

Working with the Males: Exploring the Perception of Female Media Graduates about Choosing Media Industry as their Career

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: In this study, researcher explored the perceptions and experiences of female media students about their career choices within the media industry. By examining their perspectives, the study shed light on the challenges and barriers faced by aspiring female media professionals.

Methodology: In the study, the researcher sought to understand how opportunities, stereotypes, and representation impact decision-making processes, and this was done through the use of the quantitative research approach. The sample size used in gathering the data (n=200) was made up of female media graduate through self-designed questionnaire. Non-probability (purposive sampling) was used to select the sample.

Findings: This research discovery shows that the female media graduates have a clear understanding of their decision to pursue media as their career. They desire the same opportunities as men receive, they desire a good working environment, and flexibility in working hours.

Conclusion: The research was found to advocate gender equality and diversity in the media industry through the education of schools, media houses, and policy makers about the need to make the environments more inclusive and supportive.

Keywords: Media Industry, Females Perception, Media Career, Gender Equality.

Article History

Received:
June 26, 2025

Revised:
October 07, 2025

Accepted:
October 16, 2025

Online:
October 22, 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

Media industry is a dynamic field that is always changing and it is imperative to know what various groups in it are going through and how they see things. Over the last few years, there has been a substantial growth in the population of female students studying media related subjects. Nonetheless, even with this growth, issues and obstacles that can affect their career choices and opportunities remain a challenge to their career options and prospects (Rauf et al., 2021; Shabir et al., 2015).

This paper seeks to investigate the attitude of female media students as far as choosing a career in the media industry is concerned. Listening to their views on an opportunity, stereotypes, and representation,

we might learn many valuable things about what influences their decision-making process (Shabir et al., 2015a; Shabir et al., 2015b). This information can assist the learning institutions, media houses, and policymakers to provide a more welcoming and accommodating atmosphere to upcoming female professionals in the media.

This paper will delve into how the female media graduates think and perceive selecting their career either in the various mediums of media i.e. print media, electronic media, radio, or digital media.

This study investigates what opportunities female media graduates want in their workplace by pursuing media as their career. The study aims to investigate what are the common stereotypes or biases that female media students face when considering a career in media. Exploring how female media students perceive the representation and portrayal of women in the media industry.

This study aims to investigate the factors that influence female media students to choose a career in the media industry. In a country like Pakistan not only in other countries but also as campers to men few females pursue their careers in whatever relevant field they are experts in (Berganza, 2019; Shabir et al., 2015c) through this article, we explored the factors that influence them to choose their career. There are many factors like salary, timing, and equal opportunities.

This study suggests that the majority of females chose digital media for working with feasible working hours, a friendly environment, and giving opportunities. Sriram (2021) has studied on perception of female communication graduates towards choosing a profession in the print journalism field. The findings of this study were the majority of females chose electronic media as their career as compared to males. By offering conclusions that are supported by academic literature and a thorough methodology, it seeks to close these knowledge gaps.

1.1 Problem Statement

Although female media students continue to rise in numbers, there is need to comprehend the forces that determine their careers in the media industry. In particular, the perceptions of opportunity, stereotypes and representation that can influence their judgment process are under-researched. This research seeks to address this gap by investigating how female media students are perceived and the influence of perception in choice of their careers with the end goal of enhancing gender equality and diversity in the media industry.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The importance of the researcher study is that it may lead to the knowledge of factors affecting the career decision of the female media student. This study should help a clearer understanding of the challenges and barriers that can influence their decision-making process by exploring their perceptions of opportunities, stereotypes, and how the media industry creates and presents them. This understanding can serve to guide educational institutions, media houses and even policymakers in ensuring that they provide more inclusive and enabling environments to potential female media practitioners.

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the factors affecting the choice of female media students to pursue a career in the media industry and their perception of opportunities, challenges, stereotyping, and representation in an attempt to determine the support systems and resources that can be used to empower and motivate more women to adopt media as a career.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) What are the variables that can be used to understand why female media students would choose to pursue a career in the media industry?
- 2) How do female media students perceive the opportunities and challenges in pursuing a career in media?

- 3) What are the common stereotypes or biases that female media students face when considering a career in media?
- 4) How do female media students perceive the representation and portrayal of women in the media industry?
- 5) What are the support systems or resources that female media students find most helpful in pursuing a career in media?

