The Essence of Female Journalist's Experience in the Newsroom of Pakistan

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Abstract - This study delves into the challenges confronted by women working in the media sector in Pakistan, specifically focusing on journalists, producers, and editors. The primary objective is to identify and analyze the various obstacles hindering the professional advancement and well-being of women in this industry. Phenomenology method was used to collect the data. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes and patterns across the participants' experiences and perceptions. The findings reveal a multitude of challenges faced by women in the media industry, including workplace stress, technical difficulties, tight deadlines, gender discrimination, biased promotion practices, unequal pay, harassment, limited training opportunities, and closed circles obstructing career progression. Gender inequalities are pervasive, with women being underrepresented in top management positions and facing lower compensation compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, female journalists struggle to balance work and personal life responsibilities amidst societal expectations. To address these challenges, the study recommends the implementation of policies and regulatory frameworks to protect women journalists, the establishment of training programs for professional development, the creation of mentorship opportunities, and the promotion of inclusivity and diversity within media organizations. Collaborative efforts between governments, media outlets, and society are essential to ensure the safety, well-being, and advancement of women in the media sector.
Keywords: Media Industry, Workplace challenges, Female journalists, Newsroom of Pakistan, Gender discrimination

Introduction

The media in Pakistan has grown to be a sizable and highly potential industry. This has given women many chances to develop their potential in safe and supportive work environments. As a result, women are moving quickly to enter this lucrative industry and are employed in a variety of roles, such as news anchors, writers, producers, reporters, editors, and so on.

However, the traditional male-dominated social structure has given rise to worries about women's physical, psychological, and emotional safety in their workplace cultures. Uncertainty and unsafe environments heighten the risk of women being harassed at work. According to a report by the "Alliance Against Sexual Harassment" (AASHA), approximately 93% of women report experiencing harassment at their respective either public or private sector organizations (as cited in the SPDC, 2009).

It is evident that Pakistani women are victims of sexual harassment in both their personal and professional lives, and the extent of this problem is beyond comprehension. Another pervasive issue in Pakistan that results from religious extremism and societal conservatism is gender discrimination. The

scenario of women's representation in the journalistic profession in the nation is quite thought-provoking. In Pakistan, women make up less than 5% of the media, and those who work in the field frequently suffer prejudice, dangers, and other challenges (Nusrat 2018). This begs important concerns about how the media can fulfill its job as a watchdog when journalists are in danger as well as how it can influence public opinion given how unrepresentative the journalism profession is of the society it covers.

Studies on women's harassment in Pakistan about electronic media have occasionally been conducted; yet, the gravity of the issue has received less attention. One of the largest obstacles facing working women in media organizations can be harassment; this prevents them from completing productive tasks and, as a result, prevents them from making a meaningful contribution to the reduction of poverty. Despite this, several organizational initiatives have failed to successfully close the gender and racial gaps (Schmader, 2010).

Particularly when it comes to prospects for career advancement, beat assignments, and compensation scale, there is a lack of balance. Furthermore, when it comes to addressing the problems of harassment and discrimination based on gender, organizational policies are frequently absent or insufficient (Mirza, 2016).

The research questions of the study are: (1) What are the perceptions and attitudes of women working in Pakistan's media industry regarding their experiences and challenges, particularly related to workplace dynamics and gender inequalities?; (2) How do the gathered insights from female media professionals contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges women face in the media sector, and what implications do these insights have for promoting gender equality and diversity within the industry?

The objective of the study included: (1) To Explore the Perceptions and Attitudes of Women toward Media; (2) Gather insights from female media professionals regarding their experiences and narratives. related to women's challenges in the workplace.

The gender gap in Pakistan's media sector is a result of social issues, with women journalists facing obstacles and income gaps. Despite global agreements, women are still underappreciated, and men receive higher raises and promotions in the industry (Rehmat, 2017).

This study investigates the experiences of Pakistani female journalists facing sexual harassment, threats, and discrimination, focusing on the sources and effects of these issues on their personal and professional lives. Drawing on postcolonial feminist theory, the study uses qualitative data analysis and techniques like focus groups and in-depth interviews to identify factors contributing to harassment. The study highlights the lack of research and coverage on women's harassment in Pakistani media, highlighting the need for increased awareness and action to reduce harassment directed towards women.

