FWRM
FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Perception Study on Leadership in Fiji

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

2022

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To eliminate violence against women and girls

UN WOMEN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement strives to empower, unite and provide leadership opportunities for women in Fiji, especially for the emerging young leaders, the indigenous and the locally-born women.

The Perception in Leadership Study is funded by the UN Women and the Spotlight Initiative, and administered by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. The overall objective of the study is to gather the perceptions of people on leadership, with a particular focus on the leadership styles and the political leadership of women in Fiji.

The study includes a voluntary questionnaire survey with a total of 906 responses across Fiji (851 survey responses and 55 interviews).

The findings form a fundamental connection to the development of women in leadership spaces, and help guide critical areas of discussion for FWRM in advancing women's participation in leadership in Fiji.

KEY FINDINGS

78% of respondents strongly agree that the leadership should be built on trust (affiliative leadership style)

53% strongly disagree that leaders should be feared (autocratic leadership style)

Honesty, fairness and humility were the top three (3) important leadership traits preferred in a leader. 85% of respondents stated that Honesty equally applies to men and women

A combined 55% of respondents indicated that "support from loved ones" increases a woman's chances of being elected as a leader

69% of respondents indicated that "gender stigmatisation" decreases a woman's chances of being elected as a leader

91% of respondents agree that culture influences the leadership styles of leaders in Fiji

94% of respondents agree that education can enhance the leadership capabilities of politicians in Fiji

78% agree that religion influences leadership in Fiji.

78% agree to vote for a political candidate who reflects a similar leadership style as him/her

87% of respondents agree that leadership styles differ with age

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Fiji ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1995. Articles seven (7) and eight (8) of CEDAW obliges the State Party to take all appropriate measures to eliminate any forms of discrimination against women in the political and public spheres.

Fiji's progress on increasing the participation of women in leadership remains uneven. Data shows that women are still underrepresented in many leadership spaces in Fiji. Globally, Fiji is ranked 106 out of 189 in the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) database and stands above all other states in the Pacific region. As a region, however, the Pacific ranks the lowest.

A 2020 FWRM research found that only 21 percent of board members across 38 boards of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) were women, below the global target of 30 percent for the same year. As of now, women are still underrepresented and comprise only 20 percent of all board members across the 38 boards, with 17 out of 38 (45 percent) of the boards having less than 30 percent women's participation[1].

Under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) five (5), Fiji must ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at "all" levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.

Fiji has expressed commitments to the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development[2] to increase the numbers of women in senior positions in government and on boards of state-owned enterprises. It is critical for all women to realise the significance of their active participation in all leadership spaces to help bring about change, whether it is in the home, village, community or at national spaces through legislative lobbying and advocacy.

Men and women experience life in distinct ways. As a result, they have different needs and contributions to society. The same is true in perceptions of leadership. According to (Oladipo et al., 2013), the achievement or failure of organisations, nations, and other social units has been mainly attributed to their leadership style. Therefore, it is the hope that this report provide useful insights on the different perceptions of leadership among men and women to inform better leadership models and traits to adapt to.

Despite the ambitions of gender equality, Fiji's progress against these global and national targets remains challenging. Fiji does not have any temporary special measures to support women in leadership. Globally, Fiji is ranked 106 out of 189 in the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) database and stands above all other states in the Pacific region. As a region, however, the Pacific ranks the lowest.

It is critical for all women to realise the significance of their active political participation at community and national levels to help bring about change, for instance by lobbying for and influencing legislative reforms. With awareness through civic education; women, especially young women, are also better informed of their constitutional rights as citizens and can confidently assert themselves in their respective communities through various other trainings, workshops, regional and international conferences.

Men and women experience life in distinct ways. As a result, they have different needs and different contributions to society. The same is true in perceptions, and gaining their feedback from this study would enable a broader understanding of the preferred leadership styles[3]. According to (Oladipo et al., 2013), the achievement or failure of organisations, nations, and other social units has been mainly attributed to their leadership style. This report offers insights that provide an understanding of some of the convergences and differences in perceptions of different leadership styles among men and women in Fiji.

1.2 PREVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS

Increasing women's participation in leadership is an essential indicator of gender equality. However, more efforts must be targeted toward women as leaders. Fiji has had ten general elections since its independence in 1970. The number of parliamentary seats held by women has steadily increased. In 1987, there were no women in Parliament, which grew to eight (11 percent of the 71-seat house) in the 1999 and 2006 elections. In the 2018 elections, 20 percent of the 51-seat house was allocated to women.

1. FWRM research on Diversity on boards: http://www.fwrm.org.fj/images/fwrm2017/PDFs/research/FWRM_Gender_Diversity_Incl_GoF_Boards-Final_.pdf

2. Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014. Access the full report: https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/Govt--Publications/Peples-Charter/RSSED.pdf.aspx

3. Leadership styles are a leader's approach to providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

In 2020, a survey was conducted by Fiji Women's Rights Movement on Gender Equality, diversity, and inclusion focusing on leadership in Fiji government controlled boards. The study[4] observed 38 state-owned enterprises, which revealed that overall, women's participation is low, and below the global target of a minimum of 30% by 2020. Of 192 Board members in 38 Boards, women comprise only 21% of all Board members or 40 of 192. Ten of 38 Boards, or 26%, have less than 30% women participation.

In 2014, The Fiji Women's Forum conducted a public perception survey in partnership with the International Women's Development Agency. The study explored community views about women in politics and leadership more generally. The findings provide a snapshot of attitudes and perspectives before the September 2014 election.

Some significant findings of the study indicated that 81% of respondents agree that women are underrepresented in Fiji, and 72% think it would be better for the country if there were more women in the national government. The majority of respondents identified cultural barriers (60%), discrimination (59%), and a lack of support at the community level (53%) as the significant reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections, rather than a lack of education (15%) or experience (19%). 77% of respondents would not be influenced by a candidate's sex when casting their vote. 17% of women would prefer to vote for a woman. 67% of respondents deem it likely or highly likely that Fiji will have a female Prime Minister within the next ten years, and 65% said they would like to see that happen. The research provided information about current attitudes, how they varied across Fiji populations, and where the change was happening. The study also focused on attitudes and perceptions of women in a more political context.

However, for the Perceptions study of leadership in Fiji (2022), the focus is drawn on the overall views of both men and women and their perceptions of leadership in Fiji. The parameters cover leaderships styles, leadership traits, characteristics of a leader, different qualities, level of importance, religious and cultural aspects, Violence Against Women in leadership/Gender Based Violence - which is to further develop into focus group discussions. This study has not included personal views in a political context but more on leadership and understanding the leadership styles of both men and women.

4. FWRM research on Diversity on boards: http://www.fwrm.org.fj/images/fwrm2017/PDFs/research/FWRM_Gender_Diversity_Incl_GoF_Boards-Final_.pdf

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW

Leadership is both a property and a process (Alam, 2015). Process, by using influence to direct and coordinate people, and property, as a set of characteristics attributed to those perceived to have such influence. Leadership is aligned with any achievement, and today, various studies have validated that success depends on the leadership styles of leaders (Mohammed & Shittu, 2022). There are two common groups of leadership styles: the modern and the traditional leadership style (ibid). The traditional leadership style exists in a traditional society, which includes autocracy, democratic, and the Laissez-faire leadership styles. It believe that leaders are born and not made (Yusup, 2022). As time progressed, more innovative approaches have appeared and the modern leadership styles were reflected via collaboration between leaders and followers. These include Affiliative, Servant, Transformational, Participative, Situational, Adaptive, Visionary, Transactional, Innovative, Charismatic, Coaching, Pacesetting, Distributed, Entrepreneurial, and Narcissistic leadership styles. As behavioral traits vary amongst leaders, different leadership styles would be portrayed to suit the context accordingly.

REGIONAL MILIEU

The Pacific region provides fertile ground for explorations of leadership, particularly women's leadership. While men dominate political leadership in the Pacific, women's participation in decision making and leadership varies widely across all sectors (McLeod, 2015). Despite the participation opportunities, gender stigmatisation co-exists socially and politically, creating boundaries for women to progress. A study by (Zubrinich & Haley, 2009) indicated that some women in decision-making spaces continue to experience domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. There is a fundamental need for an attitudinal shift and (Tung, 2013) has strongly emphasised that the role of local-level women's groups and NGOs remains paramount in addressing this via dialogic principles.

LOCAL NEXUS

Fiji needs political women leaders, and the patriarchal curtain that shades the traditional mindset needs gender refinement. In the 2014 study, the majority of respondents identified cultural barriers (60%), discrimination (59%), and a lack of support at the community level (53%) as the major reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections. According to (Corbett & Liki, 2015), families matter when women are involved in politics, and women who politically prosper generally have powerful fathers or brothers, often foreign husbands. The gender scale needs adjustment, and successful efforts towards policy implementation and robust support for women's movements would change the narrative on women in leadership and gender equality in Fiji.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using the mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative methods). Two (2) research tools were employed for data gathering: a questionnaire survey and interviews. The questionnaire survey gathered 851 responses, while 55 interviews were administered across Fiji. The voluntary participation witnessed a total of 906 completed responses.

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

3.1.1 OBJECTIVE

The questionnaire was developed following literature analysis and discussion with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. It aimed to gauge and gather information from respondents surrounding leadership styles and women in leadership.

The questionnaire survey was digitally constructed and disseminated using a link and quick response (QR) code. The link was nationally distributed to the public using networking contacts, social media, and emails. Given the ongoing COVID-19 safety measures, the digital approach was preferred for this research due to its ability to gather data with greater ease and efficiency in terms of time and data coordination. The questionnaire was piloted, and some questions were shortened due to the extended time taken for com- pletion.

3.2 INTERVIEWS

Simultaneously, interviews were administered face-to-face in several locations. The survey and interviews were voluntary and targeted to all Fiji citizens above the age of 18 years and living in Fiji during the study. The age criteria were aligned to the voting age under the Fiji Constitution[5], ensuring that the perceptions of every eligible voter in Fiji are captured in the study.

3.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was constructed to guide the study through the existing knowledge in leadership, leadership styles, and women in political leadership. The literature review has solidified the foundation of the study via reading, summarizing, and synthesising relevant information. The structure has consolidated the aspects of leadership in a broader setting, later focusing on the dimension of women in leadership with alignment to the regional milieu and the local nexus.

3.4 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The study was revised by an advisory committee comprising two (2) members who critically revised the draft report for further improvement. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement was a catalyst throughout the study period.

5. Voter qualification and registration, Section 55(1). Access the 2013 Fiji Constitution http://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Fiji_ang_010117.pdf

3.5 STUDY AREAS

The responses from the following Provinces, cities, and towns were received. The areas also cover the locations of some rural villages and settlements. For example, Vatukoula, Korovou, Raviravi, Baulevu, etc.

Regarding demography, 68% of respondents reside in the Central division, which covers the densely populated Lami-Suva-Nausori urban corridor. According to the 2017 Fiji Census results, the population density in the urban areas is attributed to urban boundary extensions and rural-urban drift[6] . Subsequently, a decrease in the rural population was recorded, underlining that most rural populations are currently urban residents.

