



# Gender Progress Score (GPS) Gender attitudes in Malawi

Based on data collected between 2019-2021 across Malawi  
June 2021



People  
Change  
the World



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## Acknowledgements

The Gender Progress Score, a survey of gender attitudes, is undertaken by the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance, that brings together 15 national network partners who campaigned for the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development adopted in 2008. Gender Links (which has offices in ten SADC countries) serves as the Secretariat of the Alliance. GL Executive Director Kubi Rama and Colleen Lowe Morna (Special Advisor, Gender Links) provided strategic oversight. GL data analyst Monica Bandeira analysed the data, wrote the report and produced the accompanying power point presentation with assistance from Systems Administrator Fanuel Hadzizi and Coordination by Shamiso Chigorimbo. Debi Lee designs produced the infographic. Simone Shall curated the regional and country reports on the GL and Alliance websites.

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**Malawi:** NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN) guided and coordinated by Alliance Chair and GL Board Member Emma Kaliya;

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## Executive summary

With an average score of 67%, gender attitudes in Malawi are gradually changing for the better, but evidence of deep-seated patriarchal attitudes is still strong. For example, while 61% of women and men agree or strongly agree that “Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking”, 69% agree or strongly agree that “a woman should obey her husband.”

These are among the key findings of the Southern African Gender Progress Study (GPS) administered to 310 women and men of all age groups in Malawi between January 2019 and May 2021. The full set of results is attached at **Annex A**. A technical note on the methodology is attached at **Annex B**.

The GPS is administered by country focal networks of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance coordinated by Gender Links to better understand different perspectives on gender equality, so as to target efforts to change attitudes and behaviour in more effectively. The Alliance comprises women’s rights networks across SADC that campaigned for the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development adopted in 2008 and produce an annual Barometer to track progress against its provisions. The GPS consists of 25 questions that respondents either strongly agree, agree, or disagree, strongly disagree with. The responses are rated on a scale of zero (least progressive) to 100 most progressive.

On a positive note, relatively low percentages agreed or strongly agreed that “disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services” (6%); “If a woman works she should give her money to her husband (14%); families should spend less money on the education of their daughters than of their sons (10%).

Worrying findings include low percentages of those who agreed or strongly agreed that “a woman can refuse to have sex with her husband” (45%). It is also worrying that only 28% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “a woman should be able to choose to terminate her pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy.”

Female respondents had higher gender attitude scores than male respondents. Overall, women scored 68% compared to men (66%). The research grouped GPS questions into six clusters: gender-based violence, Harmful practices, Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Sexual diversity, Media, and General questions. Men held more negative gender attitudes in relation to gender-based violence questions, harmful practices questions than female respondents held. Women and men had the least different views on SRHR, sexual diversity, media, and general questions.

Respondents between the ages of 41 and 50, with a mean score of 69 had the highest scores. On the other hand, respondents younger than 18 years of age (54), had the lowest gender attitude scores. Although these differences between age groups were not found to be significant, it is disappointing in a country where the majority population are young, and high hopes are being pinned on them in the 2030 #GenerationEquality campaign, that their scores are the lowest.

Respondents with a tertiary level of education (74) had the highest scores. On the other hand, respondents with an adult literacy level of education, with a mean score of 56 had the lowest gender attitude scores. However, these differences were not found to be significant. The overriding finding of the GPS is that patriarchy is alive and well in all countries, all ages, and all levels of education. There are no short cuts to accelerating advocacy campaigns to change those attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality.

## Background

Gender Links has developed this survey to better understand different perspectives on gender equality and help us change lives. The Alliance administers the Gender Progress Score (GPS) which measures gender awareness in the SADC region across all sexes. The GPS developed by Gender Links, which coordinates the Alliance, includes a standard set of questions to gauge gender attitudes. The GPS has evolved from a 20 question attitude survey derived from the Gender Links' Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) survey, which was based on a standard WHO attitude survey, to a 25 question survey that includes questions on contentious areas such as polygamy; choice of termination of pregnancy; sex work and sexual orientation. This 25 question questionnaire helps even the most seasoned activists measure their progress towards achieving gender awareness. This survey reflects societies in transition, from gender blind (and gender blinkered) to gender awareness, tolerance, and sensitivity.

## Sample

### Number of respondents

A total of 310 responses to the Gender Progress Score survey were collected in Malawi.

