Analysis of Women's Behaviour and Work Ethic at the National Level in Timor-Leste: Achieving Leadership and Gender Equality

* Maria Angelina Lopes Sarmento[1], Diah Pranitasari[2]

[1]Magister Management, Management Department, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Indonesia Jakarta, Indonesia
[2]Magister Management, Management Department, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Indonesia Jakarta, Indonesia
Correspondence*:
Jl. Kayu Jati Raya 11A Rawamangun, Jakarta 13220 | e-mail: nitadpranitasari@gmail.com

Abstract

Objective: The aim of this study is to analyze the behavior and work ethic of women at the national level in Timor-Leste in the pursuit of leadership and gender equality.

Design/Methods/Approach: The study was conducted on women in Timor-Leste using a mixed-methods approach. The population consisted of all women holding government positions in Timor-Leste. Using a purposive sampling technique, 21 respondents were selected. With the mixed-methods approach, primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were gathered through direct communication techniques. The research instruments for secondary data included book studies, papers, documents, regulations, diaries, and similar sources. Additionally, limited interviews were conducted with authorized individuals responsible for providing data related to the research subjects. The data were processed descriptively, aiming to analyse and summarize the fundamental characteristics of the collected data. Data presentation was carried out immediately after all data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and available documentation related to gender equality, women's leadership, and existing legislation.

Findings: The biggest challenges in achieving leadership positions for women include gender bias, lack of family support, and insufficient education and training, which hinder women from reaching top leadership roles. Patriarchal culture also contributes to domestic violence, making women feel insecure about pursuing leadership positions. Key factors that can support women in achieving leadership include leadership training to broaden their understanding of leadership, workplace gender equality policies, and support from supervisors. These three elements can help women advance to higher positions. The primary obstacle to achieving gender equality is patriarchal culture, which limits women's opportunities to pursue higher education. The lack of education and training results in women feeling less confident, undervalued, and hesitant to compete with men. The future of women's leadership will be realized when gender equality is achieved across all sectors, with more women holding leadership positions. Timor-Leste's legal framework already provides significant opportunities for women's leadership. What is now needed is the genuine commitment to implement the constitutional mandates and existing laws effectively.

Originality/Value: The novelty of this research lies in the fact that no previous studies have been conducted on the behaviour and work ethic of women in Timor-Leste.

Practical/Policy implication: The research findings provide recommendations to policymakers and organizations on how to enhance women's participation in leadership and create a supportive environment for gender equality in Timor-Leste.

Keywords: Behavior, Work Ethic, Leadership, Gender Equality

JEL Classification: M4, M40, M41

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and rapid technological development, it is crucial for women to be recognized and empowered to achieve leadership and gender equality. Gender equality is one of the key goals in social and economic development worldwide. According toUnited Nations Development Programme (2021), gender equality is not only important for social justice but also for enhancing productivity and economic growth. However, in many countries, including Timor-Leste, women still face various challenges in achieving leadership positions and equality in the workplace.

Gender equality has become one of the important global agendas, especially in the context of sustainable development. In the United Nations, gender equality is a fundamental human right and a key factor in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in 2015. Gender equality not only focuses on equal access and opportunities for women but also emphasizes the need for active participation of women in decision-making and leadership.

Although significant progress has been made in empowering women in various sectors, substantial challenges remain, especially at the village level. In many rural communities, women are often trapped in social and cultural structures that limit their ability to fully participate in economic and political activities. Research by Wula & Anggraini (2022) shows that women in rural areas tend to be involved in informal work and have limited access to education, training, and resources that could enhance their skills. This creates a cycle of limitation, making it difficult for women to develop a strong work ethic and attain leadership positions.

At the national level, despite improvements in women's participation across various sectors, there are still significant gaps in women's representation in leadership positions.World Economic Forum (2021) reports that in many countries, women are still underrepresented in managerial and decision-making roles, both in the public and private sectors. Research shows that organizations with diverse leadership tend to perform better and be more innovative, which means the lack of female representation in leadership can negatively impact organizational performance and the quality of decisions made.

The behavior and work ethic of women are heavily influenced by various factors, including social norms, cultural values, and the work environment. In the context of a patriarchal society, traditional norms often dictate the role of women as homemakers and limit their ambitions to pursue careers or leadership positions. A study by Huang et al. (2019) shows that social stigma and gender expectations can affect women's motivation to take risks in their careers.

Patriarchal culture is a social system that positions men as the central figures with authority, both at the family and organizational levels. Men hold a higher position than women in all aspects, whether social, economic, or cultural. Thus, the deep-rooted patriarchal culture in society becomes an obstacle for women to participate in various fields, including politics. Patriarchy also contributes to domestic violence due to the power imbalance between men and women.

Because of the strong and biased patriarchal culture, gender equality remains an ongoing struggle that requires collective effort and commitment from various parties, including individuals, communities, civil society, the government, and institutions, to achieve fair gender equality. While some progress has been made in the fight for gender equality, challenges still exist, such as gender-based discrimination, violence, unequal opportunities, and social norms that continue to hinder the achievement of truly fair gender equality.

The struggle to achieve gender-equal leadership began when Timor-Leste fought for the liberation of its homeland, with the liberation struggle becoming a gateway for advocating women's emancipation. The women's movement was initiated by female activists within the FRETILIN political party to fight for women's rights, both internally within the organization and at the national level. This movement, which was established in 1975, is called the Organisação Popular das Mulheres Timorenses (OPMT), which still exists today and remains one of the women's organizations within the party.

In the process of the 24-year-long struggle for the liberation of the homeland, the liberation movements became more open after the reforms in Indonesia, which paved the way for the establishment of many organizations calling for a referendum for Timor-Leste. Among these was a group of young women called "Grupo Feto Foinsae Timor-Lorosae/GFFTL" (Young Women's Group of Timor-Lorosae), which was founded in October 1998, composed of female students from the student organization "Dewan Solidaritas," which fought for a referendum for Timor-Leste. This group played a significant role in the women's

struggle, continuing the fight for women's emancipation by demanding that female students be included in decision-making for every free speech program, demonstration, lobbying, and mass mobilization.

The efforts to maintain the struggle for gender-based leadership were further reinforced by the presence of the United Nations (UN) in Timor-Leste through the United Nations Mission in Timor (UNMIT) in 1999, ahead of and after the referendum. As an independent nation, Timor-Leste was required to adopt international conventions closely related to promoting gender equality in various aspects, including politics.