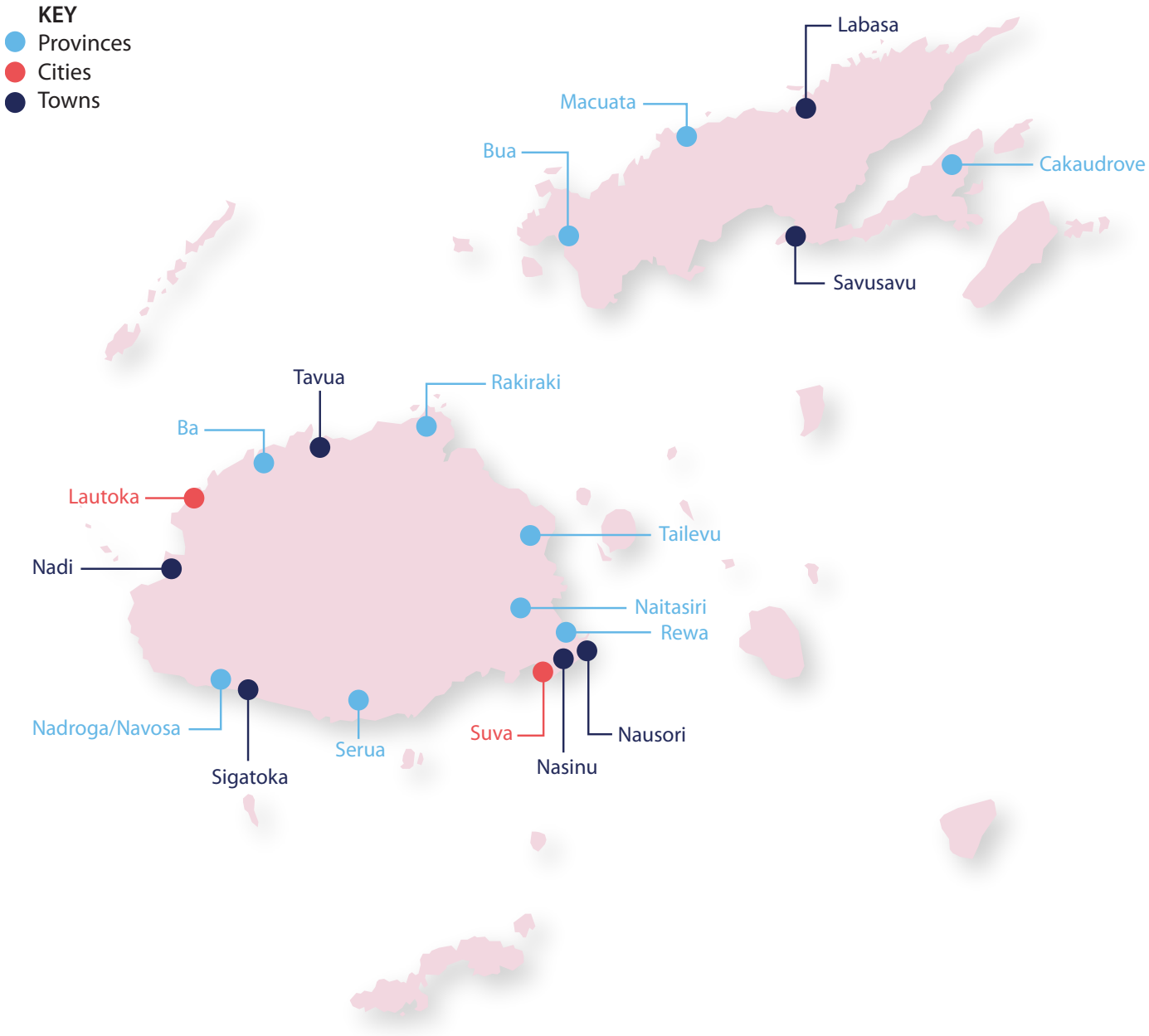


Figure 1: Locations of the survey and interview respondents across Fiji

6. 2017 Population and Housing Census - Release 1. (2017). Fiji Bureau of Statistics. https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/census-2017/census-2017-release-1

3.5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

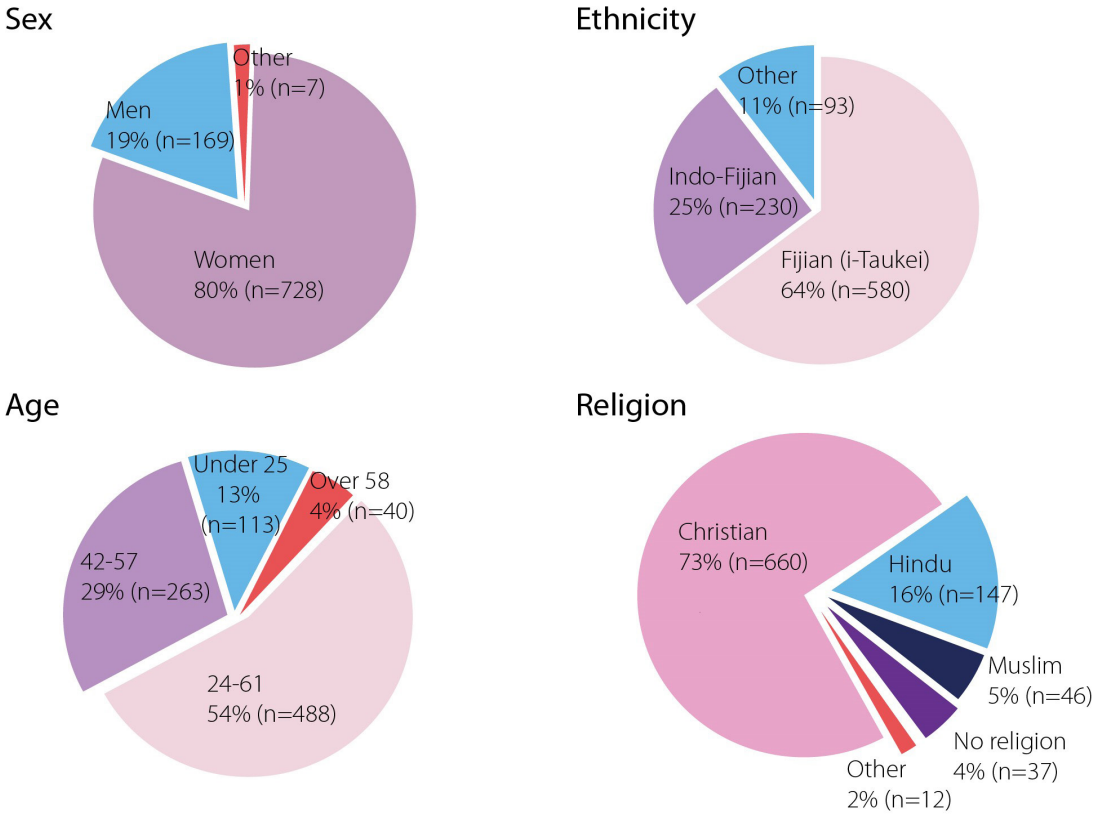


Figure 2: Demographic summary of respondents, by gender, ethnicity, age and religion.

SEX

More female volunteered to participate in the study, comprising 80% of the total respondents. Male respondents were 19%. Sex data was not recorded for two (2) respondents (0.22%).

ETHNICITY

The indigenous Fijians (i-Taukei) constituted 64%, while the indo-Fijians and the remainder (Caucasians, Asians, and Pacific islanders) made up 25% and 11% respectively. Ethnicity data was not recorded for three (3) respondents (0.33%).

AGE

The ages were categorised into four (4) cohorts to outline the generational differences (Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and the Baby Boomers). The approach would further aid the analysis of how their views impact their perceptions of leadership. Age data was not recorded for two (2) respondents (0.22%).

RELIGION

Under the 2013 Constitution, citizens of Fiji have the right to manifest their religion in worship, practice, or observance. Therefore, religion was included to examine if it influences people's perceptions of leadership. Religion data was not recorded for four (4)respondents (0.44%).

3.5.2 FUNCTIONING CHALLENGE (DISABILITY STATUS):

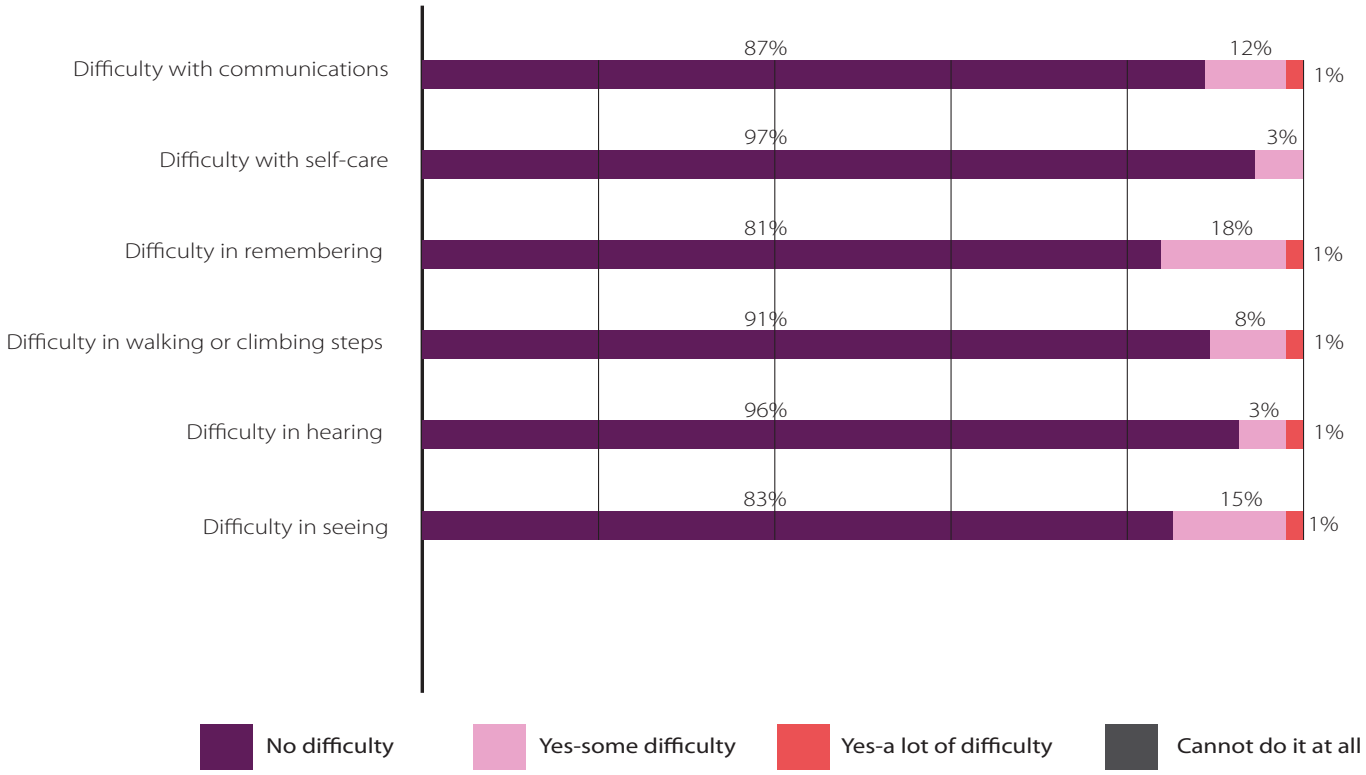


Figure 3: Functioning challenge summary of respondents by categories.

A total of six (6) Washington questions[7] were included to gauge the participation of persons living with any disability. More than 80% of respondents had no di culty in all the categories: Communications (87%), self-care (97%), remembering (81%), walking (91%), hearing (96%) and, seeing (83%).

