



# Attitudes towards Women's Political Participation in Southern Africa

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Compiled by: Monica Bandeira

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## Acknowledgements

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## **Executive summary**

The “Attitudes toward Women’s Political Participation in Southern Africa” survey gathered comprehensive insights from a total of 20,959 respondents across 16 countries. The survey aimed to measure public attitudes toward gender equality in the political sphere, identifying areas of progress as well as the persistent obstacles that continue to impede women’s full participation. With South Africa contributing the highest number of responses (2,221), followed closely by Mozambique and Madagascar, the dataset reflects a wide geographical diversity, offering a robust understanding of regional differences in perceptions and attitudes.

### **Sample composition and demographics**

The survey sample was relatively balanced across gender, with 54.8% female respondents, 45% male, and a small minority (0.2%) identifying as another sex or gender identity. The age distribution was also diverse: the largest age group, 26-40 years, comprised 33% of respondents, followed by 18-25-year-olds at 23%, and the 41-50 age group at 21%. Older age groups, 51-60 and 60+, represented 11% and 6% of the sample, respectively, while respondents under 18 accounted for 6%. Education levels varied, with 41% having tertiary education, 30% secondary school, 13% vocational education, 9% adult literacy, and 8% primary school education. Additionally, 7% of respondents indicated living with a disability, with the majority experiencing physical or sensory impairments.

### **Overall attitudes toward women’s political participation**

The survey revealed a generally positive outlook toward women’s involvement in politics, with an overall average score of 63. Sixty percent of respondents scored in the 50-74 range, reflecting supportive attitudes, while 23% scored in the 75-100 range, indicating very favourable views. Only 17% scored between 25-49, showing mixed attitudes, and less than 1% scored in the 0-24 range, indicating strong opposition. These findings suggest growing recognition of the importance of women’s roles in governance, although there is still room for improvement.

### **Key findings by thematic areas:**

1. **Gender differences in attitudes:** The survey uncovered significant gender-based disparities in attitudes. Women scored higher on average (66) compared to men (60), indicating greater support for gender equality in politics. Women were more likely to recognize the barriers faced by female politicians, such as gender-based violence and media bias. In contrast, men showed more variability in their attitudes, with some still adhering to traditional beliefs about gender roles. Notably, respondents identifying as another sex or gender identity had the highest average score of 67, though their small sample size limited statistical representation.
2. **Educational influence on attitudes:** Education emerged as a critical factor influencing attitudes. Respondents with tertiary education had the most supportive views, with an average score of 66. This suggests that higher educational attainment is associated with more progressive attitudes toward women’s political participation. Those with secondary education scored 62, while adult literacy program participants scored 61. In contrast, respondents with primary school or vocational education had the lowest scores (both at 59), indicating a need for educational interventions to foster more egalitarian views across all levels.

3. **Age variations:** Age also played a role in shaping attitudes. Respondents aged 41-50 exhibited the most supportive views, with an average score of 65, followed closely by those aged 51-60 at 64. The 26-40 and 60+ age groups both scored 63, reflecting moderately positive attitudes. Younger respondents, particularly those under 18, scored the lowest at 59, suggesting that traditional or less progressive views may be more prevalent among the youth. This age-based variation highlights the need for targeted educational campaigns to address generational gaps in attitudes.
4. **Geographical differences:** The survey revealed striking geographical disparities in support for women's political participation. Mozambique had the highest score at 78, indicating robust support and a cultural or policy environment that favors gender equality. Zimbabwe (74) and Botswana (71) also demonstrated strong support, likely due to active civil society efforts and visible female leadership. Countries like Malawi and Mauritius scored 69, showing moderate support, while Seychelles, Tanzania, and South Africa scored in the mid-60s, reflecting relatively progressive attitudes but with room for growth.

In contrast, lower scores were observed in the Comoros Islands (63), Zambia (60), and Madagascar (60), indicating more mixed views. The lowest levels of support were found in Eswatini (59), the DRC (55), Namibia (54), Angola (54), and Lesotho (52). These lower scores highlight the ongoing influence of traditional gender norms, political instability, and limited female representation in leadership roles. Addressing these disparities will require context-specific approaches to shift cultural attitudes and improve support for women's political engagement.

5. **Barriers and challenges:** The survey results underscore significant barriers that women in politics continue to face. Sixty-six percent of respondents acknowledged that women experience more gender-based violence in politics than men. Additionally, 59% felt that media coverage of women in politics is often unfair, focusing more on appearance than substance. Structural disadvantages were also evident, with 58% agreeing that women have fewer resources for political campaigns. These findings emphasize the urgent need for policy reforms, media accountability, and protective measures to ensure a safe and equitable environment for female politicians.

### **Positive shifts and remaining challenges**

Encouragingly, the survey revealed broad recognition of the value of women in politics. Seventy-four percent of women and 66% of men agreed that "*Having women in politics makes a positive difference to society,*" reflecting a societal shift toward gender inclusivity. However, traditional and gender-biased views persist, particularly among men. For example, 41% of men believe that "*Men are better political leaders than women,*" compared to 30% of women. Similarly, a higher proportion of men felt that women should prioritize domestic roles or require permission from their families to engage in politics.

**Conclusion:** The findings paint a nuanced picture of attitudes toward women's political participation in Southern Africa. While there is a clear trend toward greater support, especially among women and highly educated individuals, traditional views and structural barriers remain significant obstacles. Tailored interventions, including gender-sensitive policies, educational initiatives, and advocacy campaigns, are essential to accelerate progress. Efforts must focus on addressing gender-based violence, resource inequities, and media bias, while also promoting positive role models and highlighting the successes of women in leadership. The road to gender equality in politics is long, but the survey provides a roadmap for where and how efforts should be directed to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in governance.

