

# Gendered differences in students' attitudes to gender

by Anna Kapil and Stephen Howes

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Theonila Roka Matbob, Minister for Community Government and Member for Ioro Constituency, Autonomous Bougainville Government, speaks at the 2024 ANU State of the Pacific conference

*Photo Credit: Development Policy Centre*

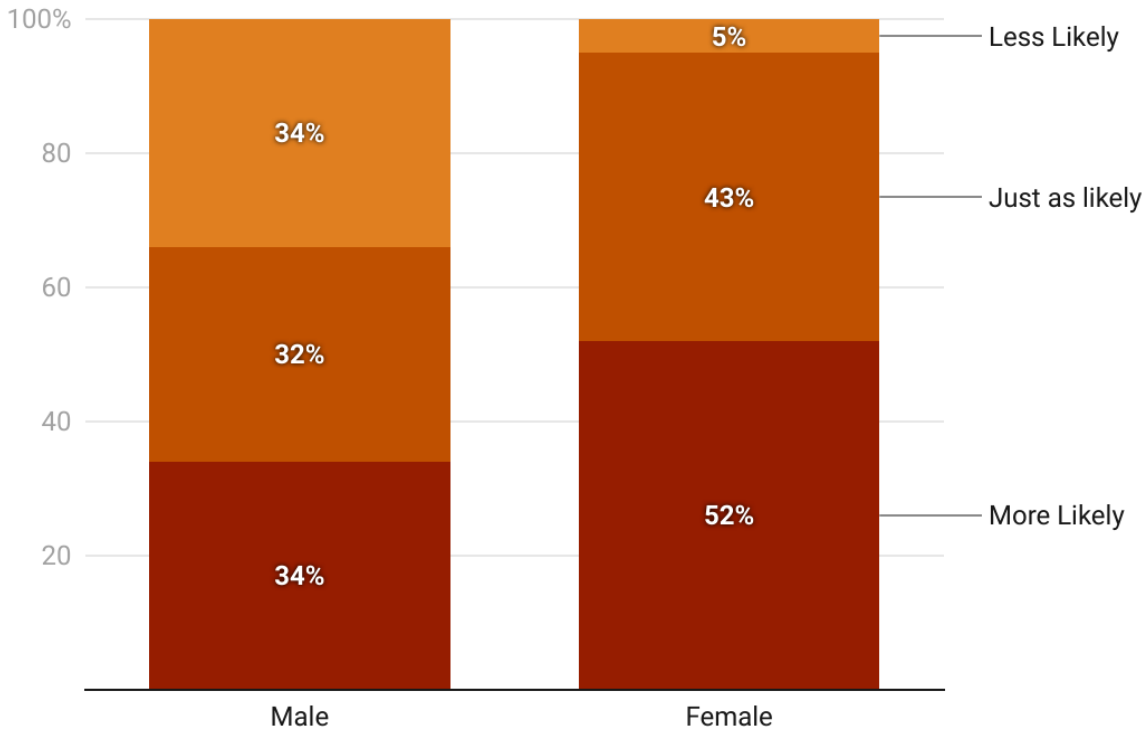
A total of 389 students from the University of Papua New Guinea School of Business and Public Policy participated in this year's [UPNG Student Attitudes Survey](#). The students were again predominantly male (67%) and mostly aged between 18 and 24. In this opening blog on findings from that survey, we focus on their attitudes to gender.

The survey asked students about women in politics. 40% of students said that they would be more likely to vote for a woman while 35% said they would be just as likely to vote for a woman as for a man, and 25% said they would be less likely to vote for a woman. 51% of students said that PNG would be better with more women in parliament, while 34% were unsure and 15% said the country would be worse off.

These responses sound encouraging. More students say they would be more likely to vote for a woman than those that say they would be less likely, and a small majority think PNG would be better off with more female MPs. However, when we disaggregate by gender the results are less reassuring.

