



# Press Release

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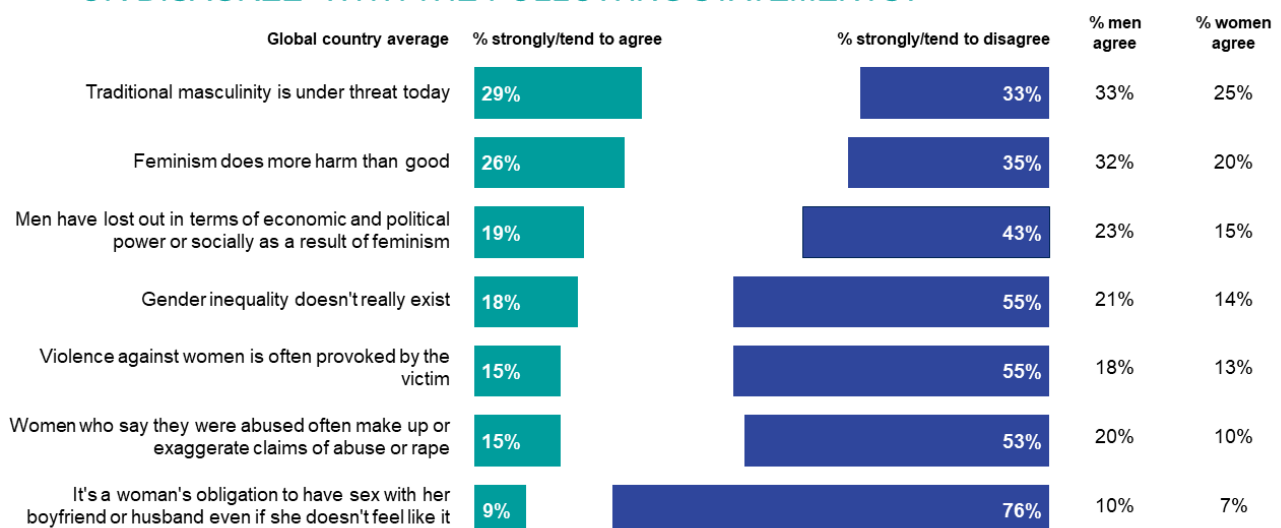
## International Women's Day 2022: Feminism, Gender Equality, and online behaviour

*1 in 3 men believe feminism does more harm than good and that traditional masculinity is under threat*

A new global study carried out in 30 countries by Ipsos, in collaboration with the [Global Institute for Women's Leadership](#) at [King's College London](#), for [International Women's Day](#) (8 March 2022) shows that:

- Only 2 in 10 deny the existence of gender inequality, but views are split on the benefits of feminism
- Concerns about online abuse remain, with 1 in 10 men saying it's acceptable to send someone unrequested explicit images
- 4 in 10 have experienced online abuse or seen sexist content but 1 in 3 believe many women overreact
- Victim-blaming attitudes are found in a minority across the countries included in the study.

### Q PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT GENDER AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?



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International Women's Day 2022: Feminism, Gender Equality and online behaviour (8 March 2022). Results from an Ipsos study  
Base: 19,523-20,024 online adults aged 16-74 across 29 countries, 21 January – 4 February, 2022



## Men are more likely to question the existence of gender inequality and the benefits of feminism

The majority of people globally disagree gender inequality doesn't really exist, with a global country average of 55%. Despite evidence that gender inequality globally has only increased since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup>, just under a fifth agree (18%). Almost seven in every ten (69%) online South Africans disagree (and only 15% agree), demonstrating that South Africans have made some progress when considering gender inequality. Only citizens in Japan (73%) and Sweden (70%) feel stronger than South Africans on this issue, and Brazilians (69%) share our views. (Admitting that gender inequality exists is, however, not a guarantee that a person regards it as unjust or wrong or something to be addressed.)

### Q PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT GENDER AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS? GENDER INEQUALITY DOESN'T REALLY EXIST



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Men are more likely to agree that gender inequality doesn't really exist (21% vs 14%). In several countries, the proportion of men who agree is double the proportion of women (including Australia, 30% vs 14%; Romania, 27% vs 13%; and Russia, 30% vs 12%).

Men are also more likely to be sceptical about the benefits of feminism and to question the existence of gender inequality today:

- A third of men think feminism does more harm than good (32% global country average) and believe that traditional masculinity is under threat (33%).
- Women are less likely to agree, with a fifth (20%) agreeing feminism does more harm than good and a quarter thinking traditional masculinity is under threat today (25%).