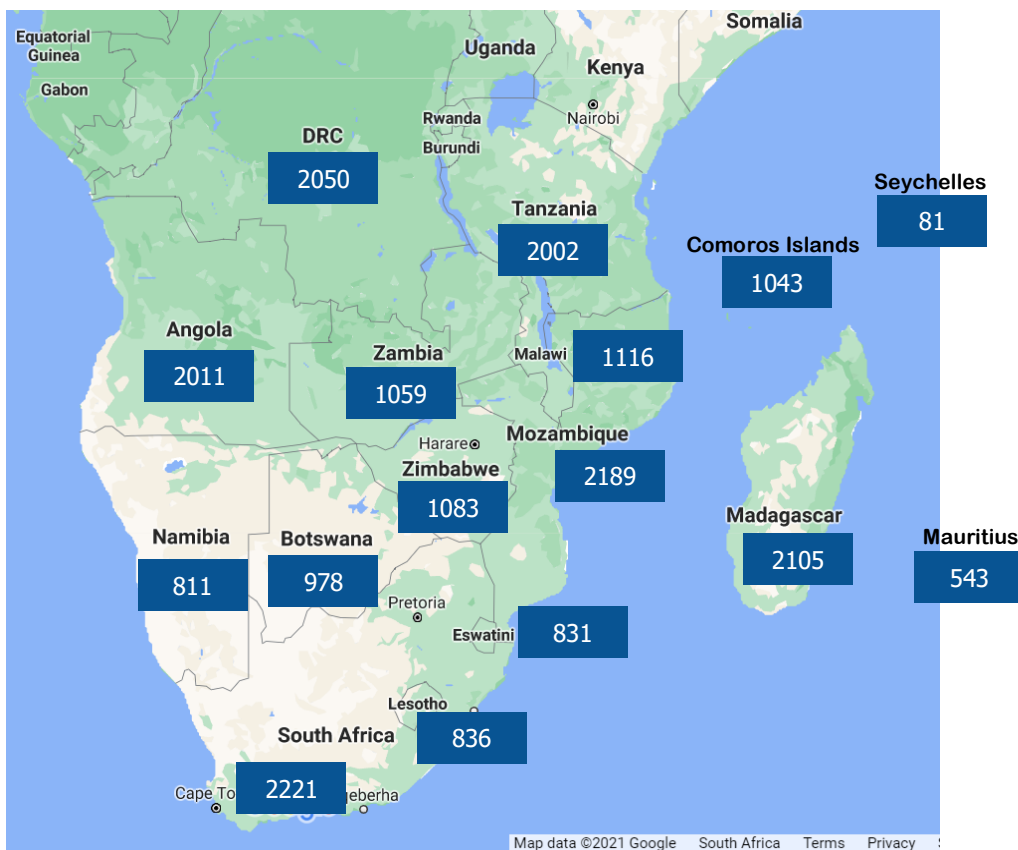
## **Background**

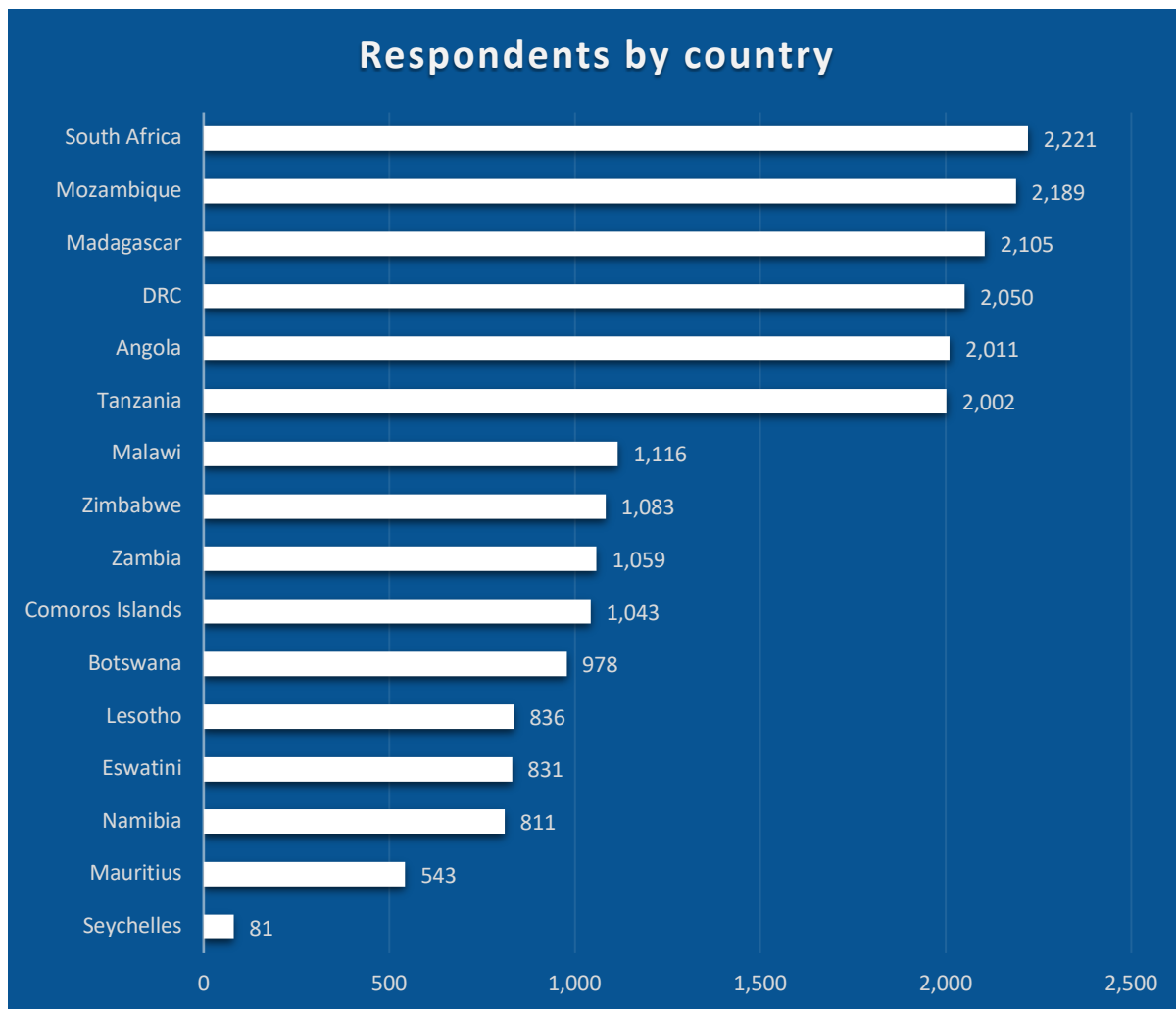
## Sample

### Number of respondents

A total of 20,959 responses to the Attitudes towards Women's Political Participation in Southern Africa survey were collected. South Africa had the highest number of responses at 2,221, followed closely by Mozambique with 2,189 and Madagascar with 2,105. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Angola also had significant participation, with 2,050 and 2,011 entries, respectively. In contrast, smaller island nations like Seychelles recorded fewer responses, with 81 entries, while Mauritius had 543. This wide range of participation highlights the geographic diversity represented in the survey data.

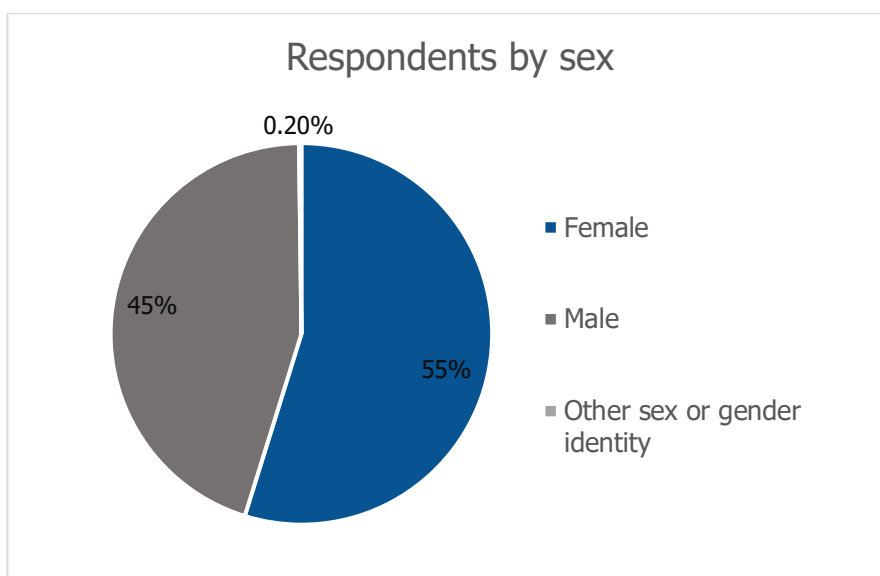
### Country breakdown





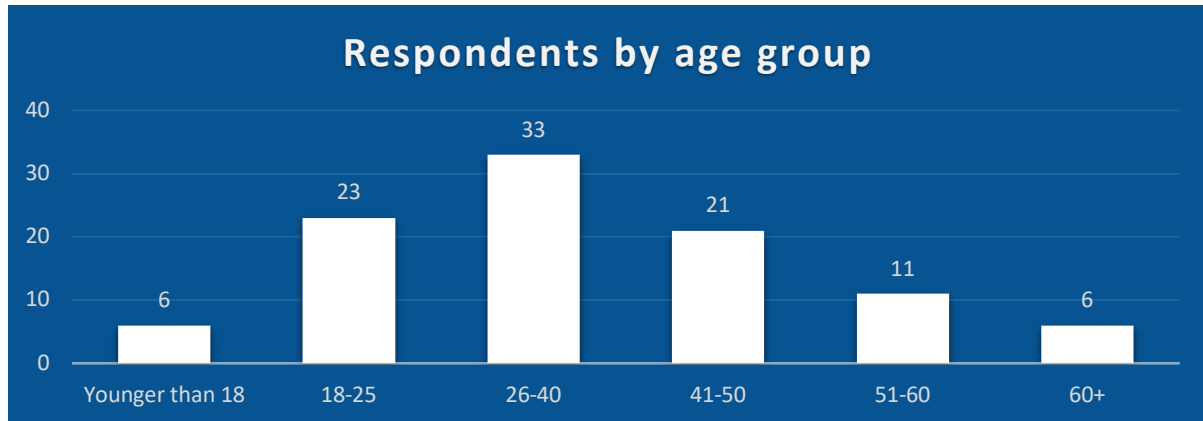
### Sex breakdown

The sample was comprised of 11479 (54.8%) female, 9439 (45%) male, and 41 (0.2%) other sex or gender identity respondents.