Less than 20% of the remaining respondents had some disability in all the categories.

7. The questions used to generate statistics on disability suitable for censuses and national surveys.

4. RESULTS

4.1 LEADERSHIP STYLES

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with some statements regarding different leadership styles. The top five (5) statements favored by the respondents are presented below in the order of agreement:

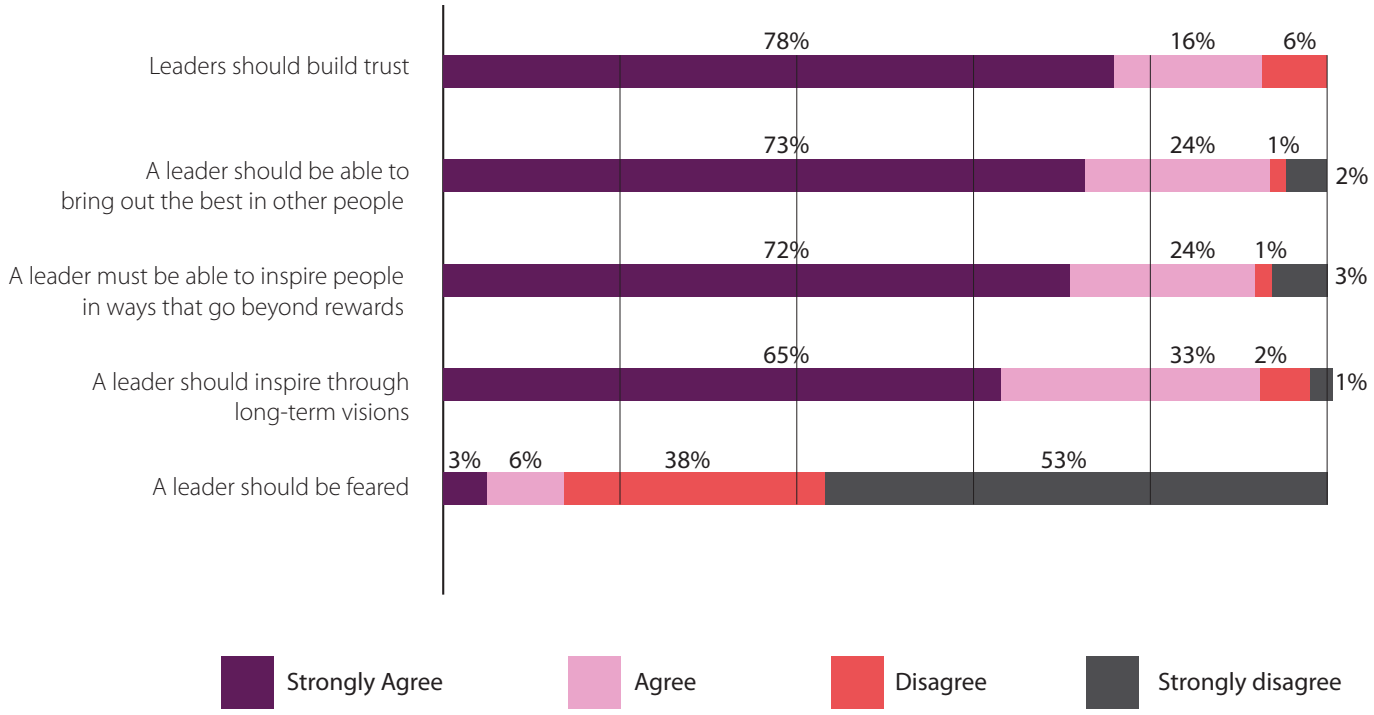


Figure 4: Responses regarding the leadership styles people approve of.

4.1.1 BUILD TRUST

Above all things, the majority of respondents (78%) strongly favored leaders who build trust. Trust is itself a fundamental trait of leaders who exhibit affiliative leadership behaviors. These leaders value morale, emotional ambiance, and trust in their followers to reach their desired goals (Seymen, 2017)[8]. From the political perspective, as political parties in Fiji campaign for the general elections, the political trust[9] of the citizens is expected to rise, which can influence their voting behaviors and decisions (Mohamad & Othman, 2020).[10]

Future leaders of Fiji must embed trust-building in their agenda, as this is a significant factor. Nonetheless, 16% of respondents agreed that leaders should trust, while 6% strongly disagreed.

4.1.2 BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN OTHER PEOPLE

73% of respondents perceived that a leader should be someone who could bring out the best in other people. The collegial trait of these leaders exhibits democratic leadership behaviors, whereby leaders believe, are inclusive of, and value their followers' capabilities. They constantly engage, share their knowledge, and collectively participate in achieving productivity (Ray & Ray, 2012).[11] However, 24% of respondents agreed, while the remaining 3% did not favor the statement.

8. Seymen, A. (2017). Different Leadership Styles and its Application in Daily Management of a Business Hotel in Istanbul. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research. Source: https://www.ijser.org/research-paper/DIFFERENT-LEADERSHIP-STYLES-ITS-APPLICATION-IN-DAILY-MANGEMENTOF-A-BUSINESS-HOTEL-IN-ISTANBUL.pdf

9. It is the trust of citizens' in political leaders, and their political parties of which they are a part of.
Dodsworth, & Cheeseman. (2020). Political trust: The glue that keeps democracies together. International Development Department, University of Birmingham. https://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/Political trust - The glue that keeps democracies together.pdf

10. Mohamad, K. A., & Othman, N. (2020). Political Trust and Political Leadership Legitimacy: Implications on Voters' Behaviour. Journal of Politics and Law, 13(4), 126. https://doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v13n4p126

11. Ray, S., & Ray, & I. (2012). Understanding Democratic Leadership. Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences. http://www.onlineresearchjournals.com/aajoss/art/83.pdf

4.1.3 INSPIRE BEYOND REWARDS

The transformational leadership style was strongly favored by 72% of respondents. A leader was perceived as someone who could inspire, influence and intrinsically motivates people to place their passions before rewards (Abazeed, 2018)[12]. 24% of respondents agreed, while the remaining 4% did not agree with the statement.

4.1.4 VISIONARY

65% of respondents strongly perceived that a leader should inspire through long-term visions and having the ability to plan for the future, not just for the present time. A leader should be able to plan a sight statement for the long run (Karwan, Hariri, & Ridwan, 2021)[13]. 33% of respondents agreed, while the remaining 3% did not favor the statement.

4.1.5 NON-AUTOCRATIC

A combined 91% disagreed with the statement that a leader should be feared. The concept of a feared leader is a characteristic of the autocratic leadership style that negatively impacts people's performances (Dolly & Nonyelum, 2018)[14]. Nonetheless, the remaining 9% of respondents indicated otherwise.

Overall, the leadership styles that both men and women preferred are affiliative, democratic, transformational, visionary, and the absence of autocracy.

The preferred leaders are those who could build relationships on trust, collegiality, motivation, future planning, and the absence of fear (freedom).

As perceptions vary, one leadership style cannot accommodate all. However, it could be concluded that respondents mostly favor leaders who display the above leadership styles.

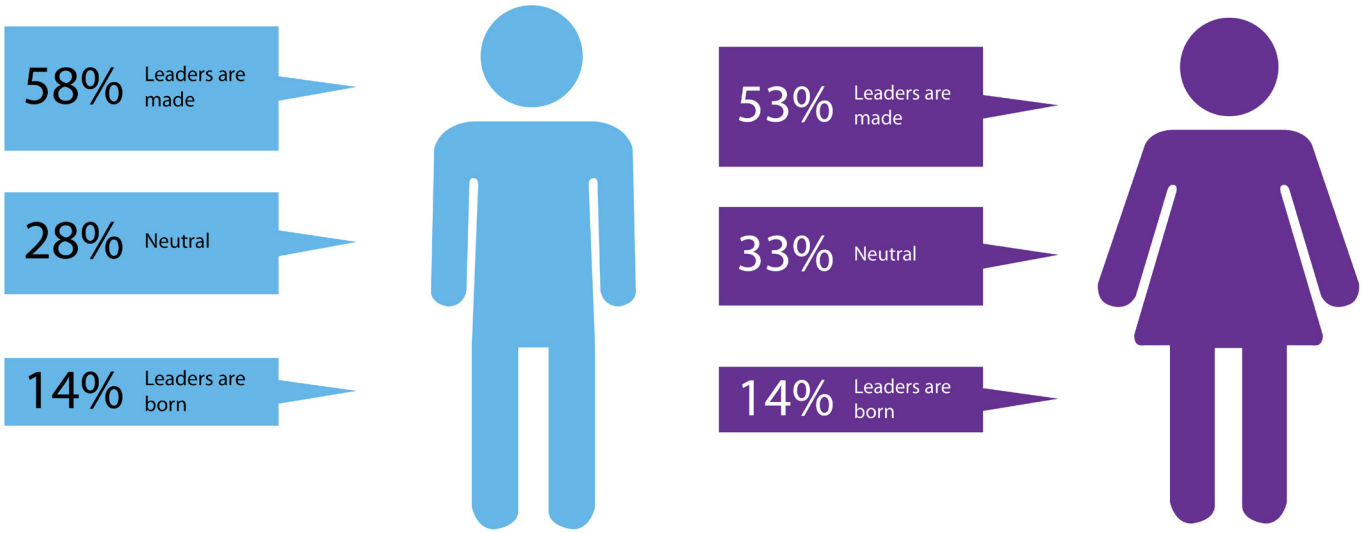
12. Abazeed, R. A. (2018). Impact of Transformational Leadership Style on Organizational Learning in the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology in Jordan. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 118-129. https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_9_No_2_February_2018/13.pdf

13. Karwan, D., Hariri, &. H., & Ridwan, &. R. (2021). Visionary Leadership: What, Why, and How. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Progressive Education. Universitas Lampung. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350902114_Visionary_Leadership_What_Why_and_How

14. Dolly, K., & Nonyelum, &. O. (2018). Impact of Autocratic Leadership Style on Job Performances of Subordinates in Academic Libraries in Prt Harcourt, Nigeria. International Journal of Research. https://oaji.net/articles/2017/1330-1542432169.pdf

4.2. LEADERS - BORN OR MADE?

To open the discussions on the desired leadership traits in all spheres, the respondents were asked if leaders are born or made.



For each category, most respondents (53% and above) indicated that leaders are made. This validates that most are familiar with some leadership philosophies or management concepts (either via employment, education, and media exposure) before answering the survey. A study in 2018 supported the statement as it discusses leadership traits to be borne by an individual (Aline & Ramkumar, 2018)[15].

28% to 33% of respondents indicated "neutral", while 14% of both men and women revealed that leaders are born. A comment box was provided, and respondents who indicated "neutral" mostly gave feedback. The most frequently mentioned words included the following:

Figure 6: "Neutral" responses to the statement "Are leaders born or made".

15. Aline, & Ramkumar, &. (2018). Leaders are not born, they are made. International Journal of Applied Research. https://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2018/vol4issue5/PartB/4-5-7-194.pdf

4.3. PREFERRED LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance on the leadership traits they would prefer to lead Fiji.

