# Female Media Graduates' Perceptions of Career Opportunities in the Media Industry

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | *This research explores female media graduates' perception of pursuing a career in the media industry, with emphasis on opportunities, challenges, stereotypes, and representation. A quantitative method was adopted based on convenience sampling. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire on WhatsApp and Google Forms from 100 female media students in different universities. The results show that digital media is the favorite professional course of study for most 79%, but job security, work-life balance, and equal opportunity significantly influence their choices. The research further shows that 69% of respondents value higher pay, with 63% desiring reasonable working hours. Still, 58% would strongly support gender equality in working opportunities. The findings highlight the need to promote a caring and welcoming environment to entice more women into pursuing media careers. This research can help educational institutions, media corporations, and politicians develop policies to improve diversity and gender equality in the media sector.* |

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## Introduction

Media industry is widely known to be both a dynamic and demanding profession for young female professionals. Despite encouraging rates of female admissions into media schools, their involvement in this industrial sector remains disparately low owing to several social, cultural,

economic, and professional barriers (Smith, 2020). Gender bias, harassment in the workplace, absence of equal opportunities, and work-life balance are some of the major drivers that influence the career trajectory of young female media professionals (Gallagher, 2017). Female media graduates' attitudes to work in media are mostly shaped by their learning experiences, industry exposure, and societal expectations (Byerly, 2018). Most graduates envision their future in working with the press and media, in the advertisement industry, in the film and digital media but are deterred by the largely male dominance in media in general (North, 2016). The existence of a glass ceiling and under-representation of females in senior roles murder their career dreams (Ross & Padovani, 2019).

Studies show that women media graduates have a keen interest in media careers. Nonetheless, they usually encounter structural challenges such as gender pay gaps and limited guidance opportunities (Löfgren Nilsson & Örnebring, 2016). In conservative settings, traditions tend to restrain women from media careers, particularly those with public contact or adaptable working hours (Ramaprasad, 2018). This condition has resulted in a shift in career aspirations as most female graduates now consider education or corporate information rather than traditional media careers (Djerf-Pierre, 2021). The knowledge of perceptions of female media graduates is important for the advancement of gender inclusivity in the media sector. Addressing the challenges that confront them can be utilized to bridge the gender gap and establish a more equitable working environment (Gill, 2017). This research is set to find out what attitudes, motivations, and barriers influence the profession choice of a female media graduate with the additional implication for the policy-makers, educators, and media organizations on how to enhance the number of women employed in the industry (Steiner, 2019).

The media sector is a fast-paced and fast-changing arena, which performs a significant function in shaping public dialogue and cultural narratives. In recent years, a notable increase in enrollment of girls and women. It has been noticed in academic programs. Female media professionals, however, usually encounter distinctive obstacles and barriers that influence their professional options and job opportunities (K.G.L.A.N.S & Sriram, 2021). Women in the media profession also struggle to maintain a work-life balance owing to the demanding nature of their jobs and the industry's expectations. The digital media industry has emerged as a popular career choice for most female graduates due to its accommodating work schedule and diverse opportunities (Sriram, 2021). Previous studies have identified that women professionals working in the media industry face several challenges, including pay disparities, limited management positions, and stereotypical portrayals in media content (Berganza, 2019).

The goal of this study is to investigate female media graduates' perceptions regarding job chances in various media industries, such as print, electronic, radio, and internet media. Based on their attitudes towards career opportunities, professional issues, and gender portrayal, the research provides insightful information about the variables that impact their career development. Media organizations, academies, and policy makers must understand these attitudes to ensure a diverse and inclusive work environment. The study aims to contribute to the literature by analyzing the career goals and obstacles encountered by women graduates in the media, specifically focusing on the Pakistani context. It analyzes the extent to which anticipated salaries, working conditions, and career prospects affect their decision-making processes. The study also analyzes the image of women in the media industry and how it affects the career decisions of women graduates. In addressing these topics, this research aims to bridge knowledge gaps and suggest ways to further gender equality in the media sector.

**Research Objectives**

- To explore the factors that influence female media students' decisions to pursue a career in the media industry.
- To examine female media students' perceptions of women's representation in media and the support systems that encourage their career participation.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent do personal and social, factors influence female media students' decisions to pursue a career in the media industry?
2. How do female media students perceive the challenges in pursuing a career in media?