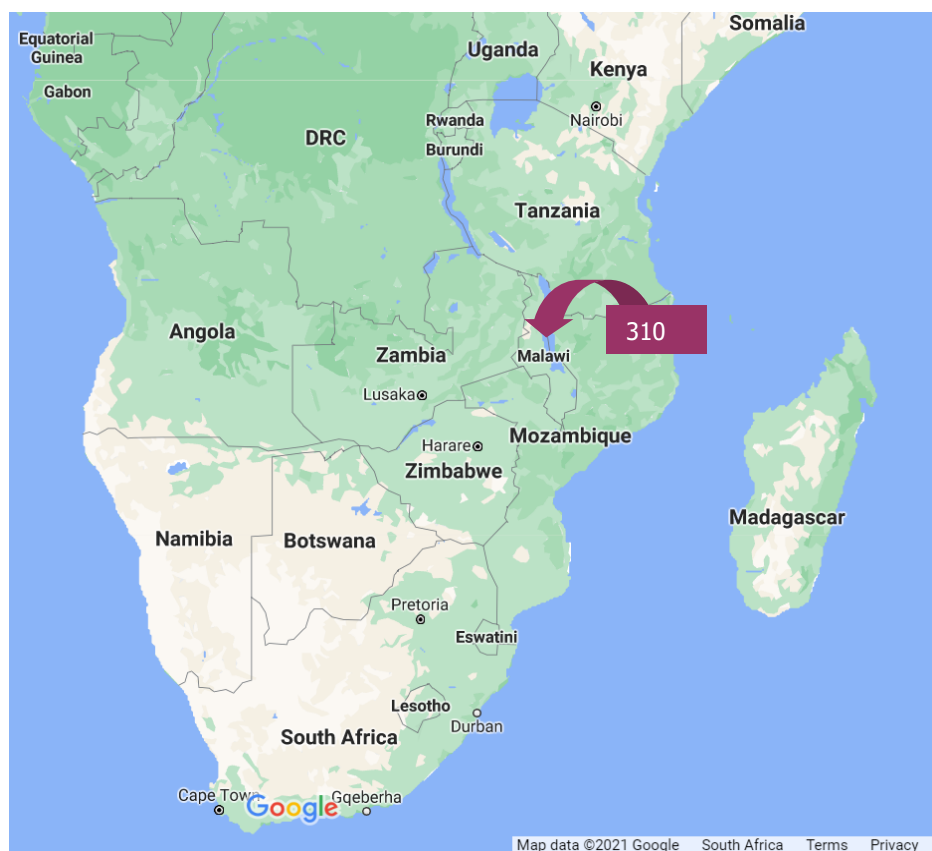
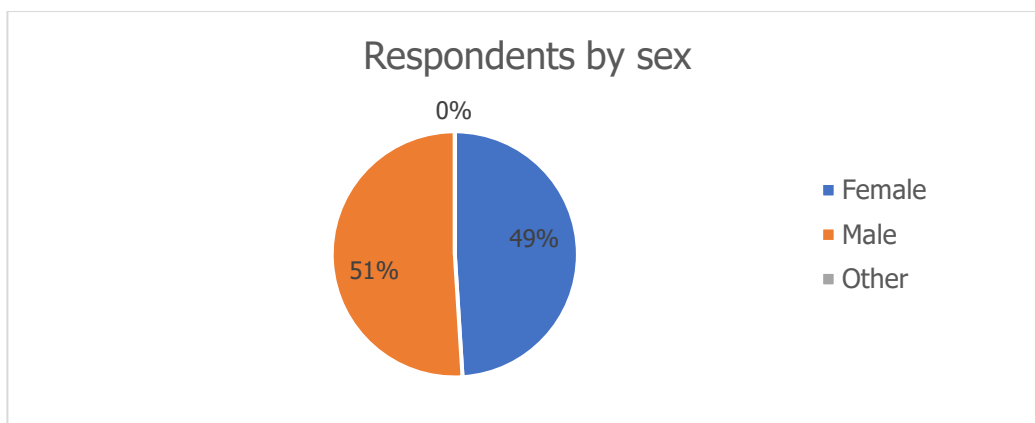


Figure 1: Map of entries per country

## Demographic characteristics of the sample

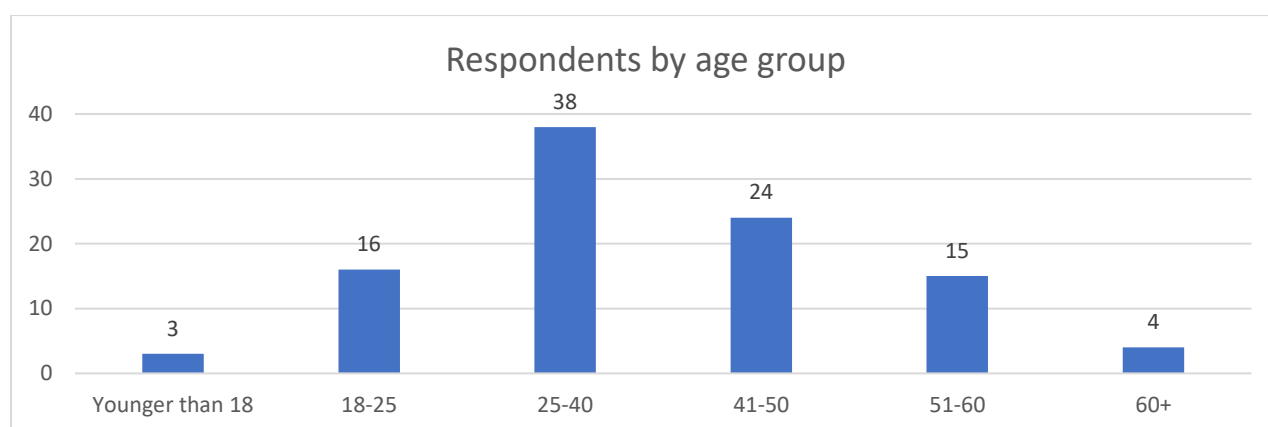
### Sex breakdown

The sample was comprised of 49% female and 51% male respondents.