The underrepresentation of women in the media indicates widespread gender inequality in media organizations. Women's access to resources, status, and well-being is institutionally restricted compared to male employees. Despite the rise in female journalists in Pakistan, less than 1000 work in the country's mainstream media, out of an estimated 20,000. Women are limited to covering "soft" beats typically assigned to women in a male-dominated field. The pay gap, discrimination, and social barriers hinder women's career advancement. Women journalists face obstacles to a straight career path and limited opportunities for peer learning. Female journalists must explore new opportunities for paid reporting on independent media outlets.

The study conducted in 2017 by Rehman, Naveed, and Raza highlights the concerning frequency of discrimination against women in the workplace. Despite their enormous contributions to a variety of industries, women are regularly denied opportunities to progress into higher-ranking positions and frequently face unequal compensation. Nawaz et al. (2013) draw attention to the difficulties that women encounter in the media industry, such as the denigration of their contributions, unequal compensation, and enduring obstacles that impede their advancement into leadership roles.

The Women in the Media and their Working Environment' study by Murthy and Anita (2010) shows that a sizable portion of the female participants reported encountering difficulties at work. According to Pandey et al. (2015), these difficulties not only have an impact on people's well-being but also impede the advancement of media organizations as a whole. The "glass ceiling" that prevents women from rising to higher positions in organizations has a detrimental effect on the culture of the institution as a whole and impedes its expansion.

The literature review highlights the challenges faced by women in Pakistan's media sector, including gender-based discrimination, uneven opportunities, safety concerns, and sexual harassment. Addressing these issues is crucial for a fair, inclusive media industry, promoting gender equality, safer working conditions, and cultural transformations. The research conducted an extensive field investigation, speaking with female media workers face-to-face. This entailed going to different media outlets and doing in-depth interviews at their offices.

To gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the industry, the researcher participated in editorial meetings, watched everyday operations, and spoke with staff members. Complete documentation of the data-gathering process was made, including field notes that describe observations, conversations, and first findings. The phenomenological study was enhanced by this practical approach, which offers a more in-depth and genuine viewpoint on the gender issues facing Karachi's media sector. The researcher's in-depth experience in the field will provide insightful background material that enhances the study's overall richness and complements the interview data.

Theoretical Framework
Feminist Communication Theory

The foundation of feminist communication theory is multidisciplinary feminist study from the 1970s, which was brought about by feminist movements that elevated women and gender relations to the top of academic and political agendas. Feminist scholars from several disciplines were initially preoccupied with reclaiming women's history and problematizing the reasons and effects of women's subordinate status.

According to feminist researchers, feminist communication theory is a cohesive body of ideas that, when taken as a whole, offer a comprehensive explanation for a variety of observed, investigated, and analyzed phenomena about women and communication (Linda Aldoory, personal communication; Eileen Meehan, personal communication; Marian Meyers, personal communication; Karen Ross, personal communication; see also Cucklanz 2016). Cucklanz (2016) and many others emphasize that "feminist theory in communication should account for not only the interplay of gender and power but also the relevance of other textual elements, including race, sexuality, and class,... religion, and ethnicity" when defining the components of feminist communication scholarship.

Cucklanz's overview of feminist communication theories acknowledges the active contributions feminist researchers have made to the development of pertinent theory across a variety of field subfields, such as rhetoric, media studies, journalism, organizational communication, international communication, and so on. She gives special emphasis to the efforts made by feminist scholars to identify, analyze, and theorize gendered ideology.

Feminist communication theory can be used to examine and question gendered power relations in organizational communication, which is the process of transferring information within an organizational setting. The theory of feminist communication emphasizes how conventional organizational structures frequently sustain gender disparities in decision-making, leadership, and general workplace dynamics. Organizational communication can be reexamined to find and address instances of gender bias, unequal representation, and systematic discrimination by implementing feminist viewpoints. Fostering inclusive communication techniques that question established gender stereotypes, advance equal opportunities for all genders, and make sure corporate messaging and policies support a more gender-inclusive workplace are all part of this strategy.

Organizations may establish cultures that actively seek to break down barriers and promote an egalitarian and empowered culture by implementing feminist communication theory into their communication techniques. This will not only increase awareness of gender dynamics inside the organization but also improve its communication tactics. An organization or business must therefore consider the communication process from both a psychological and mechanical standpoint.