**Hypothesis**

**H1:** Female media students believe women are fairly represented in the media industry.

**H2:** Female media students believe women are not fairly represented in the media industry.

**H3:** There is no significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of various support systems among female media students.

**H4:** There is a significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of various support systems among female media students.

**Problem Statement**

Despite the growing number of female media students, there is a need to understand the factors influencing their career choices within the media industry. Specifically, there is a lack of research on the perceptions of opportunities, stereotypes, and representation that may shape their decision-making process. By investigating the perspectives of female media students and how they influence career decisions, this study seeks to close this gap and eventually support diversity and gender equality in the media sector.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of the researcher's study lies in its potential to contribute to the understanding of factors influencing the career choices of female media students. By investigating their perceptions of opportunities, stereotypes, and representation in the media industry, this study can shed light on the challenges and barriers that may affect their decision-making process. This knowledge can help inform educational institutions, media organizations, and policymakers in creating more inclusive and supportive environments for aspiring female media professionals.

**Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the Social Cognitive Theory was applied. Albert Bandura initially established the Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s, which later evolved into the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986, which maintains that behavior, environment, and people interact dynamically and reciprocally in a social setting throughout the learning process. This theory emphasizes the role of social influences, self-efficacy, and observational learning in shaping individuals' career choices. It can explore how female media students' perceptions are influenced by the media industry's representation of women, role models, and their own beliefs about their capabilities. (Rosa Berganza, 2019) the study suggests that women journalists, compared to men, experience greater pressures related to business decisions, profit-driven motives, censorship, and pressures from political and economic entities. It observes that less empowered women may be more compliant with political and economic authorities, but those that shatter the glass barrier tend to develop

autonomy, maybe influenced by their empowerment in digital media. Additionally, it highlights a tendency among women journalists to perceive the decline in journalistic quality and ethics to a lesser extent. This study examines their perception of choosing any medium of media as their career and what are their thoughts regarding working in media.

## Literature Review

### Gender and Career Choices in Journalism

Jayawardhana. K.G.L.A.N.S and Sriram (2021) have studied on "perception of female communication graduates towards choosing a profession in the print journalism field". They observed that there are a large number of males as compared to females who pursue print journalism after graduation in Sri Lanka. The main concern to conduct this study is to find out the reason why female graduates don't choose print media journalism. They used a qualitative research method and data was collected from a questionnaire to receive responses from different universities. As per findings around (80%) of female respondents are interested in working in electronic media as they have an interest in it rather than print media. (De-Miguel-Pascual et al., 2019), study exploring "The Differences between Empowered Male and Female Journalists in Spain." particularly focusing on their professional experiences and perceptions within the journalism sector. Study exploring the differences between empowered male and female journalists in Spain, particularly focusing on their professional experiences and perceptions within the journalism sector. A comprehensive literature review for this abstract would encapsulate existing research on gender differences in journalism, empowerment in the workplace, and the qualitative aspects of journalistic practice. The methodology described in the abstract involves a transnational comparative study utilizing a questionnaire distributed among journalists from 124 media outlets. This methodology could be compared and contrasted with previous research methodologies used in similar cross-sectional studies in journalism or related fields, discussing the strengths and limitations of surveys in understanding complex phenomena like gender disparities and empowerment. The findings of this study suggest that women journalists, compared to men, experience greater pressures related to business decisions, profit-driven motives, censorship, and pressures from political and economic entities. It notes that less empowered women may exhibit more compliance towards political and economic powers, while those who break the glass ceiling tend to gain autonomy, potentially influenced by their empowerment in digital media. Additionally, it highlights a tendency among women journalists to perceive the decline in journalistic quality and ethics to a lesser extent.

### Perception of Print Media among Students

(Memon et al., 2021) conducted a study on "the print media production perception of university students in Pakistan". The primary goal of this study was to analyze students' perceptions on print media output at public universities in Sindh province, Pakistan. To fulfill the study's goal, data is gathered quantitatively from students at three top institutions in Sindh province, Pakistan. The results revealed that the students had a high level of knowledge and understanding of newspaper and magazine creation. They were knowledgeable about journalism and the media, such as who writes features and what constitutes editorial. It determined that the pupils have news media literacy for the variables.