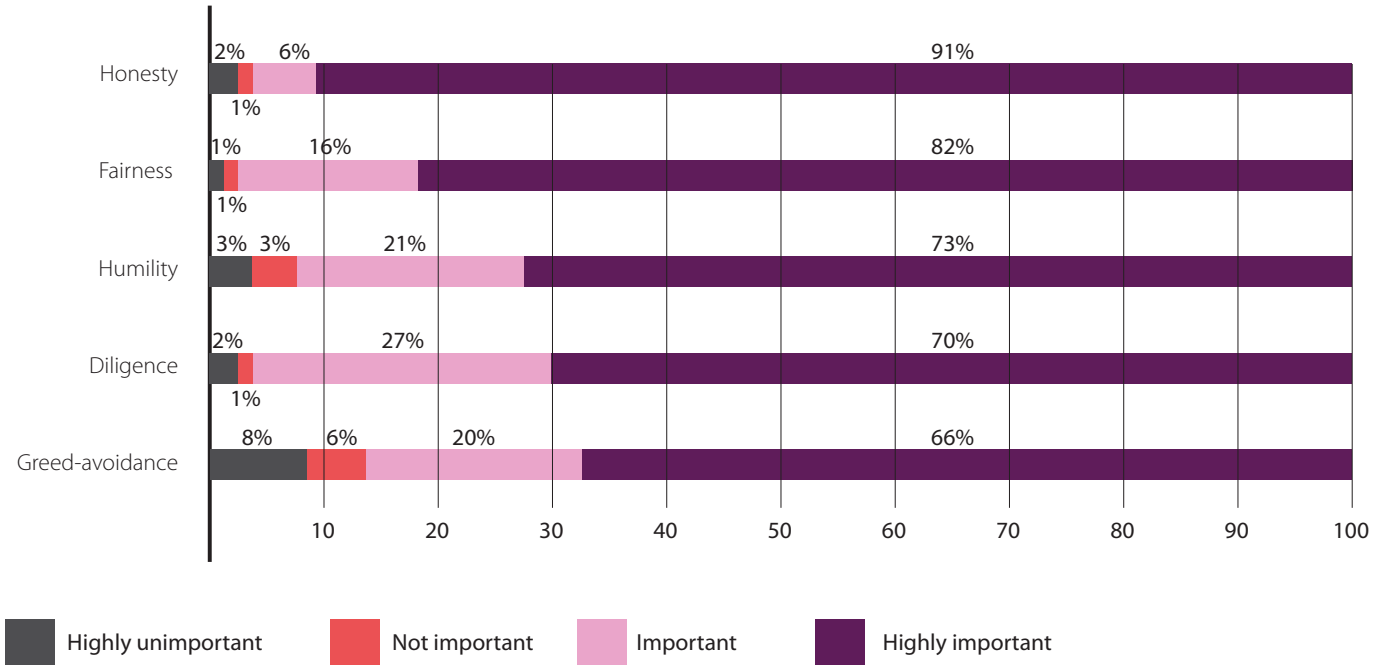


Figure 7: Responses to the leadership traits preferred to lead Fiji.

Honesty was the most favored (91%) as a highly important trait preferred for a leader to have. 6% believed that honesty was important, and 3% disagreed.
Fairness was fundamental to 82% of respondents, while 16% indicated fairness as important. The remaining 2% disagreed.
Humility was preferred by 73% of respondents, while 21% believed that it was important. The remaining 6% disagreed.
Diligence was favored by 70% of respondents, and 27% indicated that it was necessary. The remaining 3% did not favor it.
Greed avoidance was mainly favored by 66% of respondents, and 20% believed that it was important. 14% did not believe that this trait was important.
Overall, less than 14% had voted the traits unfavorably (not important and highly unimportant).

4.4 LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND SEX

Respondents were provided with five traits and were asked to indicate if each was best portrayed by women, men or equally by both. For all traits, more than 50% of the respondents indicated that they equally applied.

However, regarding the choices indicated, Honesty and ethical traits were more voted for women (14%), compared to 1% for men. 9% of the respondents indicated that self-confidence is portrayed equally by women and men. Creativity was also revealed to be best represented by women than men having 27% and 1%, respectively. Respondents also indicated compassion (37%) to be more portrayed by women, compared to 1% for men. Lastly, 43% of the respondents considered dictatorship more shown by men, compared to 3% for women.

*Percentages may be greater than 100 due to rounding.

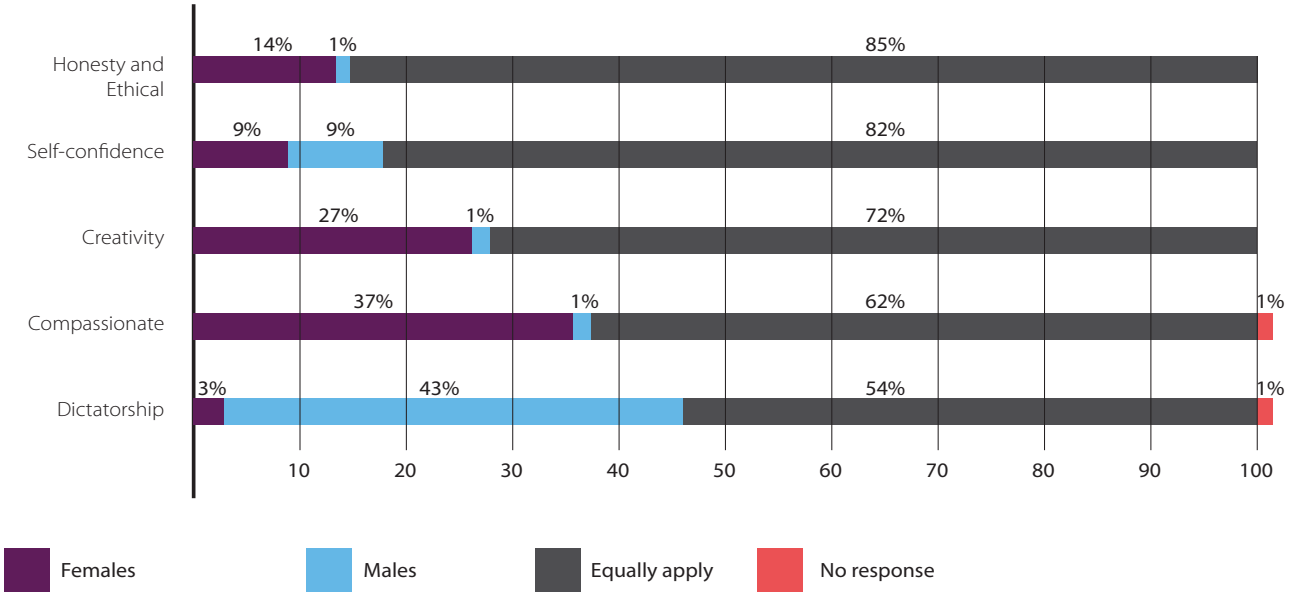
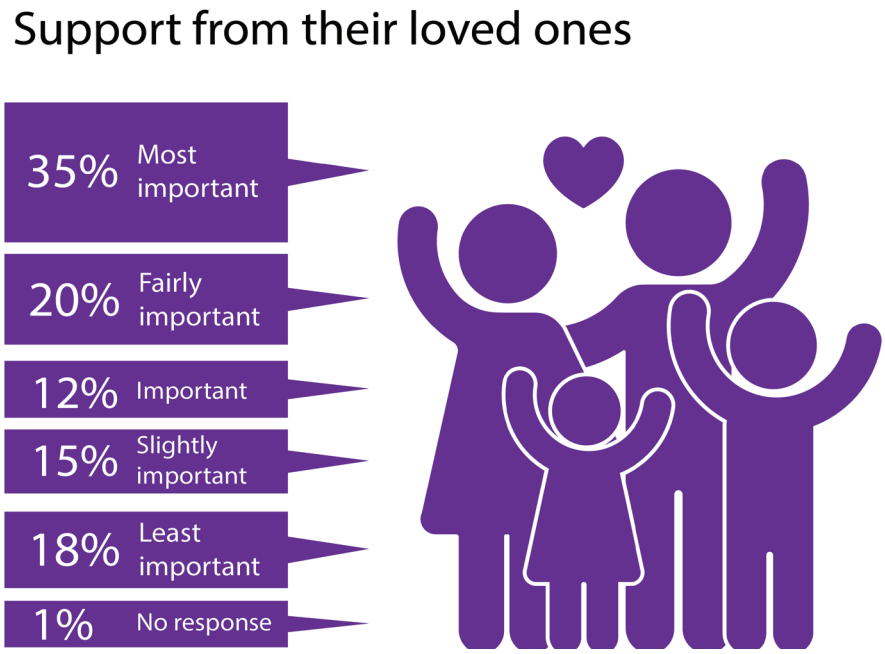


Figure 8: Responses to the leadership traits best portrayed by women, men or equally by both.

4.5 WOMEN'S CHANCES OF BECOMING A LEADER

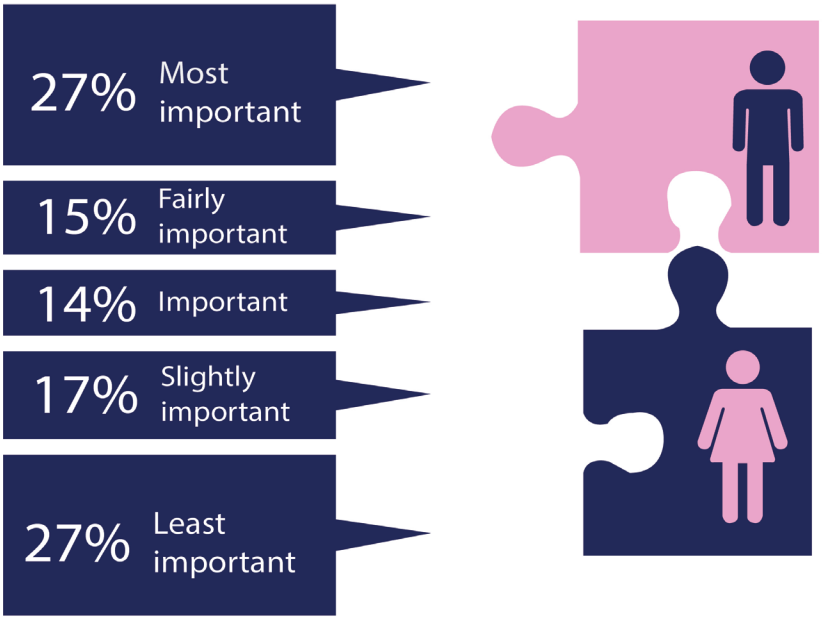
4.5.1 RESPONDENTS WERE PROVIDED WITH STATEMENTS AND WERE ASKED TO INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH IN INCREASING A WOMAN'S CHANCES OF BEING ELECTED AS A LEADER.



The results indicated that support from loved ones (35%) was the most important element that would increase a woman's chances of being elected as a leader. A paper by Imbaya (2012)[16] discusses how womens' success in small business management was positively related to the family support they received.
However, 20% of respondents stated that family support is fairly important, and 12% indicated that it is important. The combined remainder (33%) perceived family support unfavorably (slight and least important).