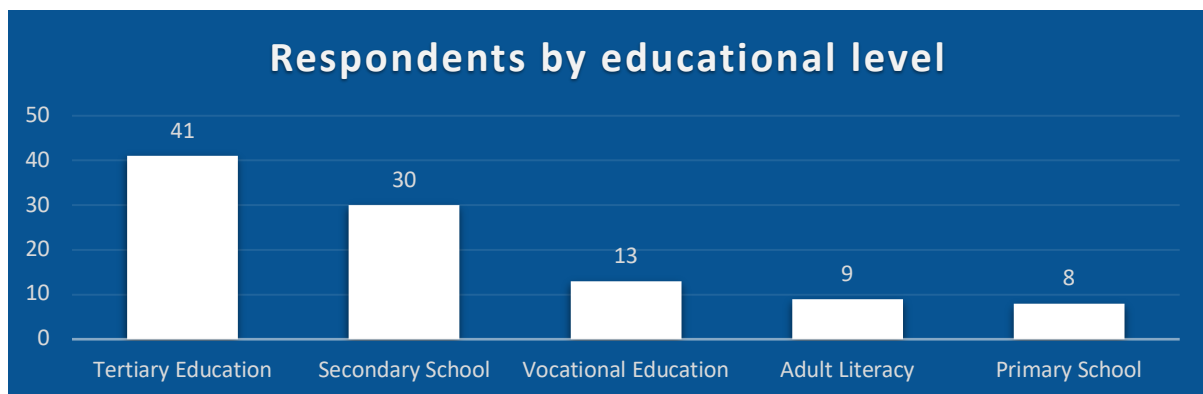
### Age group breakdown

The survey results indicate a diverse age distribution among respondents. The largest age group is 26-40, representing 33% of participants, followed by the 18-25 age group, which accounts for 23% of responses. The 41-50 age group comprises 21%, while 11% of respondents are aged 51-60. Both the younger than 18 and 60+ age groups make up 6% each, reflecting a balanced spread across different age demographics.



### Educational level breakdown

The survey data shows that 41% of respondents have completed tertiary education, making it the most represented educational level. Secondary school graduates account for 30% of participants, while 13% have received vocational education. Additionally, 9% of respondents have completed adult literacy programs, and 8% have primary school education. This distribution reflects a relatively high level of educational attainment among the survey participants.



### Disability breakdown

7% of respondents indicated living with a disability. Respondents who reported a disability indicated that it was a physical disability (46%), a sensory disability (33%), a learning disability (10%), a mental disability (5%), or other form of disability (6%).

## Overall attitudes toward women's political participation in Southern Africa

### Overall attitude scores

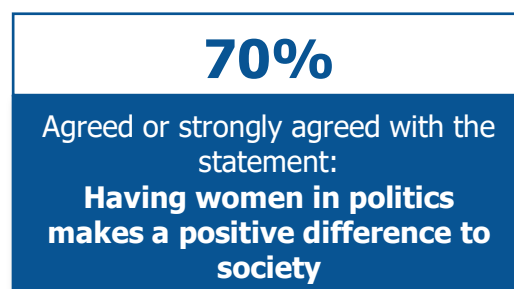
The overall average score of 63 indicates a generally positive attitude toward women's political participation in Southern Africa. This average suggests that while there is substantial support for gender equality in politics, there are still areas where attitudes could be improved. The score reflects a growing recognition of the importance of women's roles in governance, alongside the awareness of barriers they continue to face, such as gender-based violence and unequal media coverage.

The survey results on attitudes toward women's political participation in Southern Africa reveal that 60% of respondents scored in the 50-74 range, indicating generally positive attitudes. Meanwhile, 23% scored in the 75-100 range, reflecting very favourable views toward women's involvement in politics. A smaller portion, 17%, fell within the 25-49 range, showing mixed attitudes, and an even smaller group, less than 1%, scored in the 0-24 range, indicating negative or less supportive attitudes. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents have a positive outlook on women's political participation, with a significant proportion expressing strong support.

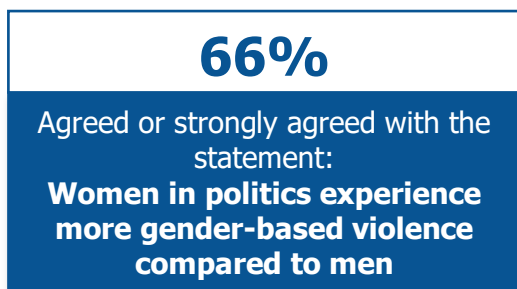
Score group	%	#
0-24	0.1%	30
25-49	17.4%	3647
50-74	60%	12556
75-100	22.5%	4726
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20959</b>

### Attitudes toward women's political participation per question

The survey results on perceptions of women's involvement in politics reveal significant insights. The highest level of support is observed for the statement, "*Having women in politics makes a positive difference to society*" with 70% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.



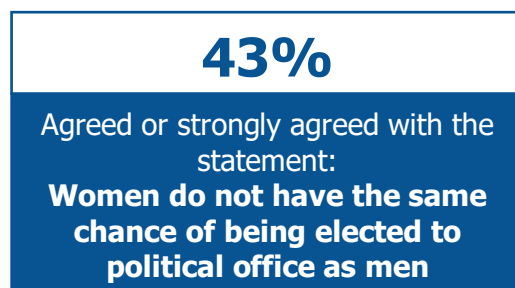
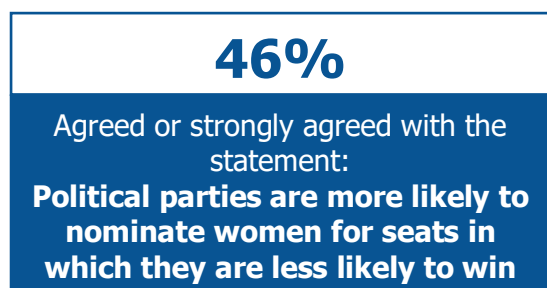
This is followed closely by the statement, "*Women in politics experience more gender-based violence compared to men*" with 66% acknowledging this challenge. Furthermore, there is substantial agreement (65%) on the necessity of legislated quotas for women in politics to achieve gender balance.



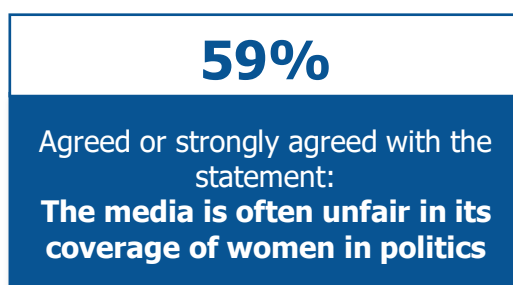
In addition, statements reflecting more traditional or restrictive attitudes received the least support. Only 18% agreed that “Women have no interest in politics,” and 20% believed that “Women should take care of the home, not venture into politics, indicating a shift toward more positive views on political engagement and involvement.

On the other hand, several areas stand out as needing further attention and work to improve attitudes and support for women’s political participation:

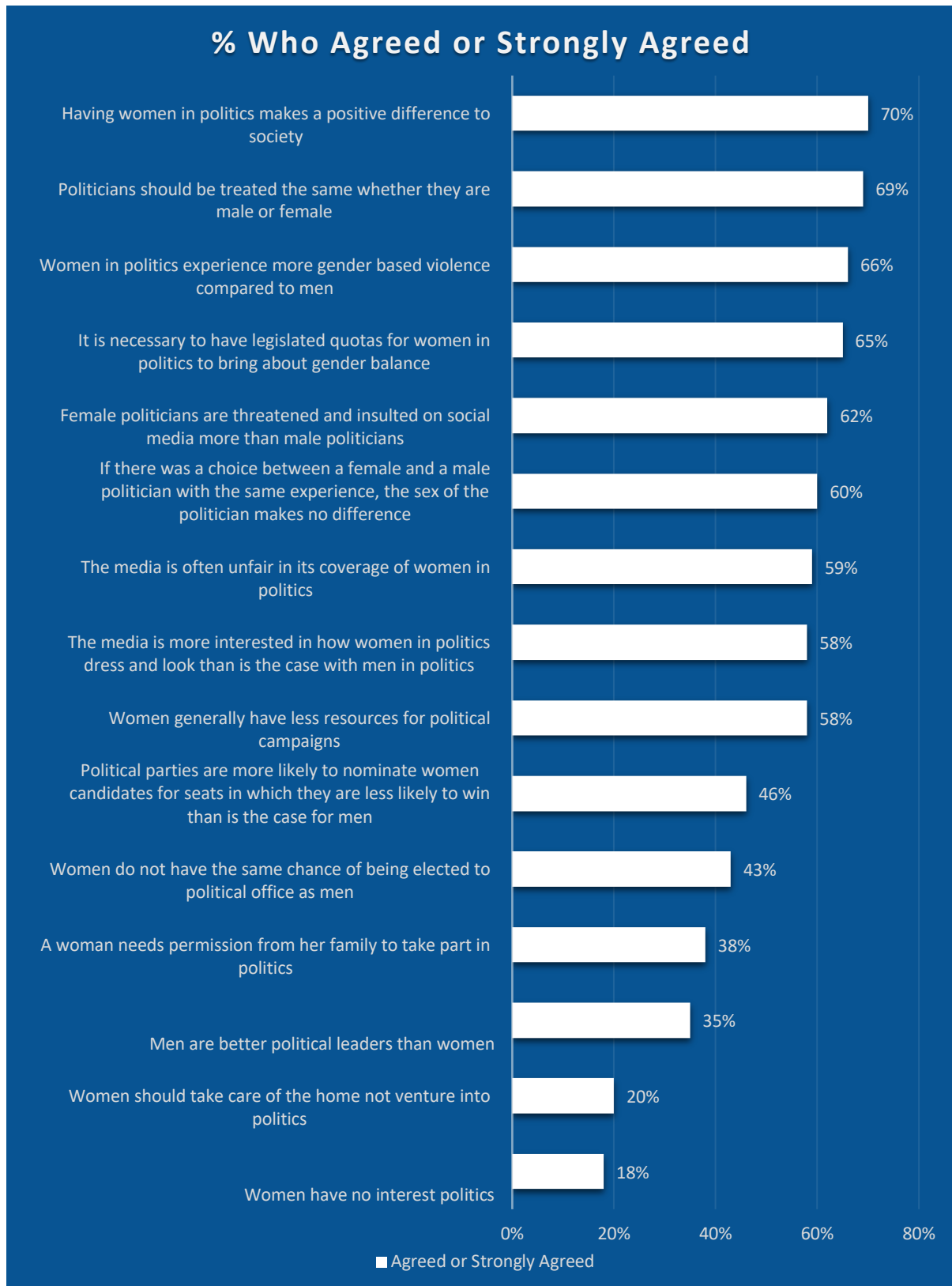
- **Barriers to political participation:** The survey reveals that 43% agree that “*Women do not have the same chance of being elected to political office as men*” and 46% believe that “*Political parties are more likely to nominate women for seats in which they are less likely to win.*” These responses highlight structural and institutional barriers that require policy reforms and efforts to create a level playing field for women in politics.



- **Perceptions of leadership:** The belief that “*Men are better political leaders than women*” is supported by 35% of respondents. This points to a need for initiatives that highlight and promote female leadership success stories to change these perceptions.
- **Gender-based violence and media representation:** The fact that 66% of respondents agree that “*Women in politics experience more gender-based violence compared to men*” underscores a critical area that needs urgent attention. Additionally, 59% feel that “*The media is often unfair in its coverage of women in politics,*” suggesting the need for media accountability and training to ensure fair and unbiased reporting.



These results highlight a strong recognition of both the challenges women face in politics and the positive impact of women’s political participation, alongside diminishing support for traditional gender roles in politics.



## Attitudes toward women's political participation by sex

The survey results show notable differences in attitudes toward women's political participation based on gender identity. On average, women have a more positive view, scoring 66 out of 100, with scores ranging from a minimum of 18 to a maximum of 100. Men, on the other hand, have a slightly lower average score of 60, with a broader range spanning from 0 to 100, indicating more variability in their attitudes. Respondents who identify as another sex or gender identity show the highest average score of 67, with a narrower range from 33 to 100, suggesting a generally more supportive stance. These variations highlight the importance of understanding how gender identity influences perceptions of women's roles in politics, with women and non-binary or gender-diverse individuals showing stronger support for gender equality in political representation. Given the limited number of respondents (41) who identified as another sex or gender identity, their data is not statistically representative and has thus been excluded from the sex-based analysis.

	Average	Min	Max
<b>Female</b>	66	18	100
<b>Male</b>	60	0	100
<b>Other sex or gender identity</b>	67	33	100

## Respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement by sex

The survey results reveal both encouraging progress and areas that still require significant improvement when it comes to attitudes toward women's political participation in Southern Africa. The data highlights gender-based differences in perceptions, reflecting both positive strides and persistent challenges.

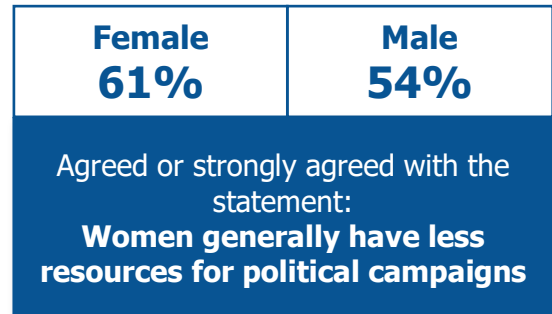
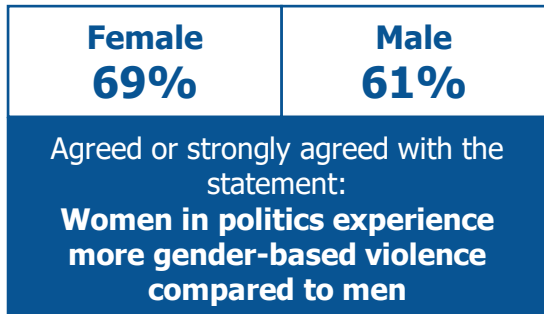
Encouragingly, a strong majority of both men and women recognize the value of gender equality in politics. Seventy-four percent of women and 66% of men agree that "*Having women in politics makes a positive difference to society.*" Similarly, a large portion of respondents believe in equal treatment, with 70% of women and 67% of men agreeing that "*Politicians should be treated the same whether they are male or female.*" This widespread support signifies a societal shift toward the acceptance and recognition of the importance of women's roles in governance.

<b>Female</b> <b>74%</b>	<b>Male</b> <b>66%</b>
Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: <b>Having women in politics makes a positive difference to society</b>	

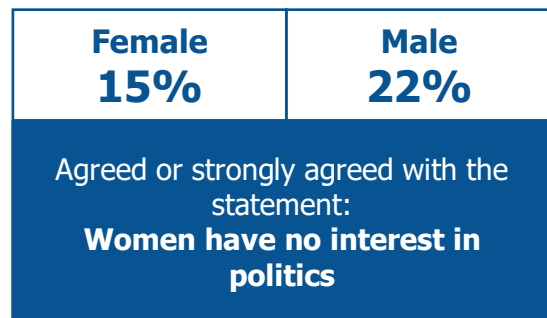
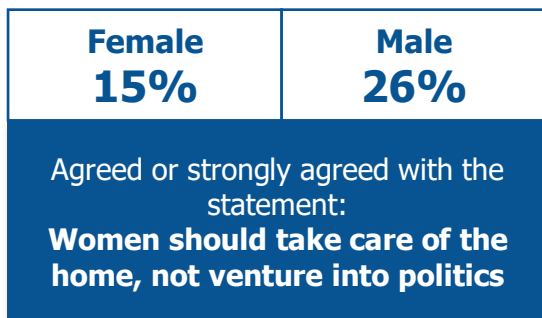
<b>Female</b> <b>70%</b>	<b>Male</b> <b>67%</b>
Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: <b>Politicians should be treated the same whether they are male or female</b>	

Support for measures promoting women's participation is also significant. For instance, 70% of women and 59% of men believe that having legislated quotas for women in politics is necessary to ensure gender balance. This level of support for policy interventions indicates growing awareness and willingness to address gender disparities in the political sphere.

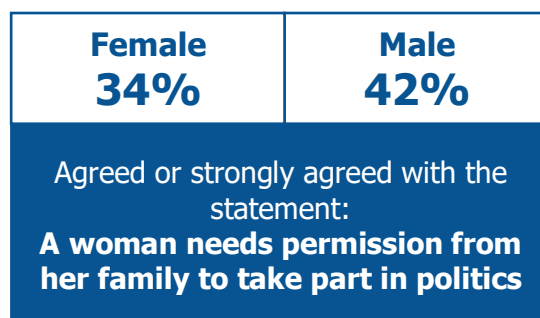
Another positive finding is the acknowledgment of gender-based challenges that women in politics face. Sixty-nine percent of women and 61% of men recognize that women in politics experience more gender-based violence compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, there is recognition of structural disadvantages, with 61% of women and 54% of men agreeing that *“Women generally have less resources for political campaigns.”* These responses reflect a growing awareness of the unique obstacles faced by female politicians.