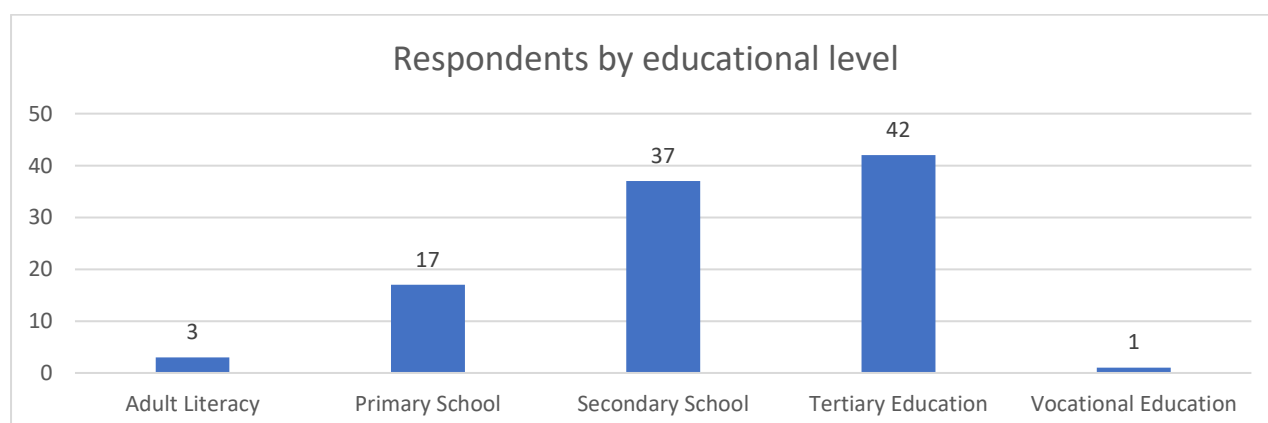
### **Age group breakdown**

Most respondents were between 25-40 years of age (38%) followed by those between 41 and 50 years of age (24%). Only 4% of respondents were over 61 years old and 3% were younger than 18.



### **Educational level breakdown**

Most respondents (42%) indicated having a tertiary, followed by a secondary school (37%) level of education. Only 3% of respondents indicated that they had adult literacy.



### **Disability breakdown**

7% of respondents indicated living with a disability. Respondents who reported a disability indicated that it was a physical disability (40%), a sensory disability (25%), a learning disability (20%), a mental disability (10%), or other (5%).

## Overall Gender attitudes

### Overall gender attitude scores

For this group, the mean gender attitude score was 67 with the lowest score being 22 and the highest 100. Most respondents' scores (77%) fell between 50-74 showing that overall gender attitudes could be said to be moderately positive. 10% of all respondents held moderately negative gender attitudes.

Score group	Frequency	%
0-24	1	0.3%
25-49	24	8%
50-74	213	69%
75-100	72	23%

Table 1: Frequency of gender attitudes score group

### Gender attitudes per question

Most respondents held positive gender attitudes with 70% or more indicating that they **disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the following statements:

- Disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services (88%)
- If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her (85%)
- Gender is only about women's issues (85%)
- Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons (84%)
- Men are naturally better religious leaders than women (82%)
- If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her (80%)
- A man should have the final say in all family matters (76%)
- If a man has paid Lobola (bride price) for his wife, he owns her (76%)
- If a woman works she should give her money to her husband (75%)
- If a woman wears a short skirt she is asking to be raped (75%)
- I trust what men say in the news more than what women say (71%)
- A man can marry as many wives as he wants but a woman can only marry one man (70%)

87%



**Disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement:**

**If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her**

84%



**Disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement:**  
**Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons**

On the other hand, 69% or more of the respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement "A woman should obey her husband".



### Respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement

On a positive note, 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking" and 61% agreed or strongly agreed that "A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom". Finally, 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "People should be treated the same whether they are male or female".

76%



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**People should be treated the same whether they are male or female**

61%



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom**

On the other hand, 60% or more of the respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statement:

→ A woman should obey her husband (69%)

69%



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A woman should obey her husband**

25%



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work**

14%



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A man should have the final say in all family**