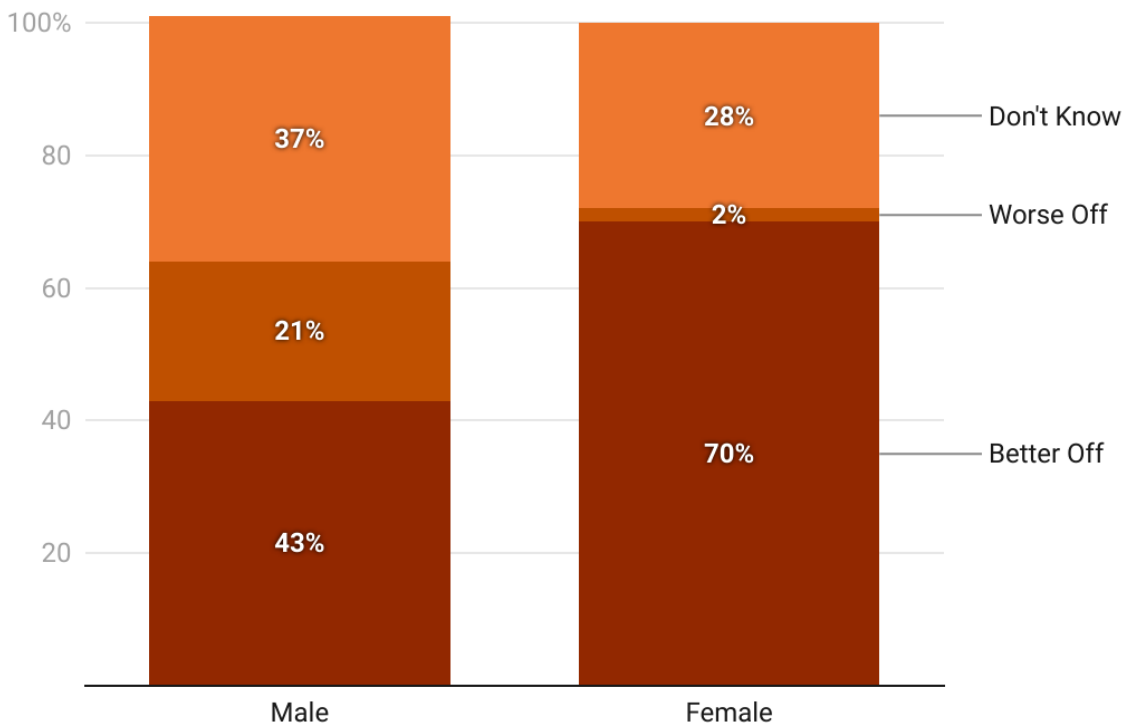
As many male students said they would be less likely to vote for a woman as those who said they would be more likely (34% each). And fewer than half of male students (43%) said that PNG would be better off with more female MPs. Given that PNG has one of the lowest rates of female political representation in the world, this is surprising. Female students were much more likely to vote for a woman candidate (52% female respondents vs 34% male respondents) and a much bigger share of women thought PNG would be better off with more women in parliament (70% female respondents vs 43% male respondents).

**Figure 1: Would you be as likely to vote for a woman candidate?**



Source: 2025 UPNG Student Attitude Survey • Created with Datawrapper

**Figure 2: Do you think PNG would be better off or worse off with more women in parliament?**



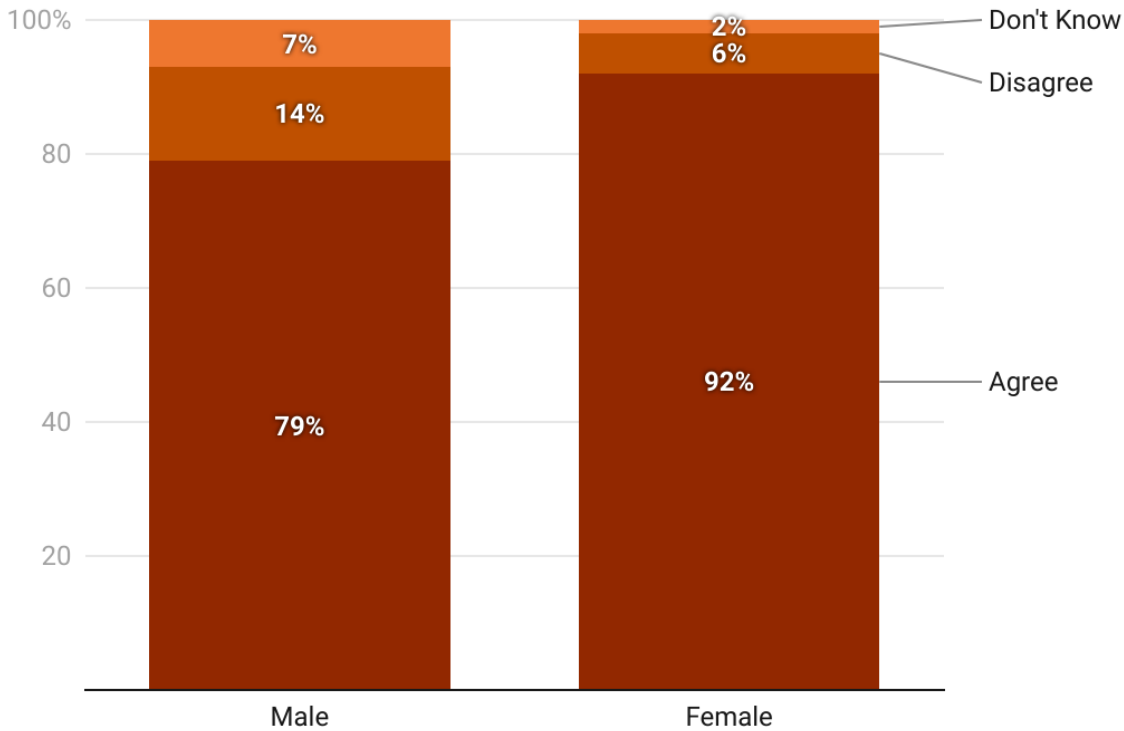
Source: 2025 UPNG Student Attitude Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Gendered differences in responses were also found in other areas. 92% of female students, but only 76% of male students, agreed that women can do the same kind

of job that a man can do.