The discussion on patriarchal culture remains relevant because a country will not achieve effective, efficient, and sustainable development without the involvement of women. Women still feel disadvantaged by this system to this day.

According to the Timor-Leste National Statistics Institute (2022), the population data from the latest census in 2022 shows that the total population of Timor-Leste is 1,341,737 people, with 681,229 men and 665,750 women. This data shows that the number of females is not significantly different from that of males, with a gap of only 15,479 people.

Since Timor-Leste became an independent country in 2002 and adopted its own Constitution, five parliamentary elections, four presidential elections, and four village head elections have been held. In the first parliamentary election in 2002, there was a significant movement from civil society and non-governmental organizations, supported by the UN mission and several other international organizations in Timor-Leste, to push for a parliamentary election law that included a 30% quota for women candidates. However, advocacy for this women's quota did not receive a positive response from the FRETILIN party, which argued that the 30% quota would limit women's access to politics and that it would be better for each party to decide for themselves to include women in their electoral lists.

According to Cristóvão (2023), gender inequality remains a reality in the country, as indicated by the Global Index of Gender Disparity in January 2023, which ranked Timor-Leste 95th out of 146 countries. In the East Asia and Pacific region, only Vanuatu and Vietnam have higher gender inequality indices.

More concerning data relates to women's participation in the economy, where the country ranks 120th, making it one of the countries where most women lack economic opportunities, similar to Muslim women in the Middle East. Another negative index is women's participation in the labour market. According to the 2022 census, 41% of working-age men have employment, while only 39% of women do. This index also places Timor-Leste 106th in the health parameter and 97th in the education parameter.

The highest ranking is in politics, where Timor-Leste ranks 60th. However, of the 65 parliamentary representatives for the 6th legislative period (2023-2028), only 20 are women, or 31%, a decline compared to the 5th legislative period (2018-2023), which had 38.5% women in parliament.

Meanwhile, in the civil service in 2022, with a total of 36,649 employees across Timor-Leste, there were 23,837 male civil servants and 12,812 female civil servants, representing 35%, which is lower than the male percentage.

Another concern regarding gender equality is that women's participation in government remains unequal, as it is still dominated by men. Appointments within political parties to participate in the government tend to prioritize men. Although women in parliament now exceed the 30% quota, much remains to be done to achieve gender equality in parliament, government, and the judiciary.

Table 1. Percentage of Women at Government Level Starting from Government I to IX.

Government	Number of members	Female	Male
I	24	4 (16%)	20 (83%)
II	36	8 (22%)	28 (77%)
III	32	7 (21%)	25 (78%)
IV	38	5 (13%)	33 (87%)
V	51	10 (19%)	41 (80%)
VI	40	8 (20%)	32 (80%)
VII	50	6 (13%)	44 (95%)

Government	Number of members	Female	Male
VIII	46	7 (15%)	39 (85%)
IX	48	8 (16%)	40 (83%)

Based on the data above, it is evident that for over twenty years and across nine government formations, the percentage of women holding positions as Ministers, Vice-Ministers, and Secretaries of State has yet to meet the 30% gender quota. This raises the question of why women's participation remains a challenge. Is this related to women's leadership abilities, work ethic, and discipline, or is it due to a patriarchal culture that continues to limit opportunities for women across different administrations? Therefore, this topic is highly relevant for research to identify the factors contributing to the low participation of women.

Literature Review

Gender Equality

According to United Nation Women (2021), gender equality involves the elimination of structural injustices that cause disparities in access and opportunities. This includes providing equal opportunities in education, employment, and leadership, as well as eliminating gender bias in the workplace and decision-making. Gender equality also encompasses equal rights under the law, the elimination of gender-based violence, and access to reproductive health.

United Nations Development Programme (2024) emphasizes that gender equality plays a crucial role in improving the overall well-being of society. Through achieving gender equality, it is expected that both women and men will have equal opportunities to fully participate in economic, political, and social life, ultimately benefiting society collectively.

In a social context, gender equality means that women and men should have equal rights in various aspects of daily life. This includes family rights, roles in the community, access to healthcare services, and freedom from gender-based violence. Social equality also involves changing social norms and values that hinder women's participation, such as traditional perceptions that view men as the head of the household and women as caretakers of the home.

In a political context, gender equality means that women should have equal access to the political process, both as voters and decision-makers. World Economic Forum (2021) in *Global Gender Gap Report* shows that although there has been an increase in women's political participation, the representation of women in global political leadership positions remains low. Women's participation in politics is considered essential to ensure that policies reflect the needs of the entire society, including women.

In an economic context, gender equality involves providing equal access for women in the workplace, equal pay for equal work, and protection from gender-based discrimination. Economic equality also means eliminating barriers for women to enter male-dominated sectors, as well as ensuring fair access to training and career advancement opportunities. International Labour Organization (2022) shows that women worldwide still face wage gaps and barriers in obtaining quality jobs, particularly in developing countries.

Gender equality is not only important as a human rights issue but also a key factor in driving sustainable economic and social development. World Bank (2020) asserts that countries with higher levels of gender equality tend to experience better economic growth. This is because women who fully participate in the economy can increase national productivity, foster more innovation, and strengthen the competitiveness of the labor market.

In terms of social development, gender equality contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and fair society. When women have equal access to education, healthcare, and employment, it not only improves the lives of the women themselves but also creates positive impacts for their families and communities. For example, OECD (2017) exports that increasing women's participation in the economy not only boosts household income but also improves the quality of children's education and healthcare. Research also shows that organizations with higher gender diversity at the leadership level tend to be more innovative and financially successful. A study by Huang et al. (2019) found that companies with higher female representation in managerial and executive positions are more likely to achieve better financial performance compared to companies that are less inclusive.

Gender equality also impacts social development by fostering the creation of more peaceful and stable societies. Countries with better gender equality levels often experience lower levels of violence and fewer conflicts. United Nation Women (2021) emphasizes that empowering women in political and social decision-making processes can help reduce inequalities that are the root causes of various conflicts.

Gender Leadership

Gender leadership theory emphasizes that women bring unique perspectives and leadership styles that differ from those of men. Female leadership characteristics are often identified with a more inclusive, collaborative, and empathetic style. According to Eagly & Carli (2007), women tend to use transformational leadership styles, focusing on empowering team members, developing strong interpersonal relationships, and paying particular attention to the needs and aspirations of individuals within the team.