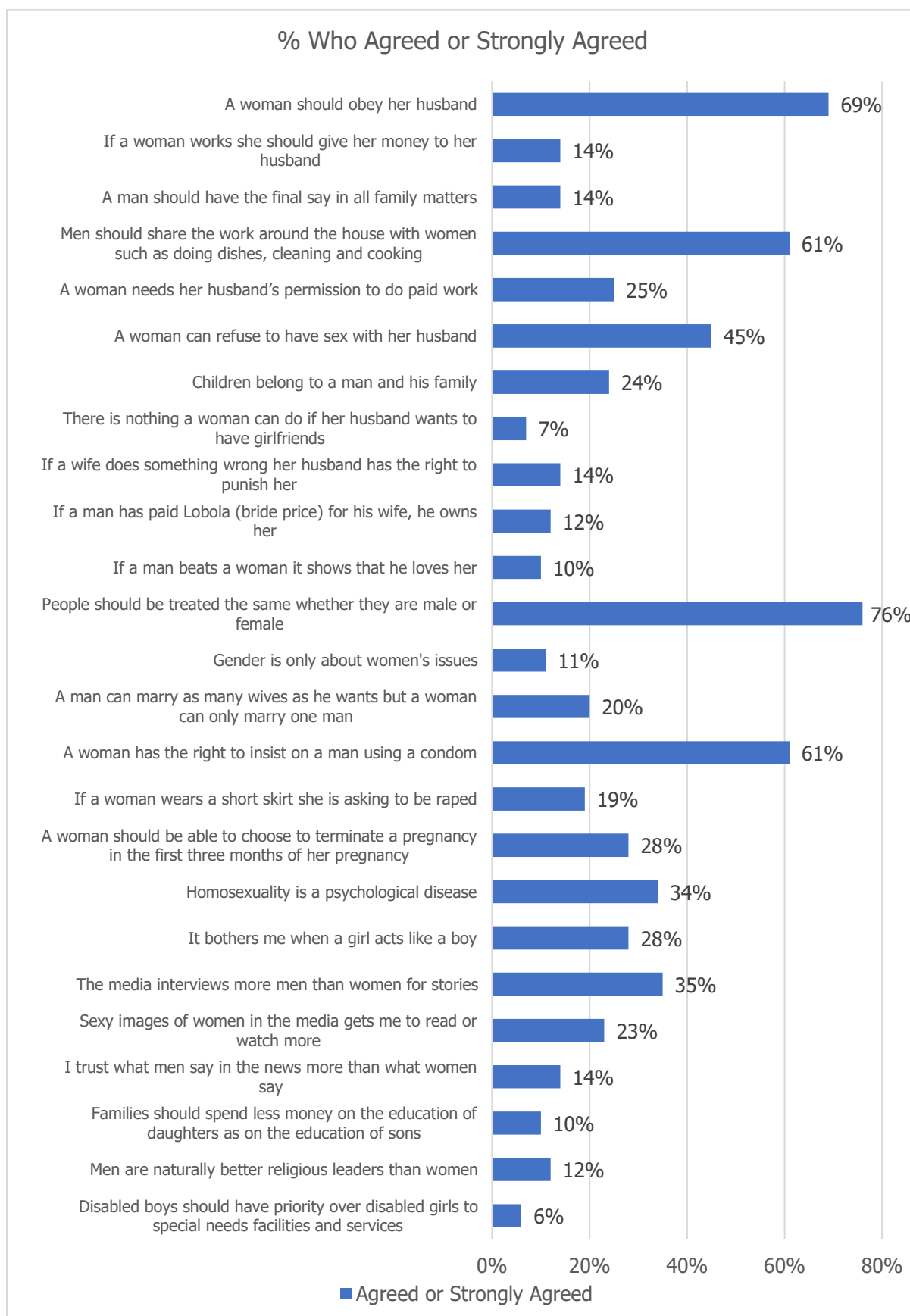


Table 2: Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement

## Gender attitudes by sex

As can be seen in Table 3, female respondents had higher gender attitude scores (68) than male respondents (66), however this difference was not found to be a significant difference<sup>1</sup>.

	Mean	Min	Max
<b>Female</b>	68	37	94
<b>Male</b>	66	26	92

Table 3: Gender attitudes by sex

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

When analysing the differences in responses to individual questions on the gender attitudes scale by sex, only three questions were found to be statistically significantly different.

Female  
**13%**



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**If a woman works she should give her money to her husband**