Organizational Communication Using Feminist Theory Men and women are not the same. Biological differences and socioculturally constructed differences can be used to categorize disparities between men and women. We refer to the biological distinctions between men and women as "gender" or "sex." Gender refers to the differences that arise between men and women as a result of sociocultural construction. The biological features of men and women, both primary (constantly present in some sexes) and secondary (tends to occur in certain sexes but not always in certain sexes), reveal biological differences between the two. exist within that gender). Due to social and cultural construction, men and

women have distinct roles, duties, responsibilities, attitudes, and behaviors. This is referred to as gender in general. This difference is internalized in every individual, every family, and every society through a process of constant habituation.

The following methods are used in this socializing process: (1) Traditional roles between men and women are frequently assigned in families, with men being accustomed to public tasks and women typically accustomed to domestic duties (housekeeping). From the time a person is born until they reach maturity, they are constantly conditioned into this role, which eventually shapes their gender ideology; (2) The separation of responsibilities between men and women, which is typically carried out at the household level, is labeled by society so that when someone or a group of people play parts outside of the divide; this is regarded as weird or unconventional;

(3) The state's numerous regulations serve as official testaments to the roles that men and women are supposed to play; (4) Using models of instructional materials and classroom procedures, schools frequently alter gender-biased values. For instance, there needs to be a distinction made between men and women in terms of movement and group separation in sports. Male students appear to move heavier when participating in sports, but female students appear to move lighter; (5) job: Due to socio-cultural structure, roles are frequently assigned to men and women differently in the job. Jobs that are thought to need ratio, decision-making quickness, or creativity are frequently awarded to men.

In the meantime, women are more likely to work in professions that call for emotional intelligence and dexterity, like secretarial or primary school teaching. Not only that, but men continue to hold the majority of leadership positions in organizations, businesses, governments, and academic institutions. In this field, there are still comparatively few displays of female leaders; (6) Through the news they present, the mainstream media frequently perpetuates the stereotypes of men and women. Men are frequently shown to be attractive due to their accomplishments, whilst women are frequently shown to be appealing due to their lovely, seductive physical beauty. It seems that the most prized assets in the organizational approach are traits associated with men, such aggression and competitiveness. However, in organizational life, feminine traits like empathy, cooperation, harmony, intuition, and emotion seem to be undervalued. According to feminist specialists, there is a patriarchal linguistic structure in organizations and a tendency for male-biased ideas like hierarchy and logic to be employed to explain organizational activity (Mumby and Putnam, 1992), (see also Penelope, 1990).

According to feminist academics, the dynamics of gender relations created by a patriarchal organizational structure can lead to women in organizations being oppressed or excluded in organizational life. The pressure (tension) between societal limitations on creativity and individual innovation in establishing a framework for the message gives rise to critical viewpoint. For instance, the topic of gender has evolved into a distinct field that draws inspiration from feminist critical theory. According to liberal feminists, women should aim for a fair role in managing the institutions that are under the authority of males, and the system itself must be the source of the end of women's subordination. Radical feminists base their argument on the idea that patriarchy is to blame for women's oppression. The primary target of male power oppression is the female body. Thus, the private-public divide, sexism, the body and reproductive rights, sexuality (including lesbianism), and sexism are among the issues that radical feminism raises.

When analyzing the obstacles faced by female journalists in Pakistani newsrooms, feminist communication theory provides an essential perspective. This idea, which emerged from the feminist movements of the 1970s, is an effective means of understanding the subtleties of organizational communication. It clarifies the ways in which traditional newsroom systems support gender disparities, affecting decision-making, leadership, and general workplace dynamics. With a focus on women journalists and the obstacles they confront specifically, the analysis uses feminist ideas to identify and overcome gender biases and discrimination—a phenomenon known as the "Screen Ceiling" in this context. Through the promotion of inclusive communication techniques, questioning of gender conventions, and advocacy for equitable chances, the study seeks to provide important insights into the particular obstacles preventing women journalists in Pakistan's media environment from advancing their careers.

Glass Ceiling Effect

The term "Glass Ceiling" refers to gender and racial disparities that keep workers from climbing the corporate ladder and succeeding in their professions. Asian Americans were said to be subject to a

"impenetrable glass" ceiling by the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. It is poorly known what influences their financial situation and how they go through the workforce in terms of their job mobility.

According to research, women entrepreneurs face systematic gender bias, which impedes their growth and performance (Lee and Cheon 2009). The systematic gender bias that women entrepreneurs and business owners face when attempting to amass wealth is referred to as the "second glass ceiling". The Second Glass Ceiling revolves around small business owners and the finance markets (Bosse and Taylor III 2012). It seems like a lot of progress has been accomplished, and gender bias is a ridiculous concept. However, studies show that women face many challenges when it comes to launching and running a business (Bellucci et al., 2010; Muravyev et al., 2009). These cover a wide range of issues, including those pertaining to the use of authority, loan approvals, managerial concerns, and access, among many others (Bosse and Taylor III 2012).

