Communication through Social Technologies: A Study of Israeli Women

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ABSTRACT

Social technologies have changed the way we communicate allowing users to interact, share knowledge, reach out to friends and family, keep up with the news, and even promote and support a business. A study of Israeli women was conducted to determine how social technologies platforms — Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+ — are used and the benefits realized. Women worldwide face challenges including economic, educational, health, and political. Israel women, like women in every other country in the world, are challenged with gender inequity. Do women who use social technologies believe that these platforms provide empowerment leading to greater success? This paper discusses Israel's global gender gap scores and rankings in four categories as compared with 144 other countries and reports the results of a study of the use of social technologies by Israeli women in the workplace.

KEYWORDS: Israel, social technologies, social media, gender gap, women's empowerment, communication

INTRODUCTION

The gender gap and women's empowerment are issues that have recently gained international attention. Women worldwide face economic, educational, health, and political inequalities, and Israel is no exception.

Cultural differences complicate the gender gap issue, but the internet and social technologies may level the playing field as it extends the reach of communication far beyond a country's borders and provides all who have access to the internet a voice unlike ever before. Along with the positive side of social technologies, users must also be prepared for the dark side. "It's a rare business owner or professional who hasn't encountered an Internet takedown. Consumers themselves have access to each other through social technology platforms. Even if they are using it just to vent steam, their complaint can travel the world" (Diamond, 2015). How complaints or negative comments are handled can make the difference. Address the person by name, express the concern, and try to correct the issue, but do not get into a public war. "Increasing positive vibes is great, but you get a bigger bang for your buck if you reduce the negative ones (Diamond, 2015). Despite the fear one may have of negative comments or personal attacks," the potential benefits are too great to ignore.

Although women in every country face inequalities, the gap has slowly been narrowing for most countries with expectations that the pace will pick up through awareness and a continued international focus.

This paper takes a look at the gender gap and social technologies as a means of empowering women. A need for this study is confirmed by Qureshi (2015) indicating that the effects of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in improving people's lives should be studied at the individual, organizational, country, regional and world levels.

It is estimated that women could increase their income globally by up to 76 percent if the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women and men were closed. This is calculated to have a global value of USD 17 trillion (Actionaid, 2015).

An ongoing global study of 24 countries across five continents entitled "Women's Empowerment through Social Technologies," is intended to identify global uses of social technologies in the workplace and benefits realized that may lead to

empowerment and equality. The results of a survey of Israeli women are reported. Conclusions and implications follow.

RELATED LITERATURE

The gender gap, women's empowerment, and social technologies have been widely studied (World Economic Forum, 2015; Nord, *et al* 2014; Gholipour, *et al,* 2010; Nazneen, *et al,* 2014; Cornwall and Anyidoho, 2010; Thapa, 2014), yet there is sparse literature on the effect of social technologies on women's empowerment. In Israel, this has been complicated in the wake of ongoing suffrage.

The Gender Gap. "The Global Gender Gap Index 2015 ranks 145 economies according to how well they are leveraging their female talent pool, based on economic, educational, health-based and political indicators. With a decade of data, this 10th edition of the Global Gender Gap Report – first published in 2006 – shows that while the world has made progress overall, stubborn inequalities remain" (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Countries are scored based on a comparative analysis of females vs. males. Equality equals a score of 1.00 while inequality equals scores below 1.00 indicating a percentage of where females stand within each of the categories as compared to males. For example, an economic score of 0.750 indicates that females earn 75 percent of what males do for the same type of work.

The gender gap score card for Israel on the overall index and in the categories of *Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment* are shown in Table 1.

Category	Rank	Score
Overall Index	53	0.712
Economic Participation and Opportunity	71	0.671
Educational Attainment	51	0.996
Health and Survival	69	0.974
Political Empowerment	54	0.205

Table 1. Global Gender Gap Score Card for Israel (World Economic Forum, 2015)

As shown in Table 1, Israel ranks 53rd out of 145 countries overall with a score of 0.712. Highlighted in gray and the main focus is the *Economic Participation and Opportunity* category. Israel falls close to the middle of the 145 countries with a rank of 71st and a score of 0.671. This means that wages and opportunities for males are 33 percent higher than they are for females. Unfortunately, Israeli women have not seen much improvement in closing the gender gap economically over a ten year period with a low score of 0.641 in 2006 and the highest score in this category being 0.693 in 2009. For comparison purposes, the highest scoring country in the *Economic Participation and Opportunity* category is Iceland ranking number one with a score of .881. Yemen came in last or 145th with a score of .484. Unfortunately, women in Iceland, the number one ranked country in the *Economic Participation and Opportunity* category, still face economic inequality while women in Yemen—ranked last statistically—earn less than one-half of the wages of their male counterparts.

"Women's economic equality is good for business. Companies greatly benefit from increasing leadership opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organizational effectiveness. It is estimated that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational effectiveness" (UNWomen, 2016).

Scores for Israeli women in the *Educational Attainment* and *Health and Survival* categories are very high at 0.996 and 0.974 respectively, translating to near equality. Although the rankings in these categories aren't as high as would be expected, it is due to the fact that other countries' scores are only fractions of a point apart.

Israeli women aren't well represented in political positions as indicated by a score of 0.205 or making up only 20 percent of the political representatives in Israel.

The Global Gender Gap report creates an awareness of areas where inequalities exist which is the first step toward women's empowerment in overcoming these differences.

Women's Empowerment. "Women's empowerment has gained a central role in the development literature over the last few decades" (Nazneen, *et al,* 2014). Cornwall and Anyidoho (2010) concur indicating that women's empowerment has gained growing visibility as a development issue while (Mosedale, 2014) states that women's empowerment is a central objective of international development.

Many studies have been conducted on women's empowerment relative to countries such as Iran (Gholipour, *et al,* 2010), Iraq (Wu, *et al)*], Bahrain (Gerber, 2014), Pakistan (Shah, *et al*), China (Levi, *et al*), Egypt (Ali, 2013), India (Ting, *et al*), Nepal (Aryal, 2014), Israel (Najjar, 2011), Algeria (Sinha, 2012), and Cyprus (Levin, 2011). In Israel, The National Council of Jewish Women awarded grants to eight Israeli organizations whose work is focused on gender equality and women's empowerment (NCJW, 2014). Sengupta (2013) looked at microfinancing with regard to poverty or women's empowerment and concluded that neither the financial system approach nor the poverty lending approach can address the real issue. None of these studies investigated social technologies as a possible means of empowerment for women.