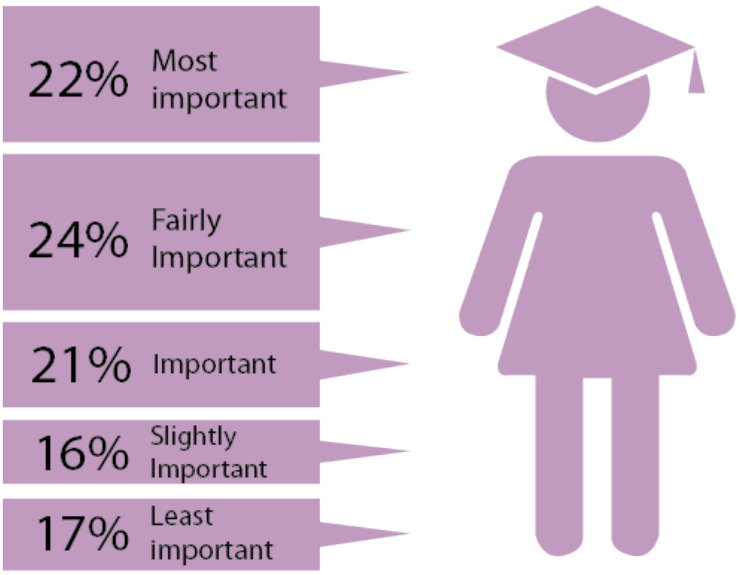
16. Imbaya, B. (2012). The Role of Family Support in Performance of Women- Micro and Small Enteprises in Eldoret, Kenya. Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS), 502-508. https://kipdf.com/the-role-of-family-support-in-performance-of-women-operated-micro-and-small-ente_5aef20527f8b9a89668b45c9.html

Enacting gender-inclusive leadership strategies across all sectors



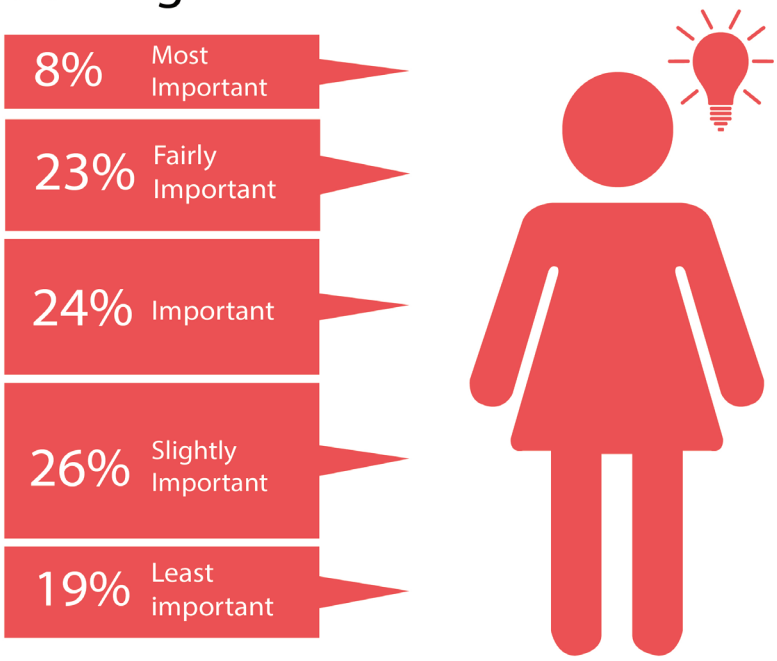
Enacting gender-inclusive leadership strategies was indicated equally by 27% of the respondents as the most important and least important. 17% highlighted that it was slightly important, higher by 2% over those that indicated it as fairly important (15%). 14% believed that it was important that the enactment would increase a woman's chances of becoming a leader.

Higher education attainment



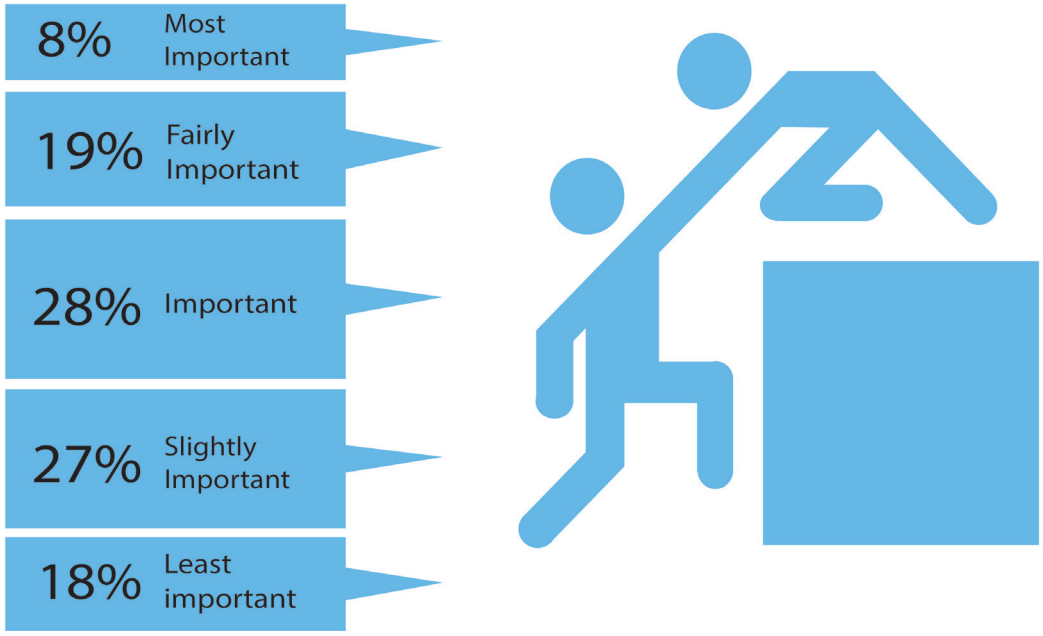
24% of respondents believed higher education attainment was fairly important, and 22% indicated it was most important. 21% said it was important, while 17% believed it was least important. The remaining 16% stated that it was slightly important.

Upskilling\Professional development training



26% of respondents said up-skilling/ professional development training was slightly important, and 24% indicated it was important. 23% stated it was fairly important, while 19% believed it was least important. The remaining 8% were highlighted as most important.

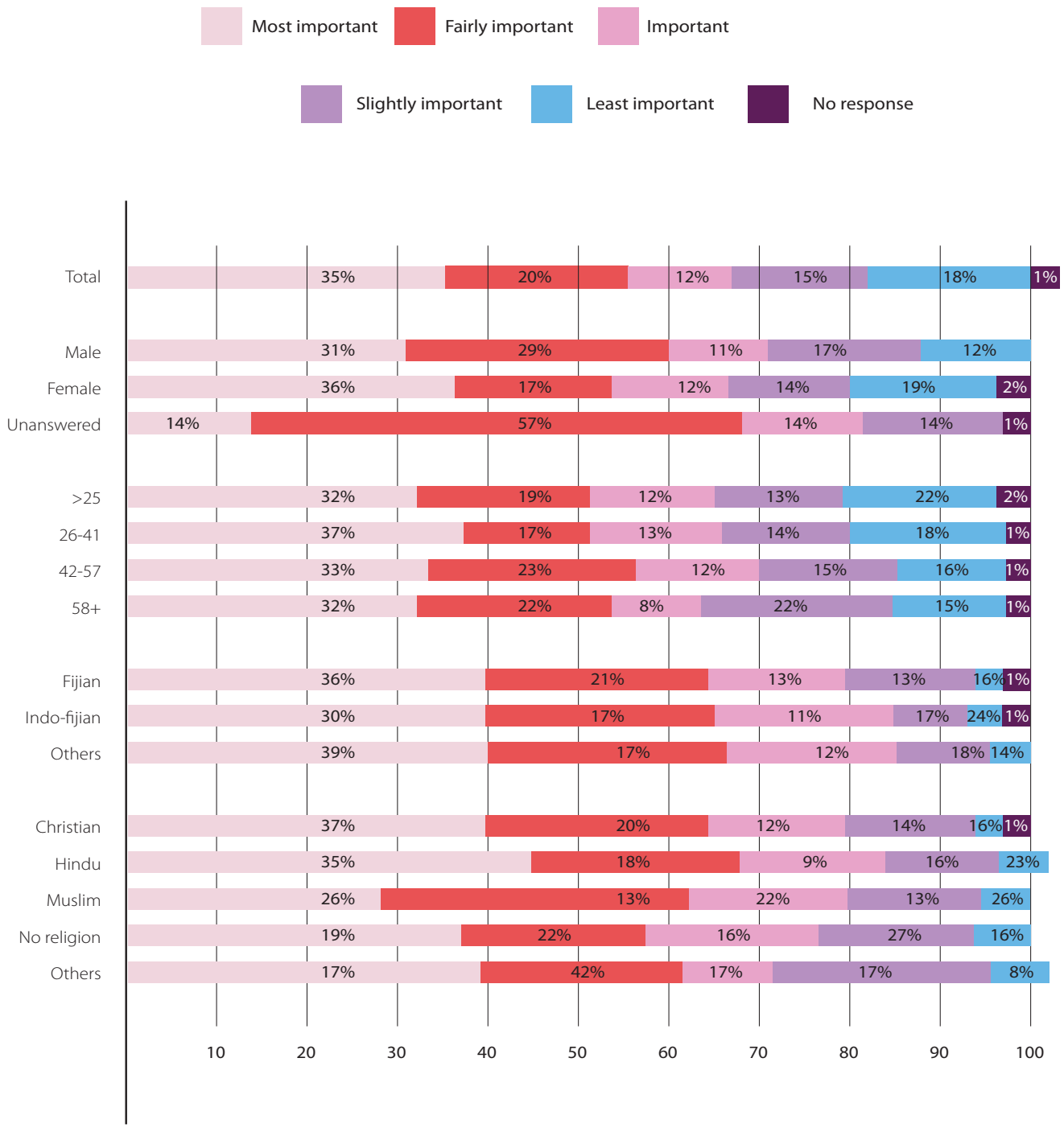
Mentorship programmes



28% of respondents said that mentorship programmes were important, and 27% indicated it was slightly important. 19% stated it was fairly important, while 18% believed it was least important. The remaining 8% were highlighted as most important.

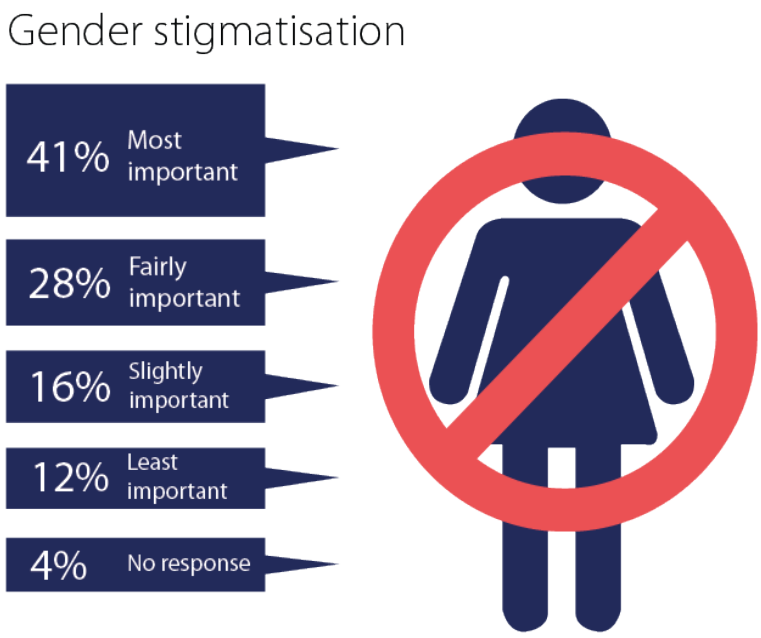
Further understanding of the most favored statement, "Support from loved ones," can be gained by examining the collective results by sex, age, ethnicity, and religion (Figure 9). Overall, women approved of the statement more frequently than men, and so did those from ethnicities categorized as others. As for religion, Christians had the highest level of agreement with the statement.