Male  
**15%**

Female  
**11%**



**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A man should have the final say in all family matters**

Male  
**16%**

Female  
**68%**



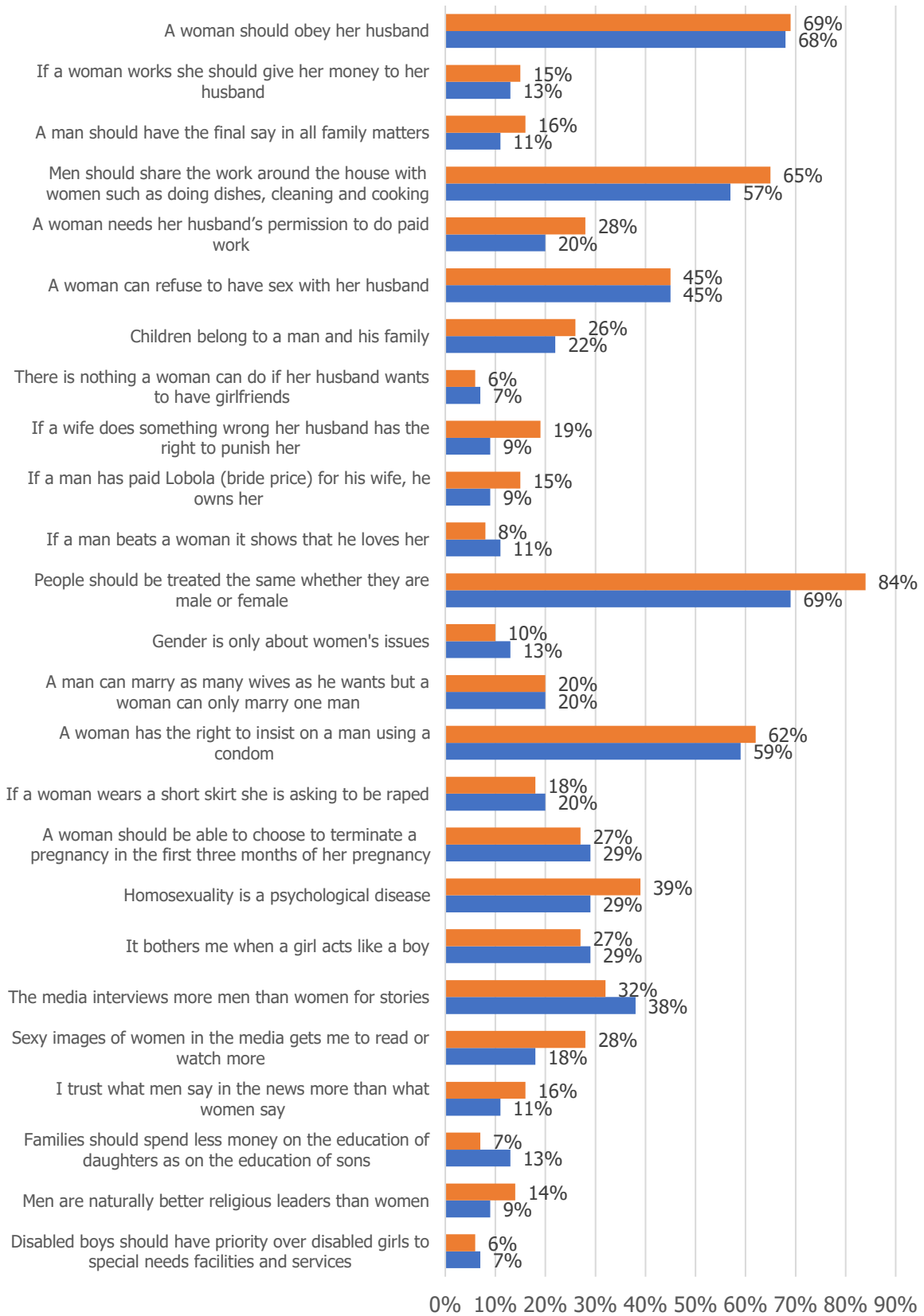
Male  
**69%**

**Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A woman should obey her husband**

<sup>1</sup>  $t(308) = 1.05, p = 0.294$

### % Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed

Male Female



## Gender attitudes by thematic area

Each of the questions were divided into different thematic areas and provide insight into the gender attitudes regarding different themes. In the section below we explore the proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement based on the thematic areas and the gender differences based on these.

### Gender-based violence

Nine questions were seen as falling under the gender-based violence theme.

On the positive side, 45% of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement "A woman can refuse to have sex with her husband". In addition, few respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements:

- There is nothing a woman can do if her husband wants to have girlfriends (7%)
- If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her (10%)
- If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her (14%)
- A man should have the final say in all family matters (14%)
- If a woman works she should give her money to her husband (14%)

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
A woman should obey her husband	69%
A man should have the final say in all family matters	14%
If a woman works she should give her money to her husband	14%
A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work	25%
There is nothing a woman can do if her husband wants to have girlfriends	7%
If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her	14%
If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her	10%
If a woman wears a short skirt she is asking to be raped	19%
A woman can refuse to have sex with her husband	45%

Table 4: Responses to questions under GBV

Of concern is the high proportion of respondents that **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements:

- A woman should obey her husband (69%)
- A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work (25%)

## Differences by sex

2%



**More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**If a woman works she should give her money to her husband**

6%



**More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**A man should have the final say in all family matters**

Male respondents held more negative gender attitudes in relation to gender-based violence questions than female respondents. A **higher proportion of male respondents agree or strongly agree** with the following statements:

- If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her (10% more male than female respondents)
- A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work (9% more male than female respondents)
- A man should have the final say in all family matters (5% more male respondents than female respondents)

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
A woman should obey her husband	68%	69%	1%
A man should have the final say in all family matters	11%	16%	5%
If a woman works she should give her money to her husband	13%	15%	2%
A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work	20%	28%	8%
There is nothing a woman can do if her husband wants to have girlfriends	7%	6%	-1%
If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her	9%	19%	10%
If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her	11%	8%	-3%
If a woman wears a short skirt she is asking to be raped	20%	18%	-2%
A woman can refuse to have sex with her husband	45%	45%	0%

Table 5: Responses to questions under GBV by sex

## Harmful practices

Five questions were grouped together under the theme of harmful practices.

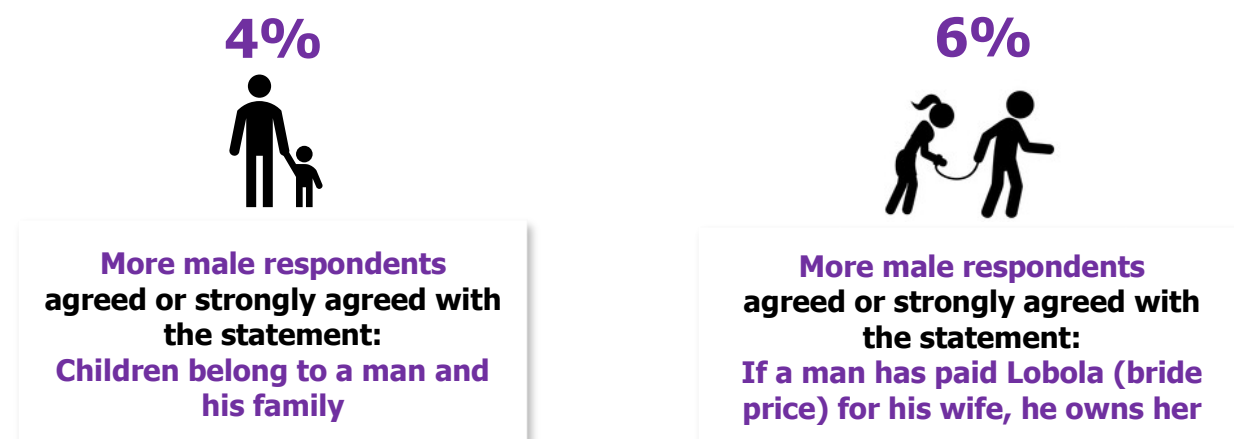
On the positive side, only 6% respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statement “Disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services” and 10% respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statement “Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons”.