### Media Consumption and Career Aspirations

N Cooper (2013), a study exploring the article titled "The relationship between media consumption, particularly among college students from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds, and its impact on their career aspirations". The literature review for this abstract could encompass

existing research on media effects on career aspirations, focusing on children, junior high school students, and the existing gap in research concerning college students, especially those from minority backgrounds. The study described in the abstract aims to fill this gap by investigating the role of media in shaping career choices among college students, specifically those from minority backgrounds. It delves into the media consumption habits of students belonging to two campus organizations with a media-related mission. By conducting interviews and surveys, the study seeks to understand students' media consumption patterns, social identity, self-esteem, and their correlation, if any, with career plans. Overall, the literature review for this abstract would highlight the existing research landscape on media effects on career aspirations among different age groups, emphasizing the gap in knowledge about college students, especially those from minority backgrounds, thus underscoring the significance of the current study's objectives.(Chen et al.,2023), presented a focus on the relationship between pre-college digital media consumption related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and students' interests in pursuing STEM careers at the beginning of their college education". In summary, the literature review for this abstract would synthesize research across these domains to provide a broader understanding of how digital media consumption influences STEM career interests among young individuals and how this influence operates through mediating factors such as identity and personal values. This synthesis would contextualize the study's findings within the broader landscape of research on media effects and career development.

## Job Search and Employment in Media Fields

LA Cahn (2019) is a small qualitative study focusing on "successful job search strategies and behaviors among media and communication graduates who secured full-time jobs within three months of graduation". Research surrounding the rising trend of student debt and concerns regarding the return on investment (ROI) for degrees in media and communication would be relevant. Studies exploring the financial aspects of pursuing such degrees, along with discussions about job prospects and salary outcomes for graduates in this field, would provide context for the challenges graduates face in finding employment in a financially burdened landscape this abstract would synthesize research and studies across these areas to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies, and factors contributing to successful job outcomes for recent graduates in media and communication fields. This synthesis would contextualize the findings and implications of the qualitative study within the broader landscape of research in this domain.

## Factors Influencing Career Selection

(Saleem et al.,2014), the study focuses on "the factors influencing students' career selection, specifically exploring the impact of "parent's profession," "mass media," and "personal choice". Research in psychology and sociology discusses the impact of parental influence, particularly parental occupation, on the career choices of young individuals. Studies show that parental professions can significantly shape children's perceptions, aspirations, and career decisions due to exposure and family expectations. Studies examining the influence of mass media on career choices, especially among youth, are relevant. Research in media studies explores how various forms of media, such as television, social media, and advertising, shape perceptions and aspirations regarding careers, providing information, and shaping attitudes towards different professions. In summary, the literature review for this abstract would synthesize research across these domains to provide a comprehensive understanding of how parental profession, personal choice, and mass media influence students' career choices. This synthesis would contextualize the study's findings within the broader landscape of research on factors impacting career decision-making among students.

**International Education Preferences**

Pesqui. Bras. Odontopediatria Clín. Integr (2021), study on "Indian dental students' perception of seeking international dental higher education during COVID-19". A self-administered questionnaire was created with questions about the country of choice, the rationale behind choosing to study abroad, the steps that foreign colleges needed to take in light of COVID-19, the state of the application, the present plan, and views on looking into other options. Our final sample consisted of 100 students, the majority of whom were female (69.3%). Sixty-three percent of students were uncertain about their application status. Our final sample consisted of 100 students, the majority of whom were female (69.3%). Sixty-three percent of students were uncertain about their application status. Indian dental students, particularly females, experienced a substantial influence on studying abroad.

## Methodology

This chapter describes the approach that was used throughout the study. In light of this, the study's areas of focus and the rationale for choosing them are discussed. This chapter contains explanations of the research design, population, sample frame/sample size, sampling technique, data collection tool, and data analysis that were used throughout the study. This study used a Quantitative approach and the purpose of this study is to get a perception of female media student about their career choices. The population of the study is female media graduates. The total sample size of our study is N =100 females. The probability method i.e. convenience sampling method used to select the target audience which is N=100. The researcher used a self-designed questionnaire consisting of two-parts, demographic part and topic related questions. There was a total of 10 questions in the questionnaire. The survey shows how the respondent feel, want, and think about their perception of choosing media as their career. The results were made by using SPSS descriptive statistics by entering the data from the responses of a questionnaire, which has frequency and percentage by SPSS 21 version.

