

Are you ready for change?

Gender equality attitudes study 2019



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Table of contents

1. Introduction	2
2. The 10-country pilot phase.....	3
3. Findings of the 10-country pilot study	5
3.1 Barriers to accessing education and health care rights.....	6
3.1a Education.....	7
3.1b Health care	10
3.2 Barriers at the individual and household level: Personal decisions, marriage/family life and safety/violence.....	13
3.2a Control of personal decisions	14
3.2b Marriage and family life	15
3.2c Safety and violence	19
3.3 Barriers at work/employment, access to property and control of personal finances	21
3.3a Work/employment (work for pay), property and finances.....	22
3.3b Access to physical property.....	25
3.3c Control over personal finances.....	27
3.4 Barriers by society at large.....	29
3.4a Barriers to safety in public and the workplace.....	30
3.4b Leadership and participation	33
3.5 A consensus moving forward: Barriers must be eliminated to ensure opportunities for all women	34
4. Findings by country.....	38
4.1 Colombia	39
4.2 India	41
4.3 Japan.....	43
4.4 Kenya	45
4.5 Nigeria	47
4.6 The Philippines.....	49
4.7 Sweden	51
4.8 Turkey	53
4.9 United Arab Emirates.....	55
4.10 United States.....	57
5. Annex.....	59

Introduction

Discriminatory social norms lead to a wide range of persistent human rights violations and the systematic denial of women's equal access to political participation, employment, education and justice, while also gravely undermining women's protection from all forms of discrimination and violence.

Not only do these norms pose grave impediments to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, but they also continue to hinder the social, economic and sustainable development of nations around the world. Although significant efforts are being made to address stereotypical gender roles, attitudes and practices, these efforts are limited, under-resourced, poorly supported and uncoordinated; experience of what works is not adequately shared.

The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, widely considered the blueprint for the achievement of gender equality.

Leveraging attitudinal change as a vehicle for gender equality appears as a critical tactic towards accelerating the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and notably, SDG-5, on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It is in this

context that the Gender Equality Attitudes Study was developed under the leadership of UN Women and in partnership with five private sector organizations, including AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Kantar, Procter & Gamble and Unilever.

The Gender Equality Attitudes Study aims to quantify the scale of harmful gender-based stereotypes, thus developing a greater awareness of the attitudes that perpetuate these stereotypes and impede their elimination. Kantar, a data, insights and consulting company offered to leverage its global infrastructure for the development, fielding and analysis of the study.

The findings from this study are meant to inform policy-makers, representatives from academia, advertisers, marketers, private sector leaders, civil society and other types of decision-makers on the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes and gendered roles that perpetuate gender inequality and subordinate women's status in society. They will also inform the preparations and outcome of the forthcoming Generation Equality Forum, convened by UN Women in partnership with France and Mexico, as it sets an agenda of concrete action to realize gender equality before 2030.

2.

The 10-country pilot phase

In 2018, a Gender Equality Attitudes pilot study was initiated to shed light on the existence and magnitude of stereotypical attitudes and gender bias. The study focused on 10 countries, including Colombia, India, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, The Philippines, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and United States.

The study serves as an evidence-based instrument that demonstrates how leveraging attitudinal change can be used as a critical tactic towards advancing gender equality. The findings have the potential to inform policymakers, advertisers, private sector leaders, civil society and decision-makers on challenging discriminatory attitudes and gender roles that perpetuate gender inequality and women's subordinate status in society.

Key messages emanating from the 10-country pilot study include:

Key Message 1:

People are aware of gender inequalities faced by women across development dimensions.

Gaps are perceived to be smaller or nonexistent in access to basic services like education and health.

48% think the quality of healthcare is good or excellent for most women (compared to 46% for men).

53% think it is easy for most women to get quality education (compared to 58% for men).

Significant gaps are perceived in areas of social interaction:

a) Within the household:

56% think that most women have control over their lives (compared to 70% for men).

53% think that most women feel safe when in their home (compared to 66% for men).

57% think that most women have a lot of influence on the decision of who to marry (compared to 68% for men).

57% think most women have control over their personal finances (compared to 71% for men).

b) In the economy:

43% think that it is easy for most women to be hired as skilled worker (compared to 55% for men).

50% think that most women have easy access to buy property (compared to 68% for men).

c) In politics:

35% think that it is easy for most women to run for elected office (compared to 63% for men).

Key message 2:

Still, social norms and cultural attitudes justify gender discrimination—among the very same respondents.

31% think it is appropriate for men to discuss a female's colleague appearance at work.

22% think that there are acceptable circumstances for someone to hit a spouse/partner.

28% think that a woman should not earn more than her husband.

29% think that --for the same job—men should be paid more than women.

41% think that when a mother works, the children suffer.

13% do not agree that women should have access to family planning.

23% do not agree that women should be free to refuse sex with her partner.

Key message 3:

People think media contributes to gender stereotyping.

54 % think that media only portrays women in certain roles.

53 % think that media only portrays men in certain roles.

Key Message 4:

There is an overwhelming consensus that gender equality is important for the country's future success.

84% believe that it is essential for society to treat women as equal to men.

91% believe equal pay for equal work regardless of a person's gender is important for the country's future success.

89% believe more affordable primary health care for women is important for the country's future success.

88% believe more access to higher education for women is important for the country's future success.

91% believe more respect for women's rights in all areas is important for the country's future success.

78% believe more opportunities for women in politics are important for the country's success.

87% believe in more opportunities for women in business are important for the country's success.

3.

Findings of the 10-country pilot study

This report summarizes the overall results and findings from the analysis in the nine focus areas of the sampled 10 countries selected for this pilot study.

Overall, the majority of respondents agree gender equality is the highest opportunity in the way forward towards a more equal society. Yet, there are significant gender-based stereotypes across all 10 pilot countries (developed and developing) and in all the nine focus areas that are not being systematically addressed.

While gaps are smaller in critical areas such as education and health, significant gaps exist in others such as media, workplace, public spaces and households.

Looking to the future, respondents agreed that these barriers should be eliminated as an important step in ensuring their country's future success.

3.1

Barriers to accessing education and health care rights

Respondents value that both women and men have similar opportunities in terms of the quality of basic health care and quality education. They also believe greater access to higher education and more affordable primary health care for women is important to their country's future success.

Differences in opinions—on current conditions that women and men face in their countries—are small. Still, women perceive a more profound disadvantage for themselves.

Interestingly, respondents agree that the level of education and health care is as poor (or as good) for most of the people in their country, regardless of people's gender. A country's income level plays an important role, and larger gender gaps in access to education and health care are observed at lower income levels (developing countries).

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