Heemsbergen and Lindgren (2014) conducted a study of the evolving uses of social technologies in Israel during wartime. They suggest that these media are useful tools to shape perceptions, inform far-reaching audiences, and disseminate near real-time messaging pursuant to goals.

Access to the internet and an awareness of the benefits that social technologies can provide are critical to women's empowerment (Nord, 2013).

Social Technologies. Social technologies, now accessible globally in countries with internet access, have the potential to play a significant role in empowering women in both developed and developing countries.

In Israel, the most used social network on a mobile device is Facebook with usage of about 95.77%. Other social technologies sites have a very low usage. Pinterest ranks second with 1.81%, Twitter ranks third with 1.52%, StumbleUpon ranks fourth with 0.27% and the remaining social networks holds 0.63% using Mobile internet (StatsMonkey, 2015).

"The power of social networking is such that, the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.5 billion by 2018, around a third of Earth's entire population. An estimated half a billion of these users are expected to be from China alone and approximately a quarter of a million from India. The region with the highest penetration rate of social networks is North America, where around 60 percent of the population has at least one social account. As of 2015, over 70 percent of the United States population had a social networking profile" (Statista, 2015).

"As more Americans have adopted social media, the social media user base has also grown more representative of the broader population. Young adults were among the earliest social media adopters and continue to use these sites at high

levels, but usage by older adults has increased in recent years" (Pew Research Center, 2017). For example, teens prefer sites such as SnapChat (39%), Instagram, and Twitter, with Facebook coming in fourth with only 11 percent (Statista 2017), which differs somewhat from the social technologies platforms preferred by businesses.

According to Portal Statista (2015) Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Google+ were among the top five platforms used. Other studies concur with at least four of the described platforms listed in the top five for business (Tucker, 2011; Maina, 2016; Sachs, 2016; Chitwood, 2014; eBiz, 2016).

Whether used in small business, the corporate world, or for personal use, social technologies provide opportunities for empowerment never available before. This paper addresses four research questions regarding social technologies used by women in the workplace in Israel.

METHODOLOGY

Separate studies have been conducted on the Gender Gap, Women's Empowerment, and Social Technologies, but no specific studies were found on Women's Empowerment through Social Technologies. Use of these technologies and benefits realized were identified in a study of Israeli women. The survey instrument contained close-ended multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. (See Appendix 1)

Research Questions. There were four research questions answered by the results of this study:

- What social technology platforms are used in the workplace by Israeli women?

- For what purposes do Israeli women use social technologies in the workplace?

- Are benefits realized from using social technologies in the workplace?

- Do education and social technologies provide empowerment and success for women?

Participants and Procedures. A survey was selected to collect data for this study because of the benefits over other collection methods based on the type of data being collected. Wyse (2012) names four main benefits of using surveys for research:

> "1) Cost. It is relatively inexpensive to administer surveys to a large group; 2) Extensive. No other research method can provide this broad capability, which ensures a more accurate sample to gather targeted results in which to draw conclusions and make important decisions; 3) Flexible. Surveys can be administered in many modes, including: online surveys, email surveys, social media surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys, telephone surveys, and face-to-face interview surveys; and 4) Dependable. The anonymity of surveys allows respondents to answer with more candid and valid answers. To get the most accurate data, you need respondents to be as open and honest as possible with their answers. Surveys conducted anonymously provide an avenue for more honest and unambiguous responses than other types of research methodologies, especially if it is clearly stated that survey answers will remain completely confidential."

The survey instrument was translated from English to Israel's native language, Hebrew, by an individual on the research team who spoke both fluent Hebrew and English. Convenience and snowball sampling were used to administer to104 women in the workplace who used at least one of the following social technology platforms for business purposes: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, or Google+. There are other social technologies used in business, but according to multiple sources, the literature shows that these were consistently among the top five platforms used (Tucker, 2011; Maina, 2016; Sachs, 2016; Chitwood, 2014; eBiz, 2016).

Participants of the study work in 10 different fields out of the 12 defined by the Israeli government. They work in 36 different places including cities, towns, and community settlements throughout Israel.

Data Analysis. Responses from each of the surveys were translated for analyses purposes to English by the same researcher who translated the survey to Hebrew to ensure that nothing was lost in translation. Descriptive statistical analyses were used for the close-ended questions. Results from the open-ended questions will also be reported.

RESULTS

Name, contact information, and name and location of business for each person completing a survey was collected for credibility purposes, but to encourage more answers, respondents were assured this information would not be revealed.

As expected, respondents were well educated with a total of 85 percent of the women having attended between 15 and 28 years of school.   Figure 1 illustrates the distribution.
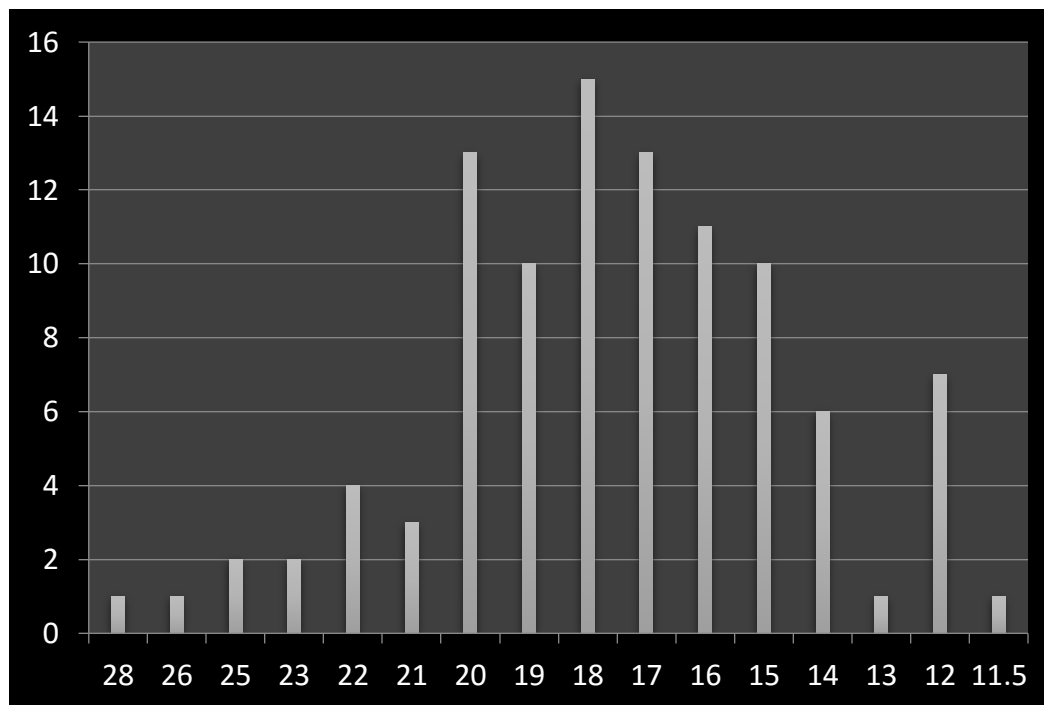