Transformational leadership, often associated with women, involves motivating individuals to achieve common goals, encouraging innovation, and building strong teams through trust and collaboration. This contrasts with transactional leadership, more frequently associated with men, where the focus is on control, hierarchy, and incentives based on achieving specific targets. Research from Catalyst (2020) also shows that female leaders are more likely to foster a workplace environment that is open to new ideas and increases creativity within the organization.

In various sectors, female leaders bring unique added value. In the political sector, for instance, female leaders are often considered more sensitive to social welfare issues, education, and healthcare. A study by United Nation Women (2021) shows that when women are involved in decision-making processes, the resulting policies tend to be more inclusive and focus on the well-being of the broader community, particularly in areas such as reproductive health, education, and social equality.

In the business sector, female leadership is often associated with increased attention to corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Dixon-Fyle et al. (2020) report that women in leadership positions tend to support initiatives related to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors and are more focused on policies that promote employee welfare, such as work flexibility and work-life balance.

In education, female leaders also play a key role in creating a more inclusive learning environment and supporting the holistic development of students. A study by OECD (2019) revealed that schools led by women tend to have policies more aligned with student development, such as support for emotional and social well-being.

Gender diversity not only brings financial benefits but also creates a more inclusive and innovative work environment. Research by Boston Consulting Group (2018) found that companies with high gender diversity in leadership tend to have more innovative teams due to the different perspectives brought into decision-making processes. This is especially evident in organizations in the technology and innovation sectors, where understanding consumer needs from diverse perspectives is crucial for the success of new products and services.

Moreover, gender diversity in leadership positions also has a positive impact on organizational policies and culture. Female leaders are more likely to support policies that promote employee well-being, such as maternity leave, work flexibility, and equal pay. Catalyst (2020) also reports that organizations with women in leadership positions tend to be more responsive to issues related to employee well-being, such as workplace sexual harassment and protection against gender discrimination.

Women's Behavior

Behavior refers to the actions, attitudes, and habits of individuals in the workplace, including how they interact with colleagues, perform their tasks, and the values they hold in their work. Women's behavior encompasses various aspects, such as social roles, emotions, and their involvement in work, family, and society. In recent decades, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the dynamics of women's behavior in relation to gender equality, leadership roles, and participation in various sectors of life (UNICEF, 2020).

1. Actions and Attitudes of Women in Society
   Women's behavior in society is often influenced by social and cultural norms, but with changing times, many women are now taking on more active roles beyond their traditional roles. They play significant roles in family, community, and organizations.
   Women are increasingly showing proactive attitudes on various social issues, such as family health, education, and economic empowerment. According to Risman et al. (2018), the changing roles of

women in society have occurred as women's access to education and employment has increased, allowing them to participate more actively in public life.

2. Participation in Economic Activities
   Women play a crucial role in the economy, both in the formal and informal sectors. Many women work in sectors such as trade, entrepreneurship, and services. In rural areas, they are involved in subsistence farming and small businesses that sustain their families. However, challenges such as gender discrimination and limited access to capital often hinder their economic participation. United Nation Women (2024) highlights the importance of women's economic empowerment for inclusive growth and emphasizes women's contributions to both local and global economies.

3. Participation in Social and Political Activities
   Women are involved in social activities through roles in community organizations, advocacy groups, and feminist movements. They play vital roles in education, health, and community empowerment. In politics, although female participation has increased, representation gaps still exist. Norris & Inglehart (2013) note that women often focus attention on social welfare issues in politics.

4. Involvement in Decision-Making
   Women are increasingly involved in decision-making processes, both at the family level and within organizations. They play roles as community leaders, politicians, and managers. Profeta, (2017) found that women in leadership positions tend to adopt collaborative leadership styles, allowing for more inclusive decision-making.

Women's Work Ethic

Work ethic refers to a set of principles and values that guide individuals in their work, including dedication, responsibility, discipline, perseverance, and commitment to their work and organization. According to Max Weber (2019), work ethic is often influenced by social, cultural, and religious factors that shape one's view on the importance of hard work, morality in work, and social responsibility. In the context of women, women's work ethic refers to how women articulate their dedication and professionalism in the workplace, whether in the formal or informal sectors. A study by ILO (2019) shows that women often face specific challenges in the workforce, such as gender bias, structural barriers, and unequal domestic responsibilities, which impact their behavior and work ethic. However, women are also known for having a strong work ethic in terms of multitasking, adaptability, and empathy, which are increasingly recognized as strengths in the modern workplace. Factors Influencing Women's Work Ethic, as proposed by UNESCO (2021); Hofstede (2020); OECD (2020) include:

1. Education
   Education plays a key role in shaping women's behaviour and work ethic. Access to quality education allows women to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to enter the labour market and contribute productively. Higher education levels are also linked to increased participation of women in the formal sector, higher wages, and the ability to balance household and work demands.

2. Culture
   Culture plays a significant role in shaping women's work behaviour. In some societies, patriarchal cultures still dominate, limiting women's ability to take on certain roles in work and public life. In countries with strong masculine cultures, women's roles are often confined to domestic work or the informal sector, and they are underrepresented in leadership positions.

3. Social Support
   Social support from family, friends, and the community also influences women's work ethic. Women who receive good social support, such as fair sharing of household responsibilities and access to childcare services, tend to have higher work ethics. This support enables women to focus on their careers without being overwhelmed by unequal domestic responsibilities. Conversely, a lack of social support can create a double burden for women who must balance work and household responsibilities. This often affects their productivity at work and leads to higher stress. Therefore, policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and access to social welfare services, are essential to improving women's work ethic.

4. Household Responsibilities
   Unequal household responsibilities often act as a barrier for women in building a strong work ethic. It has been found that women worldwide still spend more time on housework and childcare than men, even though they also work outside the home. This burden limits the time and energy women have to fully engage in formal employment and participate in professional development activities.

Women's behavior and work ethic vary depending on the geographical and social context, particularly between rural and urban women (United Nation Women, 2021):

Women in Rural Areas

Women in rural areas are often involved in the informal sector and agriculture, playing crucial roles in the local economy. Rural women typically work as farmers, artisans, or domestic workers, focusing on managing local resources and meeting family needs. They often exhibit a strong work ethic related to resilience and family responsibility, even though their work is rarely formally recognized in economic statistics. The work ethic of rural women is also heavily influenced by traditional cultural norms, which often confine them to domestic roles. However, in many rural areas, women are increasingly participating in economic activities through entrepreneurial initiatives and empowerment programs, which have helped raise awareness of their roles in local economic development.

