



PRESS RELEASE

A hard day's work: global attitudes to gender equality in the workplace

Close to three in ten men say sexual jokes or stories at work are acceptable

London, March 6, 2020 — Nearly three in ten men (28%) around the world think it's acceptable to tell jokes or stories of a sexual nature at work, according to a new global survey to mark International Women's Day. By contrast, only 16% of women globally say such jokes or stories are acceptable.

The survey of over 20,000 people in 27 countries was carried out by Ipsos MORI and the [Global Institute for Women's Leadership](#) at King's College London. It reveals attitudes towards workplaces that many would regard as toxic or at the very least not female-friendly, which have been shown to hold women back in their careers.

The survey finds significant differences in what women and men see as acceptable workplace behaviour, reveals where sexism is most likely to be challenged, and looks at whose careers are most likely to be affected by certain choices and responsibilities.

Most people around the world do not think that workplaces in their country are a level playing field for men and women – and there is a big gender gap here...

- Globally, almost half of men (49%) agree that there is gender equality in the workplace in their country compared with just three in ten women (32%):
- Countries where inequality in the workplace is felt to be greatest are Brazil (72%), Japan (71%) and France (69%). Conversely, those in Malaysia (68%), China (60%) and India (54%) are most likely to agree there is equality in the workplace between men and women

Representation matters; gender equality won't be achieved unless there are more female leaders in business and government

- Close to six in ten people (58%) agree that women won't achieve equality with men unless there are more female leaders in business and government, a third (36%) disagree.
- However, the gender gap persists: two-thirds of women agree (65%) compared with half (51%) of men.
- There is strongest agreement with this statement in India (69%), South Africa (69%) and Japan (68%) whereas those most likely to disagree are people in China (61%), Russia (49%) and South Korea (47%).

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And both men and women acknowledge that men need to play their part in helping to achieve gender equality.

- The vast majority of people surveyed (68%) believe that equality won't be achieved between men and women unless men take actions to support women too although close to three in ten (27%) disagree.
- Here there is much less of gender divide between the sexes: three-quarters (74%) of women agree as do six in ten men (62%).
- Respondents most likely to agree that men need to play their part in achieving equality are in South Africa (80%), India (78%) and Hungary (77%). At the other end, countries where people are least likely to say that men should play their part are the Netherlands (53%), Russia (49%) and China (42%).

Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister and Chair of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership, said:

"The workplace is one of the most important battlegrounds in the fight for equality between women and men, and these findings show we still have some way to go. While those who help fuel toxic work environments are in the minority, it's nonetheless a significant one – and their views can make people's working lives a misery. If employers want to pay more than just lip service to gender equality, they need to invest in creating cultures that value diversity and inspire respect for all."

Kelly Beaver, Managing Director of Ipsos MORI Public Affairs' team, said:

"International Women's Day is a great reminder each year to think about where we are headed, and how far we have come, in the fight for gender equality. Our new research shows that we still have a way to go when it comes to levelling the playing field, especially in the workplace. Our data shows that people feel women's careers are significantly more at risk than men's if they turn down a romantic advance, if they talk about their family life or don't take part in social activities with colleagues. However, there are some real positives coming through from the data, such as over half of men feeling confident to call people out if they make sexist comments."

"Equality won't happen without both men and women making changes and in the world of work, which is still dominated by men, we need more men to start prioritising equality and making a stand when required."

About the Study

These are the findings of a survey conducted in 27 countries via Global Advisor, the online survey platform of Ipsos, between 24 January - 7 February 2020.



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For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 20,204 adults aged:

- 16-74 in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Sweden;
- 18-74 in Canada, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States of America;
- 19-74 in South Korea.

The sample consists of 1,000+ individuals in each of Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and of 500+ individuals in each of the other countries surveyed.

The data is weighted so each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of its adult population according to the most recent census data, and to give each country an equal weight in the total "global" sample.

Online surveys can be taken as representative of the general working-age population in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. Online samples in other countries surveyed are more urban, more educated and/or more affluent than the general population and the results should be viewed as reflecting the views of a more "connected" population.

Sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. The precision of online surveys conducted on Global Advisor is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. Here, the poll has a credibility interval of +/-3.5 percentage points for countries where the sample is 1,000+ and +/- 4.8 points for countries where the sample is 500+. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please go to https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA_CredibilityIntervals.pdf.

About Ipsos

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