Additionally, the glass ceiling draws attention to traits associated with feminine, such kindness, love, and caring. In contrast to men, they don't behave rudely or arrogantly in groups (Adams and Funk 2012). Furthermore, because they have less time to start a family, working women face additional difficult obstacles (Tower and Alkadry, 2008). Taking care of the household and family presents a number of challenges. Working women are more likely to be single, divorced, or have fewer children since they work in official jobs more frequently (Guy and Schumacher 2009). They think women are less capable and clever than men. The way gender relations operate in society makes dealing with women easier. Men feel that accepting orders from women is insulting or embarrassing, according to Connell (2006). According to Eagly and Carly (2007), men resist women's influence in the workplace and avoid following directions. It's also believed that women in leadership positions are less daring and less self-starting. They also tend to make erratic decisions and are less likely to take on leadership roles inside the organization (Tan 2008).

Shafiq (2014) looked into the impact of the glass ceiling on Pakistani women. Pakistani women face many challenges in their career progression and often lack decision-making chances. Due to societal conventions, male domination, and traditional family responsibilities, Pakistani women are hesitant to think of pursuing professional advancement. This problem is accompanied by harassment, lax enforcement of the law in the corporate sector, and restricted access to venues for meetings, training, and mentorship. Mubeen (2015) said that women were reluctant to progress in their occupations because of gender discrimination, familial influence, and social expectations. However, Nath (2000) studied the Indian experience and found that the primary factors contributing to women's success in India include strong motivation for professional progress, interactions with organizational culture, and familial support.

Women executives in the corporate world face a "glass ceiling" that keeps them from rising to management positions and taking on international assignments (Sattar et al., 2013). It was stated that female CEOs needed to become meek and lose confidence in order to defy this tendency (Insch et al. 2008). Women's access to the commercial sector is highly restricted, even in developed nations. Women make up a very small percentage of senior posts (Paiand and Vaidya 2009). Bosse and Tylor III (2012) claim that women face challenges when submitting loan applications for startup funding and new businesses. A different study (Buckalew et al. 2012) asserts that family, education, and other advantages can assist shatter the second glass ceiling.

Material and Methodology

The study investigated the subjective experiences and perceptions of gender problems in the media sector through the application of phenomenology. This methodology was selected due to its capacity to delve deeply into individual experiences, distilling the essence of the lived realities of the participants. Data from the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) indicates that of the roughly twenty thousand journalists working in Pakistani media companies, less than five percent are women. The difficulties faced by women working in the media are varied (Adnan, 2017).

The biggest obstacles for women employed in Pakistan's media sector are harassment, threats of violence, unfavorable social perceptions, and a sizable gender pay disparity. It is also mentioned that societal pressure is a problem that female media workers agree exists. Because they chose to work in an industry that has historically been controlled by men, many women in this field experience stigmatization and are called "bad women". A few people are unjustly linked to immorality or loose morals, and others face disillusionment from their relatives for dabbling in the media (Rabia, 2018).

Phenomenology was preferred above other qualitative approaches because of its exceptional capacity to reveal and comprehend the subtleties and complexity of individual experiences. It is especially well-suited for the investigation of intricate social phenomena such as gender relations.

Research Phenomenon
Interview Guidelines: Comprehensive interview protocols were developed as part of the project, outlining the kinds of questions to ask, how the interviews should proceed, and tactics to promote candid experience sharing.

Interviewer Training: Interviewers received training to make sure they know how to get insightful and in-depth answers.

Pilot Study: A preliminary investigation was carried out to enhance the interview procedure and verify the efficacy of the inquiries.

The target participants for the study included include Karachi-based female journalists, editors, and other media workers. The study concentrated on their experiences and difficulties in the media sector.

Purposive sampling was used in the study to recruit participants who can offer rich insights into the topic of the investigation. Their roles, experiences, and influence in the media sector serve as the selection criteria.

In phenomenological research, the sample size was decided by the need to attain depth in comprehending the phenomenon being studied, striking a balance between comprehensiveness and manageability.