Women at the National Level

At the national level, particularly in urban areas, women are more likely to be engaged in the formal sector, such as business, education, healthcare, and government. They often have better access to education, healthcare, and job opportunities compared to women in rural areas. Urban women are more represented in professions requiring high skills, such as managers, doctors, and teachers. Women at the national level are also more likely to demonstrate a work ethic associated with career ambition, innovation, and continuous professional development. They are more likely to participate in training programs, professional networks, and leadership initiatives, allowing them to develop careers beyond traditional roles. However, despite the differences in opportunities, urban women also face similar challenges regarding household burdens and gender bias at work.

Women's work ethic is characterized by dedication, commitment, discipline, and high responsibility in their work (Simanjuntak, 2020; Usoh et al., 2020; Zusmawati & Julianti, 2023). Their attitudes towards hard work and professionalism are key drivers of their success, even though they often face challenges that are not equivalent to those faced by men. Women demonstrate resilience and the ability to adapt to obstacles, creating a strong work ethic that positively impacts the workplace.

1. Dedication
   Women's dedication in work is often seen through their commitment to achieving personal and organizational goals. Many women show high dedication, both in their professional roles and in managing family responsibilities. This commitment is reflected in their efforts to enhance skills, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute to the success of the team.

2. Discipline
   Discipline is a key aspect of women's work ethic. Women often successfully juggle dual roles, as workers and caregivers, which requires them to be organized and disciplined in managing their time. A study byPratiwi (2020) shows that women often do more housework after returning from formal jobs, demonstrating high discipline and responsibility in meeting demands in various aspects of life.

3. Attitude Towards Hard Work
   Women tend to have a positive attitude towards hard work, often associating it with success and goal achievement. They face various challenges, including gender stereotypes and workplace discrimination, but many still strive to achieve their desired positions. This attitude is also reflected in various studies that show that women have high intrinsic motivation to work hard and achieve success, despite often facing more obstacles than men. Eagly & Carli (2007) explain that women often have to work harder to prove their abilities in male-dominated work environments.

4. Professionalism
   Professionalism is an important aspect of women's work ethic. Many women show dedication to maintaining high standards in their work, whether in communication, work quality, or interactions

with colleagues. They often strive to build a solid and reliable professional reputation. A study by Catalyst (2022) shows that women engaged in formal employment often have high levels of education and adequate skills, enhancing their professionalism at work. They tend to participate in training and self-development to ensure they remain competitive in the labor market.

5. Attitude Towards Challenges

Women often face greater challenges in the workforce, including discrimination, difficulties in balancing work and family, and lack of support from colleagues or superiors. However, many women show resilience and the ability to adapt to these challenges. A study by Schein (2018) shows that women tend to develop strategies to overcome obstacles they face, including seeking support from other women, mentors, and professional networks. This attitude reflects high resilience and optimism, allowing them to move forward despite facing difficulties.

Method

This study employs a mixed-method research approach and was conducted on female leaders in Timor-Leste. The study uses purposive sampling techniques, with specific criteria established for selecting participants. These criteria include women leaders in Timor-Leste who have held or are currently holding positions in government. The sample size for this study is 21 respondents.

The data utilized in this research is a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected directly from respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data was obtained through direct communication using research instruments such as books, papers, documents, regulations, diaries, and limited interviews with authorized individuals providing data relevant to the research subject. The data was processed using descriptive analysis to summarize and present the basic characteristics of the collected data. Data presentation was carried out immediately after all information was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation related to gender equality, women's leadership, and existing laws.

The research framework aims to examine the behavior and work ethic of women at the national level, identify challenges faced by women in achieving leadership positions, and explore factors influencing women's participation in leadership roles across different levels. The conceptual framework of this research is designed to address these objectives.
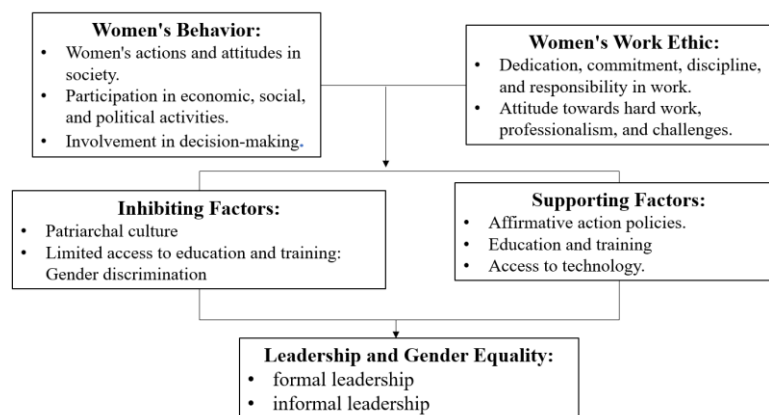

Chart 1. Research framework

Result and Discussion

Based on the findings obtained through a mixed-method approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative research, the discussion of the results is presented in this chapter. The study, titled *"Analysis of Women's Behavior and Work Ethic at the National Level to Achieve Leadership and Gender Equality,"* involves two independent variables: Leadership and Gender Equality, two dependent variables: Women's Behavior and Work Ethic, and an intervening variable: National Level. The research aims to determine whether factors such as Women's Behavior and Work Ethic influence Leadership and Gender Equality.

The quantitative aspect of the study targeted 21 respondents divided into three categories: nine (9) respondents from national parliament members for the 2023–2028 period, nine (9) civil servants holding management positions in the national parliament, and three (3) government officials. Initially, the research design identified 30 targeted respondents. However, due to several challenges, such as some parliament members being unavailable to complete the questionnaires due to busy schedules or frequent travel, two directors from the Secretariat of State being overseas, and delayed responses from certain participants, the total number of respondents decreased. As a result, nine (9) questionnaires were not successfully collected, whether distributed online or manually.

The following section provides an explanation of the research findings based on respondents' answers gathered through the questionnaires and interview.