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
Children belong to a man and his family	24%
If a man has paid Lobola (bride price) for his wife, he owns her	12%
A man can marry as many wives as he wants but a woman can only marry one man	20%
Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons	10%
Disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services	6%

Table 6: Responses to questions under Harmful Practices

Of concern is that 24% of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statement “Children belong to a man and his family”.

### Differences by sex



Male respondents held more negative gender attitudes than female respondents in relation to all but one of the statements falling under harmful practices. A higher proportion of male respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements:

- Children belong to a man and his family (4% more male respondents than female respondents)
- If a man has paid Lobola (bride price) for his wife, he owns her (6% more male than female respondents)

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
Children belong to a man and his family	22%	26%	4%
If a man has paid Lobola (bride price) for his wife, he owns her	9%	15%	6%
A man can marry as many wives as he wants but a woman can only marry one man	20%	20%	0%
Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons	13%	7%	-6%
Disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services	7%	6%	-1%

Table 7: Responses to questions under Harmful Practices by sex

### Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

Two questions were grouped together under the SRHR theme.

On the positive side, 61% of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** that a woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom.

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom	61%
A woman should be able to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy	28%

Table 8: Responses to questions under SRHR

Of concern is that only 28% respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** that a woman should be able to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy.

### Differences by sex

-2%



**More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:  
A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom**

3% more male respondents than female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom and 2% more female respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "A woman should be able to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy". This indicates that in relation to SRHR, male and female respondents had similar gender attitudes.



Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom	59%	62%	3%
A woman should be able to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy	29%	27%	-2%

Table 9: Responses to questions under SRHR by sex

### Sexual diversity

Two questions were grouped together under the theme of sexual diversity.

When respondents were asked questions regarding sexual diversity, 34% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Homosexuality is a psychological disease" and 28% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy". This indicates that a number of respondents held negative attitudes in relation to sexual diversity.

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
Homosexuality is a psychological disease	34%
It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy	28%

Table 10: Responses to questions under sexual diversity

### Differences by sex

10%



More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:  
**Homosexuality is a psychological disease**

-2%



More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:  
**It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy**

A higher proportion of female respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement "It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy" (2% more female respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing than male respondents). 10% more male respondents than female respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Homosexuality is a psychological disease".

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
Homosexuality is a psychological disease	29%	39%	10%
It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy	29%	27%	-2%

Table 11: Responses to questions under sexual diversity by sex

## Media

Three questions were grouped together under the media theme.

Responses to these questions seem to indicate more positive gender attitudes. This can be seen by a lower proportion of respondents **agreeing or strongly agreeing** with the following statements:

- I trust what men say in the news more than what women say (14%)
- Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more (23%)

35% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The media interviews more men than women for stories".

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
The media interviews more men than women for stories	35%
Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more	23%
I trust what men say in the news more than what women say	14%

Table 12: Responses to questions under media

### Differences by sex

5%



**More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**I trust what men say in the news more than what women say**

10%



**More male respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:**  
**Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more**

A higher proportion of male respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statement:

- Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more (10% more male than female respondents)
- The media interviews more men than women for stories (5% more than female respondents)

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
The media interviews more men than women for stories	38%	32%	-6%
Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more	18%	28%	10%
I trust what men say in the news more than what women say	11%	16%	5%

Table 13: Responses to questions under media by sex

## General

Four questions were grouped together under the general theme.

Responses to these questions seem to indicate more positive gender attitudes. This can be seen by the low proportion of respondents **agreeing or strongly agreeing** with the following statements:

- Men are naturally better religious leaders than women (12%)
- Gender is only about women's issues (11%)

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed All
Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning, and cooking	61%
People should be treated the same whether they are male or female	76%
Gender is only about women's issues	11%
Men are naturally better religious leaders than women	12%

Table 14: Responses to questions under general

76% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people should be treated the same whether they are male or female, and most (61%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning, and cooking".

### Differences by sex



Male respondents tended to show more positive gender attitudes to two of the questions under this theme. A higher proportion of male respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements:

- People should be treated the same whether they are male or female (15% more male than female respondents)
- Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking (8% more male respondents than female respondents)