Figure 1. Education: Highest Grade Attained

The average age of the respondents was 50 years old. The youngest respondent was 18 with the oldest 84. Marital status is revealed in Figure 2. Three-fourths of the respondents were married.
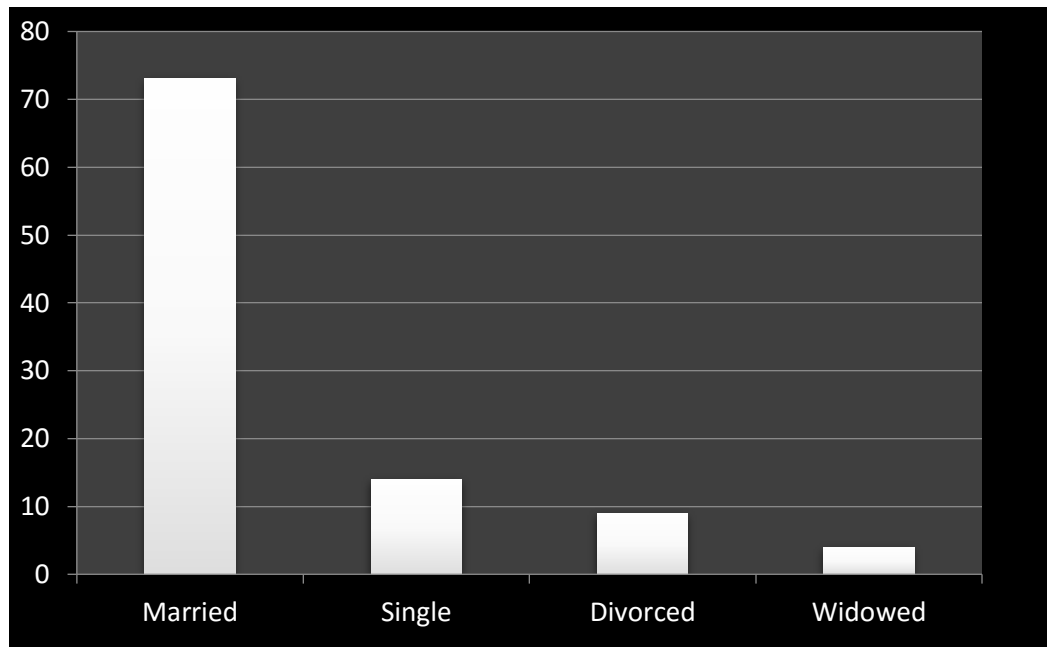
Figure 2. Marital Status by Percentage

Eighty-five percent of the working women responding have from one to four children with 31 percent indicating they have two children and over half or 51 percent having four children.

When asked whether the respondents worked for a company/organization vs. owning their own business, 65 percent indicated they work for a company/organization with the top three being government, service, and health.

The range of company sizes—number of employees—from which respondents worked varied greatly with the average being 14,810.   Table 2 shows the statistical results.

14,810	120	1	1,000,000	1

Table 2. Number of Employees

All but one respondent have access to computers/technology and all but two respondents indicated they have used computers for more than five years. SmartPhones and desktops were the most widely used devices. Figure 3 reveals the percentage distribution on usage of technology devices.
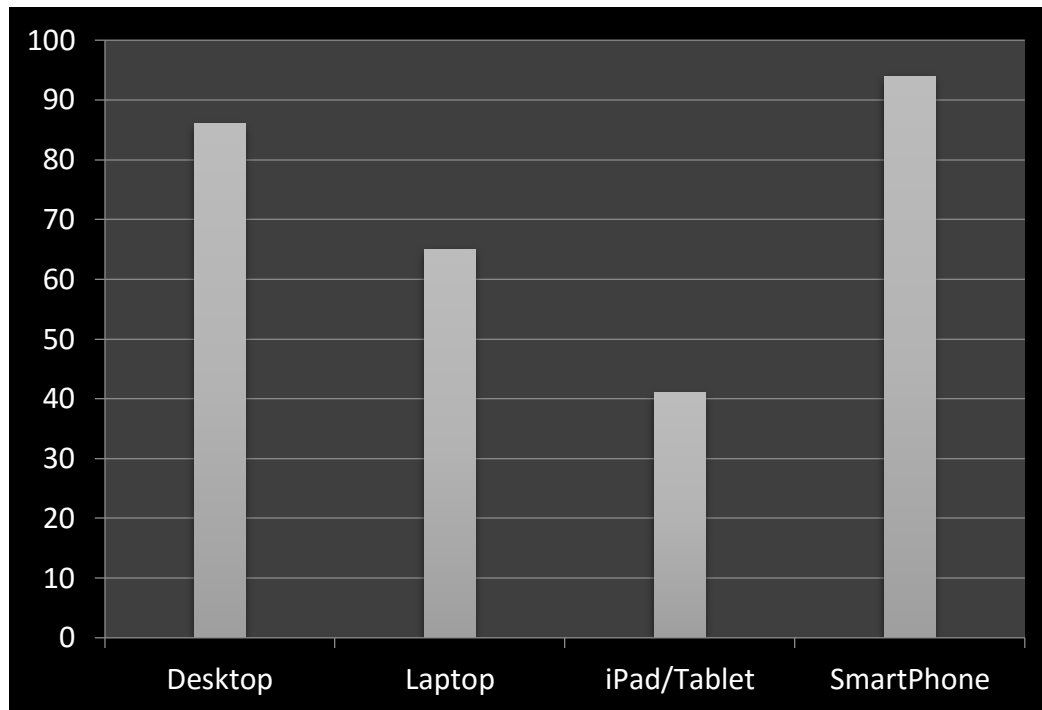
Figure 3. Technology: Usage of Devices by Percentage