Behavior

The average response from participants indicated that women's behaviour in actions, attitudes, and participation in leadership and gender equality is rated as *Good*. This behaviour is influenced by both internal factors, originating from the individual, and external factors, stemming from the surrounding environment.

Regarding internal factors, the majority of respondents acknowledged that, as citizens, they play a vital role in their communities. Building on this foundation, externally, they feel it is important to actively participate in social and economic activities, engage in discussions, express opinions, make decisions, stay informed about political developments and societal issues, and ensure that every decision is made through deliberation. The response with the highest index from participants was related to decision-making within the family. Respondents reported feeling actively involved, indicating that within family environments, decision-making processes always include all family members.

From the research findings, it can be concluded that every individual carries innate attitudes and behaviors, such as self-awareness, resilience, and self-discipline. These basic behaviors evolve under the influence of societal, economic, and political environments. This interaction between innate attitudes and environmental influences shapes an individual's character, demeanor, thoughts, and actions demonstrated in society. Such development fosters a more inclusive and participatory community.

However, other factors also significantly influence individual behavior, including personal experiences, motivation, workplace support, and long-term personal networks.

Work Ethic of Women

The responses from participants indicated a *Good* evaluation of women's work ethic. A good work ethic among women is characterized by high dedication, discipline, commitment, and responsibility, demonstrated through hard work and resilience in facing challenges. The highest-rated response from participants emphasized the belief that hard work is the key to success and highlighted the importance of staying motivated to continually learn and develop skills. These enhanced skills contribute to fostering a productive and high-quality work culture. The lowest-rated response, however, noted that women were perceived as less confident in positively addressing challenges in the workplace.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that a *Good* work ethic among women is influenced by attitudes, behaviors, and values reflecting dedication, responsibility, and commitment to their work. Achieving a strong work ethic requires a high enthusiasm for learning to acquire new knowledge and skills, which will contribute to creating a productive and high-quality work environment.

Moreover, women must also possess the intelligence and resilience to face challenges in the workplace positively, avoid giving up easily, and independently seek solutions to overcome obstacles. This underscores the notion that work ethic encompasses all aspects of an individual's skills, intelligence, and qualities in demonstrating appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

Factors Influencing Women's Work Ethic

Based on the results of the questionnaire presented in Table 4.4, the first factor influencing women's work ethic is Education, as indicated by seventeen (17) respondents. This finding suggests that higher levels of education enhance work ethic, as education serves as a foundation for improving performance, fostering responsibility, and instilling discipline. These attributes, rooted in intellectual capacity, enable individuals to perform their tasks effectively and achieve desired outcomes.

The second factor is Culture and Social Values, identified by fourteen (14) respondents. This means that the social values embraced by a particular community can have either a positive or negative impact on women's work ethic in various organizations and government institutions.

The next factor, mentioned by ten (10) respondents, is the Work Environment, while nine (9) respondents highlighted the importance of Family Support in shaping behavior and work ethic. A positive work environment and supportive family dynamics are crucial in creating conditions that enable women to adapt to their workplaces. Positive family support at home boosts women's motivation to develop themselves, enhance discipline, and build a strong work ethic, as household responsibilities are not solely placed on their shoulders.

Three key aspects that define an ideal work environment include:
1. Organizational Culture that promotes discipline, responsibility, and motivational behaviors among employees.
2. Strong Leadership and Management that inspire workers by setting a good example and fostering independent work habits.
3. Dynamic Team Collaboration that motivates individuals and cultivates a strong work ethic in the workplace.

Another factor identified is Commitment and Responsibility toward tasks. These qualities play a significant role in influencing employees to achieve desired work outcomes and develop a robust work ethic.

Household Responsibilities Impact Work Productivity
Based on the responses to question number two (2) in the questionnaire, which asked whether household responsibilities affect productivity at work, the answers were as follows: nine (9) respondents stated that it significantly impacts productivity, six (6) said it does not affect productivity, five (5) said it affects productivity, and only one (1) respondent indicated it has little effect. This suggests that sharing household responsibilities between men and women is necessary to reduce the time women spend on domestic tasks. If one person devotes excessive time and energy to household chores, it can diminish their motivation and productivity at work. Constant multitasking can have psychological effects, potentially leading to multitasking stress, which may reduce concentration capacity and drain the energy needed to deliver high-quality service and maintain productivity.

Women often lack quality time for themselves. However, when there is a balance between household and office responsibilities (balancing home and work), along with workplace and home flexibility, it positively impacts productivity. For those who stated that household responsibilities do not affect or do affect their work productivity, it can be assumed that they are willing to fully handle household responsibilities while simultaneously managing their office work effectively and productively.

The Role of Women in Leadership in the Workplace
Based on the results obtained from the third questionnaire, it shows that the role of women in leadership within the workplace has been achieved in several areas. For example, in politics, many intellectual and highly qualified women have influence not only domestically but also internationally. They are capable of bringing about changes at both the policy and technical management levels. Awareness of the importance of gender equality between men and women in the era of independence has positively impacted women's roles in society.

In the informal sector, knowledge and technical skills such as planning, monitoring, mentoring, and evaluation gained through training and capacity-building programs further enhance public confidence in the importance of women's roles.

Female leaders possess the ability to motivate their subordinates, inspire them, build trust, remain humble, and value individual intellectual capabilities. Additionally, women tend to lead with high empathy and responsibility, which sets them apart from male leaders.

From the above points, it can be concluded that the role of women in leadership in the workplace is significant, both in formal and informal sectors.

The Biggest Challenges in Achieving Leadership Positions

From the results of the fourth question, nine (9) respondents stated that the biggest challenge in achieving leadership positions is Gender Bias. Traditional thinking emphasizes that only men can reach the highest leadership positions, and when a woman tries to pursue a leadership role, she receives less support from society, not only from men but also from other women.

Seven (7) respondents cited a lack of family support as another barrier, as society views women's role as limited to domestic duties, while public work is not seen as their responsibility.

Six (6) respondents mentioned that a lack of education or training hinders women from reaching the highest leadership positions. The final response, given by three (3) respondents, was the burden of responsibilities, which aligns with the points mentioned earlier.

In societies with high patriarchal culture, many women report that it is difficult to fight for leadership positions due to the lack of support from both family and society. They are constantly questioned and doubted, with the persistent stereotype that women's roles are confined to domestic matters—managing the household, children, and family. However, with societal changes, many women have succeeded in breaking free from these discriminatory stereotypes. They have moved forward and demonstrated to the world that they are capable.