Respondents between the ages of 26-41 (Millennials) indicated the highest (37%) valuing of family support as a factor that increases the chances for women to be elected as leaders.

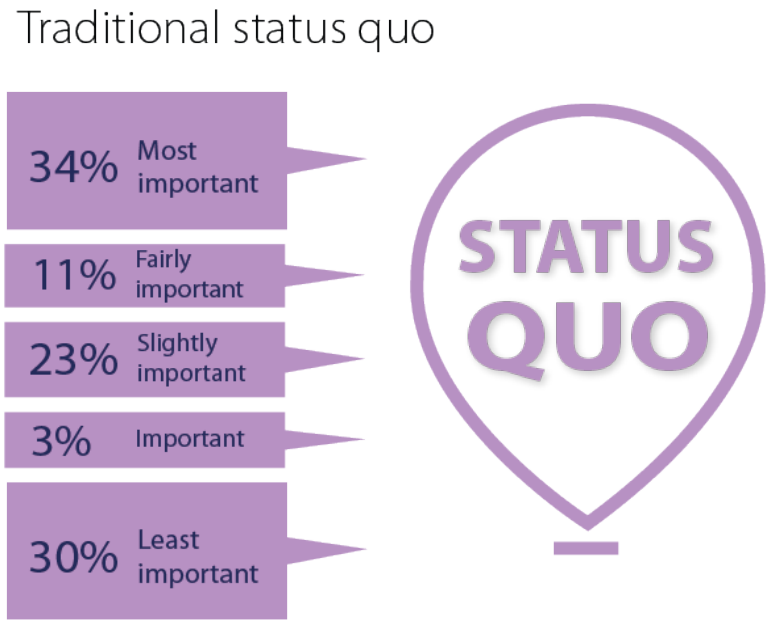


*Percentages may be greater than 100 due to rounding.

4.5.2 RESPONDENTS WERE PROVIDED WITH STATEMENTS AND ASKED TO INDICATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH IN DECREASING A WOMAN'S CHANCES OF BEING ELECTED AS A LEADER.

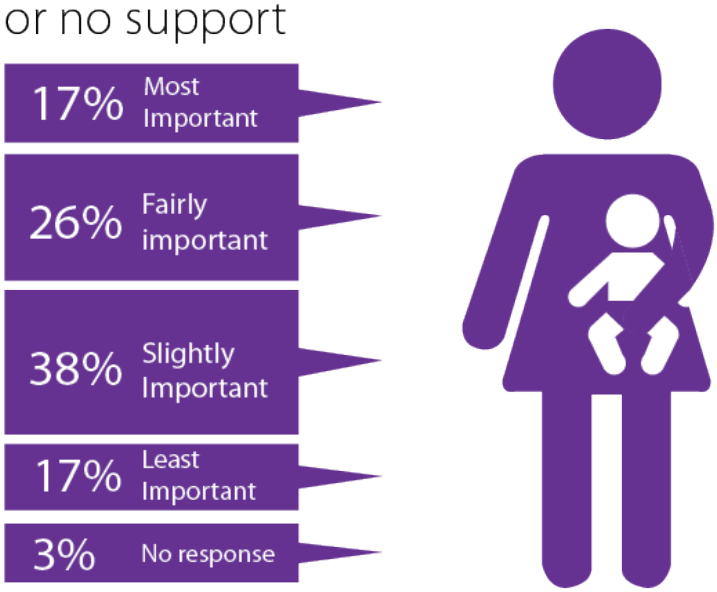


The results indicated that gender stigmatisation (41%) was the most important element that would decrease a woman's chances of being elected as a leader.
However, 28% of respondents indicated that gender stigmatisation was fairly important, and 16% indicated it as slightly important. 12% perceived gender stigmatisation as least important, while 4% did not respond.



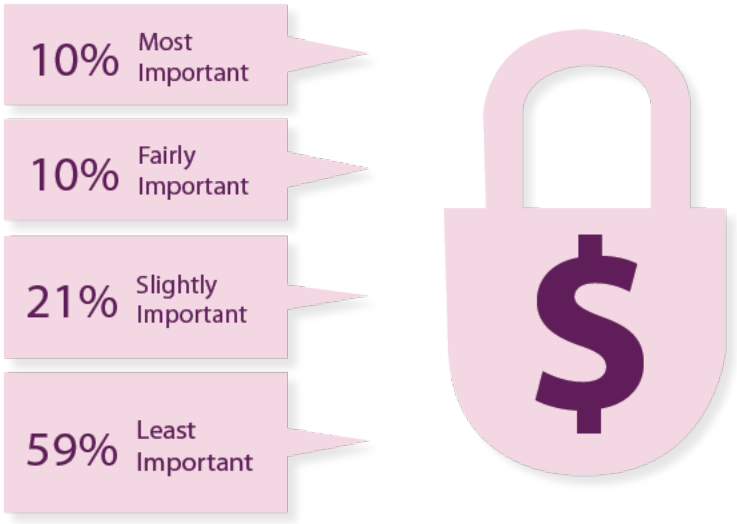
34% of respondents stated that the traditional status quo was the most important element that would decrease women's chances of being elected as leaders, and 30% indicated it was least important.
23% highlighted that it was slightly important, while 11% believed it was fairly important. The remaining 3% indicated it as important.

Family responsibilities with little or no support



38% of respondents stated that family responsibilities without support were slightly important in decreasing women's chances of being elected as leaders.
26% indicated it was fairly important, while 17% equally highlighted that it was most and least important. The remaining 3% did not respond.

Financial constraints



59% of respondents stated that financial constraints were the least important in decreasing women's chances of being elected as leaders.
21% indicated it was slightly important, while 10% equally highlighted that it was most and fairly important.

Further understanding of the most favored statement, "Gender stigmatisation," can be gained by examining the collective results by sex, age, ethnicity, and religion (Figure 10). Overall, the proportion of respondents that did not answer their gender viewed gender stigmatisation (as a barrier) more frequently than men and women. The two (2) main ethnicities showed equal outcomes (42%) on the same question, while the Hindus topped the religion category (47%). As for age, respondents above the age of 58 years (Baby boomers) registered the highest (47%) agreement that gender stigmatisation is an element that would decrease women's chances of being elected as leaders.

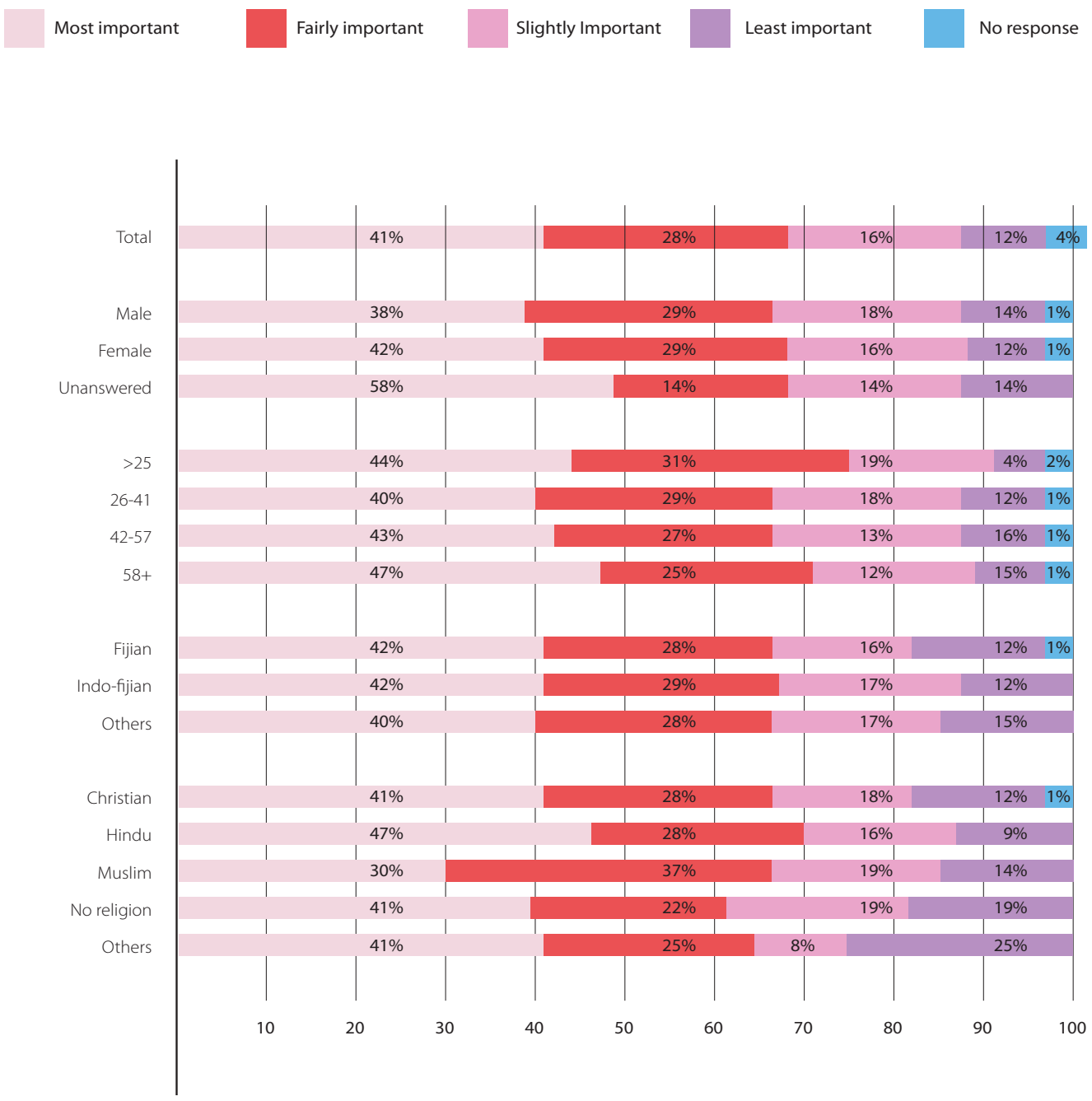


Figure 10: Gender stigmatisation collective results by gender, age, ethnicity and religion

*Percentages may be greater than 100 due to rounding.

4.6 RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED FOUR (4) QUESTIONS TO INDICATE THEIR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT ABOUT WOMEN IN THE FOLLOWING CONTEXTS: PERFORMANCE REWARDS, DIVERSITY, CONFIDENCE, AND INDEPENDENCE.