<sup>1</sup> <https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-threatens-four-lost-decades-gender-equality>

- A fifth think that feminism has resulted in men losing out in terms of economic or political power or socially (19%), with men more likely to agree than women (23% vs 15%). Online South African men are also more likely to agree (27%) than South African women (18%).

## **Victim-blaming attitudes toward violence against women are held by a minority, but only around half disagree outright with victim-blaming statements**

More than half of citizens across the world disagree that violence against women is often provoked by the victim (global country average of 55%). In South Africa, 62% disagree that violence against women is often provoked by the victim, but we still have a long way to go. 77% of citizens in the Netherlands disagree with this statement. In line with global opinion (53%) a similar proportion (54%) of online South Africans also disagree that women who say they are abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape. Together with South Africans, citizens in Brazil, Sweden, Turkey and the Netherlands all tend to believe the woman in these cases.

But globally a minority expressed concerning views in relation to violence against women:

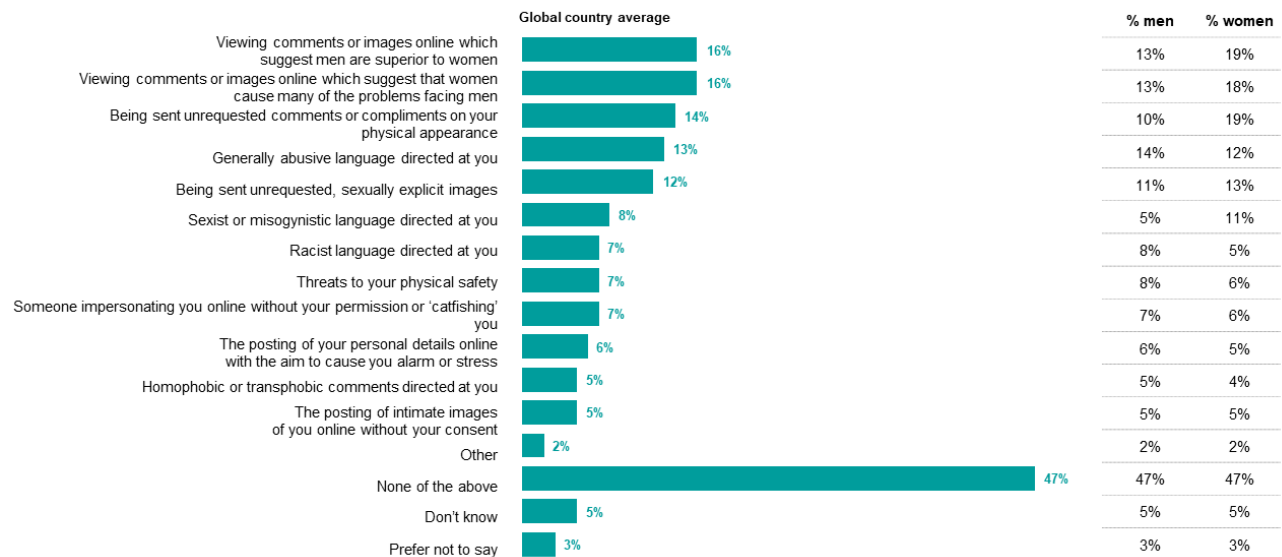
- Around one in seven say violence against women is often provoked by the victim (15%), including 13% of women.
- The same proportion say that women who report being abused often make up or exaggerate claims (15%, with 20% of men and 10% of women agreeing).
- Three quarters disagree that it's a woman's obligation to have sex with her boyfriend or husband even if she doesn't feel like it (76%), while one in ten agree (9%).
- Younger people are more likely to agree with all three sentiments. For example, around one in five Gen Z and Millennials agree that violence against women is often provoked by the victim (18% and 19%, respectively, compared to 14% of Gen X and 11% of Baby Boomers).

## **Women are more likely to receive online harassment and to feel affected by it**

Harmful and misogynistic content is prevalent online:

- Two in five (45% global country average) say they have experienced online abuse or seen sexist content in the past two years.
- Of the examples of harmful content surveyed, the two most commonly viewed forms are comments or images suggesting men are superior to women or suggesting that women cause many of the problems faced by men (16% each).
- Women were more likely to say they had noticed both these messages, perhaps being more likely to notice and remember these messages (19% of women vs 13% of men noticed comments suggesting men are superior, and 18% of women vs 13% of men saw comments suggesting women cause men's problems).
- In terms of online harassment, women are more likely to have received sexual harassment. A fifth (19%) have been sent unrequested comments or compliments on their physical appearance and one in 10 (11%) have had sexist or misogynistic language directed at them (vs 10% and 5% of men, respectively).