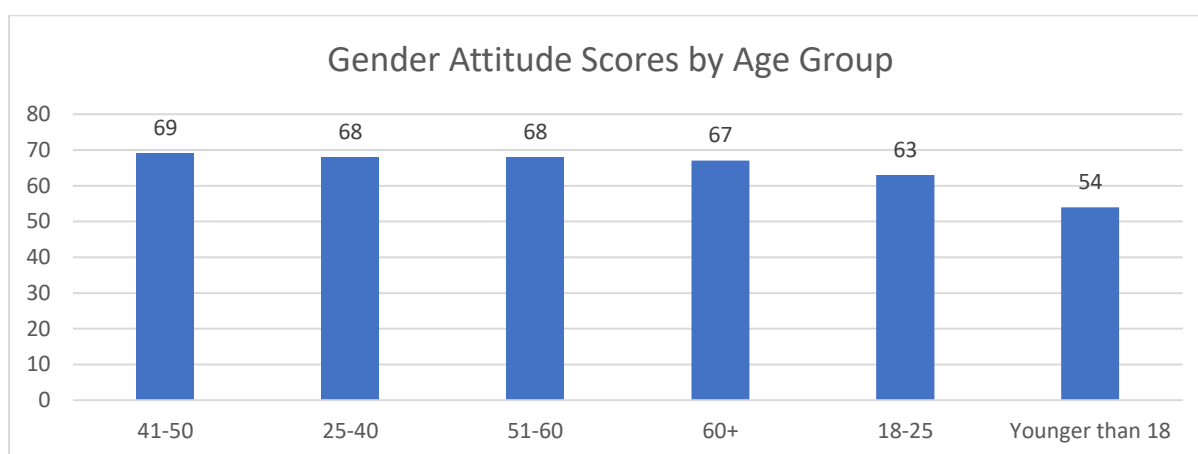
On the other hand, 5% more male respondents agreed or strongly agreed that men are naturally better religious leaders than women.

Question	Agreed or Strongly Agreed		% more males %
	Female	Male	
Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking	57%	65%	8%
People should be treated the same whether they are male or female	69%	84%	15%
Gender is only about women's issues	13%	10%	-3%
Men are naturally better religious leaders than women	9%	14%	5%

Table 15: Responses to questions under general by sex

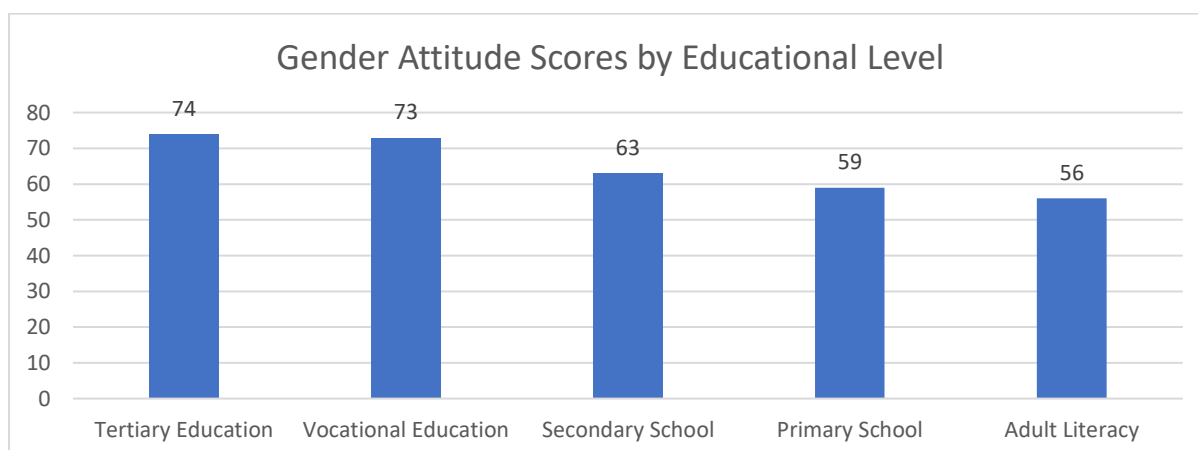
### Gender attitudes by age group

Respondents between the ages of 41 and 50, with a mean score of 69 had the highest scores. On the other hand, respondents younger than 18 years of age (54), had the lowest gender attitude scores<sup>2</sup>.



### Gender attitudes by educational level

Respondents with a tertiary level of education (74) had the highest scores. On the other hand, respondents with an adult literacy level of education, with a mean score of 56 had the lowest gender attitude scores<sup>3</sup>.

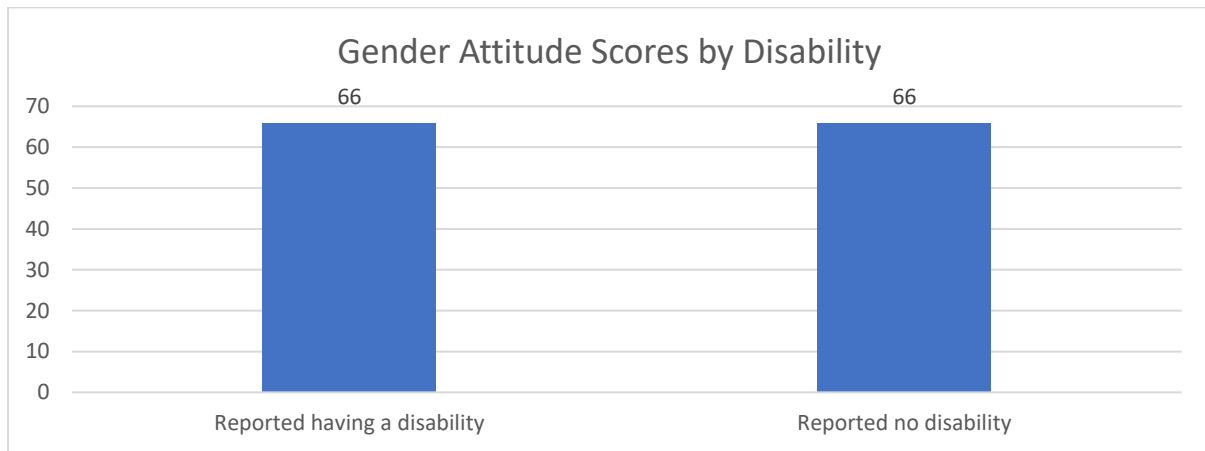


<sup>2</sup>  $\chi(5) = 3.52, p = 0.621$

<sup>3</sup>  $\chi(4) = 8.92, p = 0.063$

## Gender attitudes by disability

Respondents who reported having a disability had slightly lower gender attitude scores (66) than those who did not (67)<sup>4</sup>.