Overall, ninety-eight percent of the respondents were aware of the benefits provided by technology including education, social technologies for business, information, communication, news, and leisure. Figure 4 shows the responses by category.
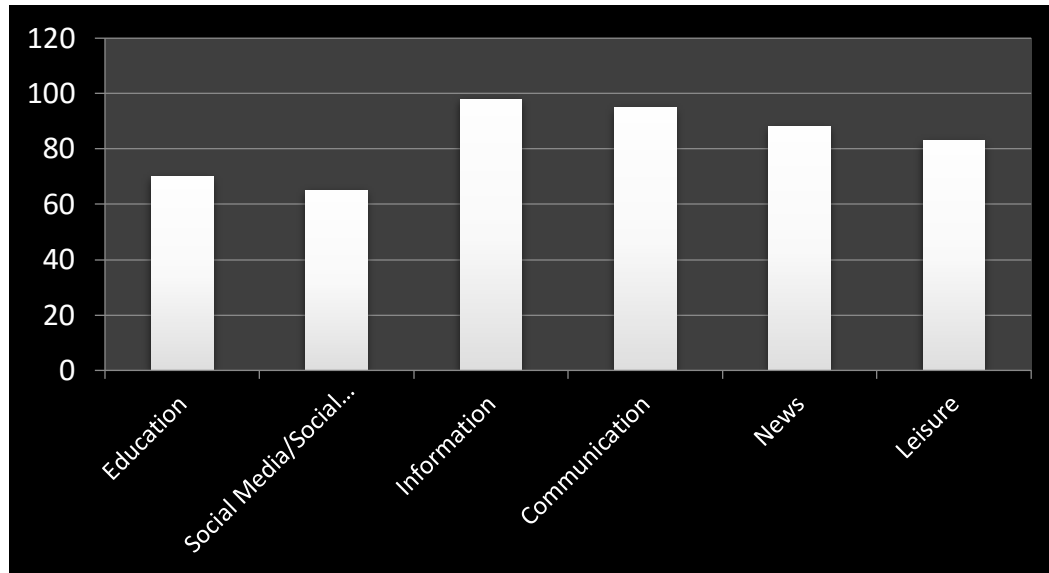
Figure 4. Aware of the Benefits of Technology by Percentage

Respondents indicated that all categories listed were benefits of using technology with information and communication scoring more votes than the others.

The focus of this study includes social technology platforms used identifying purposes and benefits realized. The platforms listed on the survey were Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+. The following reports results which answer the first three research questions: 1) What social technology platforms are used in the workplace by Israeli women? 2) For what purposes do Israeli women use social technologies in the workplace? and 3) Are benefits realized from using social technologies in the workplace?

Figure 5 shows the platforms and percentage of users indicating use of the social technologies platform within their organization.
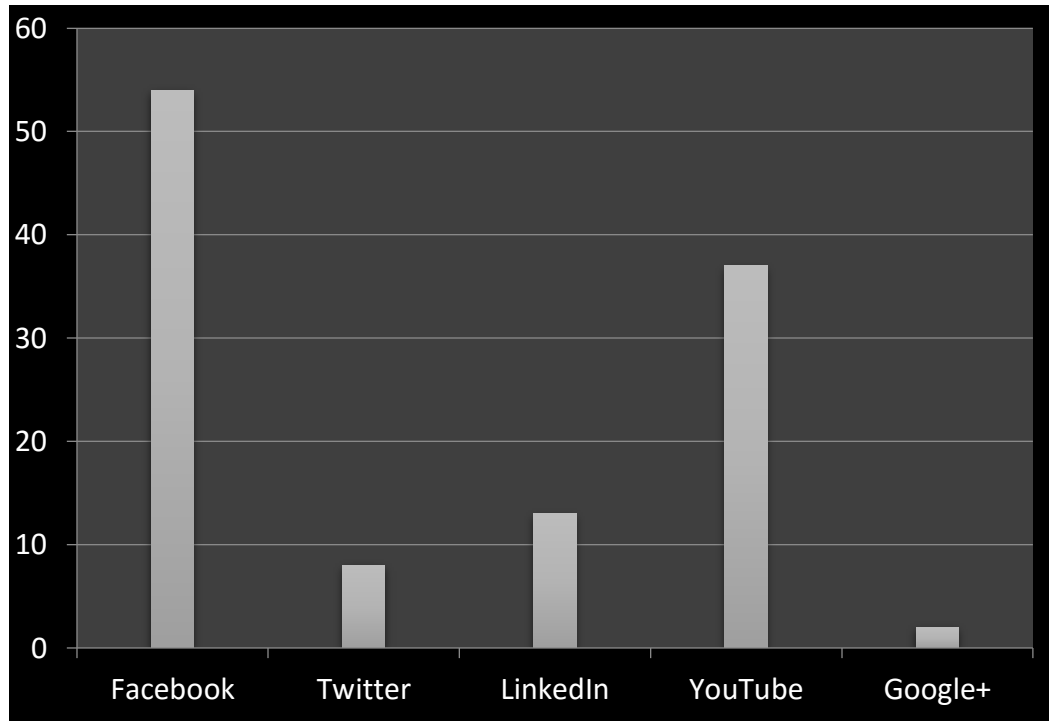
Figure 5. Social Technology Platforms Used by Percentage

Facebook and YouTube are the two most widely used platforms in organizations in Israel according to the respondents. Over half or 54 percent of the respondents use Facebook, while 37 percent use YouTube in their companies. LinkedIn was used by 12.7 percent, with Twitter and Google+ falling below 10 percent usage by the respondents.

After each social technology platform listed, those respondents who indicated they used the platform were asked to respond to a list of eight purposes with an additional space for 'other' indicating whether they used the platform for each of the purposes and if so, whether the organization had realized a benefit from the stated purposes.