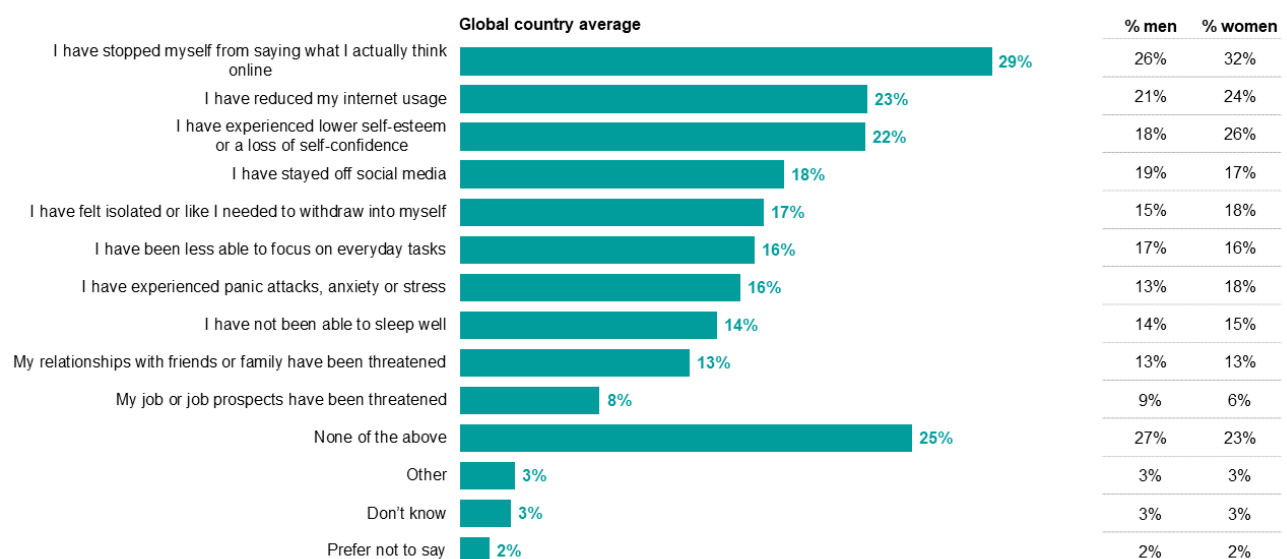
## Q HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF ONLINE CONTACT IN THE PAST TWO YEARS?



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Base: 20,524 online adults aged 16-74 across 30 countries, 21 January – 4 February, 2022

Women also seem to be more impacted by online abuse, as among those who have viewed comments or images online which suggest men are superior to women or that women cause many of the problems facing men, are more likely to report that they have stopped saying what they think online (32% vs 26% of men), experienced lower self-esteem or self-confidence (26% vs 18% of men) and experienced panic attacks, anxiety or stress (18% vs 13% of men) as a result of online abuse.