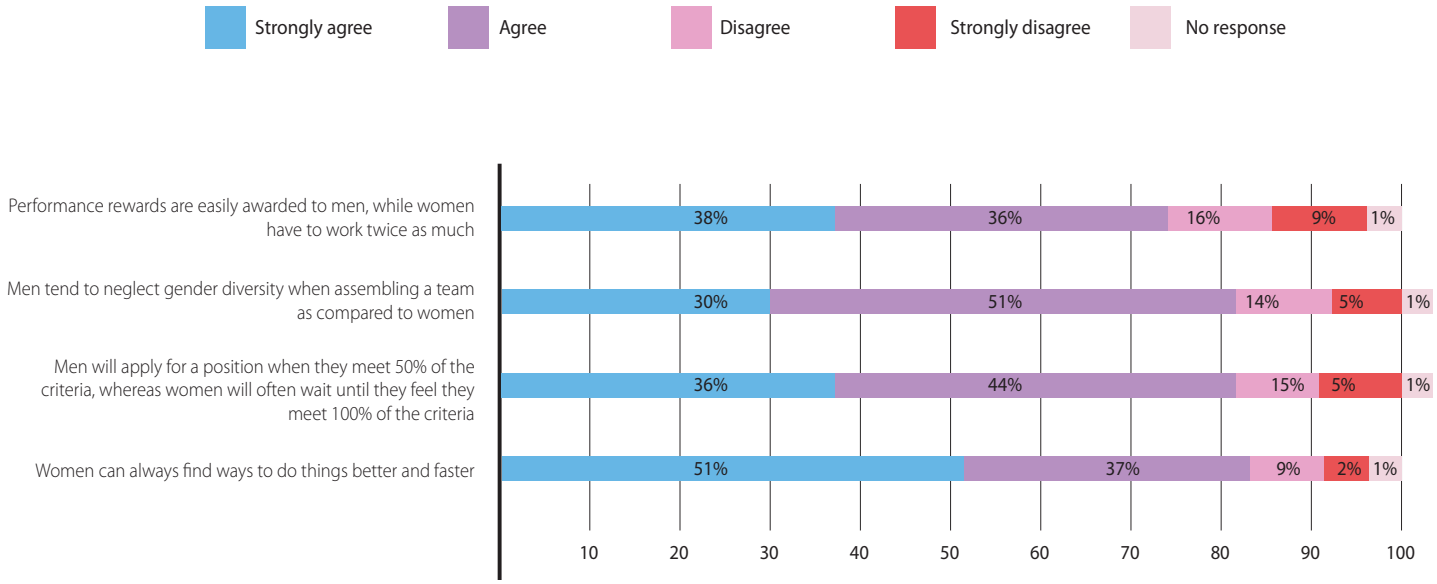


Figure 11: Level of agreement about women in performance rewards, diversity, confidence, and independence.

*Percentages may be greater than 100 due to rounding.

It was evident that the combined answers in favor of the statements (strongly agree and agree) outweighed the responses of those who negatively voted (disagree and strongly disagree). This applied to all four statements asked.

A combined 74% (agreed and strongly agreed) that performance rewards are easily awarded to men, while women have to work twice as much. The remaining 25% indicated otherwise.

Similarly, in the question about diversity, a combined 81% (agreed and strongly agreed) that men tend to neglect gender diversity when assembling a team compared to women.

80% agreed that men would apply for a position when they meet 50% of the criteria. In contrast, women often wait until they feel they meet 100% of the criteria. This question on women's confidence level was disagreed with by 20% of respondents.

Finally, on independence, 88% agreed with the statement that women can always find ways to do things better and faster, while 11% indicated otherwise.

4.7 RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED FIVE (5) QUESTIONS TO INDICATE THEIR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE, RELIGION, EDUCATION, SIMILAR TRAITS AND AGE.

4.7.1 Most of the respondents confirmed that Culture influences the leadership style in Fiji (38% strongly agreed and 53% agreed). 7% disagreed and the remaining 2% strongly disagreed.

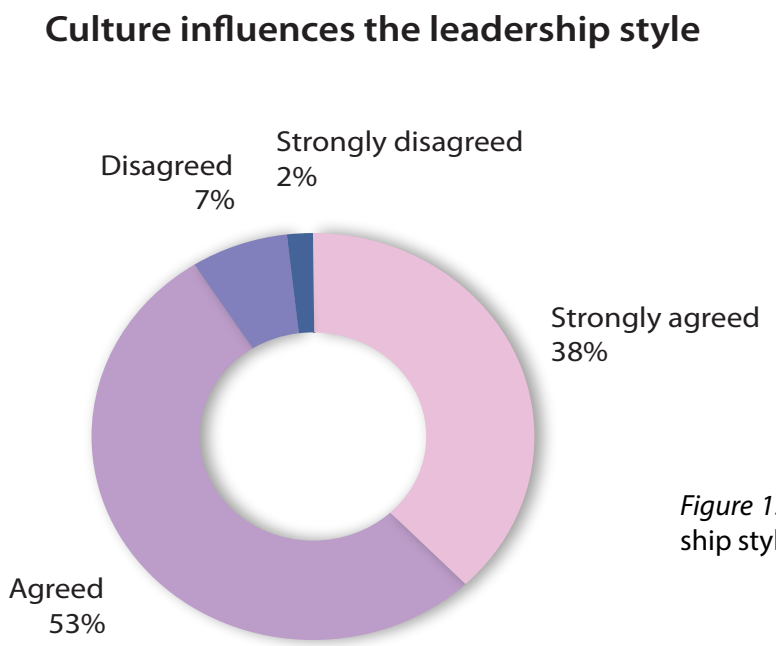


Figure 13: Responses to "Culture influences the leadership style"

4.7.2 Respondents were also asked to indicate if religion influences leadership. 78% of respondents supported of the statement (24% - strongly agreed and 54% agreed). The remaining 22% indicated otherwise (19% - disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed).

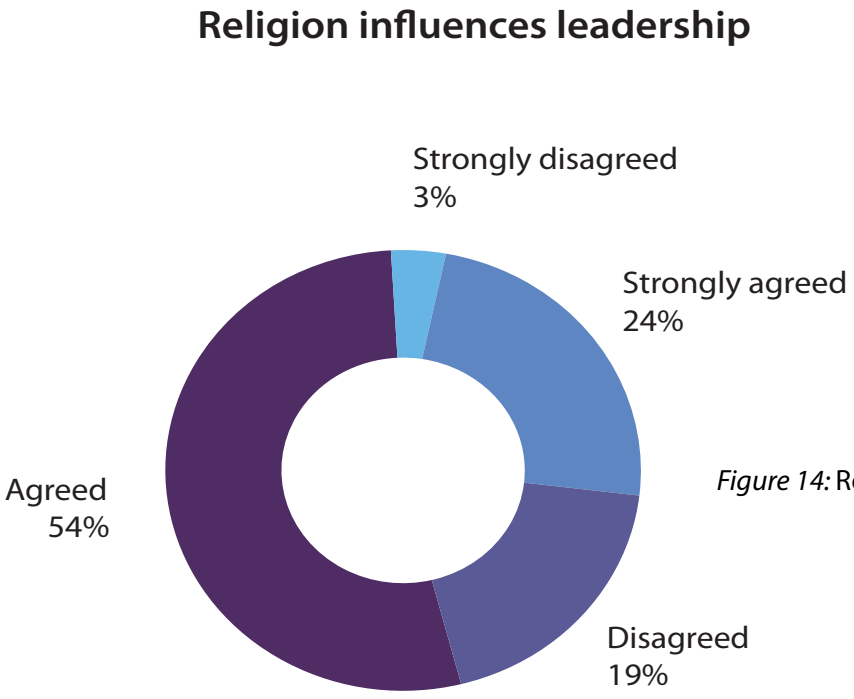
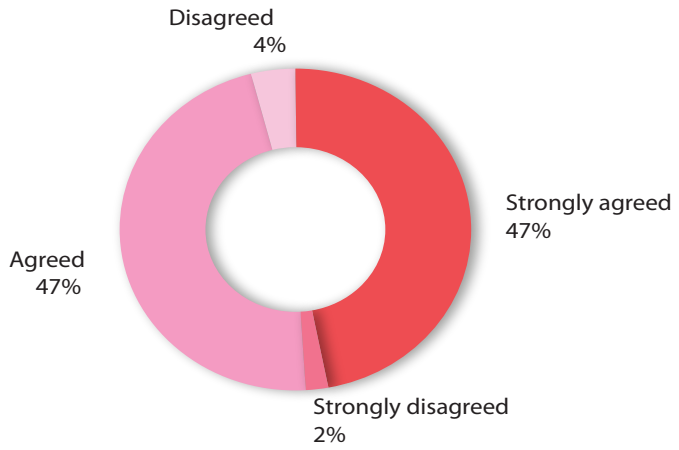


Figure 14: Responses to "Religion influences leadership"

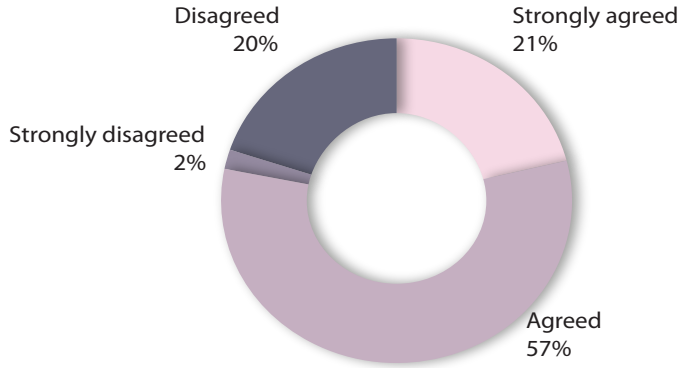
Education can enhance the leadership capabilities of politicians



4.7.3 Education gained the combined support of 94% (47% - strongly agreed and 47% agreed) of respondents to confirm that Education can enhance the leadership capabilities of politicians. The remaining 6% indicated unfavorably (4% - disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed).

Figure 15: Responses to "Education can enhance the leadership capabilities of politicians"

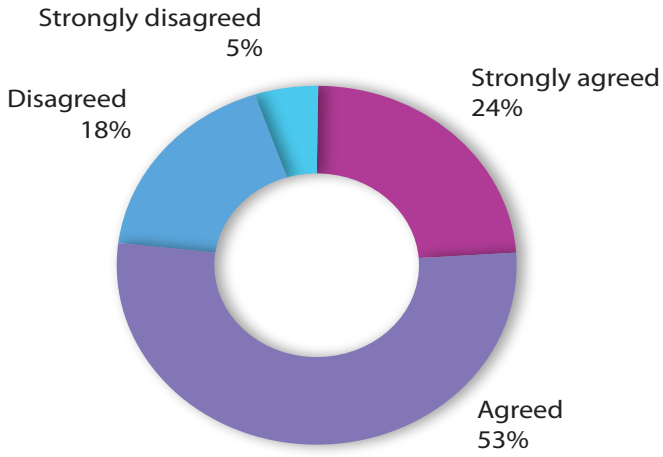
A person would be more inclined to vote for a political candidate who reflects similar leadership styles as him



4.7.4 A question on similarity was included. Respondents were asked if a person would be more inclined to vote for a political candidate who reflects similar leadership styles as himself/herself. 78% of respondents were in support of the statement (21% - strongly agreed and 57% agreed). The remaining 22% indicated otherwise (20% - disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed).

Figure 16: Responses to "Culture influences the leadership style"

Leadership styles differs with age



4.7.5 Respondents were also asked to indicate if leadership styles differed with age.
A combined 77% of respondents were in support of the statement (24% - strongly agreed and 53% agreed). The remaining 23% indicated otherwise (18% - disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed).