We will take a more in-depth look at the responses to Facebook and YouTube— the two most widely used platforms by the respondents.

Figure 6 reveals the responses for Facebook regarding purposes used and whether benefits were realized in that order for each stated purpose.
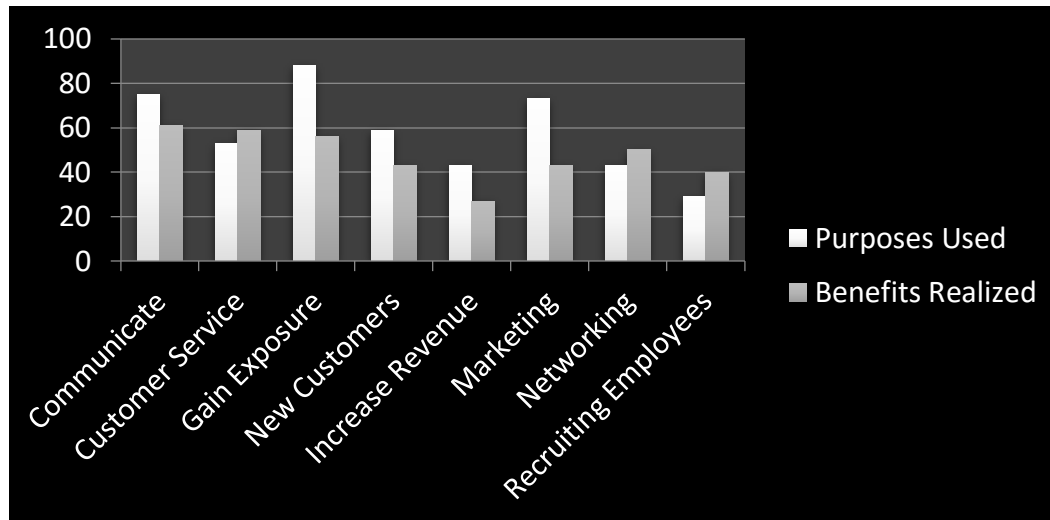
Figure 6. Facebook: Purposes Used and Benefits Realized by Percentage

Facebook is the most widely used social technology platform worldwide and includes text, pictures, and videos. Facebook comprises the largest blend of demographics of any social platform. It provides an extraordinary medium for a business to connect with prospective customers all around the world (Sachs, 2016). Note that all purposes listed and benefits realized made it on the chart ranging from slightly less than 30 percent to almost 90 percent. There were three reasons that were indicated by more than 70 percent of those respondents using Facebook in their companies: To communicate, to gain exposure, and for marketing purposes. Providing customer service, gaining new customers, increasing revenue, and networking were all checked by 40 percent or more of those responding. Recruiting fell at the bottom with the fewest number of respondents—less than 30 percent indicating that Facebook was used for this purpose.

Benefits were realized by all, with almost 60 percent finding that Facebook served them well in the area of customer service. Over half of those using Facebook, identified the following purposes as beneficial uses of the platform: to communicate, to provide customer service, and to gain exposure. Networking and marketing were rated beneficial purposes by approximately 40 percent with slightly less than 30 percent finding Facebook beneficial for increasing revenue or recruiting employees. Note that if the respondent did not indicate that benefits were realized when using Facebook—or any of the other social technologies platforms—for a stated purpose, this may not have meant that no benefits were realized. Many indicated 'unknown' which could perhaps indicate that these

metrics may be looked at by an individual in a different position or level, that no metrics were established for the stated purpose, or simply that the respondents were unaware of whether benefits were realized.

Figure 7 shows the results for YouTube—a video platform with the first bar indicating purpose percentage and the second benefits realized.
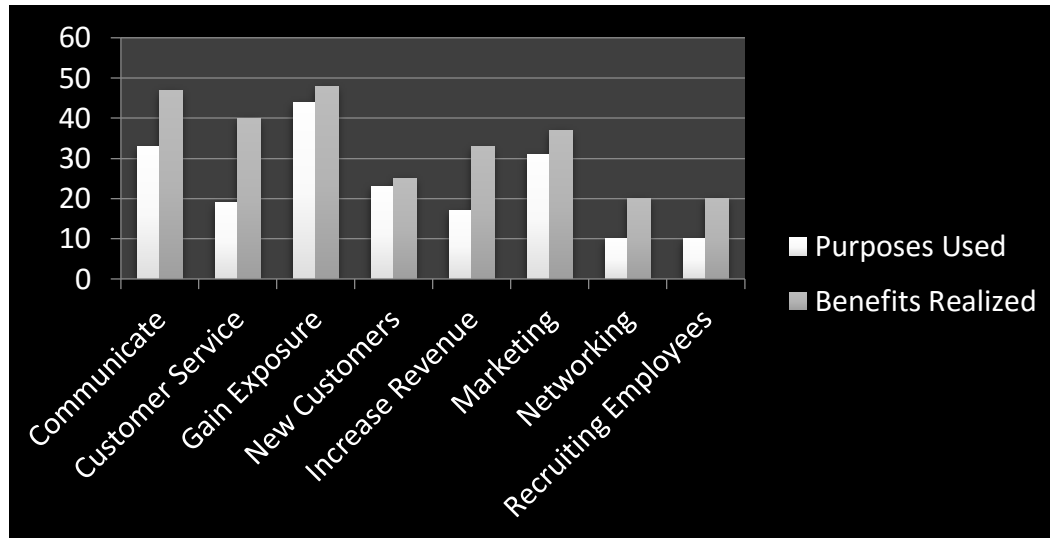

Figure 7. YouTube: Purposes Used and Benefits Realized by Percentage

YouTube is much different than Facebook in that it consists of videos only. Again, YouTube is used in organizations for all purposes listed with all realizing some degree of benefit according to the respondents. For all platforms, the percentage of benefit was calculated based on those respondents who used the social technology (YouTube in this case) for the stated purpose who also indicated a realized benefit. Communication, gaining exposure, and marketing were the three biggest reasons the respondents use YouTube in their companies and the greatest benefits were also found when using YouTube for these purposes. Other purposes were indicated by at least 10 percent up to approximately 20 percent of the respondents. Benefits were realized by all ranging from 10 percent of the respondents to a high of over 40 percent. As with the other platforms, many knew what purpose the social platform was used for, but didn't have knowledge of whether benefits were realized.

Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ were used in organizations by few respondents— 7.7 percent, 12.8 percent, and 2.2 percent respectively,

When asked whether the respondents experience with social technologies was positive or negative—check all that apply—44 percent indicated positive only, 22 percent checked both positive and negative, and 2 percent responded negative only, which reveals that approximately one-fifth have had both positive and negative experiences with social technologies with two-third of the respondents indicating positive experiences.

Respondents indicating that their experience had been positive or negative were asked to share an example of an experience or outcome from using social technologies. Some of the comments from those who responded that their experience has been positive are listed in List 1.

List 1 Positive Experiences from Using Social Technologies

- I get information which I wouldn't have without Facebook.
- I can influence others.
- I am able to get information quickly or from relevant people.
- One of my direct clients is a direct outcome of my Facebook activity.
- We upload many marketing and training movies and it helps marketing and customer support.
- We share ongoing information in the company to keep everybody updated.
- We are always looking for the next thing, and how we can use it to achieve our goals.
- The option to write and immediately share and get feedback, support, or assistance.
- You get to know many people. Exposure to many people and relationships with other businesses.
- I was introduced to people who later became partners.

List 2 reveals comments shared by respondents of negative experiences or outcomes from using social technologies.

List 2 Negative Experiences from Using Social Technologies

- I waste my time on social networks.
- Generally, the abundance of communication options creates a not so calm work day.

- I was insulted on social media.
- Some untrue things on the internet have influenced opinions and viewpoints.
- We are still trying to find our way on Facebook in terms of marketing our museum.
- There is the possibility of receiving negative messages.
- The social technologies put you out in the open to deal with good and bad criticism. You need to know when to answer and sometimes when to delete the comments.
- I don't feel so comfortable with social networks
- There were no economic results - FB doesn't help marketing.
- It is time consuming and sometimes people share too many things. There is hardly any privacy left.

Respondents were asked in the open-ended questions to comment on the impact that social technologies have had on their success or the success of their organization. List 3 includes those comments.

List 3 Impact of Social Technologies on Success

- Customer service is faster and more efficient.
- Social media has helped bring more clients into the company.
- We can do market surveys with no cost or very little cost.
- You get good exposure with lower expenses.
- Using social technologies made it possible to advertise our products and reach more potential customers as well as getting feedback from actual customers and improving our service.
- Exposure of my business in social networks enhanced sales.
- It has allowed us to increase the number of donors to the organization.
- Most of our marketing is based on social technologies.
- Social technologies are part of everyday life, for managing, networking, marketing, teaching, designing, sharing and more.
- Thanks to one of the social networks, I have found more jobs and earned more money.

Success is different depending on the individual so respondents were asked "What does success look like to you?" A representative sample of responses are listed in List 4.

List 4 What does Success Look Like?

- High effectiveness while maintaining a good working relationship.
- Financial success and satisfaction from work.
- Doing the things I want to do, being able to choose my work / partners / way of spending time, and being able to feel contentment and fulfilment with the outcome.
- Positive connections with people, influence, and leaving an impression.
- To get the income you planned, the customers you want, and the professional interests you are looking for.
- Success is when you don't need to look for customers—they look for you.
- Setting goals and achieving them. My personal goals would be in the areas of family and career.
- To enjoy your work, and be content.
- Getting recognition in the things you do, joining in the organisations decisions, getting people to listen to your opinions and using them when they are effective.
- Fulfilling wishes, dreams, and plans.
- There are different levels of success: personal-family, professional, social, spiritual. Low levels of success: taking care of my health, helping others with health matters, not gaining weight, creating nice things, selling my works, assisting and supporting, listening and strengthening (mostly for my family).
- A lot of knowledge and using all the technology options wisely.

In response to the final research question, "Do you believe education and social technologies could empower you or help you become more successful?" An astounding 97 percent said 'Yes.' This provides clear evidence that those who have used social technologies for business purposes, believe in the power of these technologies as tools for empowerment. Figure 8 graphically depicts these results.
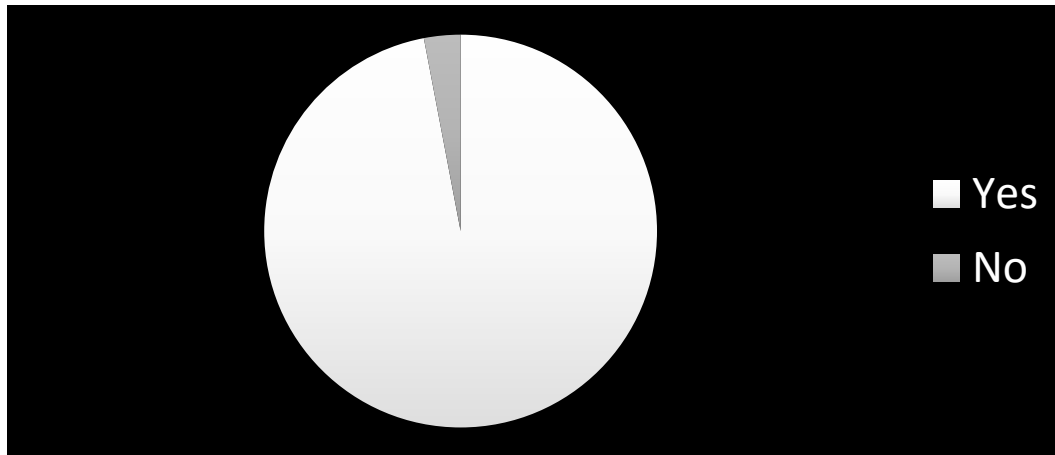
Figure 8. Empowerment through Education and Social Technologies

Respondents also commented after responding to this question. The three percent who responded to the question with 'No' did not add comments. A representative sample of the comments regarding how education and technology could empower the respondents or help them to be more successful are listed below in List 5.