The study concentrated on six female professionals working in Karachi's media sector, including as journalists, editors, and producers, under the "Population and Sampling" part. Purposive sampling was used in the study to choose participants who could provide a variety of viewpoints on gender problems in the workplace. By using this approach, representation from a range of organizational levels and media sectors was guaranteed. Achieving data saturation was the aim, and a reasonable sample size was chosen to enable a thorough examination of experiences. This methodology aims to encompass a wide range of perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics within Karachi's media sector.

Data Analysis Plan
Phenomenological analysis involves identifying a phenomenon, collecting data through phenomenological interviews, and analyzing it using Moustakas' data analyzing procedure. The process began with bracketing the researcher's subjectivity, known as Epoché, to clarify preconceptions. Researchers read their subjectivity statement, including their own experience with the phenomenon, before starting data analysis. This helps uncover the essence of the experience.
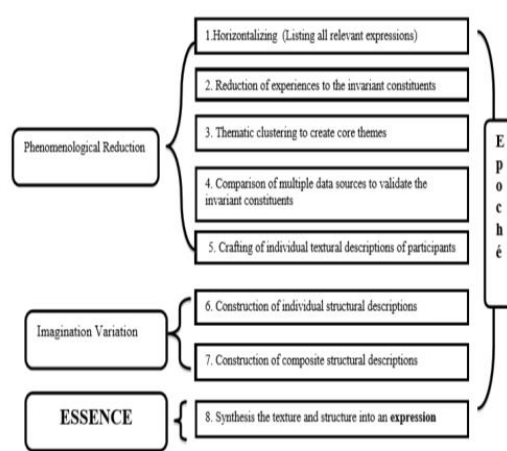
Horizontalizing, or listing all relevant expressions: Researchers analyzed all data equally, ignoring irrelevant or repetitive statements. They can create a list from co-researchers verbatim

transcripts and delete irrelevant expressions. The remaining data is called horizons, which are textural meanings or constituent parts of the phenomenon, and horizontalization is a never-ending process.

Reduction of experiences to the invariant constituents: The researcher clusters horizons into themes and splits translated data into meaning units, describing phenomena in "textural language" through phenomenological reduction.

Thematic clustering to create core themes: The invariant elements, or the horizons identified as the "core themes of the experience" of the phenomena, is what the researcher should cluster and thematize in this step (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

Comparison of multiple data sources to validate the invariant constituents: To ensure accuracy and clear representation across the data sources, the themes derived from participant experiences gathered through a specific data collection method—such as interviews—are compared to other methods—such as researcher observation, field notes, focus group interviews, and literature.

Constructing of individual textural descriptions of participants: A narrative that clarifies participants' perceptions of a phenomenon is called a textural description. Using exact quotes from their interviews, the researcher in this stage explains the experiences of his or her other researchers. In addition, the investigator employed a narrative approach to elucidate the significance of the experiences of the participants.

Construction of individual structural descriptions. The textural descriptions and creative diversity serve as the foundation for this step. The researcher constructed the structures after imagining how the experience occurred through the use of creative variety.

Construction of composite structural descriptions: The textural descriptions for each co-researcher were written by the researcher, who then combined them into a structure that explains how the event happened. To produce a structured description, the researcher ended each paragraph with a structure. This procedure aids in the researcher's comprehension of the experiences of fellow researchers with the phenomenon they are studying.

Synthesizing the texture and structure into an expression: The researcher created two narratives for each co-researcher, describing what and how the phenomenon occurred. They listed meaning units and created common meaning units for all co-researchers. They synthesized these narratives from a third-person perspective, combining the structural and textural descriptions to create a universal description of the phenomenon.

Validity and Reliability

Triangulation: The study employed triangulation, comparing interview data with previously published research and other data sources, to improve validity.

Reflexivity: To ensure objectivity, reflexivity was used to identify and reduce any biases and prejudices.

Ethical Considerations: Sensitive Topics: Sensitive subjects were handled with extra caution throughout interviews, with participant comfort and security coming first.

Data Storage and Privacy: Throughout the research process, participant privacy was protected by the implementation of secure data storage methods.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Participant Hesitancy: Anticipating participant reluctance to divulge personal experiences, techniques were implemented to establish a secure and dependable atmosphere throughout the interview process. Developing a relationship, maintaining privacy, and highlighting the significance of their stories will promote transparency and communication.