The survey also asked about attitudes to women in a relationship. 83% of students agreed it is never OK for a husband to hit his wife, but 12% disagreed: 14% of men and even 6% of women.

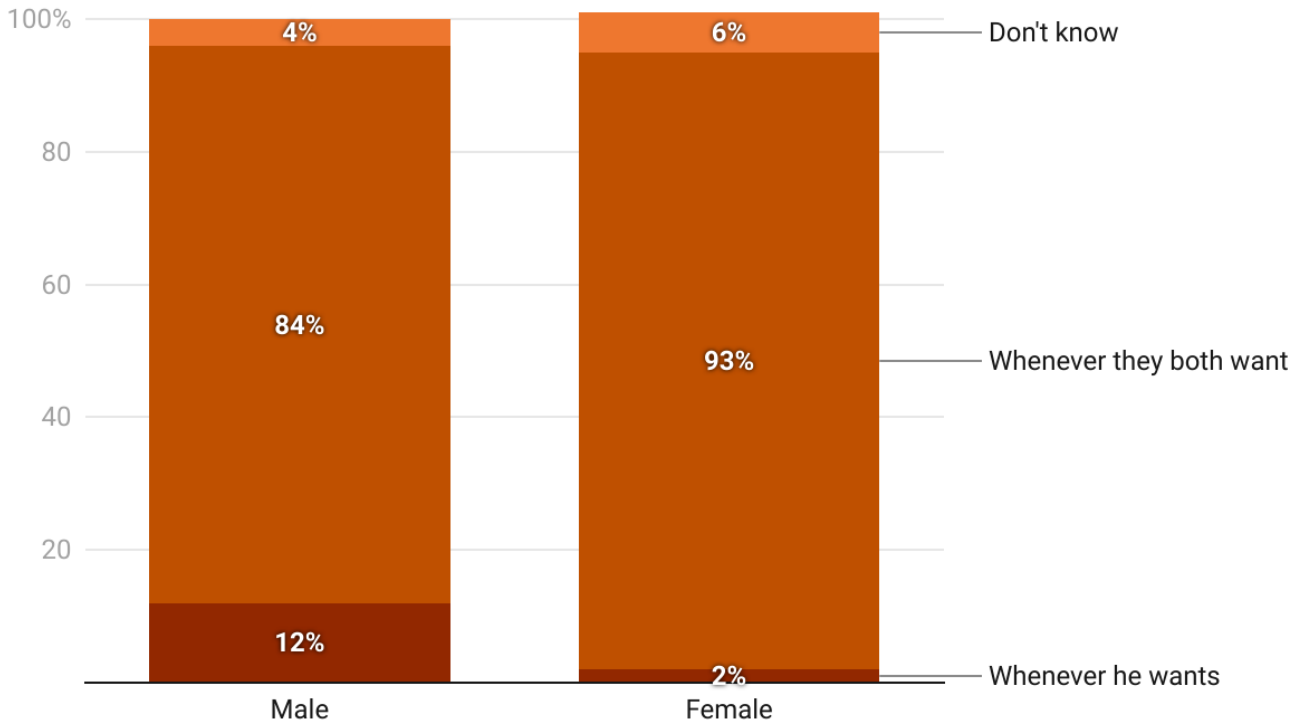
**Figure 3: It is never OK for a husband to hit his wife**



Source: 2025 UPNG Student Attitude Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Similarly, 87% thought that a man should be allowed to have sex with his wife whenever they both want sex, but 9% said it should be whenever he wants: 12% of men and 2% of women.

**Figure 4: A man should be allowed to have sex with his wife**



Source: 2025 UPNG Student Attitude Survey • Created with Datawrapper

In general, the survey found strong (and statistically different) differences between the two genders about the two genders especially when it comes to politics. Male students are no more likely to vote for female than male candidates and, despite the country’s extremely low level of female representation in parliament, fewer than half of male students think that PNG would be better off with more women in parliament. Moreover, even though it is still a minority, male students are much more likely to condone violence against female intimate partners.

As we’ll see in later blogs in this series, there are other differences in views by gender as well: female students are more worried about their personal security and are (even) less supportive of Australian funding for PNG to have a team in Australia’s National Rugby League.

Given that male students are much more likely to become political leaders, more work needs to be done to reinforce messages to them around gender equality, and the importance of female political representation, consent and non-violence.

*Further findings will be published in forthcoming articles and can also be found in this [2025 PNG Update presentation](#). The results of the first survey, conducted in 2024, [were reported here](#). All the differences across genders are statistically significant at the 5% level using the Chi-square test.*

## **Disclosures:**

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Link: <https://devpolicy.org/gendered-differences-in-students-attitudes-to-gender-20251211/>