Figure 17: Responses to "leadership style differs with age"

4.8 THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES WERE HIGHLIGHTED FOR THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION, "WOULD YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF WHO A LEADER IS AFFECT HOW YOU VOTE." MANY INDICATED "YES" WITH A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES ANALYSED BELOW:

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Honesty	• Transparent • Upright • Integrity • Reliable	Yes. Honesty, integrity, demonstrated congruency between their words and action are critical. I will only vote for a leader who leads with fairness, has equal appreciation for the contributions of men and women, is honest and corruption free, not racially divisive, etc.
Gender sensitive	• Respectful • Helpful • Equity	Yes, my perception would affect my vote. I want to vote for a leader who understands that women have not been given equality and show this through equity. I want a leader who puts more funding towards girl's education and will emphasise and bring in more women in leadership roles. Yes, women work twice as hard as men and there aren't many preferences given for women to live and work as a special human species that we were made to be
	• Abuse • Violence	Absolutely. If he has a history of being an abuser, e.g., conjugal violence, I will not vote for him. Respect is paramount. Yes, I wouldn't vote for a leader with a reputation of violence or being corrupt and /or abusive
	• Equality • Gender champion	Yes, I would vote for a leader who champions gender equality and equity as well.as Indigenous rights. Yes. If they uphold good governance principles and promote Gender equality then I choose them

4.9 THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES WERE HIGHLIGHTED FOR THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION, "WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE LEADERS OF FIJI." MOST INDICATED "YES", WITH DIVERSE RESPONSES SURROUNDING THE DESIRED TRAITS AND BROAD ISSUES. RESPONSES WERE THEMATICALLY ANALYZED AND ARE SUMMARISED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE BELOW:

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Humble	• Selfless • God-fearing • Integrity • Reliable	I want leaders that care more about our people, than trying to please the world. I just [want] Fiji to get back to being, "the way the world should be" A leader should be able to admit that they are wrong.
Gender sensitive	• Transformational • gender lens • balance	A leader is someone who is transformational and believes that women are the pillars of society. They recognize the stigma surrounding women. I want my future leader to have programs that work on the advancement of individuals and someone who wears the gender lens. I'd like to see a well-balanced parliament in regards to gender
People-centered	• serving • listen • accountability	Become more people focused, serving communities rather than self-serving/self-centered Someone who is willing to not just listen to the public but tries to act on the suggestions made. Also, someone who holds people accountable for their wrongdoings does not matter the person's reputation in the public.

Most of the respondents mentioned similar responses for both open-ended questions (cross-cutting). The following were noted.

5. LIMITATIONS

MEN'S RESPONSES (RELUCTANCE)

It was gathered that females were more willing to participate than males. The survey was shared on social media sites and through networking. Reasons behind males' reluctance could include fewer males visiting the FWRM social media pages or may be due to compressed time in answering.

SAMPLE SIZE

Compared to the 2014 report on public perceptions of women in leadership, this study witnessed fewer participants. The study could have gauged more from those age groups with fewer responses (those below 25 years and those over 58 years) to enrich the findings; however, voluntary participation was in place. Another factor to be considered was the timing of the study during the time of election preparation.

COVERAGE

Few responses were received from the rural communities, while most responses were from those in the urban corridor of Lami-Suva-Nausori. Some interior rural communities were unable to participate due to connection accessibility. The same applies to the coverage in the maritime areas. Future studies could consider extending their reach into these locations to gather more on the perceptions of leadership in Fiji.

6. CONCLUSION

This perceptions study of leadership in Fiji focuses on the overall views of both men and women and their perceptions of leadership in Fiji. The parameters cover leadership styles, traits, characteristics of a leader, and level of importance; based on sex, diversity, and religious and cultural aspects. These findings would provide a better understanding of the leadership styles and guide the Fiji Women's Rights Movement on the critical areas of discussions surrounding the women's movement and advocacy for balancing the gender scales in political leadership.

This study has surfaced interesting concepts that could aid leadership development and women's advancement in leadership spaces. The affiliative leadership style, which draws on trust, was evident as the most favored component for any leader. As Fiji prepares for its general elections in December 2022, citizens' trust on leaders are expected to rise. Interestingly, the autocratic leadership style was not favored by 91% of respondents. Having experienced four (4) Fijian coups d'état in the past 52 years, the participants have clearly voiced their need for freedom over fear.

Honesty, fairness, and humility were the top three (3) important leadership traits preferred in a leader. Honesty, ethical traits, creativity, and compassion were voted more for females than males, while dictatorship voted more for males than females. Females were more favored to have leadership traits preferred by respondents. However, it was revealed that females would be more likely to become leaders if they had support from their loved ones, and gender stigmatisation was discovered to be the main reason for obstructing female's capacity for leadership. As females ascend the political leadership ladder, the playing field is still dominated by males.

While other ideological lines (culture, education, religion, and age) have proved to influence leadership, the gender scale in political leadership (and across all sectors) should be shifted to balance to reflect the policy commitments and the close population data of males and females in Fiji.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Both males and females had perceived the affiliative, democratic, transformational, and visionary leadership styles as their most preferred. Therefore, leadership dialogues should consider the embedding of these leadership fundamentals and their traits to solidify the leadership capacities of women.

The significance of family support or from loved ones was the most important element that would increase women's chances of being elected as leaders. Interestingly, more females (36%) voted for this statement compared to males (31%) and other (14%). This greatly signified the voices of females needing support system to boost morale and uplift women in leadership spaces. More advocacies should be conducted around this area to remind people that support mechanisms for women in leadership are paramount for their success.

On the same note, the age category between 26 years – 41 years (Millennial) voted the most (37%) on the importance of providing family support to increase women's chances of becoming leaders. These individuals are born from 1981 to 1996, believed to be digitally creative and more exposed and adapted to the changing post-independence movements such as the progress of gender equality and coups. People of this age group are more likely to promote women in leadership and could be approached by organisations to collaborate on projects that would elevate women's political participation in Fiji.

27% of respondents equally stated that the enactment of gender-inclusive strategies across all sectors were both most important and least important. This would somehow indicate that more awareness on gender policies at community levels should take place. The global alignment to the national and sub-national levels must be emphasised and communicated (translated) in simple terms for the illiterate population to understand the policy jargons. The use of creative visuals could be explored to accommodate the disability groups.

Gender stigmatisation was mentioned as the main factor that could decrease women's chances of being leaders. The age group above 58 years (born in 1964 onwards) strongly validated (47%) this statement, which signified the prolonged existence of gender stigmatisation in Fiji. This could also question the effectiveness of gender policies over the past years and its mechanisms to address gender equity and women recognition. Additionally, the sex category of "Unanswered" also voted the most (58%) on gender stigmatisation. This proportion could signify the LGBTQI groups and the feedback on discrimination. It woul

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9. APPENDIX - QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: About the Questionnaire

Research title: Perception Study on Leadership in Fiji

Administering Organisation: Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)

Purpose: The study intends to examine people's perceptions of leadership in Fiji.

Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.
Criteria: To participate, you must be above 18 years of age and be residing in Fiji. This questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality: All obtained data will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. All information will be combined and anonymously presented.

Contact information: For any questions about the questionnaire or the overall research, please send an email to perceptions.fiji@gmail.com

Thank you for your time!

Part II: Questionnaire

1. ***Personal details***

Sex: _____ **Age:** _____ **Ethnicity:** _____
Location/ Division: _____ **Education level:** _____ **Religion:** _____
Disability status:

2. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
   A. No - no difficulty
   B. Yes – some difficulty
   C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
   D. Cannot do at all

3. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
   A. No - no difficulty
   B. Yes – some difficulty
   C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
   D. Cannot do at all

4. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
   A. No - no difficulty
   B. Yes – some difficulty
   C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
   D. Cannot do at all

5. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
   A. No - no difficulty
   B. Yes – some difficulty
   C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
   D. Cannot do at all

6. Do you have difficulty with self-care such as washing all over or dressing?
   A. No - no difficulty
   B. Yes – some difficulty
   C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
   D. Cannot do at all

7. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

A. No - no difficulty
B. Yes – some difficulty
C. Yes – a lot of difficulty
D. Cannot do at all

Leadership Styles

8. *For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree about a leader. Give your immediate impressions.*

Statements	***Strongly Disagree***	***Disagree***	***Agree***	***Strongly Agree***
Leaders should build trust	1	2	3	4
Great leaders lead by example	1	2	3	4
Leaders should care more about others' success than his/her own	1	2	3	4
A leader must be able to inspire people in ways that go beyond rewards	1	2	3	4
Leaders are effective when they do not get too involved	1	2	3	4
A leader should be feared	1	2	3	4
A leader should `be able to bring out the best in other people	1	2	3	4
A leader should inspire through long-term visions	1	2	3	4
Leaders should be able to adjust to situations	1	2	3	4
Great leaders invest their time in people	1	2	3	4

Leadership and politics

9. *Which of the following do you support (please select one):*

a) *Leaders are born* *b) leaders can be taught to lead* *c) Neutral*

Others (please specify): _____

10. *Please indicate the level of importance of the leadership traits that you prefer to lead Fiji. Please circle a number.*

Traits	***Highly unimportant***	***Not Important***	***Important***	***Highly important***
Fairness	1	2	3	4
Diligence	1	2	3	4
Greed-avoidance	1	2	3	4
Humility	1	2	3	4
Honesty	1	2	3	4

Leadership and gender

11. *For each of the below traits, please indicate the leadership traits that you think best apply to the genders. Please* ***tick*** *in the empty spaces below.*

Traits	***Females***	***Males***	***Equally apply***
Self-confidence	☐	☐	☐
Compassionate/ empathetic	☐	☐	☐
Creativity	☐	☐	☐
Dictatorship	☐	☐	☐
Honesty and ethical	☐	☐	☐

No.	***Statements***	***Rank from 1-5***
1	Support from their loved ones	
2	Higher education attainment	
3	Mentorship programmes	
4	Upskilling /professional development training	
5	Enacting gender-inclusive leadership strategies across all sectors	

13. *What would **decrease** a woman's chances of being elected as a leader? Please rank the following state most to least important (Please write the numbers from 1-4, where 1 would be the most important statement to least important).*

No.	***Statements***	***Rank from 1-5***
1	Gender stigmatization. For example, women being considered weak	
2	Traditional status quo (men are the recognized family heads)	
3	Family responsibilities with little or no support (childcare and chores)	
4	Financial constraints	

Please select one response to the following statements:

14. Performance rewards are easily awarded to men, while women have to work twice as much.

A. Strongly Disagree
B. Disagree
C. Agree
D. Strongly Agree

15. Men tend to neglect gender diversity when assembling a team as compared to women.

A. Strongly Disagree
B. Disagree
C. Agree
D. Strongly Agree

16. Men will apply for a position when they meet 50% of the criteria, whereas women will often wait until they fee 100% of the criteria.

A. Strongly Disagree
B. Disagree
C. Agree
D. Strongly Agree

17. Women can always find ways to do things better and faster.

A. Strongly Disagree
B. Disagree
C. Agree
D. Strongly Agree

Leadership styles and other ideological lines

18. Culture influences the leadership styles in Fiji.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Disagree
   C. Agree
   D. Strongly Agree

19. Education can enhance the leadership capabilities of politicians.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Disagree
   C. Agree
   D. Strongly Agree

20. Religion influences leadership.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Disagree
   C. Agree
   D. Strongly Agree

21. A person would be more inclined to vote for a political candidate who reflects similar leadership styles as him.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Disagree
   C. Agree
   D. Strongly Agree

22. Leadership styles differ with age.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Disagree
   C. Agree
   D. Strongly Agree

23. Would your perception of who a leader is affect how you vote? Please explain

_____

_____

_____

24. What are some of your expectations for the future leaders of Fiji?

_____

_____

_____

This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you very much for your participation!