List 5   Empowerment through Education and Technology

- Yes. Access to information and people. Social technologies provide a platform to get new ideas that I can use in my work and life.
- Yes. To learn how to use technologies and to understand their potential.
- Yes. To learn during my whole life.
- Yes. For marketing purposes.
- Yes. Access to knowledge sources.
- Yes. More information gives you wider horizons and more alternatives.
- Yes. Education and technology are needed for succeeding in life. Today it is impossible to advance without on-going education and updating in your professional area. Technology helps a lot in those areas, therefore improving the ability to reach the needed information.
- Yes. It makes communication & sharing knowledge much easier.
- Yes. I believe that anyone can benefit by using technology.
- Yes. Perhaps I would make more extensive use of the technology if I knew more about it.

The final question on the survey was "What else do you believe would empower you as a woman? Representative examples of responses appear in List 6.

List 6 Women's Empowerment

- Finding the right balance between the things I want to do, including, but not limited to work.
- Having a guide on subjects like business and how to handle a small business.
- To do what I believe in is important to me as a human being.
- Equality in all areas.
- Being more active in caring for women rights in institutions and politics.
- Having a meaningful occupation while my husband is very busy with his own very successful career – not leaning on his successes.
- Embracing new technologies and not being afraid of them can help women.
- An intimate partner, literature, and knowledge - all empower femininity.
- Self-belief that you can do anything you would like to.
- Fair rights for women—for example equal salaries, no exclusion of women, etc.

The closed-ended questions provided an opportunity for respondents to express themselves in more detail regarding both positive and negative experiences when using social technologies and thoughts on women's empowerment. Their open comments have identified areas that are important to women and have strengthened the study.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Women's empowerment and the global gender gap have become international issues. The use of social technologies has increased dramatically in recent years as social technologies platforms provide global communications and allow women to serve customers and promote their businesses in ways that are drastically different from the past. These topics were examined in this paper and results of a study of Israeli women were presented.

The four research questions posed in this study of *Israeli* women *in the workplace* regard*ed* socia*l technology platforms used*, *purposes* that social technologies are used, the *benefits realized*, and the possible impact of these technologies on women's *empowerment* and the gender gap.

In response to the first question, all platforms are used to some extent by the respondents with Facebook and YouTube being the two most widely used social technology platforms. This concurs with studies regarding social technologies platforms used in business (Tucker, 2011; Maina, 2016; Sachs, 2016; Chitwood, 2014; eBiz, 2016), with all being used to some extent in the workplace by the respondents.

All *purposes* listed and *benefits* realized made it on the chart ranging from slightly less than 30 percent to almost 90 percent. There were three reasons that were indicated by more than 70 percent of those respondents using Facebook in their companies: To communicate, to gain exposure, and for marketing purposes. Providing customer service, gaining new customers, increasing revenue, and networking were all checked by 40 percent or more of those responding. Recruiting fell at the bottom with the fewest number of respondents—less than 30 percent indicating that Facebook was used for this purpose. Benefits were realized by all, with almost 60 percent finding that Facebook served them well in the area of customer service. Over half of those using Facebook, identified the following purposes as beneficial uses of the platform: to communicate, to provide customer service, and to gain exposure. Networking and marketing were noted as beneficial purposes by approximately 40 percent with slightly less than 30 percent finding Facebook beneficial for increasing revenue or recruiting employees.

The second most popular platform, YouTube, showed usage for all purposes listed with the top three being for communication, to gain exposure, and for marketing. YouTube users also realized benefits for all purposes used, with the highest percentages shown for communication, customer service, to gain exposure, and for marketing.

Overall, Israeli women respondents found social technologies beneficial to some extent for all purposes listed: Communication, customer service, to gain exposure, to recruit new customers, to increase revenue, for marketing purposes, to network, and for recruiting employees. Although benefits were realized for all purposes, some indicated that they were not in a position to be able to quantify the benefits. Facebook and YouTube were the social technologies platforms of choice for the respondents, however, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ were used by a small percentage.

This data is intended to help women in both developing and developed countries to understand the purposes—both personal and professional—that social technologies can be used for and have knowledge of those that reap the highest benefits. Perhaps even more powerful for empowering women are personal comments shared by the respondents. Knowledge is power and the first step toward implementing social technology platforms for support and empowerment.

Common themes were identified in the comments. For example, those who responded that their experience with social technologies had been positive indicated these benefits: Obtaining information; influence, new clients, marketing, training, sharing information, support, and relationships. Those who had negative experience shared the following: Waste of time; stressful, privacy issues, negative comments, and not comfortable with social technologies. As in any endeavour, it is normal to experience positive and negative. In this case, the positive far outweigh the negative for those who learn how to use these technologies for business purposes, make a commitment, and devote time daily to achieve their goals.

Negative comments should always be responded to in a business environment. Not responding only makes things worse and customers now have a louder voice than ever before through social technologies. This is also an opportunity to show others the level of customer support provided by your business.

Open-ended questions were asked regarding what success looks like and the impact of social technologies on success. There were numerous responses as shown in List 4, which can be summed up by one of the listed responses: Fulfilling wishes, dreams, and plans. For some, this may include personal, family, and work. Regardless, social technologies can have an impact on success as respondents indicated in List 3 which included finding jobs, earning more money, marketing, teaching, sharing, networking, or customer service.

Finally, getting to the results of the last research question of the study, "Do you believe education and social technologies could *empower* you or help you become more successful?" This question was responded to with 'Yes' by an astounding 97 percent of the respondents. How? Answers ranged from access to information and people, access to knowledge sources, and perhaps the most significant of the responses was to learn how to use these technologies and to understand their potential. To go one step further, the question was asked 'What else do you believe would empower you as a woman?' These responses, shown in List 6, fell in the categories of economic equality, life balance, independence, confidence or self-belief, and equality in all areas.

Results of this study make a strong case for social technologies as an answer to gender equality. Simply stated, when we have equality and women's empowerment, the gender gap will be closed.

When examining the results and open-ended responses, social technologies hold the power to give women a voice, support, and ultimately provide empowerment that should help equalize the gender gap. Each country has its own set of challenges, but women in any country with internet access can benefit greatly from social technologies platforms that will open the window of the world to empowerment and equality. The women of Israel concur.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research should be conducted to study the differences in social technologies usage and opinions according to gender. Because of the rapid pace of changes in technology, future studies should also include other/additional social technology platforms that are widely used in business.

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APPENDIX 1. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: ISRAEL

Survey regarding the use of social technologies by women who own a business or work in a company/organization.

