Impact of Gender Diversity and Equality Initiatives

Poonam Yadav, Mariam Kiran, Amel Bennaceur, Lilia Georgieva, Maria Salama, and Amparo Eliza Cano

ACM-W UK

p.yadav@imperial.ac.uk

Abstract

Recent years have seen an increase in diversity initiatives worldwide with different organisations emphasizing the need for a 50-50 male and female workforce distribution. Different initiatives have been proposed to bring women on boards, especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and make them comfortable in the current working environments. To understand the impact of these initiatives, ACM-W UK conducted an online survey [3]. This poster presents the useful insights drawn from the results of the survey and also our recommendations for STEM and computing fields to increase female numbers in their programs.

Information about Respondents

The age groups taking part in this survey were between 20-50 years with 62% female. The countries involved belong to UK (80%), Europe and USA, with a mix of universities roles (Education 66%, Medicine 2%, IT and Computers 35%), comprising of undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD, research associates, lecturers and senior lecturers. The proportion of distribution among fields was Science 42%, Technology 57% and Engineering 38%. Total respondents in the survey: 87 (75 Completed the survey).

Importance of Mentoring and Role Models

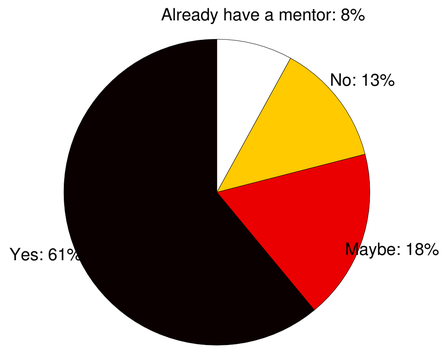

Figure 1: Q: “Do you need a mentor?”

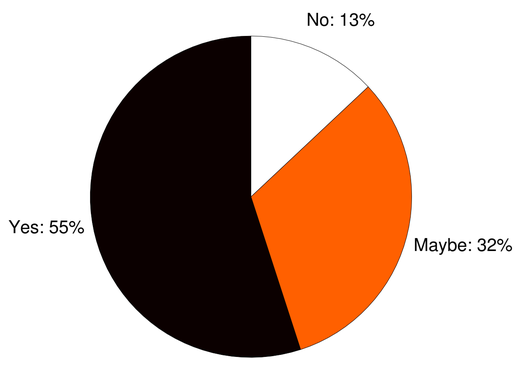

Figure 2: Q: “Do you need role models to inspire your tech career?” The responses indirectly show how participants perceive the strong emphasis of the role models in their career.

Importance of Gender Diversity

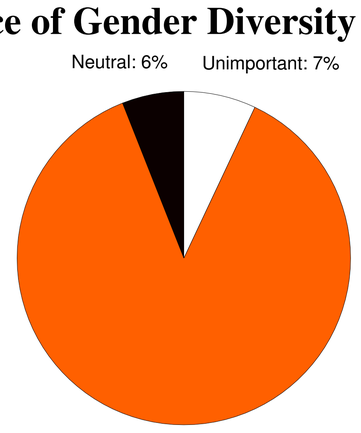

Figure 3: Q: “Do you think diversity is important for a successful organisation?”

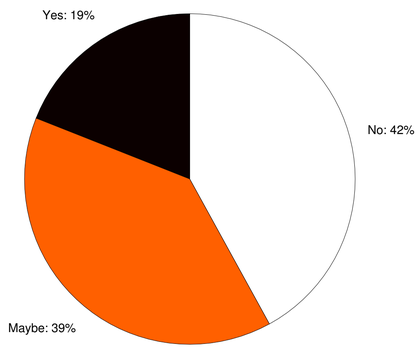

Figure 4: Q: “Do you think there is any difference in the skill sets that male and female candidates bring to technology fields?”

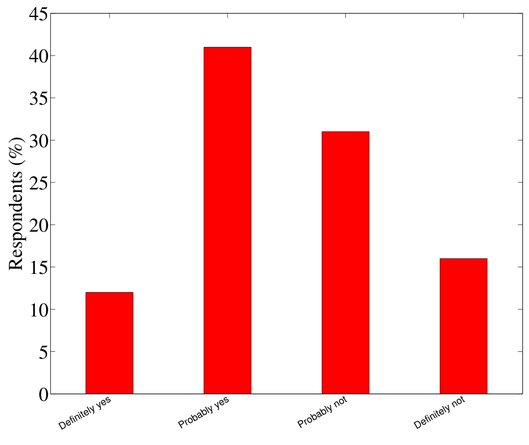

Figure 5: Q: “As a Woman, do you feel uneasy in male dominated technology sector?”

Current Status Analysis

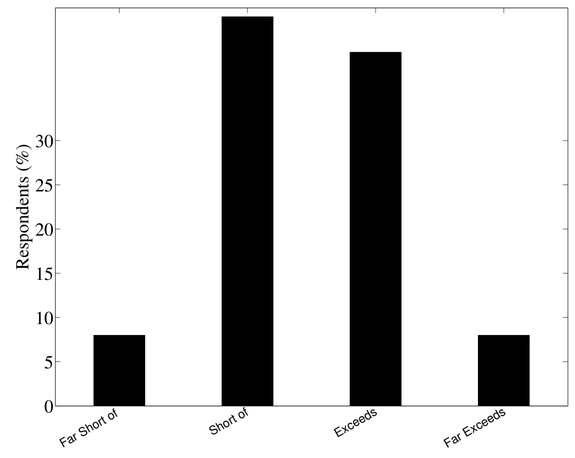

Figure 6: STEMM: Q: “If you are working or studying in Technology field, do you think you are equally treated based on your merits?”