Domestic violence is also a factor influenced by patriarchal culture, where men are always dominant, make decisions unilaterally, control everything, and dominate in various aspects. Another challenge is that women do not support each other, which further encourages men to question the integrity and abilities of women.

What Can Help Women Achieve Higher Leadership Positions?

Based on the results of the fifth questionnaire on what can help women reach higher positions, nineteen (19) respondents stated that leadership training is crucial in helping women gain the necessary skills to pursue higher positions.

Next, fifteen (15) respondents emphasized the need for gender equality policies in the workplace. This indicates that such policies facilitate and support women's aspirations, as there would be no discrimination or gender bias, particularly in the selection of female leaders in the institutions where they work. It's not just about gender equality policies, but also about creating policies to prevent gender discrimination, such as implementing a sexual harassment code of ethics from the civil service ministry for all civil servants, which should be followed by all public institutions as a preventive measure against the widespread gender discrimination in the public sector.

Some experiences show that during the initial recruitment process, many women nominate themselves, but by the final phase, they tend to withdraw because they feel isolated among male candidates. This becomes a unique challenge for women, but if there are supportive policies in place within the institution, women will feel more confident to fight until they succeed.

Eleven (11) respondents mentioned that support from superiors is essential for women. This means that equal treatment from superiors, regardless of gender, is crucial and will support women's achievement in reaching the highest positions. The least mentioned factor, with two (2) respondents, was the reduction of domestic responsibilities. In relation to household responsibilities, another factor mentioned was family support. Family serves as a critical support system for women, enabling them to realize their full leadership potential.

Has Gender Equality Been Achieved?

From question six asked to the respondents regarding whether gender equality has been achieved, thirteen (13) people answered that it has been fully achieved. From the perspective of the Constitution and the laws, it is true that gender equality has been fully achieved. However, it should be noted that technically, substantive equality has not yet been achieved. Many factors influence this, including patriarchy, insufficient education, a lack of training targeting many women, and the incomplete implementation of policies across various sectors. The only area where gender equality has been largely fulfilled is in politics, as a result of electoral laws.

The responses that received the same score, four (4) respondents each, were "partially achieved" and "not achieved." What can be proven as partially achieved is the level of female participation in politics, which has exceeded the 30% quota due to the electoral law. However, in the civil service, female leadership only reaches 25%, raising the question of whether female civil servants' behavior and work ethics influence their leadership roles. This phenomenon occurs because laws have set standards for gender equality, but

technically, they have not been fully addressed. This issue will be explored further in the subsequent questionnaire.

Main Barriers to Achieving Gender Equality

Based on question seven regarding the main barriers to achieving gender equality, twelve (12) respondents indicated that patriarchy culture is the main barrier. This is true, as the patriarchal culture consistently places men as the primary class in the public sector, so even when men's achievements are average, they are always prioritized over women. Many hardworking women are proving that this mindset is wrong, and they continue to advocate for changing such views.

The next barrier, identified by five (5) respondents, is the lack of education or skills. Along with the patriarchy culture, women are not given the opportunity to pursue higher education or acquire skills due to discrimination from the patriarchal system that always prioritizes men. The lack of education and skills causes women to feel less confident, inferior, and unappreciated, hindering them from reaching their full potential.

Lastly, two responses received the same score of four (4) from respondents: Gender Bias and Lack of Equality Policies. Both of these issues serve as barriers to achieving gender equality. These are related to the lack of understanding about gender equality, and more concerning is the gender bias among women themselves, who fail to support one another due to their own internalized biases.

Hope for the Future of Women's Leadership in Timor-Leste

Not only the challenges outlined above, but also the important aspect of striving for gender equality, is having hope. Question eight asked, "What is your hope for the future of women's leadership in Timor-Leste?" Eighteen (18) respondents believe that one day gender equality will be achieved in all sectors. This hope is seen as attainable because the legal framework of Timor-Leste ensures equal rights for both women and men. Furthermore, each year, the national budget incorporates gender indicators across all ministries as a basis for promoting gender equality in all sectors.

Next, thirteen (13) respondents expressed hope that more women will hold leadership positions, which will drive further progress in gender equality. This indicates that when women hold leadership roles, it proves that they are ready to lead organizations and the country. It also reflects a shift in societal behavior and attitudes towards accepting gender equality and diversity. To achieve this, a long process and significant time are needed to change societal mindsets, and the government must make continuous and periodic investments to shift the patriarchal mentality.

The next response, given by eight (8) respondents, highlighted the expectation that the recognition of work ethics would increase. Thus, the fight against gender inequality will create a new generation of female leaders in the future, as women with strong work ethics are appreciated. As a result, the leadership gaps that still exist in various sectors will gradually be filled.

The Role of Women in Formal Leadership Positions (Government, Business, Politics) and Informal Leadership in Communities (Villages, Civil Society Organizations)

The role of women in formal leadership positions is the subject of question nine, which has been discussed in detail in Chapter IV above. Women in formal sectors such as government, business, and politics are those who must understand the vision and mission they are advocating for in order to voice women's rights. Being in these positions means that women possess high intellectual capabilities and strong personalities, enabling them to make fair, calm, rational decisions while being sensitive to women's issues. They can quickly influence public policies and make strategic decisions for programs that can bring about change for women who have been marginalized and excluded.

For women in informal leadership roles, both in communities and civil society, they also play a crucial role in gender advocacy to encourage women in formal positions to adopt inclusive, fair, and prosperous public policies. Since they experience firsthand what women go through, they can lead with rationality, empathy, and sensitivity to women's needs. Their role is to promote a shift away from patriarchal mentalities, advocate for transparency and accountability, and resolve conflicts peacefully. For instance, they understand the needs of pregnant women in rural areas who face difficulties accessing prenatal and postnatal care, and they can advocate for formal leadership to address these issues. This could include proposing the integration of a "Family Health" program into the national budget, where doctors with comprehensive facilities could visit remote villages, offering mobile clinics.

Women in both formal and informal leadership positions possess natural leadership abilities, strong character, and a good work ethic. As such, they are quick to act when they witness injustices faced by other women. Therefore, at the mid-level, it is essential for more women to run for mayoral positions, as the law now supports women in such candidacies. This will promote socio-economic development that is fair, equitable, and respectful of gender equality at the local level.