## Q HOW, IF AT ALL, HAS THIS TYPE OF ONLINE CONTACT AFFECTED YOU?

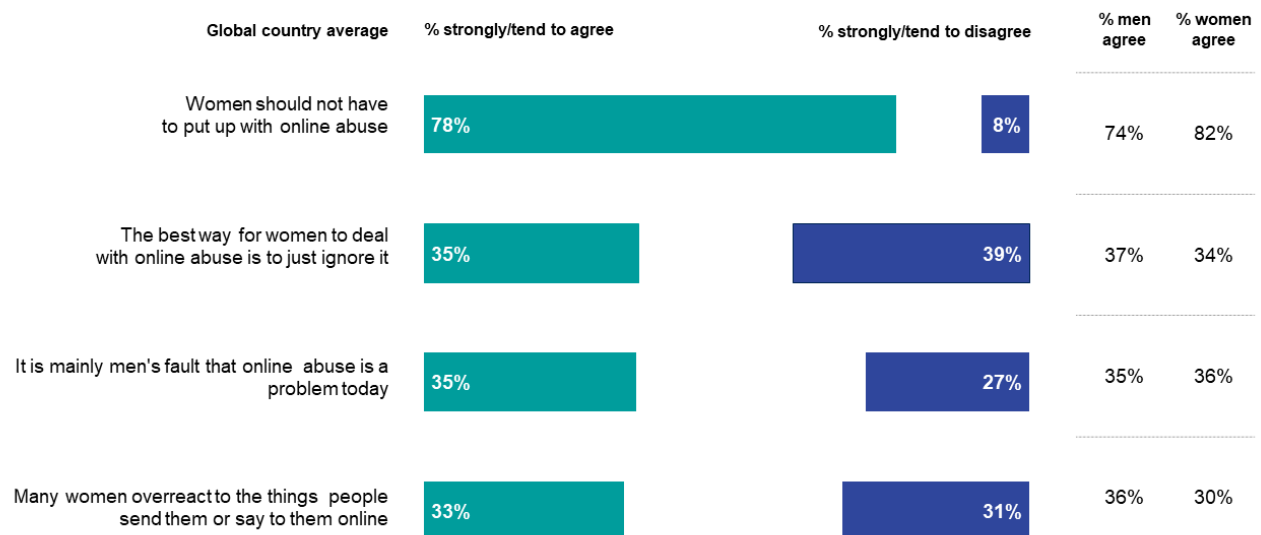


© Ipsos 2022  
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Base: 4,444 online adults aged 16-74 across 29 countries; saying yes to 'Viewing comments or images online which suggest men are superior to women' and 'Viewing comments or images online which suggest that women cause many of the problems facing men' Q12, 21 January – 4 February, 2022

The majority agree that women should not have to put up with online abuse (78% global country average). Eight in every ten (80%) online South Africans also agree that online abuse against women is unacceptable. Globally, agreement is lower amongst men (74% vs 82% of women) and younger generations (75% of under 50s vs 85% of over 50s). However, people are split as to whether the best way for women to deal with online abuse is to ignore it, with 35% agreeing and 39% disagreeing.

People are slightly more likely to agree than disagree that men are mainly to blame for online abuse (35% agree and 27% disagree). However, people are split on whether many women overreact to things that people send them or say to them online (33% agree and 31% disagree), and agreement is higher amongst men (36% vs 30% of women).

## Q TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?



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## Most think harmful and abusive online behaviour is unacceptable, but acceptability is higher among men, frequent internet users, and younger generations

When asked about various forms of online abuse, the vast majority find them unacceptable. However:

- A quarter think sending unrequested comments or compliments to someone on their physical appearance is acceptable (25% global country average), with men more likely to agree than women (28% vs 22%).
- Around one in 10 think the following forms of online contact are acceptable: using generally abusive language (11%), homophobic or transphobic comments (9%), sexist or misogynistic language (8%), racist language (8%), posting personal details online (8%), and sending unrequested sexually explicit images (7%). Men are more likely to find all these forms of online contact acceptable. Six percent find sharing someone's intimate images without consent acceptable.

- More frequent online usage was associated with viewing forms of online harm as acceptable. For example, those who use online gaming sites at least once a month were more likely to view sharing someone's intimate images without their consent as acceptable than those who never use social media, messaging services, or online gaming (11% vs 2%).
- Younger people tend to be more likely to find harmful online behaviour acceptable than older generations. For example, 10% of Gen Z and Millennials find sending someone unrequested, sexually explicit images acceptable, compared to 6% of Gen X and 3% of Baby Boomers.

"The prevalence of harmful and misogynistic content online can be seen to both contribute to and reflect wider issues in society regarding sexism, gender inequality, misogyny, patriarchy and gender-based violence. Looking through this lens at some online content it should come as no surprise that there is a call for increased regulation of online content and/or the acceptance of more responsibility for the content carried by online companies. This is a talking point in many countries, including all over Africa," said Mari Harris, Knowledge Director of Ipsos Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Technical Detail

- These are the results of a 30-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 20,524 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, aged 21-74 in Singapore, and 16-74 in 24 other countries between Friday, January 21 and Friday, February 4, 2022.
- The sample consists of approximately 1,000 interviews in each of Australia, Brazil, Canada, mainland China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.
- The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be taken as representative of their general adult population under the age of 75.
- The samples in Brazil, Chile, mainland China, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.
- The data is weighted so that each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.
- "The Global Country Average" reflects the average results for all the countries where the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country and is not intended to suggest a total result.
- Where results do not sum to 100 or the "difference" appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of "don't know" or not stated responses.





## Press Release - Continued

- The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/-3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos' use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website. The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

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