

From Glass Ceilings to Gendered Job Roles Examining Gender Disparities in Pakistani Media Organizations

Ifra Iftikhar

Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication Lahore Garrison University
ifraiftikhar@lgu.edu.pk

Madiha Javed

Lecturer, Government Associate College for Women, Harappa, Sahiwal
madeejaved@gmail.com

Sajjad Ahmad Paracha

Former Chairperson, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University Bahawalpur
sajjadparacha61@hotmail.com

Abstract

The major objective of this study is to investigate the invisible 'glass ceiling' that inhibits women's advancement in Pakistan's print and electronic media sectors, especially television channels. The study employed the gathered data, which comprised demographic information such as gender, age, media organization affiliation, and job title, to empirically examine the proposed hypotheses. This research endeavor investigated the presence of gender disparities in print and electronic media organizations with regard to professional responsibilities, career trajectories, and hierarchical standing. The study hypothesized that women's representation and career paths differed significantly between traditional print and digital media. Women are more likely to be employed in low-wage, labor-intensive jobs. These disparities vary according to hierarchical levels. These hypotheses were substantiated by the data. According to this study, a comprehensive strategy is necessary to surmount the barriers associated with the glass ceiling. In addition to implementing gender-neutral and inclusive organizational policies, it is critical to analyze the matter from the perspective of "pink ghettoization," which provides insight into the factors that perpetuate the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Media Organizations, Gendered Job Roles, Hierarchical Positions, Career Paths, Pink Ghetto

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1. Introduction:

In terms of the percentage of female journalists, Pakistan ranks 150th out of 180 countries, making it one of the countries with the lowest number of female journalists, which is alarming (Pakistan, 2023). The media industry experiences a substantial gender disparity, as women are often inadequately represented in high-ranking positions due to the media's preoccupation with leaders and the concept of the 'glass ceiling.' This discrepancy is apparent in the worldwide proportion of women to men, with men predominantly occupying leadership positions in the top 100 media organizations globally. Female journalists are seldom leaders in Pakistan's \$2 billion media business (Arain, 2023).

Pakistan's media business, valued at \$2 billion, is marred by institutional sexism since it lacks a female leader at the highest position. The industry's cultural norms encompass the occurrence of improper remarks made by male coworkers, gender-based wage disparities favoring males, and the prevailing belief that only men are capable of becoming primary earners. Female employees in media companies encounter a detrimental work atmosphere and an invisible obstacle that obstructs their professional advancement (Ali, 2022).

Although there were improvements for women in management in 2019, the "broken rung" (Ali, 2022) still posed a significant obstacle. In 2019, the ratio of women to men promoted to manager was 85 to 100, indicating a substantial underrepresentation of women in entry-level management positions. Promotion, voluntary departure, and recruitment from outside sources are the main catalysts for women's advancement in the media industry. Female employees in lower-level positions exhibit a higher attrition rate than their male counterparts, whereas the recruitment process for executive-level positions tends to favor male candidates. The progress of women's status and global participation in the media industry has been modest yet discernible. The Pakistan Country Report of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2020) revealed that media content, especially representations of girls and women, remains patriarchal, lacks sensitivity towards gender issues, and occasionally infringes on consumer rights and media responsibilities.

Female professional journalists are more inclined to advocate for and express other women's demands and opinions than male journalists. However, not all women in the field would prioritize gender-related issues and be inclined to cover women's needs and perspectives. Recent research from 18 various nations indicates no significant disparity in the perspectives of male and female journalists. Female journalists in local media frequently embrace masculine qualities such as leadership and risk-taking, but they use female journalism principles to challenge the dominant worldview (Sunarto, 2020).

There is a clear gender gap in Pakistan's media industry; women mostly work as assistants or associates, while men hold most of the top positions like producers, directors, chief editors, and publishers. This gender bias has prevented many women from pursuing careers in the field. Whenever there is a cultural norm that discourages women from pursuing traditionally male-dominated occupations, this disparity becomes apparent (Rao & Rodny-Gumede, 2020).

How the media influences public opinion concerning women also contributes significantly to the obstacles that prevent women in Pakistan from entering and achieving success in any industry. Today's media is educating people in several ways like health, education, community development, children, adults, women empowerment, gender rights, gender discrimination, human rights, politics, entertainment, etc. (Shehzad et al., 2019).

Television advertising serves as a reflection of the dominant socio-cultural trends that govern the representation of gender in society. The predominant depiction of women in Pakistani television advertising is involved in traditional roles and responsibilities, including child-rearing, household upkeep, and subordinate or supportive positions (Iram, 2023). The frequency of exposure of these stereotypical advertisements is three times that of advertisements that portray women engaging in physical activities while appearing self-assured and extroverted.