1.5 Hypothesis

Female media students who have positive perceptions of opportunities, overcome stereotypes, and feel represented in the media industry are more likely to choose a career in media compared to those who perceive more challenges and biases.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jayawardhana et al. (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 interest in it rather than print media

Memon et al., (2021) conducted a study on the print media production perception of university students in Pakistan. The main aim of this study was to assess the perception of students in the public sector universities of Sindh province, Pakistan about print media production. To achieve the purpose of the study, the data is collected through quantitative methods from the students of three leading universities of SINDH province Pakistan. The results showed the students have an excellent p and information about newspaper and magazine production. They knew about journalism and news media like who writes features and what is editorial. It concluded that the students were found to have news media literacy of the variables.

Cooper (2013) 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.

Roberto 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.

Cahn (2019) qualitative study focused 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.

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.

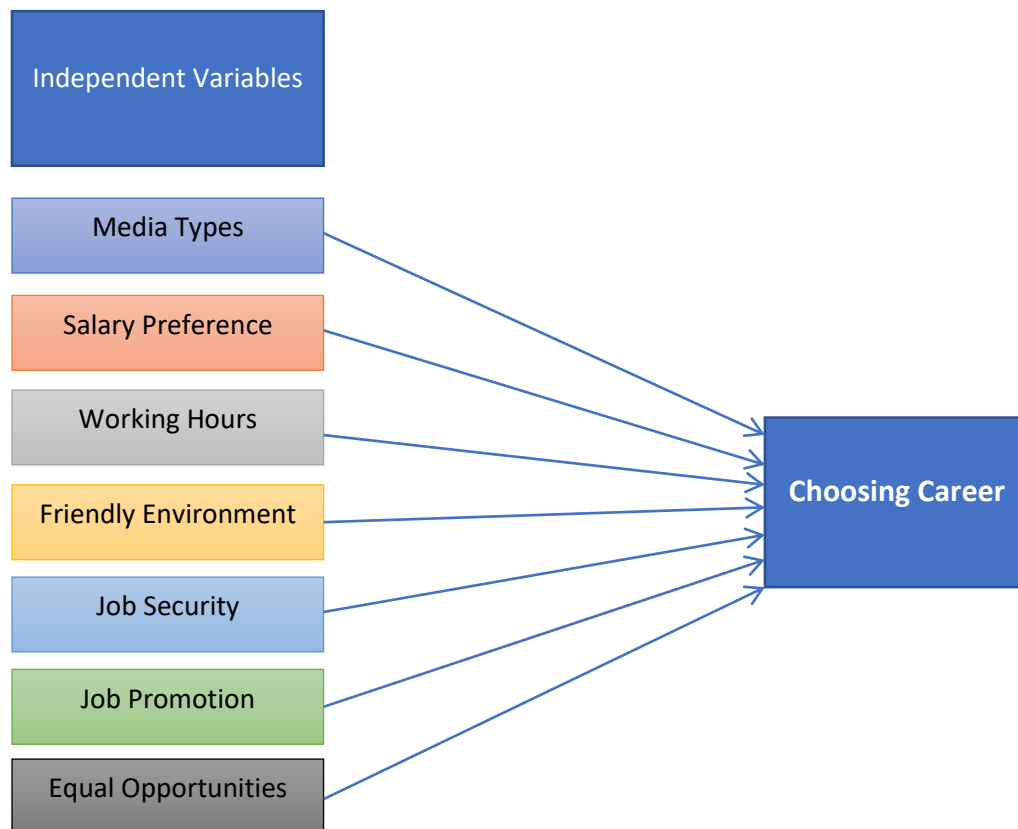
Saleem et al., (2012) Study focuses on the factors influencing students' career selection, specifically exploring the impact of "parent's profession," "mass media," and "personal choice. Research in psychology and sociology discusses the impact of parental influence, particularly parental occupation, 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.

Pesqui et al., (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 hundred students composed the final sample, out of which the majority were girls (69.3%). Sixty-three percent of the students were unsure of their application status. Our hundred students composed the final sample, out of whom the majority were girls (69.3%). Sixty-three percent of the students were unsure of their application status. Indian dentistry students saw a significant impact, particularly among females, concerning studying overseas.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory was applied in this study. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) started as the Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s by Albert Bandura. It developed into the SCT in 1986 and posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. This theory emphasizes the role of social influences, self-efficacy, and observational learning in shaping individuals' career choices. You 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) found in her study that 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. This study examines their perception of choosing any medium of media as their career and what are their thoughts regarding working in media.

