensions, and its index value of 18.07 sits below Jambi's 25.53 — which is consistent — and far below Jawa Timur's 56.29. But the spacing is wrong: Jawa Barat is 0.3720 below Jambi on the compliance dimension and 7.46 index points below it, while Jambi is 0.0020 above Jawa Timur and 30.76 index points below. No monotone function of the two dimensions produces that arrangement.

4.5 What could explain it

The article can identify the discrepancy and cannot resolve it, but the candidate explanations are worth listing because they carry different consequences for a user.

The first is that the index has components beyond the two published. If the composite is built from three or more dimensions and only two appear in the table, the residual is simply the missing one, and the table is incomplete rather than inconsistent. This is the most likely explanation and it is the least damaging, though it means the table as published cannot be used to interrogate the index.

The second is that the aggregation is not a weighted average. A geometric mean, a minimum, or a rule with thresholds would all produce composites that a linear average predicts imperfectly. None of the simple alternatives, however, produces the Jambi and Jawa Timur arrangement, since all of them are monotone in each component.

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The third is that the dimensions are reported at a different level of aggregation from the composite — for instance, that the index is computed at district level and averaged, while the dimensions are computed directly at provincial level. Aragon, Restuccia and Rud (2024) show in a different field that the unit of aggregation changes a derived statistic materially, and the mechanism is available here.

The fourth is a reporting or transcription difference between the columns. This cannot be assessed from the table and is raised only because it cannot be excluded.

What a user needs, and what would settle the matter, is the published methodology: the list of components, the weights and the level at which each is computed. Gates, Teasdale, Shim and Hubacz (2024) argue that evaluative criteria must be stated explicitly to be examinable, and the same holds for an aggregation rule.

4.6 The index distribution itself

Independent of the aggregation question, the distribution of the composite is worth reporting because it is unusually wide.

Across the thirty-three provinces the index runs from 2.74 in Papua to 56.29 in Jawa Timur, a factor of 20.5. Its mean is 32.67 and its median 34.98, and its coefficient of variation is 0.3827 against 0.3236 and 0.3285 for the two dimensions.

The composite is therefore more dispersed than either of its published components, which is the opposite of what averaging produces: an average of two positively correlated variables has a coefficient of variation between theirs, not above both. This is a second internal inconsistency and it points in the same direction as the first.

The provinces at the extremes are not the ones a reader of the schooling statistics would predict. Jawa Barat, the most populous province in Indonesia, scores 18.07 and ranks fifth-lowest of thirty-three; Nusa Tenggara Timur, which has the widest school completion gap in the country, scores 40.56 and ranks above the median. A companion analysis examines the relationship between this index and the school system directly and finds it weak.

4.7 A note on the scales

The composite runs from 2.74 to 56.29 and the dimensions from 0.1010 to 0.5770 and 0.1100 to 0.5980, so the three columns are on scales differing by two orders of magnitude. This is worth a paragraph because it is the most likely source of a reader misinterpreting the table.

A reader encountering the three columns together would reasonably suppose the composite to be the dimensions rescaled — multiplied by a hundred, say, and combined. Under that supposition Jambi, with dimensions of 0.5650 and 0.5920, would be expected in the mid-fifties, and it scores 25.53. Jawa Timur, at 0.5670 and 0.5610, scores 56.29, which is very close to what the supposition predicts.

The scale mismatch therefore does not explain the discrepancy; it makes it harder to notice. Where all three columns ran on the same scale, the Jambi row would be visibly anomalous to anyone reading down the page, and the check this article performs would be unnecessary.

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The general recommendation that follows is that a composite and its components should be published on a common scale wherever the aggregation permits it, or that the transformation between them should be stated in the table notes. Gates, Teasdale, Shim and Hubacz (2024) make the parallel argument for evaluative criteria: what is not stated cannot be examined, and what cannot be examined is taken on trust.

4.8 Implications for practice

Four implications follow.

First, the index should not be used as though it summarised the two dimensions published with it. It correlates with their average at 0.8506 on Pearson and 0.7574 on Spearman, and provinces move an average of 4.79 rank places between the two orderings.

Second, the two dimensions should not be treated as separate axes for analysis. They correlate at 0.9462 and the same province holds each extreme on both; a study using them as independent variables is using one variable twice.

Third, any provincial ranking on this index should be published with the caveat that it is not reproducible from the accompanying columns. Jambi at eighth on the index and thirty-second on the dimensions is not a marginal case that careful reading would resolve.

Fourth, the general practice this argues for is cheap. Where a composite is published with components, correlating the composite against the components takes minutes and would have surfaced this. Adeleke and McSharry (2022) perform the favourable version of the same exercise on an international index and find it well behaved, which is the result one hopes for and should therefore check.

4.9 Limitations of the finding

Four limitations bound the result.

The article does not have the index methodology and the discrepancy may be fully explained by components not shown in the table. If so, the finding reduces to the statement that the table is not self-contained, which is still worth knowing for a user of the table but is a weaker claim than an inconsistency.

Five provinces are absent, including Bali, and the excluded set is not random: four of the five are the provinces created in 2022. The correlations reported are computed on thirty-three provinces and would change by an unknown amount with the full thirty-eight.

One year is observed, so the article cannot say whether the discrepancy is a feature of the 2025 compilation or a persistent property of the index. A two-year comparison would distinguish them and is the obvious next step.

Finally, no external criterion is used. The article establishes an internal inconsistency and says nothing about whether the index measures literacy well, which would require an independent literacy measure that Indonesia does not publish at provincial level.

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5. CONCLUSION

The Indonesian community literacy development index is published with two dimensions, and the composite cannot be recovered from them. It correlates with the compliance dimension at 0.8568, with the performance dimension at 0.8222, and with the average of the two at 0.8506 — lower than with the first dimension alone, which no positively weighted aggregation of the two would produce.

The two dimensions are close to a single dimension. They correlate at 0.9462 on Pearson and 0.8807 on Spearman, have coefficients of variation of 0.3236 and 0.3285, and the same province holds the minimum and the maximum on both.

Provinces move an average of 4.79 rank places of thirty-three between the composite and the average of its components. Jambi moves twenty-four places, from eighth on the index to thirty-second on the dimensions; its dimension scores of 0.5650 and 0.5920 are among the highest in the country and its index value of 25.53 among the lowest.

The clearest single case is Jambi against Jawa Timur. The two are within 0.0020 and 0.0310 of one another on the two published components — under half a per cent and six and a half per cent of the observed ranges — and their composites are 25.53 and 56.29.

The most likely explanation is that the index has components not shown in the table, in which case the finding is that the table is not self-contained and a user cannot interrogate the index from it. The remedy in either case is the same: publish the aggregation rule and the full component list, and check a composite against its components before using it, which takes minutes and would have surfaced this.

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