Data Saturation

Because of the intricacy of the phenomenon, the study concedes that it may not be possible to achieve data saturation within the initial sample. More interviews could be done in these situations until saturation is achieved. After consulting with subject-matter experts and doing continuous analysis, the decision to keep collecting data was taken.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Initial and Final Themes

Initial Themes	Final Identified Themes
Work Environment	1. Workplace Experience
	2. Noteworthy Experiences
	3. Team Collaboration
Personal Gender Obstacles	1. Gender Challenges and Discrimination
	2. Gender Discrimination
	3. Advocacy for Gender Equality
Professional Growth Opportunities	1. Career Progression Obstacles
	2. Career Barriers
	3. Mentorship and Development Programs

Table 2. Themes and their Definition

No.	Themes Established	Definition of Themes
1	Workplace Experience	Describes the overall environment and noteworthy experiences within the workplace, including daily routines, interactions, and significant events.
2	Gender Challenges and Discrimination	Focuses on obstacles and discrimination individuals face based on gender within the workplace, including personal experiences and systemic biases.
3	Career Progression Obstacles	Explores barriers and challenges hindering professional growth and advancement, including limitations and opportunities for career development.

Table 3. Coding Sheet

No.	Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Code No.	Codes
1	Workplace Experience	Noteworthy Experiences	1.1	Work Environment
			1.2	Daily Routines
			1.3	Significant Events
2	Gender Challenges and Discrimination	Personal Gender Obstacles	2.1	Bias in Promotion
			2.2	Unequal Pay
			2.3	Harassment
3	Career Progression Obstacles	Professional Growth Opportunities	3.1	Lack of Mentorship
			3.2	Glass Ceiling
			3.3	Limited Training Opportunities

Research question One and Two findings:

Theme 1: Workplace Experience: The study examines the media industry's workplace experiences, highlighting challenges such as time management, fast decision-making, and gender imbalance. It also highlights the need for teamwork and diversity but also acknowledges the need for societal stereotypes and family issues. The findings suggest creating more inclusive and supportive workplaces.

Sub-theme: Noteworthy Experience. The sub-theme explores the impact of media activities on personal and professional skills. Participants shared their experiences in the media sector, highlighting challenges, rewards, adaptability, teamwork, and recognition. They also emphasized lifelong learning and the importance of teamwork, leadership training, and advancement opportunities. The stories provided insight into the multifaceted nature of media work, highlighting the dynamism and ever-changing nature of the industry.

These interviews delineated in-depth and overview of work life, which showed the delicate and intricate balance between organizational culture, gender dynamics and resiliency. These kinds of human conversations created among participant's considerable opportunities to share real life experiences that happen when individual work, so discussion resulted in ideas on how to make contemporary workplaces more inclusive, equitable and supportive.

Sub-theme Code 1: Work Environment. The media industry is a dynamic and constantly changing work environment, requiring professionals to adapt to market demands and adapt to various tasks like breaking news, interviewing, and producing captivating stories. The fast-paced, high-pressure environment requires quick strategic decisions and smart reporting. Key qualities for media professionals include resourcefulness, flexibility, and fast thinking, as they must adapt to any news or event.

Sub-theme code 2: Daily Routine. The study examined the daily routines of media professionals, highlighting their diverse duties such as research, interviewing, writing, editing, and project collaboration. They stressed the importance of efficient time management, adaptability, and flexibility in the fast-changing news media environment, emphasizing the need for quick responses to challenging situations.

Sub-theme code 3: Significant Events. The session on Personal Significant Events in the media sector highlighted the importance of adaptability, innovation, resourcefulness, and problem-orientedness in the ever-changing landscape. Participants stressed the need for clear communication and crisis management strategies. The sub-theme "Sensitive Events" highlighted the defining point of success in the media industry, emphasizing the need for organizations to understand the factors influencing employee perception and work experiences to create an environment of innovation and creativity.

Theme 2: Gender Challenges and Discrimination. The second main theme found was gender challenges and discrimination. Gender challenges and workplace discrimination are prevalent in the IT sector, with women facing unique challenges due to cultural norms and organizational structures. Progress has been made, but government action may hinder significant improvement. Complex remedies and systemic reforms are needed, considering diversity and intersectional approaches. Fighting institutionalized prejudices and lobbying for law reforms can help create equal work environments.

Sub-theme 1: Personal Goal Obstacles. The narratives of respondents reveal the personal challenges faced by civilians and officers in the workplace due to gender bias. They face a lack of recognition, commitment, and discrimination in leadership roles. This bias negatively impacts career progression and personal satisfaction and contributes to the widespread gender pay gap. To address these issues, employers and policymakers must create inclusive, caring workplaces where genders are under equal standards.