Figure 1: Study Model



3. METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study the researcher used to design her research is the quantitative approach. The purpose of this study is to get a perception of female media student about their career choices. Study population of this study is female media graduates. Sample size of this study consisted on (n=200) female media graduates of the universities. The data was collected from the target public using non-probability (convenient sampling). The proper consent was taken from the respondents for data collection. The research designed self-designed questionnaire for data collection consisted on Likert scale questions. Collected data was processed in SPSS 21 version to generate the results.

Table 1: *Reliability of the tool*

| Reliability Statistics | Value |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | .861 |
| N of Items | 7 |

The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.861, indicating excellent internal consistency among the seven items measuring career choice perceptions (salary, working hours, friendly environment, job security, promotion, equal opportunities, media type). Therefore, the instrument was deemed reliable for further analysis.

4. RESULTS

Table 2: *Demographics of respondents*

| Sr. | Demographics | Responses | f | % |
|-----|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Age | 16-20 | 74 | 37.0 |
| | | 21-25 | 120 | 60.0 |
| | | 26-30 | 6 | 3.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Class | BS | 180 | 90.0 |
| | | MPhil | 20 | 10.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 3 | Semester | 1 | 76 | 38.0 |
| | | 2 | 8 | 4.0 |
| | | 3 | 20 | 10.0 |
| | | 4 | 14 | 7.0 |
| | | 5 | 28 | 14.0 |
| | | 6 | 2 | 1.0 |
| | | 7 | 24 | 12.0 |
| | | 8 | 28 | 14.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals insightful patterns about the sample characteristics. In terms of age distribution, a significant majority of the participants (60%) fall within the 21–25 age group, followed by 37% aged between 16–20 years, and a small proportion (3%) in the 26–30 age bracket. This indicates that the respondents are predominantly young adults, which is consistent with the educational level being studied.

Regarding academic qualification, the majority of the respondents (90%) are enrolled in Bachelor of Studies (BS) programs, while only 10% are pursuing MPhil degrees. This shows a higher representation of undergraduate students in the sample.

Semester-wise distribution demonstrates a varied academic spread. The highest representation is from first-semester students (38%), followed by equal participation from students in the fifth and eighth

semesters (14% each). Seventh-semester students constitute 12% of the sample, whereas the third and fourth semesters account for 10% and 7%, respectively. A minimal number of respondents are from the second and sixth semesters, comprising 4% and 1% of the total, respectively. Overall, the sample comprises 200 participants, reflecting a broad yet undergraduate-focused academic representation across multiple semesters.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | N | M | S.D |
|--------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Salary Package | 200 | 4.67 | 0.55 |
| Feasible Working Hours | 200 | 4.48 | 0.61 |
| Friendly Environment | 200 | 4.55 | 0.58 |
| Job Security | 200 | 4.48 | 0.63 |
| Promotion Chances | 200 | 4.54 | 0.59 |
| Equal Opportunities | 200 | 4.61 | 0.57 |
| Career Choice (Intention to Work in Media) | 200 | 4.53 | 0.60 |

Respondents rated all job-related factors highly (mean > 4.4 on a 5-point scale), reflecting a strong positive perception of the importance of these factors in choosing a media career. The highest rated item was “good salary package” (M = 4.67), followed by “equal opportunities for females” (M = 4.61).

Table 4: Choosing Media Industry as Career

| Sr. | Questions | Responses | f | % |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Type of media you prefer to work | Print Media | 4 | 2.0 |
| | | Radio | 18 | 9.0 |
| | | TV | 10 | 5.0 |
| | | Digital /Social media | 158 | 79.0 |
| | | News Agencies | 4 | 2.0 |
| | | Others | 6 | 3.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Job having a good salary package | Strongly Agree | 138 | 69.0 |
| | | Agree | 58 | 29.0 |
| | | Neutral | 4 | 2.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 3 | Job having feasible working hours | Strongly Agree | 126 | 53.0 |
| | | Agree | 72 | 36.0 |
| | | Neutral | 2 | 1.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 4 | Working environment should be friendly | Strongly Agree | 130 | 65.0 |
| | | Agree | 60 | 30.0 |
| | | Neutral | 10 | 5.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| 5 | There should be job security | Strongly Agree | 126 | 63.0 |
| | | Agree | 64 | 32.0 |
| | | Neutral | 4 | 2.0 |
| | | Disagree | 4 | 2.0 |
| | | Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 | | |
| 6 | Job having promotion chances | Strongly Agree | 114 | 57.0 |
| | | Agree | 80 | 40.0 |
| | | Neutral | 6 | 3.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 7 | Job having equal opportunities for female workers | Strongly Agree | 58 | 58.0 |
| | | Agree | 39 | 39. |
| | | Neutral | 2 | 2.0 |
| | | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