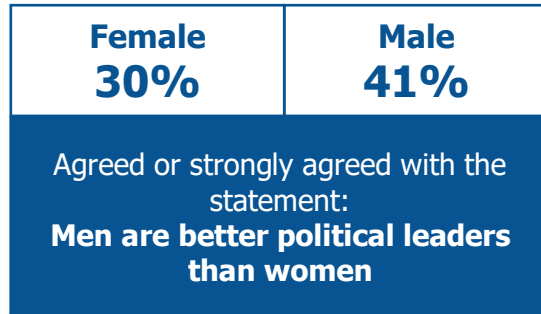
Despite this progress, some traditional and gender-biased attitudes persist, especially among men. Twenty-two percent of men agree with the statement *“Women have no interest in politics,”* compared to only 15% of women. Similarly, 26% of men believe that *“Women should take care of the home, not venture into politics,”* while only 15% of women share this view.



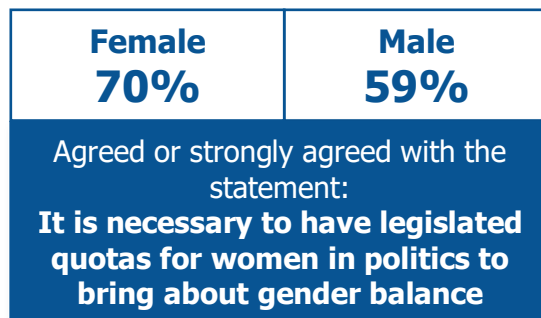
In addition, a higher proportion of men (42%) than women (34%) felt that *“A woman needs permission from her family to take part in politics.”* These figures suggest that a segment of the population still adheres to traditional beliefs about gender roles, which may impede further progress toward equality.



The perception of male leadership superiority also remains an issue. Forty-one percent of men believe that “*Men are better political leaders than women,*” compared to 30% of women. This difference highlights a gender gap in the perception of leadership capabilities, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to showcase and promote successful female leadership examples.



While 70% of women felt that “It is necessary to have legislated quotas for women in politics to bring about gender balance,” only 59% of men felt the same.

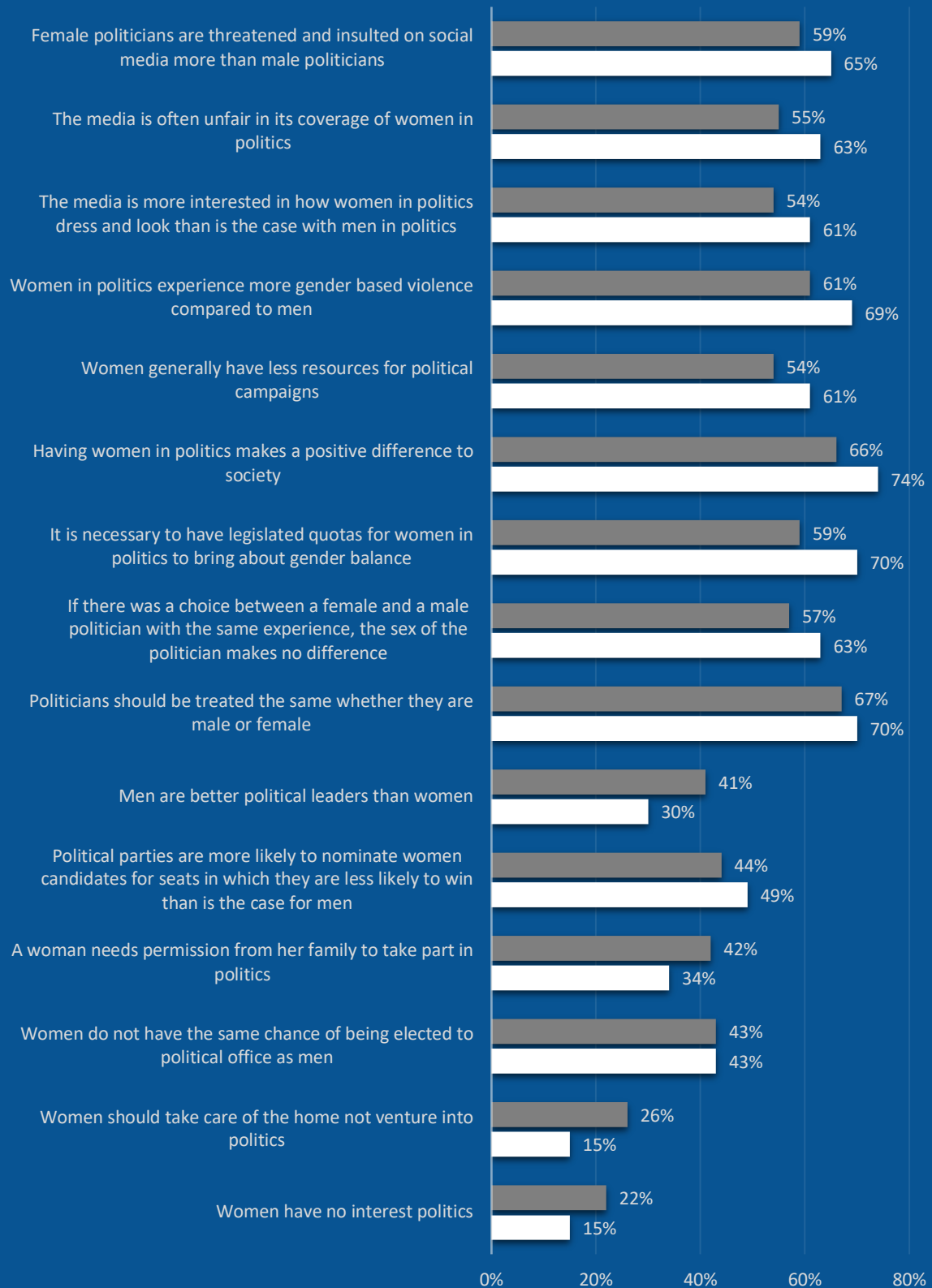


Another concerning finding is the difference in the recognition of institutional and media-related biases. While 63% of women agree that the media often covers women in politics unfairly, only 55% of men share this view. Similarly, 61% of women feel that the media focuses more on how women dress and look compared to men, but only 54% of men acknowledge this bias. These gaps suggest that more education and awareness-raising efforts are needed to help men understand the gender-specific barriers that women in politics encounter.

Overall, the survey reveals a mixed picture. There is strong and growing support for gender equality in politics, with both men and women acknowledging the importance of women’s political participation and the necessity of policy measures to promote it. However, persistent traditional views and a lack of full recognition of the challenges faced by female politicians remain obstacles. Efforts to continue shifting attitudes and dismantling biases will be crucial to achieving a more equitable and inclusive political landscape.

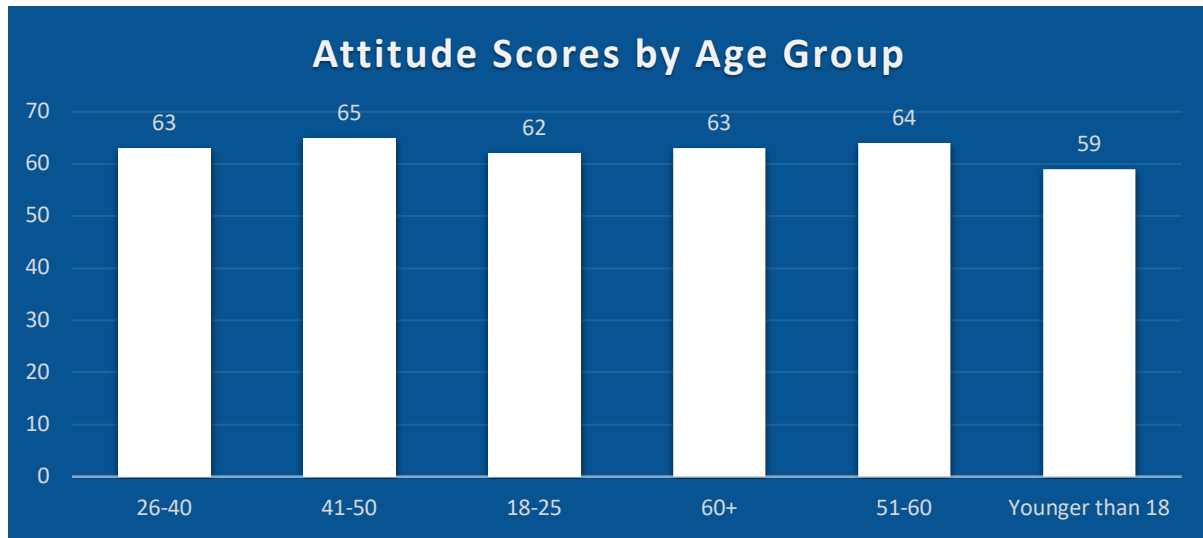
## % Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed

■ Male ■ Female



## Attitudes toward women's political participation by age group

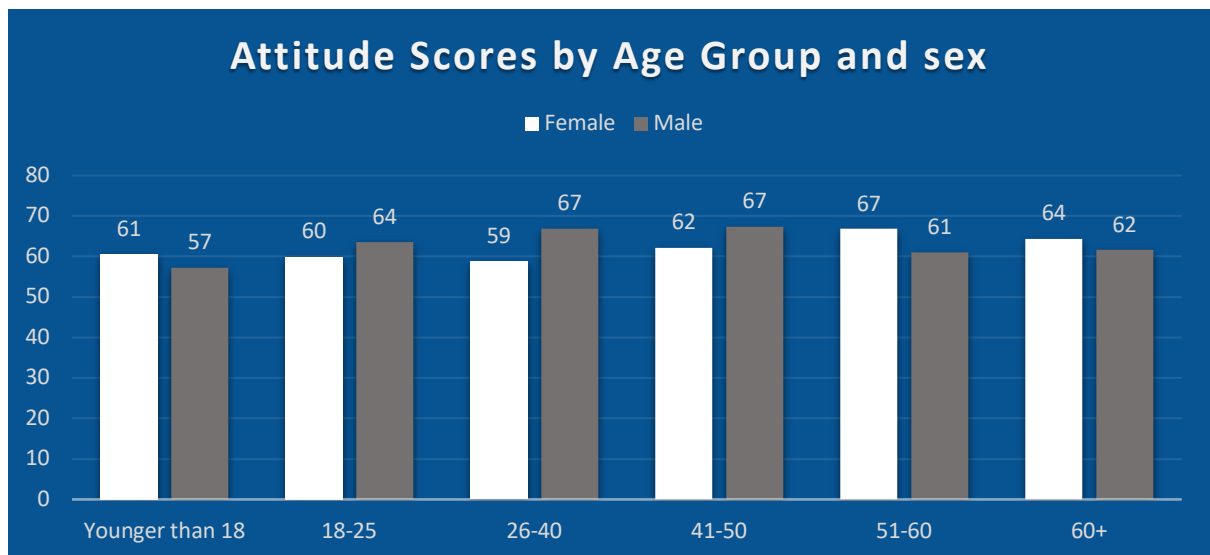
The survey results reveal variations in attitudes toward women's political participation across different age groups. Respondents aged 41-50 show the most supportive attitudes, with an average score of 65. The 51-60 age group follows closely with a score of 64, indicating strong support as well. Both the 26-40 and 60+ age groups have an average score of 63, reflecting moderately positive views. Respondents aged 18-25 have a slightly lower score of 62, suggesting a somewhat less favourable but still supportive attitude. The youngest group, those under 18, scored the lowest at 59, indicating that younger respondents may have more traditional or less developed views on women's roles in politics. Overall, support tends to be highest among those aged 41-60, with slight declines in both younger and older groups.



The survey data highlights differences in attitudes toward women's political participation between females and males across various age groups. Among respondents younger than 18, females have a slightly higher score of 61 compared to males at 57, indicating more supportive attitudes among young females. In the 18-25 age group, males score higher at 64, while females have a lower score of 60, suggesting that young men may be more supportive in this age range.

For the 26-40 age group, the gap widens, with males scoring 67 compared to females at 59, highlighting a significant difference in perspectives. This trend continues in the 41-50 age group, where males again score 67, while females score 62. However, the pattern shifts in the 51-60 age group, where females show greater support with a score of 67, compared to 61 for males. Among respondents aged 60 and older, females have a higher score of 64 compared to 62 for males.

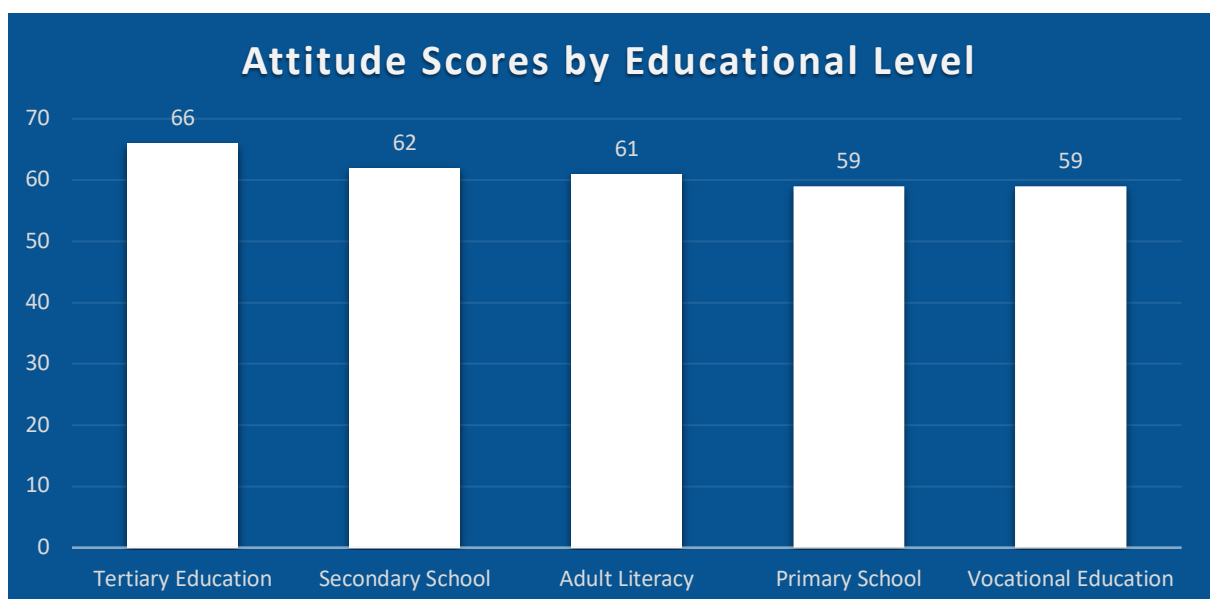
Overall, the data reveals that attitudes toward women's political participation vary significantly between genders and across age groups, with some age brackets showing greater male support and others higher female support. The most pronounced differences are observed in the 26-40 and 41-50 age groups, where males express notably higher levels of support.



### Attitudes toward women's political participation by educational level

The survey results indicate a clear relationship between education level and support for women's political participation. Respondents with tertiary education have the highest average score of 66, suggesting that higher educational attainment is associated with more supportive attitudes toward gender equality in politics. Those with secondary school education score slightly lower at 62, followed by individuals who completed adult literacy programs, who have an average score of 61.

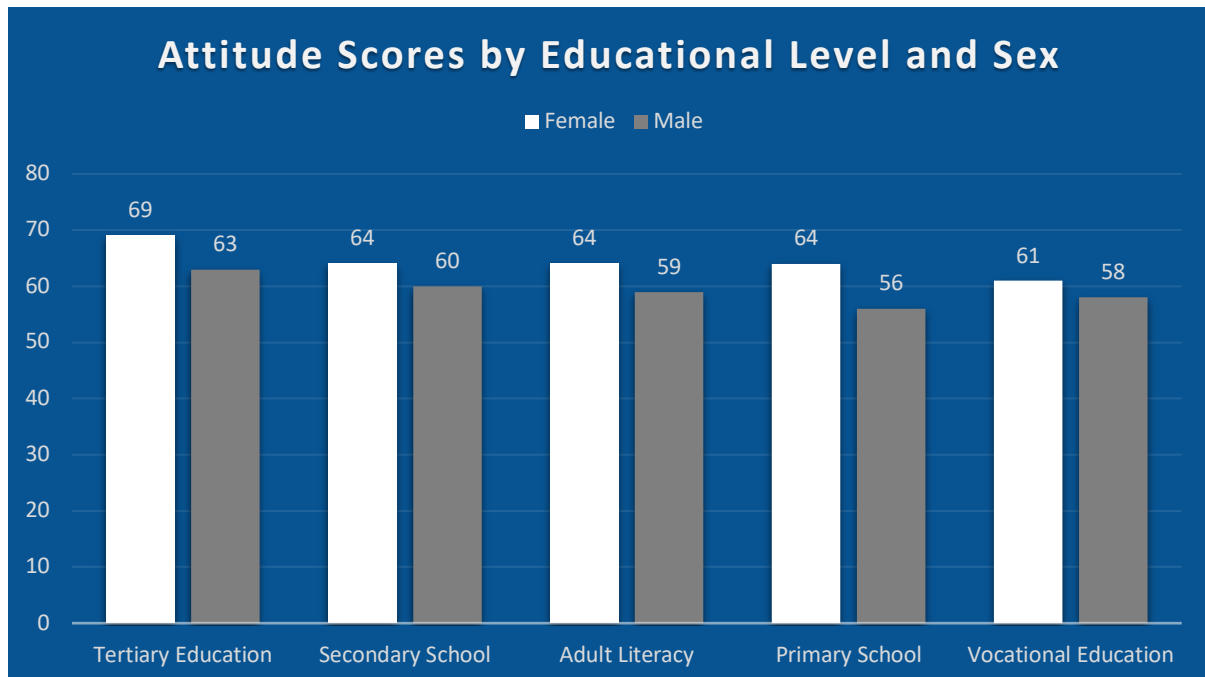
Respondents with primary school education and vocational education have the lowest scores, both at 59, indicating less favourable views compared to those with higher educational qualifications. These findings highlight that individuals with higher levels of education are generally more supportive of women's involvement in politics, while those with lower levels of education may hold more traditional or less progressive views.