The discussion made the point clear that the implementation of the complex remedies and the systemic reforms is the only way to eradicate the gender disparities. As much as progress has been made, the pace of the governmental action is so scanty, that it may become an obstacle on the way to the substantial improvement. The organized struggle against the established stereotypes and creating an inclusive work environments that provide all people with equal possibilities for career and success are the keys.

Sub-theme Code 1: Bias in Promotion. Females often face gender bias in promotions, facing sexism, and discrimination. Men are often recruited to managerial positions more frequently than female applicants. Factors contributing to this bias include gender stereotypes, lack of women in high-ranking positions, and discriminatory policies. This unjust promotion process contributes to staff splits.

Sub-theme Code 2: Unequal Pay. The media industry often faces the highest gender pay gap, with unequal compensation in salaries, bonuses, and financial awards. Lack of transparency in wage negotiations hinders equalization. Women face fewer professional prospects due to pay adjustment, and income disparity and financial insecurity are also exacerbated by uneven wages.

Theme 3: Career Progression Obstacle. Participants in the media industry shared their experiences of career progression obstacles, highlighting the bias and barriers that hindered their progress and limited opportunities for social improvement.

In the final analysis, continuous learning and skills development appeared as major guarantees for one's career advancement. Participants were unanimous on point: if we do not stay in tune with

industry and get professional certifications that are what our peers have then we're completely out of step with them. The other two factors separating the juniors and the seniors in a career journey are networking and interpersonal relations. This was directly implied by the fact that personal connections or networks would work effectively in securing a new position and broadening one's professional circles. Moreover, participants highlighted the importance of employers providing adequate resources and support services for promoting career growth: eg. Mentorship opportunities, training, guidance as well as job assistance programs are also some of the examples.

Sub-theme 1: Promotion and Development. The media industry faces challenges in career advancement, requiring employers to recognize individual potential, master skills, and build professional networks. Organizations should provide mentorship, attitude development workshops, performance assessments, and professional certificates to create a culture of excellence. Providing female networking, training opportunities, and job guidance services can eliminate systemic barriers and promote innovation. Addressing gender bias in the industry is crucial for creating a supportive environment for career advancement and ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals.

Sub-theme code 1: Lack of Mentorship. Staff members lack mentorship from supervisors, senior managers, and directors, limiting their development and potential for advancement. Without mentorship, employees may feel isolated and detached from their jobs. A formal mentoring program in the media industry is suggested to support women in academic pursuits and long-term employment, ensuring they have access to transferrable skills and opportunities for promotion.

Sub-theme code 2: Closed Circle. The sub-theme "Closed Circle" describes an invisible barrier that hinders women's advancement in media organizations. This barrier is influenced by prejudiced opinions, poor management, and a male-dominated environment. Participants expressed cynicism and gloom, urging for increased visibility and accountability, and the elimination of past barriers like the glass ceiling.

Sub-theme code 3: Few Training Opportunities. The sub-theme code highlights the lack of employer-led training and professional development opportunities, particularly for women employees in media. This lack of opportunities hinders career advancement and perpetuates employment inequalities. The conference participants emphasized the importance of investing in staff development to improve job capacity, satisfaction, and retention rates. They call for expanded training schemes, joint programs, mentorship, and reduced barriers to participation.

Discussion

The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by women in media who work as journalist, producer and editor in Pakistan. The earlier chapters provide a thorough description of the participants sample's thematic analyses as well as the research's goals, methods, and data collecting. Through careful analysis, the findings have highlighted the challenges faced by women like harassment, inequality, career progression obstacles etc.

This discussion chapter provides a forum for exploring the implications, importance, and constraints of our findings, adding to the larger conversation on management, workplace behavior, and performance. We seek to not only address the research questions given at the outset but also to assist practitioners, academics, and organizations looking to optimize their leadership practices with practical insights by methodically deconstructing the study results and contextualizing them within the body of current literature.

According to findings of the study, women faced different kind of issues during their job role at media house. The major problems include stressful workplace environment, technical difficulties, tight deadline, personal gender obstacle, bias in promotion, unequal pay, harassment, career progression obstacle, lack of mentorship, closed circle and limited training opportunities.

According to this survey, unequal compensation is a significant issue that women in the media must deal with. An earlier survey by the Women's Media Center (2019) shown that women in journalism make, on average, 83 cents for every dollar made by men. This finding was corroborated by earlier research. For women of race, the difference is much more pronounced; they make only 54 cents for every \$1 earned by males of color.