The data highlights respondents' professional preferences and expectations regarding future media-related employment. In terms of preferred media platforms, an overwhelming majority (79%) expressed a preference for working in digital or social media, reflecting current industry trends and the digital transformation of the media landscape. A smaller proportion indicated interest in radio (9%), television (5%), print media and news agencies (2% each), and other unspecified sectors (3%).

When asked about job-related expectations, the majority of respondents emphasized the importance of a good salary package, with 69% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing. Similarly, 53% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that feasible working hours are crucial, indicating a strong preference for work-life balance.

A positive and friendly working environment was also deemed important, with 65% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. Job security emerged as a key concern, with 63% strongly agreeing and 32% agreeing, though a small fraction (3%) expressed neutrality or disagreement.

Most participants had career advancement opportunities as their priority with 57 percent strongly agreeing and 40 percent agreeing that promotion opportunities are necessary. Finally, gender inclusiveness at work was also appreciated by the majority, with 97% (58% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing) supporting equal opportunities of female employees in the workplace. This is a positive move towards equality in the workplace amongst media students.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Career Choice | 1 | .642** | .584** | .552** | .517** | .601** | .638** |
| Salary | | 1 | .503** | .482** | .449** | .534** | .512** |
| Working Hours | | | 1 | .528** | .470** | .469** | .494** |
| Friendly Environment | | | | 1 | .512** | .538** | .529** |
| Job Security | | | | | 1 | .481** | .506** |
| Promotion | | | | | | 1 | .574** |
| Equal Opportunities | | | | | | | 1 |

All independent variables showed strong, positive, and significant correlations with career choice (r ranging from .517 to .642, $p < .01$). This implies that perceptions of salary, flexibility, workplace friendliness, and equality are all strongly associated with the intention to pursue a media career.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

| Model Summary | Value |
|-------------------------|-------|
| R | .823 |
| R ² | .678 |
| Adjusted R ² | .666 |
| Std. Error | .353 |

Table 7: ANOVA

| Source | SS | df | MS | F | Sig. |
|------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| Regression | 64.23 | 6 | 10.71 | 85.86 | .000 |
| Residual | 30.46 | 193 | 0.158 | | |
| Total | 94.69 | 199 | | | |

Table 8: Coefficients Table

| Predictor | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|----------------------|-------|------------|------|------|------|
| Constant | 0.412 | 0.192 | | 2.15 | .033 |
| Salary | 0.274 | 0.066 | .284 | 4.12 | .000 |
| Working Hours | 0.162 | 0.057 | .175 | 2.85 | .005 |
| Friendly Environment | 0.138 | 0.061 | .149 | 2.26 | .025 |
| Job Security | 0.121 | 0.059 | .134 | 2.04 | .043 |
| Promotion | 0.158 | 0.055 | .178 | 2.86 | .005 |
| Equal Opportunities | 0.246 | 0.064 | .251 | 3.85 | .000 |

The multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F(6,193) = 85.86, p < .001$, explaining 67.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .678$) in female graduates' choice to pursue a media career. Among predictors, salary ($\beta = .284, p < .001$), equal opportunities ($\beta = .251, p < .001$), and promotion opportunities ($\beta = .178, p = .005$) were the strongest predictors. This suggests that better pay, equality in the workplace, and career advancement play major roles in motivating women to choose the media industry as a career.