To Promote Women's Leadership, Should There Be Special Criteria or Should the Same Criteria Be Applied to Both Men and Women?

The researcher conducted interviews with key informants to gain a deeper perspective on the research topic. The question raised concerned whether there should be specific criteria for women. According to several individuals, if recruitment criteria include special criteria for women, it would be considered gender bias. Therefore, there should be no special criteria for women; instead, the same general criteria should apply to everyone, based on Education, Meritocracy, and Experience.

The civil service recruitment process has been correctly carried out to encourage more women to participate in public sector recruitment and job promotions. For example, if there are two strong candidates, one female and one male, who receive the same score, it means they have the same meritocracy. However, priority will still be given to the female candidate. This approach motivates many women to participate because the process is transparent, and equal rights are upheld throughout.

Merit-based or gender-neutral criteria aim to implement the same standards for all individuals. This strategy assumes that opportunities are equally available to both men and women, with leadership quality evaluated based on performance, ability, and qualifications rather than gender. However, other aspects are necessary, such as equal access for both genders, selection that is free from gender discrimination, and equal pay for equal work.

What Kind of Female Leadership Model Is Desired to Achieve Gender Equality?

Regarding the female leadership model that reflects feminine characteristics, various answers were provided, which can serve as the foundation for leadership. Women possess strong character but also excellent communication skills. They are more transparent in their leadership, have natural abilities, are humble, and serve as family role models, which encourages women to serve better. A visionary woman leader, with a leadership style marked by integrity, responsibility, and support for a fair and inclusive work environment, is productive, participatory, explorative, open, and willing to listen to others. She is patient and ready to accept criticism and suggestions.

To lead with integrity, a woman must adhere to the constitution, laws, and all applicable regulations, which will help avoid what is called "abuse of power" aimed at violating existing laws. A female leader with this model will pave the way for gender equality because society will not view women as ready to lead. However, if women achieve integrity, they will become transformational leaders, the kind that society dreams of.

Women have the power to influence development and inspire transformation. Women in leadership roles often drive reforms that support gender equality to create opportunities for future generations. They will also advocate for policies that promote family-friendly work environments, equal pay, anti-discrimination laws, and access to education and healthcare for women and girls. The impact on organizational culture will be seen as they introduce policies related to diversity, equality, and inclusion. For instance, organizations or companies led by women will likely implement flexible work policies, inclusive practices, and employee welfare programs.

What Needs to Be Done to Ensure Quality Female Participation in Government to Achieve Gender Equality?

Formal education and training to enhance knowledge and prepare women to become leaders are vital for every organization. Involving more women in leadership training and other disciplines can increase their knowledge and broaden perspectives, enabling them to be more active and participate at higher levels.

The more women who attain leadership positions, the more it will indirectly support economic independence, increase job markets involving women, and reduce gender disparities in wages, income, and pensions. Nowadays, many women experience domestic violence, and one of the causes is their economic dependence on men. Therefore, one way to reduce the risk of domestic violence is for women to have their own income. This allows them to contribute to the family's financial stability, leading to a more harmonious family life and greater success in their work.

In business, women play roles in sectors like agriculture and infrastructure, but on a smaller scale. One factor limiting women's access to capital is cultural norms, and a lack of intensive mentoring also hinders women in the business sector, as they are often associated with small-scale businesses in the informal sector.

Meanwhile, female participation in politics in Timor-Leste has developed well, especially with women making up 38% of the Parliament. This, along with the election of Fernanda Lay as President of the Timor-Leste Parliament, has provided an opportunity to work under a single platform to influence national policies on gender equality and advocate for women's rights. In addition to political representation, the presence of women at the government level has successfully implemented policies to promote women's rights, such as the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, legal frameworks like laws against domestic violence, and other public policies such as paternity leave, family-friendly workplace policies, and zero tolerance for gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment. Therefore, the role of women in politics and the executive branch is crucial to ensure that national policies and laws are properly implemented, which will support the achievement of gender equality in the country.

What Are the Challenges Hindering Women's Participation at the Government Level (Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and State Secretaries) to Achieve the 30% Quota?
Preventing them from achieving gender equality and the 30% quota, the main hindrance is the lack of legislation regarding the appointment of government officials as an affirmative action that the Prime Minister must take when selecting deputies for the government.

In politics, there is widespread violence, intimidation, and political discrimination against women because there is a lack of trust in women's ability to hold executive positions. Women also face financial challenges, as they lack the necessary capital or funds. Furthermore, the most detrimental factor is the lack of support from other women themselves. These combined factors cause many women to opt out of political party structures and reject offers to hold public office. Instead, they prefer to work professionally outside the system.

Another major challenge is the societal patriarchal culture that is less supportive of gender equality. Although Timor-Leste's legal framework encourages equal rights, the lack of socialization and limited public knowledge means that gender equality remains more of a rhetorical idea than a tangible reality.

To address these issues, political parties play an important role in minimizing the challenges mentioned above. This can be done by creating laws and party regulations aligned with political party laws, as an effort to prevent political conflicts and discrimination. Political parties can also endorse these initiatives after winning elections and gaining government positions, thus promoting legislative efforts for the implementation of a gender quota in government.

What Are the Challenges Hindering Women's Participation at the Government Level (Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and State Secretaries) to Achieve the 30% Quota?
Several suggestions were made about adopting government regulations for gender equality policies. In the National Parliament, female civil servants holding leadership positions have reached 45%, but at the government level overall, the number of female civil servants in leadership roles has only reached 25%, which means the 30% quota has not yet been met.

To promote both the quality and quantity of women's participation in leadership positions, education and training remain the top priorities, with training topics including leadership, management, political education, legislative drafting techniques, financial management transparency, national financial analysis, and others to broaden the knowledge of women working to serve members of the national parliament.

Several important aspects of leadership are indicators that, when performed, demonstrate the capability of a leader: the ability to make decisions, work as part of a team, show initiative, take responsibility, and have the good intention to serve. If these characteristics are met by a woman, she is worthy of being a leader.

One current trend related to leadership appointments is the tendency to use political power in these positions, rather than strictly applying the established criteria. Since the winning party holds the majority, it opens the door for leaders of each government institution to select and recruit based on party loyalty. This approach must be avoided as much as possible, because civil service recruitment should be free from political control and should serve all individuals equally.