Harassment is another issue that women in journalism must deal with. According to a 2019 International Women's Media Foundation survey, 64% of female journalists said they had been the

target of abuse, threats, or intimidation at work. The poll also revealed that harassment was more common among women journalists covering human rights and politics.

Women in journalism experience underrepresentation in senior positions in addition to unfair compensation and harassment. Women only make up 41% of newsroom workers and 27% of top management positions in the business, according to the Women's Media Center (2019) (Malik and Dhiman, 2022; Dhiman, 2022; Dhiman, 2022).

Gender bias is a significant issue for journalists. Despite recent strides toward gender parity, men still predominate in the media sector. Bias and discrimination against women journalists in recruiting, compensation, and promotions are common. Instead of covering difficult news themes like politics and business, women journalists are sometimes assigned to less prominent positions or forced to cover "soft" news like lifestyle and entertainment.

Another major issue that women journalists in the media encounter is sexual harassment. Inappropriate remarks, demands for sexual favors, and unwelcome physical contact are just a few examples of the various ways that sexual harassment manifests. In order to further their careers, women journalists may be under pressure

to put up with or even engage in sexual harassment. This may result in a poisonous workplace, excessive levels of stress, and burnout.

For female journalists in the media, finding a balance between work and life is another difficulty. Many female journalists find it difficult to juggle their rigorous work schedules with their familial obligations. This can lead to a great deal of stress and make it difficult to keep a good work-life balance. In addition, there may be pressure on female journalists to choose between their families and jobs, which can leave them feeling guilty and frustrated.

Media outlets and social media sites must take action to stop online harassment of female journalists to address this problem. This can involve actions like comment moderation, legal assistance, and reporting tools (Dhiman, 2022). Journalists should also take precautions to keep themselves safe, like limiting the amount of personal information they provide online, employing online safety tools, and asking for help from groups and colleagues who support press freedom and safety. In the end, media outlets, social media sites, and society must work together to combat online harassment of female journalists and acknowledge the critical role that female journalists play in a free and safe press. Opportunities for professional growth are available to female journalists in the media.

Learning new skills, staying current with best practices, and understanding industry trends are all components of professional development. Training sessions, seminars, and workshops are available for women journalists to further their education and develop their talents. Women journalists can improve their chances of job advancement and maintain their competitiveness in the field by investing in professional development.

In the media field, women journalists have several opportunities. In addition to advocating for significant topics, networking with other professionals, working in a variety of forms, seeking mentors, and taking advantage of professional development opportunities, women journalists can also capitalize on their distinct viewpoints and focus on a specific area of coverage (Byerly, 2016; Dhiman, 2022). Women journalists can have prosperous careers and make significant contributions in the media by utilizing these chances.

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By establishing precise standards and procedures for handling harassment and abuse, policies and regulatory frameworks can aid in tackling these problems. They may also assist in establishing legal repercussions for offenders, which may discourage harassment of others in the future.

Governments and media companies can take action to establish laws and policies that safeguard female journalists. These rules could contain instructions on how to report harassment events, management and staff training on handling such situations, and procedures for safeguarding the safety and privacy of journalists who report harassment incidents.

Governments can also enact laws and rules that make harassment of journalists online illegal and offer them legal channels for recourse. Laws of this kind can also guarantee that those who harm female journalists and engage in cyberbullying are held responsible for their conduct.

In general, women journalists' safety and capacity to perform their duties may suffer greatly from the absence of laws and other legal protections. Governments and media outlets need to take notice of this problem and make sure that female journalists are secure and supported in their vital work.

Conclusion

In the media sector, women journalists are essential because they offer a variety of viewpoints and influence public conversation on significant topics. Nonetheless, there are still many obstacles that women must overcome in this field, such as lesser compensation, a dearth of female leaders, and a higher risk of harassment and abuse.

Governments and media outlets need to act to address these problems and advance the security and prosperity of female journalists. This can involve putting policies and procedures in place to deal with abuse and harassment, offering chances for professional development, encouraging inclusivity and diversity, utilizing online safety tools, asking for help from organizations and coworkers, and holding offenders

Women journalists can continue to make significant contributions to public discourse and the media sector can become more egalitarian and inclusive by cooperating to address these concerns. It's critical to acknowledge the essential role that female journalists play in the field and to make sure they get the resources and assistance they require to be successful.

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