The survey results reveal differences in attitudes toward women’s political participation between females and males across various educational levels. Among respondents with tertiary education, females show greater support with a score of 69 compared to 63 for males, suggesting that higher education may influence women to be more supportive of gender equality in politics.

For those with secondary school education, females also score higher at 64, while males score 60. This trend continues for respondents who completed adult literacy programs, where females score 64 compared to 59 for males. The gap widens among those with only primary school education, with females scoring 64 and males significantly lower at 56, indicating a pronounced difference in attitudes based on gender at this educational level.

Among respondents with vocational education, females score 61, slightly higher than males at 58. Overall, across all education levels, females consistently show higher levels of support for women’s political participation compared to their male counterparts, with the largest gender gap observed among those with primary school education. This suggests that educational attainment influences attitudes, and women tend to have more supportive views regardless of their educational background.



## **Attitudes toward women's political participation by country**

The Women's Political Participation Gender Attitude Score across various countries reveals both encouraging support and significant gaps that reflect varying attitudes toward gender equality in the political sphere throughout the region. Here is a more detailed analysis of the scores:

**High support countries:** Mozambique stands out with the highest score of 78, indicating a robust and widespread positive attitude toward women's participation in politics. This score suggests a cultural or policy environment that is highly supportive of gender equality, perhaps influenced by progressive gender policies or active civil society efforts promoting women's rights. Zimbabwe follows closely with a score of 74, reflecting strong support as well. This positive attitude may be linked to ongoing advocacy efforts and the visibility of women in leadership roles. Botswana, with a score of 71, also demonstrates considerable support, indicating a relatively favourable public perception of women's roles in political decision-making.

**Moderate to neutral support countries:** Malawi and Mauritius both have a score of 69, showing moderate but firm support for women's political participation. This level of support may be attributed to the presence of women in political office and active gender equality campaigns in these countries. Seychelles, scoring 66, and Tanzania and South Africa, both at 65, indicate that these nations also maintain relatively progressive attitudes, although there is room for improvement. South Africa, in particular, has a history of gender activism and legal frameworks aimed at promoting equality, which might contribute to its supportive stance.

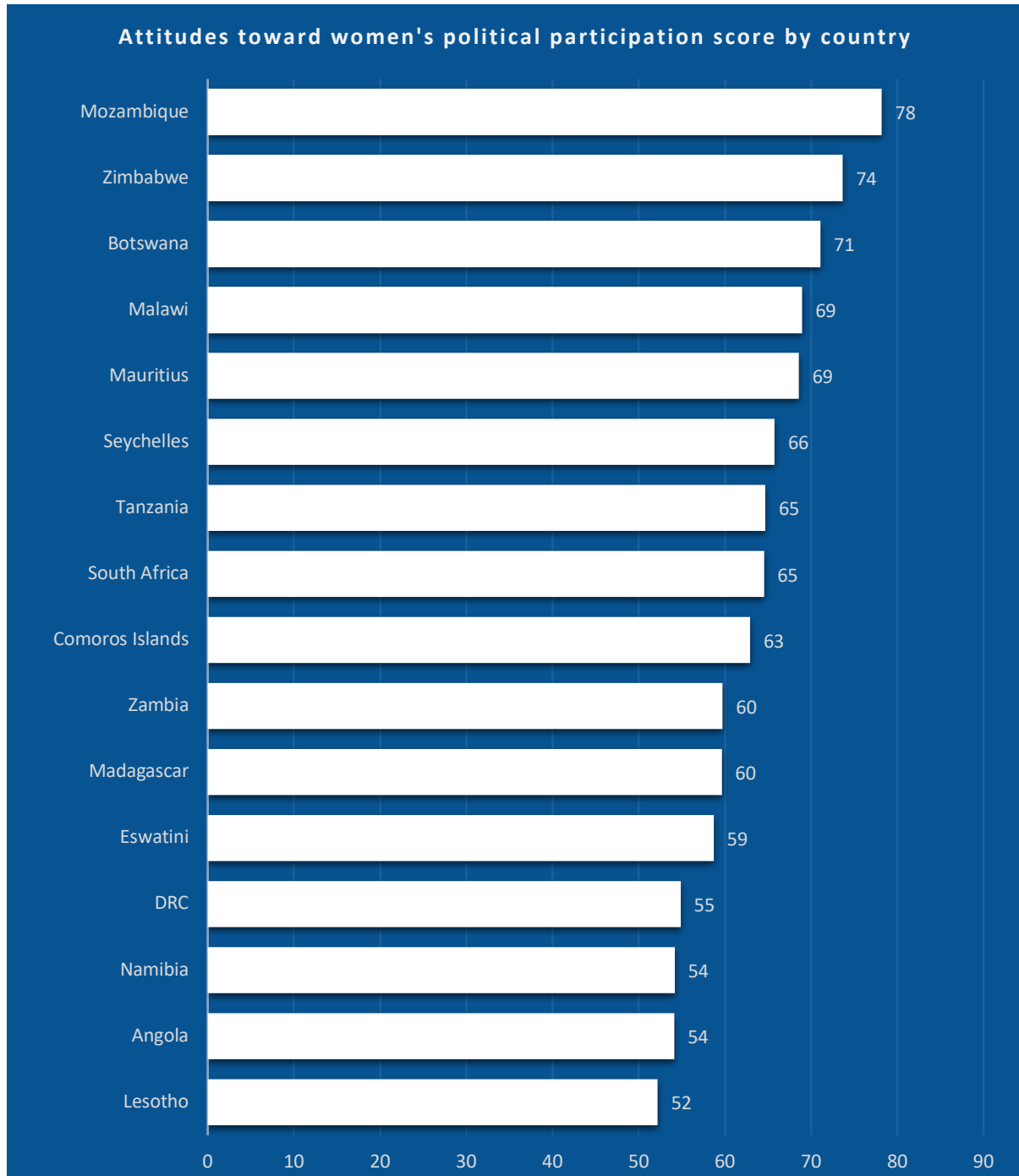
The Comoros Islands, with a score of 63, reflect a more neutral attitude, suggesting that while there is some support for women in politics, it may not be as strong or widespread as in higher-scoring countries. Similarly, Zambia and Madagascar both score 60, indicating a more mixed perception of women's political roles. These scores may reflect societal ambivalence or ongoing cultural barriers that affect gender equality in political settings.

**Lower support countries:** The scores begin to drop with Eswatini at 59, highlighting less favourable views and a potentially more traditional outlook on gender roles. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) scores 55, signalling a pronounced lack of support for women's political participation. This may be due to entrenched gender norms, political instability, or limited representation of women in high-profile leadership roles.

**Countries with the least support:** Namibia and Angola are tied at 54, further emphasizing the conservative attitudes toward women in politics in these countries. These scores suggest that societal and institutional barriers remain significant and require targeted efforts to foster gender inclusivity. Lesotho has the lowest score at 52, reflecting the most traditional or least supportive views regarding women's roles in the political sphere. This could point to deep-rooted cultural beliefs and structural challenges that hinder gender equality.

The wide range of scores across these countries illustrates the diverse landscape of gender attitudes in Southern Africa. The high scores in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana are promising, indicating that progress is being made in certain areas. However, the lower scores in countries like Lesotho, Namibia, and Angola highlight the persistent need for gender-sensitive policies, increased representation of women in politics, and awareness campaigns to challenge traditional gender norms.