The recent practice of recruitment based on party loyalty has taken place outside the control of the Ministry of Civil Service. Therefore, it is necessary to reform the civil service law to ensure that it is strictly adhered

to, fostering transparency, avoiding nepotism, and motivating women to advance. There should be no political compromise, only adherence to the law that governs the country.

Observations on the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Violence Against Women and Girls in a Village in Timor-Leste

Every year, through the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion, the government of Timor-Leste observes the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-Based Violence, a global initiative established by the United Nations. This period is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting actions against violence toward women and girls. As a member of the United Nations, Timor-Leste utilizes this time to conduct various activities such as national and municipal seminars, open discussions, academic forums, social media debates, and the dissemination of laws, alongside other creative initiatives aimed at reaching diverse groups at different levels.

From the observation of a seminar held in a village, which was attended by the wider community and government partners, as discussed in Chapter IV, these activities were crucial in building public awareness. They helped people understand the importance of avoiding violence and promoted constructive dialogue at family, village, civil society, and national levels. The Domestic Violence Law, passed by the National Parliament in 2010, has been a key motivator in the struggle to reduce domestic violence. However, it highlighted the challenge of insufficient support from families and communities for women to become leaders, as women who are victims of violence often live with deep psychological trauma, which impedes their ability to develop their full potential and become effective female leaders.

Violence remains a significant barrier to encouraging more women to take roles in the family, community, and organizations, as well as in social, economic, and political spheres. Therefore, it is essential to firmly implement the Domestic Violence Law, including criminal penalties, to set a powerful example for men and discourage them from taking matters into their own hands or perceiving violent behavior as acceptable within society.

In conclusion, continuous awareness campaigns are essential, as many in the community still lack understanding of the different forms of violence, the legal processes for handling domestic violence cases, the authorities that women can turn to for complaints, the impacts of violence on women in family, political, and economic contexts, and the cycle of violence that perpetuates injustice and disharmony. This cycle also has broader societal consequences, such as poverty and other negative outcomes for the country.

Given that women and girls are often the primary targets of violence, it is crucial to engage in deeper socialization efforts, especially in communities with a high degree of patriarchal culture. In these environments, violence is often seen as a normal practice, and men are perceived to have the right to inflict violence on women. This perception is incorrect and contradicts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Girls.

Conclusion and future direction

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are as follows:

1. Influence of Internal and External Factors: Women's behavior, attitudes, and participation in leadership and gender equality are influenced by both internal (self) and external (social and cultural environment) factors. A supportive environment can strengthen a woman's character and empower her to take on greater leadership roles.
2. Education and Training: Education and training are key to improving women's work ethic, enabling them to contribute more effectively in the workplace and prepare for leadership positions.
3. Challenges of Patriarchal Culture: Patriarchal culture represents a significant barrier to achieving gender equality and leadership positions for women. Domestic violence, discrimination, and gender bias exacerbate this inequality, hindering women's potential to thrive.
4. Role of Government and Legislation: The government of Timor-Leste has implemented policies to promote women's rights, such as the domestic violence law and public policies supporting gender equality. However, more consistent implementation and stricter monitoring are required.
5. Effective Female Leadership: Women possess strong leadership potential, both naturally and through the development of leadership skills. Female leaders with integrity, transparency, and a

commitment to social justice can make significant contributions to economic and social development.

6. Political Party Involvement: Political parties play a vital role in creating laws and internal policies that support gender equality, as well as ensuring women have equal opportunities for leadership positions in government and the public sector.
7. Gender Equality in All Sectors: To achieve true gender equality, it is necessary to implement policies that support women across all sectors, particularly in leadership positions in the political, economic, and social spheres.
8. Affirmative Action and Quotas: Affirmative action policies and specific legislation are needed to support the increased representation of women in executive positions, such as ministers and deputy ministers, which remain underrepresented in Timor-Leste, in order to achieve the 30% quota for women in government.

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Implication

The implications of this research for leadership and gender equality in Timor-Leste are as follows:

1. Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks: The study underscores the need for stronger legal and policy frameworks to promote gender equality in leadership roles. This includes the establishment of gender quotas and affirmative action policies to ensure a more balanced representation of women in executive positions such as ministers, deputy ministers, and other key government roles. Timor-Leste can benefit from developing laws and policies that specifically address the gender gap in leadership.
2. Promoting Women's Education and Leadership Training: The research emphasizes the importance of education and skill-building programs for women. To improve women's participation in leadership, there should be a concerted effort to provide education and leadership training tailored to empowering women, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead effectively in both public and private sectors.
3. Challenging Patriarchal Norms and Gender Bias: The study reveals that the patriarchal culture in Timor-Leste remains a significant barrier to gender equality in leadership. To overcome this, there must be initiatives to challenge traditional gender norms, create awareness about gender equality, and actively promote women's rights. It is crucial to address deep-rooted cultural beliefs that undermine women's potential in leadership.
4. Political Party's Role in Advancing Gender Equality: Political parties in Timor-Leste can play a key role in advancing gender equality by introducing internal policies that encourage the inclusion of women in leadership positions. Political parties should adopt measures to promote female candidates for executive positions, implement gender-sensitive policies, and advocate for reforms that support women's advancement in governance.
5. Increasing Women's Representation in Public Leadership: The study suggests that increasing women's representation in leadership positions is essential for achieving gender equality across all sectors in Timor-Leste. Women's inclusion in leadership roles not only empowers women but also contributes to better governance, social progress, and economic development. It is vital to create opportunities for women to take on leadership roles at all levels of government.
6. Promoting Public Awareness and Social Change: The study highlights the need for continued public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality. These campaigns should focus on educating the public about the importance of women in leadership and the benefits of gender equality for national development. In a society where patriarchal views persist, changing perceptions about women's roles in leadership is a critical step.
7. Ensuring Effective Implementation of Gender Policies: The research indicates that while Timor-Leste has made significant strides in promoting gender equality, the effective implementation of gender-focused policies remains a challenge. Timor-Leste needs to ensure that existing laws, such as those against domestic violence, are enforced consistently and that there is regular monitoring to ensure that women are given equal opportunities in leadership positions.

8. Achieving Gender Equality in All Sectors: For Timor-Leste to truly achieve gender equality, it must be integrated into all sectors of society. This includes fostering equal opportunities in politics, the economy, and civil society. By creating an environment that supports gender equality, women can thrive as leaders, driving positive change in the country.

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