

# A Male Lens on Gender Equality

Langa Masilela & Dr. Jen Wallin-Ruschman

## Introduction

- Research suggests that although most millennial men understand and embrace the underlying principles of gender equality, there exists a discrepancy about the current relevance of gender equality discussions (Cohen, 2018).
  - A study conducted by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (2019) reveals that globally men are twice as likely as women to say that gender equality has been achieved, indicating a disconnect between how men and women perceive the issue.
- There has not been much depth of research into men within Generation Z, and their views on the current state of gender equality and feminism.
- The present research aims at understanding how men between the ages of 18 and 25 (Gen Z) understand and perceive the state of gender equality and feminism today. My research question was **"How do Gen Z men perceive gender equality and feminism?"**

## Results

- General agreement among participants that all societies should strive towards gender equality.
- Differences in the current relevance of gender equality and feminist movements arose, with 75% of participants believing that gender equality has not been achieved, and 25% believing it has been achieved.
- The 75% who believed gender equality has not been achieved cited the following reasons for their beliefs:
  - Men's lack of understanding of both feminism and gender equality; leading them to believe the progress that's been made means gender equality has been achieved.
  - Persistently imbalanced power dynamics within society, continuing to disproportionately favour men.
  - The tendency of men to reduce a larger societal/systemic problem into a more miniscule individual problem, making it easier to believe society has achieved gender equality.
- The 25% who believed gender equality has been achieved cited the following reasons for their beliefs:
  - Women's distorted views of gender equality; most women seem to favour female superiority over actual gender equality.
  - Changes in legislature over the years reflecting equality of opportunity and access.
  - The tendency of women to inflate small individual problems into larger societal/systemic issues; in the grand scheme of things gender equality has been achieved.
- Most participants did not identify as feminists, largely due to disagreement with what the feminist movement has become over the years. Many believe feminism has become less about equal rights, and more about women's superiority over men.
- Recognition of the gender equality discussion not being solely about men and women; many participants noted that all genders should be apart of the discussion about gender equality.

## Methods

- 48 men aged between 18 and 25 years old participated. Approximately 79% of participants fell between the ages of 18 and 21, while approximately 21% fell between the ages of 22 and 25.
- Participants were recruited through social media and SONA software.
  - A majority of participants (56.3%) were freshmen in college/university, and a majority of participants (70.8%) identified as white males.
- Participants completed open-ended surveys created using Google Forms, with survey questions inspired by pre-existing measures and prior research conducted about gender equality and feminism (Diemer et al., 2017; Glick & Whitehead, 2010)).
  - Survey questions inquired into participants' understanding of both gender equality and feminism, whether they believe gender equality has already been achieved, as well as why they hold the beliefs they hold.
- Lastly, participants were asked to fill in demographic information.
- Data analysis was done using an inductive thematic content analysis.

## Discussion

- Learning that a majority of Gen Z men agree on the importance of gender equality indicates that we are heading in the right direction. Efforts made by women and men in years prior are altering the once prominent notion that men are superior and can thus dictate how women live their lives.
- Though legislation reflects progress towards gender equality, the fourth wave of feminism suggests that there is still a long way to go before women and men are treated equally and afforded the same opportunities and resources in society.
- Understanding how men in Generation Z view gender equality and feminism is the first step in learning how to change behaviours and ideologies that perpetuate gender inequality.

## References

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Figure 1. Ideas expressing why participants believed gender equality has or has not been achieved.