## Conclusion

Although the study has limitations, the results provide valuable insight into gender attitudes in the country. This information can be used to better understand different perspectives on gender equality and where people in the country are in relation to gender progress. It is clear, that although some progress has been made towards gender awareness, tolerance, and sensitivity, gaps remain and work still needs to be done to reduce the gender blindness in the region. This study provides some guidance on where focus should be placed in order to enhance gender progress.

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<sup>4</sup>  $t(308) = 0.33, p = 0.738$

## ANNEX A – Responses per question

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. A woman should obey her husband	11%	11%	9%	51%	18%
2. If a woman works she should give her money to her husband	39%	36%	10%	9%	5%
3. A man should have the final say in all family matters	33%	43%	11%	8%	6%
4. Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking	12%	14%	14%	41%	20%
5. A woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work	27%	37%	12%	18%	7%
6. A woman can refuse to have sex with her husband	15%	27%	13%	34%	12%
7. Children belong to a man and his family	32%	32%	13%	11%	13%
8. There is nothing a woman can do if her husband wants to have girlfriends	56%	35%	2%	4%	3%
9. If a wife does something wrong her husband has the right to punish her	39%	41%	6%	10%	4%
10. If a man has paid Lobola (bride price) for his wife, he owns her	39%	37%	12%	7%	5%
11. If a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her	57%	30%	3%	5%	5%
12. People should be treated the same whether they are male or female	10%	10%	3%	32%	45%
13. Gender is only about women's issues	40%	45%	4%	5%	6%
14. A man can marry as many wives as he wants but a woman can only marry one man	39%	31%	9%	14%	7%
15. A woman has the right to insist on a man using a condom	13%	16%	10%	37%	24%
16. If a woman wears a short skirt she is asking to be raped	46%	29%	6%	12%	7%
17. A woman should be able to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the first three months of her pregnancy	25%	28%	19%	20%	8%
18. Homosexuality is a psychological disease	20%	29%	18%	21%	13%
19. It bothers me when a girl acts like a boy	18%	37%	17%	18%	10%
20. The media interviews more men than women for stories	15%	35%	15%	25%	10%
21. Sexy images of women in the media gets me to read or watch more	24%	41%	12%	16%	7%
22. I trust what men say in the news more than what women say	32%	39%	15%	9%	5%
23. Families should spend less money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons	53%	31%	6%	7%	3%
24. Men are naturally better religious leaders than women	45%	37%	7%	5%	7%
25. Disabled boys should have priority over disabled girls to special needs facilities and services	54%	34%	5%	3%	3%

Table 16: 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 January 2019 to December 2020, with most of the responses being collected in 2019.

Country	2019	2020	Total
Malawi	297	13	310

### 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 ensuring 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 a gender attitudes scale. The GPS included 25 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. The total score has a possible range of between 0 and 100 with a higher score indicating more positive gender attitudes.

Reliability of an instrument is its ability to measure a construct consistently and with precision over time and groups of respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Reliability is about internal



consistency or the extent to which all the items in the scale measure one construct; stability or the consistency of results using the instrument repeatedly; and equivalence or consistency responses among multiple users (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In order to ensure that data capturing, and administration is done consistently a data collection training manual was developed which all data collectors were trained in. The most common statistic used to demonstrate reliability of the instruments is Cronbach's alpha (Taber, 2018). The internal reliability of all scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ), which measures inter-item correlations (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency for an instrument (i.e., the questionnaire). Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.7 are acceptable (Field, 2018) and indicate that the instrument (questionnaire) is reliable. Cronbach's alpha for the 25 items of the gender attitude scale showed the questionnaire did reach an acceptable reliability,  $\alpha = 0.81$ .

### **Limitations**

As with all research this study has several limitations that must be considered when reviewing the results. The main limitations of this research are that non-probability sampling methods were used and that the data was collected across a long period of time.

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 gender attitudes held within this country. Rather, these results are seen as giving insight into prevailing gender attitudes among those from whom data was collected. It provides valuable exploratory information about gender attitudes in the country.

Lastly, the data was collected across 2 years during which things may have occurred that may have impacted on gender attitudes. This limits the degree to which the results are reflective of current attitudes. Authors are cautious to not imply that these results are indicative of current gender attitudes.

Future research of this kind could overcome these limitations by exploring the possibility of using probability sampling hereby making the results generalisable. In addition, future research could look at limiting the period of data collection so as to ensure that the data is indicative of current or recent gender attitudes.

Despite these limitations, this data is rich and paints a useful picture of gender attitudes held across Sub-Saharan Africa. While keeping these limitations in mind, the reader is encouraged to reflect on what this data is telling us about gender norms, practices, and views and how these could be altered moving forward.