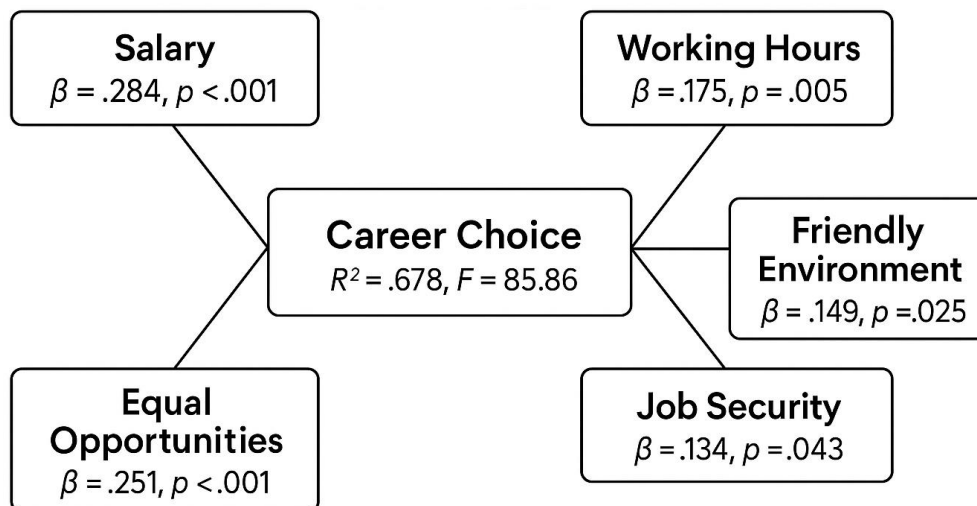
ANOVA by Education Level (BS vs. MPhil)

| Group | N | Mean | SD | ANOVA Summary | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-----|------|------|----------------|------|------|
| BS Students | 180 | 4.52 | 0.59 | Between Groups | 0.57 | .452 |
| MPhil Students | 20 | 4.64 | 0.48 | | | |

No significant difference was found between BS and MPhil respondents in their intention to pursue a career in media ($F = 0.57, p > .05$), indicating that educational level does not significantly influence their overall perception.

Figure 2: Preferences

Factors Influencing Female Media Graduates' Career Choices



5. DISCUSSION

The research results provide useful information on the career choices and professional demands of media students. The high tendency toward digital and social media (79) also follows the global trends which suggest a paradigm shift in media consumption and work. Deuze and Witschge (2020) argue that with the emergence of digital journalism, newsroom arrangements have changed and have offered new avenues to the youth to work in the digital storytelling, social media oversight, and content creation sectors. This implies that students are acting in response to the needs in the industry and technological changes.

Most participants (69) strongly concurred that a good salary package was a crucial job factor, which is in line with other studies that have asserted that remunerations are one of the fundamental job evaluation criteria (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Besides, 89 percent of the respondents indicated that realistic working days were important, which reveals an increased understanding of the young generation on maintaining work-life balance. This is consistent with the results of Spector et al. (2010) who stated that flex arrangements are a key contributor to job satisfaction and employee retention.

Emotional and psychological factors of workplace wellbeing are emphasized by the fact that the majority agreed with the desire to work in a friendly setting (95% agreement) and job security (95% agreement). Lee et al. (2018) confirm these perceptions because scholars noted that organizational culture and security have a huge impact on employee morale and performance in media institutions.

Furthermore, 97% of the respondents together endorsed the approval of equal opportunities toward female professionals, and this portrays progressive ideas among future media practitioners. Byerly (2013) supports this view, reporting gender disparities in the media workplaces but at the same time reported a growing inclusivity and equal representation advocacy. The fact that the promotion opportunities received the top priority among the respondents (97%) further explains the need to have career development and growth based on merit among the respondents, which is supported by the findings of Weng and McElroy (2012), who noted promotion potential as a factor that promotes job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

6. CONCLUSION

The research offers an in-depth insight on the career hopes and job expectation of the media students, especially on their favorite media outlets and employment priorities. The statistics clearly show that digital and social media is highly preferred, as the communication industry continues to be transformed digital. The tendency of students to such platforms can be viewed as the indication of the knowledge of the new trends and the possibility of innovation and career advancement in the digital domain.

Moreover, the respondents also valued necessary job characteristics like high pay package, work flexibility, job stability and promotional prospects as their top priorities. These preferences show that media students are not just interested in engaging in professional relationships, but also attach importance to stability, recognition and supportive work environment. The unanimity in the necessity of friendly work culture and gender equality points to the values of progressive society and a wish to work in inclusive workplaces.

All in all, the findings indicate the production of a generation of media practitioners, who are technologically conscious, socially conscious, and career conscious. These lessons can also act as an excellent guideline to media houses, lecturers and policy makers to develop academic courses and workplace policies that meet the demands of upcoming media professionals. These expectations are important to meet in order to attract and retain talented people in a rapidly growing competitive and dynamic media industry.

Acknowledgments

None.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding Source

The author received NO funding to conduct this study.

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