## Results and Findings

*Descriptive Statistics of key variable*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is your age? | 100 | 1 | 3 | 1.66 | .536 |
| What is your semester? | 100 | 1 | 8 | 3.76 | 2.682 |
| Which type of media you prefer to work? | 100 | 1 | 6 | 3.79 | .832 |
| The job having feasible working hours | 100 | 1 | 3 | 1.38 | .508 |
| There should be job security | 100 | 1 | 4 | 1.43 | .640 |
| A job having equal opportunities for female workers | 100 | 1 | 21 | 1.63 | 2.028 |
| The working environment should be friendly | 100 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 1.3700 | .56237 |
| Valid N (list wise) | 100 | | | | |

*Note m= Medium; SD= standard deviation. The total number of respondents was (N=100)*

The descriptive statistics show that most of the respondents were young students, mostly between the ages of 21 and 25 years, and were mostly in the lower to middle semesters (M = 3.76, SD = 2.68). Most of the respondents had a specific kind of media they would like to work in, but the answers were slightly diverse (M = 3.79, SD = 0.83). In terms of job preferences, the respondents strongly agreed that reasonable working hours (M = 1.38, SD = 0.51), job security (M = 1.43, SD

= 0.64), and a friendly working environment (M = 1.37, SD = 0.56) are important. Though most agreed that there should be equal opportunities for female workers (M = 1.63), the high standard deviation (SD = 2.03) shows there were many diverse opinions on this.

*Frequency Table*

| Statistics | Age | Class | Semester | Preferred Media Type | Good Salary Preference | Feasible Working Hours | Friendly Environment | Job Security | Promotion Chances | Equal Opportunities for Females |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N (Valid) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Missing | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Mean | 1.66 | 1.10 | 3.76 | 3.79 | 1.33 | 1.38 | 1.37 | 1.43 | 1.46 | 1.63 |
| Std. Deviation | 0.536 | 0.302 | 2.682 | 0.832 | 0.514 | 0.508 | 0.580 | 0.640 | 0.558 | 2.028 |
| Minimum | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Maximum | 3 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 21 |

The above table shows whole respective frequencies of the collected data we had the sample size (N=100) this table is a result of our survey with its mean, std. Deviation Below, we have a frequency table of each question which were included in our survey.

**Table 1:**

*What's your age?*

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 16-20 | 37 | 32.5 | 37.0 | 37.0 |
| | 21-25 | 60 | 52.6 | 60.0 | 97.0 |
| Valid | 26-30 | 3 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 | |
| Missing System | | 14 | 12.3 | | |
| Total | | 114 | 100.0 | | |

*Table 2:*

*What is your class?*

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | 90 | 78.9 | 90.0 | 90.0 |
| Valid | MPHIL | 10 | 8.8 | 10.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 | | |
| Total | | 114 | 100.0 | | |

**Table 3:**

*What is your semester?*

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 38 | 33.3 | 38.0 | 38.0 |
| | 2 | 4 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 42.0 |
| | 3 | 10 | 8.8 | 10.0 | 52.0 |
| | 4 | 7 | 6.1 | 7.0 | 59.0 |
| Valid | 5 | 14 | 12.3 | 14.0 | 73.0 |
| | 6 | 1 | .9 | 1.0 | 74.0 |
| | 7 | 12 | 10.5 | 12.0 | 86.0 |
| | 8 | 14 | 12.3 | 14.0 | 100.0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |

The above three tables showed the demographic information of the respondents (N=100), i.e., age, education, and semester they were in. The majority of our respondents were between (21-25) age group

**Table 4:**

*Which type of media you prefer to work*

|  |  | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Valid Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Print media | 2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
|  | Radio | 9 | 7.9 | 9.0 | 11.0 |
|  | TV | 5 | 4.4 | 5.0 | 16.0 |
| Valid | Digital / Social Media | 79 | 69.3 | 79.0 | 95.0 |
|  | News Agencies | 2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 97.0 |
|  | Others | 3 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table shows the results of "Which type of media do you prefer to work". The majority of respondents prefer to work on digital media (N=79)

**Table 5:**

*The job having a good salary package will be your preference*

|  |  | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Valid Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Strongly Agree | 69 | 60.5 | 69.0 | 69.0 |
| Valid | Agree | 29 | 25.4 | 29.0 | 98.0 |
|  | Neutral | 2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table shows the results of "the job having a good salary package will be your preference". The majority of respondents will prefer a good salary (N=69)