1. Name and contact information (e-mail) of person interviewed_____

2. Highest grade attended in school_____

3. Age_____

4. Marital Status_____A. Single_____B. Married_____C. Divorced_____D. Widowed

5. Do you have children?

    _____A. Yes, how many and age(s)_____
    _____B. No

6. Do you work for a company/organization or own your own business?

    _____A. Work for a company/organization

    _____B. Own my own business

    _____C. No (If no, go to question #12)

    _____D. Other (please specify)_____

7. Name of Organization_____

8. Location of
   Organization_____

9. Organization (check one only)

   _____A. Sole Proprietorship

   _____B. Partnership

   _____C. Corporation

   _____D. Franchise

   _____E. Cooperative

   _____F.   Direct Selling or Network Marketing

   _____G. Non Profit

   _____H. Other (please specify)_____

10. Type of organization (check one only)

    _____A. Energy
    _____B. Health
    _____C. Manufacturing
    _____D. Retail
    _____E. Service
    _____F. Technology
    _____G. Transportation
    _____H. Government
    _____I. Other (please specify)_____

11. Number of Employees_____

12. Do you have access to computers/technology?

_____A. Yes (check all that apply)
　　　_____1. Desktop
　　　_____2. Laptop
　　　_____3. iPad/Tablet
　　　_____4. SmartPhone
　　　_____5. Wi/Fi
　　_____6. Other (please specify)_____
_____B. No (If no, go to question #15)

13. How long have you been using computers/technology?

_____A. Less than one year

_____B. 1-3 years

_____C. 3-5 years

_____D. Over 5 years

14. What do you use computers/technology for? (check all that apply)

_____A. Education
_____B. Social Media/Social Technologies
_____C. Business Support
_____D. E-Mail
_____E. Internet
_____F.   Other (please specify)_____

15. Are you aware of the benefits technology can provide?

_____A. Yes (check all that apply)

_____1. Education

_____2. Social Media/Technologies for Business Support

_____3. Information

_____4. Communication

_____5. News

_____6. Other (please specify)_____

_____B. No

16. **facebook:**

_____A. Our organization does not use facebook and has no future plans to use facebook.

_____B. Our organization does not use facebook, but plans to within the next year.

_____C. Our organization uses facebook. Please complete the following table. (check all that apply)

	Does your organization use facebook for the stated purpose?		If yes, has your organization realized a benefit from using facebook for the stated purpose?		
Purpose	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Unknown**
1. Communicate/Collaborate					
2. Customer Service					
3. Gain exposure and create awareness					
4. Gain new customers					
5. Increase revenue/profits					
6. Marketing					

7. Network and build relationships					
8. Recruiting employees					
9. Other (please specify)_____ _____					

Twitter:

_____A. Our organization does not use Twitter and has no future plans to use Twitter.

_____B. Our organization does not use Twitter, but plans to within the next year.

_____C. Our organization uses Twitter. Please complete the table below: (check all that apply)

	Does your organization use Twitter for the stated purpose?		If yes, has your organization realized a benefit from using Twitter for the stated purpose?		
Purpose	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Unknown**
1. Communicate/Collaborate					
2. Customer Service					
3. Gain exposure and create awareness					
4. Gain new customers					
5. Increase revenue/profits					
6. Marketing					
7. Network and build relationships					

8. Recruiting employees					
9. Other (please specify)_____ _____					

LinkedIn:

_____A. Our organization does not use LinkedIn and has no future plans to use LinkedIn.

_____B. Our organization does not use LinkedIn, but plans to within the next year.

_____C. Our organization uses LinkedIn. Please complete the following table. (check all that apply)

	Does your organization use LinkedIn for the stated purpose?		If yes, has your organization realized a benefit from using LinkedIn for the stated purpose?		
Purpose	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Unknown**
1. Communicate/Collaborate					
2. Customer Service					
3. Gain exposure and create awareness					
4. Gain new customers					
5. Increase revenue/profits					
6. Marketing					
7. Network and build relationships					

8. Recruiting employees					
9. Other (please specify)_____ _____					

YouTube:

_____A. Our organization does not use YouTube and has no future plans to use YouTube.

_____B. Our organization does not use YouTube, but plans to within the next year.

_____C. Our organization uses YouTube. Please complete the following table. (check all that apply)

	Does your organization use YouTube for the stated purpose?		If yes, has your organization realized a benefit from using YouTube for the stated purpose?		
Purpose	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Unknown**
1. Communicate/Collaborate					
2. Customer Service					
3. Gain exposure and create awareness					
4. Gain new customers					
5. Increase revenue/profits					
6. Marketing					
7. Network and build relationships					

8. Recruiting employees					
9. Other (please specify)_____ _____					

Google + or Other Social Technologies (please specify)_____

_____A. Our organization does not use Google+ or social technologies other than those previously listed and has no future plans to use additional social technologies.

_____B. Our organization does not use Google+ or social technologies other than those previously listed, but plans to within the next year.

_____C. Our organization uses Google+ or social technologies other than those previously listed (please specify social technology(ies) _____ and complete the following table. (check all that apply)

	Does your organization use Google+ or other social technologies for the stated purpose?		If yes, has your organization realized a benefit from using Google+ or other technologies for the stated purpose?		
Purpose	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Unknown**
1. Communicate/Collaborate					
2. Customer Service					
3. Gain exposure and create awareness					

4. Gain new customers					
5. Increase revenue/profits					
6. Marketing					
7. Network and build relationships					
8. Recruiting employees					
9. Other (please specify)_____ _____					

17. Your experience with social technologies has been: (check all that apply)

_____A. Positive (please share an example of a positive experience or outcome from using social technologies)_____
_____
_____

_____B. Negative (please share an example of a negative experience or outcome from using social technologies_____
_____
_____

18. Please comment on the impact that social technologies have had on your success or the success of your organization. If you have specific examples including increases in revenue, number of customers, sales, etc. please specify.

_____
_____
_____

19. What does success look like to you?_____

_____
_____

20. Do you believe education and social technologies would empower you or help you become more successful?

_____A. Yes (please comment if applicable)_____
_____
_____

_____B. No (please comment if applicable)_____
_____
_____

21. What else do you believe would empower you as a woman?_____
_____
_____

22. Other comments:_____
_____
_____