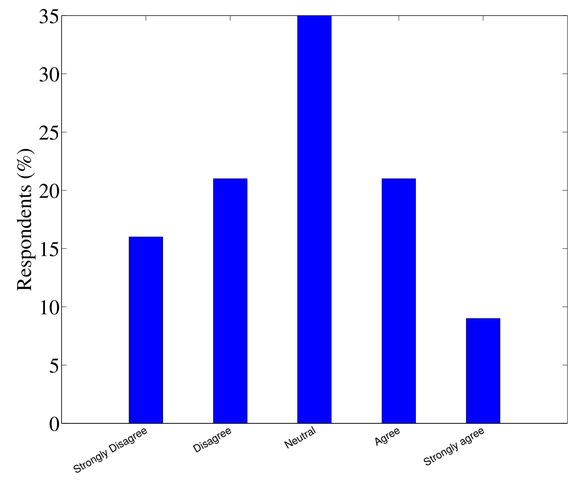

Figure 7: Q: “Do you think your local Government should introduce quota systems for females on all boards and industrial positions in general?”

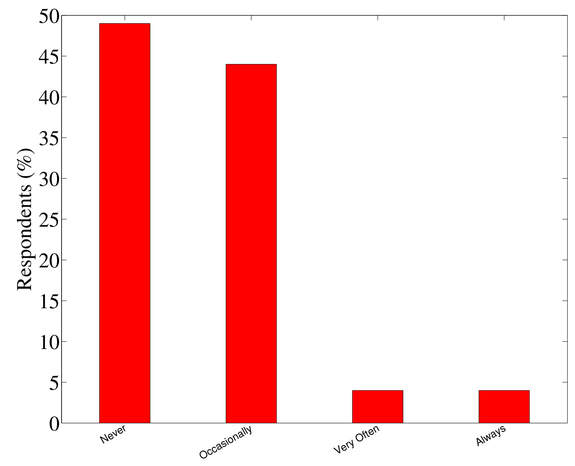

Figure 8: Q: “Do you think there should be new laws introduced by the government to promote the number of females?”

Figure 9: Q: “Do you agree inappropriate stereotypes deter you from establishing a career in the field?”

Gender Diversity and Equality Initiatives

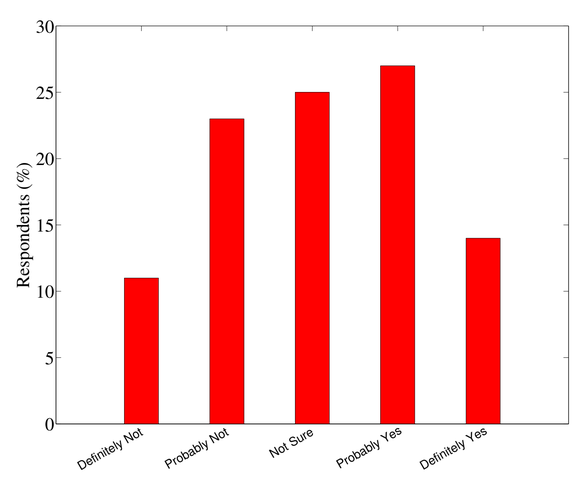

Figure 10: Training in gender equality, Q: “Do you want to undertake training in gender equality and workplace bias?”

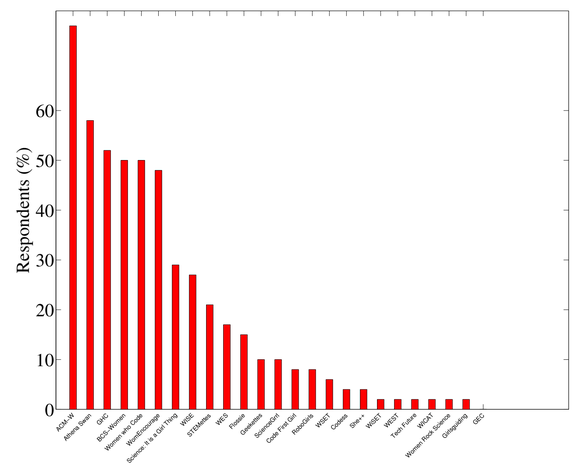

Figure 11: Most popular Women Initiatives in UK and their Awareness ratio, Q: “Have you heard about a gender diversity initiatives started by the following organisations and communities?”

Recommendations

- Create programs to encourage more girls to study engineering.
- Develop mentoring programs for school students such as having engineers to come in and do talks.
- Promote women visibility as role models through social media such as Facebook, forums, Youtube channels and more in a positive manner.
- Build strong peer support network for participants.
- Address barriers of isolation and lack of successful women role models at the graduate level.

According to the World Bank report [2], women make 40% of the total work force globally in 2012, with women becoming more assertive and empowered. This new environment also brings forward new cultural tensions in force. New policies are needed to facilitate and allow women to earn respect of their peers and families. Recent studies [1], have shown that most women leave engineering naturally due to family issues or child care responsibilities. We argue that policies introduced at the government level, should help support family, hard work and ambition for nurturing young female talents in engineering and computing fields.

References

1. J. Hunt, Why Do Women Leave Science and Engineering, NBER Working Paper No. 15853, 2010.
2. World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development.
3. ACM-W UK: Gender Diversity Initiatives Survey Online Link: $https://jfe.qualtrics.com/preview/SV_b8yDVarBKjn2Wih$