**Table 6:**

*The job having feasible working hours*

|  |  | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Valid Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Strongly Agree | 63 | 55.3 | 63.0 | 63.0 |
| Valid | Agree | 36 | 31.6 | 36.0 | 99.0 |
|  | Neutral | 1 | .9 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table showed the result of "the job having feasible working hours" The majority of respondents wanted the feasible working hours in their workplace. (N=63)

**Table 7**

*The working environment should be friendly*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 0 | 1 | .9 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
|  | Strongly Agree | 65 | 57.0 | 65.0 | 66.0 |
| Valid | Agree | 30 | 26.3 | 30.0 | 96.0 |
|  | Neutral | 4 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table showed the result of "working environment should be friendly." The majority of respondents agreed the working environment should be friendly at the workplace (N=65)

**Table 8:**

*There should be job security*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Strongly Agree | 63 | 55.3 | 63.0 | 63.0 |
|  | Agree | 33 | 28.9 | 33.0 | 96.0 |
| Valid | Neutral | 2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 98.0 |
|  | Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table shows the results of "there should be job security" The majority of respondents agree with the statement that there should be job security. (N=63)

**Table 9:**

*Job having promotion chances*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Strongly Agree | 57 | 50.0 | 57.0 | 57.0 |
| Valid | Agree | 40 | 35.1 | 40.0 | 97.0 |
|  | Neutral | 3 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 100 | 87.7 | 100.0 |  |
| Missing | System | 14 | 12.3 |  |  |
| Total |  | 114 | 100.0 |  |  |

The above table shows the result of "job having promotion chances" the majority of respondents agreed with the statement that job having promotion chances. (N=57)

**Table 10:**

*Job having equal opportunities for female workers*

|       |                | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|       | Strongly Agree | 58        | 50.9    | 58.0          | 58.0               |
|       | Agree          | 39        | 34.2    | 39.0          | 97.0               |
| Valid | Neutral        | 2         | 1.8     | 2.0           | 99.0               |
|       | 21             | 1         | .9      | 1.0           | 100.0              |
|       | Total          | 100       | 87.7    | 100.0         |                    |
| Missing | System       | 14        | 12.3    |               |                    |
| Total |                | 114       | 100.0   |               |                    |

The above table shows the results of "Job having equal opportunities for female workers "The majority of respondents agreed that they wanted equal opportunities. (N=58).

## Discussion

This research indicates that female media graduates have a very clear perception of choosing media as their career. The research findings show that the population wants equal opportunities as males, a good working environment, and flexible working hours. The first question of the research was "Which type of media do you prefer to work?" The result showed that most of the respondents wanted to work on social media \ digital media. A similar pattern was noted in the study conducted by (Jayawardhana and Sriram, 2021) where it was determined that almost 80% of the women participants showed interest in electronic media careers over print media, and it was strongly influenced by interest. The second question of this research was "The job having a good salary package will be your preference" The results of this question showed that most of the respondents wanted a good salary package while working in media, salary is the main secondary important factor for them. Studies exploring the financial aspects of pursuing such degrees, along with discussions about job prospects and salary outcomes for graduates in this field (LA Cahn, 2019). The third question of this research was "the job having feasible working hours the results of this question showed that most of the respondents wanted feasible working hours to work at their workplace. The fourth question of this research was "working environment should be friendly" The results of this question showed that most of the respondents wanted the working environment should be friendly. The sixth was 'Job having promotion chances' the results of this question showed that most of the respondents wanted to have promotion chances at their workplace. The seventh of this research was "Job having equal opportunities for female workers" The result of this question showed that most of the respondents wanted to have equal opportunities as males are given in the workplace. A previous study explores the differences between empowered male and female journalists in Spain, particularly focusing on their professional experiences and perceptions within the journalism sector (De-Miguel-Pascua et al, 2019).

## Conclusion

This study reveals that female media graduates are motivated to find jobs in the media industry, particularly in digital media, due to its flexibility and evolving opportunities. However, their career choice is greatly influenced by factors such as job security, high salaries, normal working hours, friendly working environments, and equal opportunities. The findings emphasize the necessity of bridging gender disparities, organizational culture, and career prospects to encourage more women to pursue and excel in the media industry. These findings can guide educational institutes, media organizations, and policy-makers to create more inclusive and facilitative professional environments.

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