The findings underscore the importance of a tailored approach to promoting gender equality in politics. In countries with higher scores, efforts should continue to sustain and build on existing support. In contrast, nations with lower scores may benefit from interventions such as education initiatives, leadership training for women, and advocacy efforts aimed at shifting cultural attitudes and creating more inclusive political environments.



## **Conclusion**

The survey on attitudes toward women's political participation in Southern Africa provides a comprehensive look at the region's progress and remaining challenges. With 20,959 responses collected, the survey highlights a general trend toward supporting gender equality in politics, but it also reveals significant areas needing improvement. Women generally show more supportive attitudes than men, with notable gender-based differences in views on leadership and gender roles. The data also emphasize disparities across educational levels and age groups, with higher educational attainment correlating with greater support for women's political involvement.

Geographical variation is pronounced, with Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana displaying the highest levels of support, while Lesotho, Namibia, and Angola lag behind. To foster a more inclusive political environment, targeted efforts such as policy reforms, educational initiatives, and media accountability are essential to address persistent barriers and traditional biases. Overall, the findings call for sustained and tailored interventions to advance women's political representation and create equitable opportunities for all.

## ANNEX A - Responses per question

Question	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree
1. Women have no interest politics	38%	5%	10%	33%	13%
2. Women should take care of the home not venture into politics	38%	7%	9%	32%	13%
3. Women do not have the same chance of being elected to political office as men	21%	16%	12%	25%	27%
4. A woman needs permission from her family to take part in politics	25%	13%	13%	25%	25%
5. Political parties are more likely to nominate women candidates for seats in which they are less likely to win than is the case for men	12%	18%	19%	22%	29%
6. Men are better political leaders than women	28%	15%	12%	25%	21%
7. Politicians should be treated the same whether they are male or female	7%	36%	11%	13%	33%
8. If there was a choice between a female and a male politician with the same experience, the sex of the politician makes no difference	9%	27%	14%	17%	33%
9. It is necessary to have legislated quotas for women in politics to bring about gender balance	6%	28%	16%	13%	37%
10. Having women in politics makes a positive difference to society	6%	34%	13%	11%	36%
11. Women generally have less resources for political campaigns	9%	25%	15%	18%	33%
12. Women in politics experience more gender based violence compared to men	6%	28%	14%	14%	37%
13. The media is more interested in how women in politics dress and look than is the case with men in politics	8%	24%	17%	17%	33%
14. The media is often unfair in its coverage of women in politics	6%	27%	17%	17%	33%
15. Female politicians are threatened and insulted on social media more than male politicians	7%	29%	16%	15%	33%

Table 1: Responses per question

## **ANNEX B - Methodology**

### **Research design**

This research employed a cross-sectional comparative case study research design. Comparative case study research seeks to enhance knowledge about society as a process by exploring the differences and similarities among large macrosocial units such as countries (Ragin, 2014). Comparison enhances description, stimulates concept formation, provides criteria hypothesis testing, and contributes to theory building (Collier, 1991). It underlies almost all forms of research (Bray & Thomas, 1995) and forms an essential part of how humans think (Lor, 2019). Comparison case studies allow researchers to expand the number of variables being analysed and ask questions that may not have been asked when looking at only one unit of analysis (Bray & Thomas, 1995), hereby moving away from narrow national perspectives (Kosmützky, 2018). Comparative case studies “are important in order to deconstruct narrow and often parochial national perspectives” and give “us the opportunity to investigate whether empirical relationships and phenomena found in one context can also be observed in other contexts and to analyse empirical regularities of several cases” (Kosmützky, 2018, p. 14).

### **Selection of participants**

Non-probability, convenience sampling was used for data collection. In contrast to probability sampling which involves randomisation so that all people in the population have a chance of being selected into the sample, non-probability sampling means that not all units in the population had the chance of being included (Wolf, C. et al., 2016). In non-probability sampling, the probability that a person is selected is unknown and resulting in selection bias (Acharya, A.S. et al., 2013). This form of sampling can be useful when randomization is impossible and when the researcher has limited resources, time, and workforce (Etikan, I., et al, 2016). In this case, limited resources available was the main factor influencing the use of a non-probability sampling method. Convenience non-probability sampling was used, in this method “members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study” (Etikan, I., et al, p.2, 2016).

Data was collected through Gender Links events, partners, or in areas the organisation or its partners work in. The data contained in this report was gathered between December 2023 to March 2024.

### **Data collection**

Quantitative primary data was collected through a survey administered directly with participants. Survey designs assist researchers to describe phenomena, make inferences about relationships between variables, and predict relationships between variables over time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The main advantages of surveys include being cost effective, generating numerical data, providing descriptive, inferential, and explanatory information, derive frequencies, standardisation of information gathered, establishes correlations, is context-free, enables hypotheses testing, generates accurate instruments, makes generalisations, and gathers data that can be statistically manipulated (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Some limitations of this method include not providing in-depth understanding of a given problem, less focus on understanding the context of the problem, being less flexible, respondents having to fit into the researcher’s categories, and that some phenomena cannot be reduced to numbers (DeCarlo, 2018; Queiros et al., 2017). These limitations were addressed by ensuing that the results are presented as a limited representation of complex issue and understanding that it does not provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of the complex issues under review, but rather a picture of similarities and differences that may require a more in-depth exploration.

Data collectors ensured that all ethical considerations were observed to protect the respondents who took part in the study. The process entailed the provision of the M&E pack from Gender Links articulating what the study entails. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Respondents were sensitised about their voluntary right to participate in the study, including the right to terminate the interview if they felt the content was affecting them in any way. Most forms were administered by the data collectors with individual respondents or in group consultations. Others were self-administered or completed online independently. Participants who could not write were assisted in completing the forms. Where printed copies were not available, participants took turns using Gender Links mobile tablets or their mobile phones to complete the online forms.

Once all responses were collected, data was uploaded into a cloud-based server which used data encryption in transit, at rest, and on all backups. Only the researcher had complete access to all the data. Identifying data was only accessible to the researcher who managed the database. Confidentiality was maintained throughout all study procedures by storing locator information separate from participant data. No identifying data was extracted from the database for analysis.

### **Data analysis and interpretation**

The primary analysis focused on the description of the gender attitudes of respondents and also explored between-group differences (e.g., gender, age groups, country). Correlational data analyses were used to establish the relationships between variables per country or between the same variable across countries (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). This type of analysis allows researchers to determine relationships between variables (Curtis et al., 2015). Here, we are interested in "an assessment of the relationship between or among variables" and should not be equated to experimental research (Asamoah, 2014, p.51). Inferring causation from simple correlation is problematic because correlation does not provide clarity in terms of the directionality of the correlations and the influence of a third variable (Asamoah, 2014). However, causal inferences can be informed by correlational research (Thompson et al., 2005) through the use of structural equation modelling (Curtis, 2016). This research focused on describing prevalence, the relationship between variables in general and between groups, and causal inferences between variables.

STATA v14 was used for the normality tests, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and correlations. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted to examine the distribution of all variables, assess relationships between variables, and determine differences between groups. Significance testing was undertaken using a 5% level of significance.

### **About the tool**

The tool included demographic questions (i.e., sex, age group, nationality, level of education, disability) and an attitude toward women's political participation scale. The attitude toward women's political participation scale included 15 questions and used a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from Strongly Disagree (0) to Strongly Agree (4). Responses are added up into a total score out of 100. The total score has a possible range of between 0 and 100 with a higher score indicating more positive gender attitudes.

### **Limitations**

As with all research this study has several limitations that must be considered when reviewing the results. The main limitation of this research is that non-probability sampling methods were used.

The use on non-probability (and therefore non-randomised) sampling means that we are unable to draw inferences about a population or generalise the results to the broader population. Despite the large sample size obtained which increases the statistical power of the sample, these results cannot be said to be representative of the gender attitudes of people in this country. Limited resources (money, time, and human capacity) available was the main factor influencing the choice of sampling. This limitation is managed by not claiming that these results are representative of the attitudes toward women's political participation held within this country. Rather, these results are seen as giving insight into prevailing attitudes toward women's political participation among those from whom data was collected. It provides valuable exploratory information about gender attitudes in the country.

Future research of this kind could overcome these limitations by exploring the possibility of using probability sampling hereby making the results generalisable.

Despite these limitations, this data is rich and paints a useful picture of gender attitudes held across Southern Africa. While keeping these limitations in mind, the reader is encouraged to reflect on what this data is telling us about attitudes toward women's political participation and how these could be altered moving forward.