Notwithstanding the perceptual angle, there are real obstacles that women face when trying to advance in their working lives. However, women face significant challenges to their career advancement in the mainstream media industry due to the limited opportunities for training and capacity development. This presents a significant obstacle. Cultural norms and practices that prevent women from learning as quickly as their male coworkers, who benefit from informal on-the-job training, are a major factor in this disparity. The existence of unfavorable working

conditions, such as unsuitable facilities and hostile environments, is another element that deters women from seeking careers in the media sector.

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In particular, positions that require coverage of "hard" news beats, which require substantial travel and unpredictable schedules, are particularly difficult for women to work in because of the stigmas that are associated with working long and irregular hours in society (Shahid, Imran, & Kiani, 2022). Furthermore, the absence of reporting that takes into account gender differences and the limited opportunities for women to hold high-ranking positions in media organizations both contribute to the continuation of unfairness and the worsening of gender inequalities. To effectively address these issues and create a media industry that is more inclusive and equitable, women must have equal access to training, that working conditions be improved, that cultural barriers be addressed, and that gender-sensitive reporting techniques be promoted (UK Research Center, 2010).

Therefore, there are several reasons to be concerned about gender issues in the media sectors, primarily due to the crucial need to dismantle stereotypes and promote varied narratives from all viewpoints. Ensuring an equitable representation of both genders in leadership, decision-making, and governance processes is crucial for promoting gender equality, empowering women, and improving national success. By examining the extent to which the glass barrier exists in Pakistani media companies, we may gain a better understanding of the obstacles women face and find ways to overcome them. The study's overarching goal is to help women reach their full employment potential, which will boost economic development and stability. Breaking the glass ceiling might lead to higher-paying and more influential professions, and we believe that women should have equal opportunities to advance in their careers and assume leadership roles. Companies in the media industry that fail to breach the glass ceiling and take advantage of women's talents, perspectives, and abilities might benefit from this study's findings. This study shows that companies may benefit from a more diverse talent pool if they provide women an equal opportunity to use their creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving abilities. Research that seeks to shed light on present cultural norms, institutional barriers, and alternative viewpoints is necessary to understand how the public perceives gender in the media. Policy and social change initiatives could benefit from this study's findings.

2. Glass Ceiling Effect

According to the popular metaphor, many women's careers plateau at a certain point, regardless of their ability and qualifications (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001; Lorber, 1994). In 1986, a piece in the Wall Street Journal promoted this idea, and a government committee headed by Robert B. Reich, who was the secretary of labor at the time, focused on it. In its report, the committee defined the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organizations into management-level positions." The study broadened the original meaning of the word to encompass all administrative and decision-making roles, as well as racial and ethnic minorities.

A glass ceiling is a phenomenon where gender disparities become more pronounced in the upper echelons of an organization's structure as opposed to the lower levels. However, this does not mean

that all gender disparities exist. The "glass ceiling" describes the intangible obstacles that women and other underrepresented groups face when trying to climb the professional ladder. Several processes contribute to and sustain this imbalance. Research shows that the glass ceiling appears in several industries, such as science, state-level bureaucracy, manufacturing, social work, giant enterprises, and law firms (Rosser 2004).

2.1.Factors Contributing to the Glass Ceiling in the Workplace

Several factors contribute to the establishment and perpetuation of the glass ceiling. Opting not to employ women is a contributing factor since it diminishes the presence of women in the workforce and thus reduces their opportunities to overcome gender barriers. Reasons for this can include a lack of flexibility in juggling work and family responsibilities or a desire for more conventional gender roles. Inconsistencies between cultural messaging and reality, as well as expectations placed on women to provide care, can also "force" women out of the workforce (Davies-Netzley & Ann, 1998; Stone, 2007). Implementing family-friendly workplace rules might lead to women facing insecure arrangements and career disadvantages while trying to balance their job and family responsibilities.

Selection effects, homophile, cultural capital, networking, discrimination, gender stereotypes, and occupational segregation are some of the elements that contribute to the glass ceiling in the workplace and can be reduced through research (Purcell, MacArthur, & Samblanet, 2010). Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2001) and the desire for homophily also help to build and keep the glass ceiling in place. Cultural capital, such as the consumption of cultural items, may be utilized to establish and sustain social networks (Goldthorpe, 2007; Gunn, 2005).

Homophily, the propensity to associate with people who share one's social and cultural background, limits women's opportunities for advancement in the workforce (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). Managers generally recruit socially and culturally similar personnel because they value trust, discretion, and dependability (Ragins & Cotton, 1991; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). As a result, males are more likely to have mentors and advance in their careers, while women are labeled as "tokens" and subjected to antagonism, harassment, and isolation (Roth, 2004b; Spangler, Gordon, & Pipkin, 1978; Kanter, 1977). Even in customer preferences, homophily can manifest as a desire for experts similar to the client or even a rejection of female employees (Erickson & Drakulic, 2000; Roth, 2004a).

Members of workplace networks, which are associated with homophily and cultural capital, reap the benefits and advantages. Opportunities for advancement, social standing, and financial reward may vary depending on these benefits. Gender norms make it harder for women to take part in networking events where they may meet male coworkers (Roth, 2004a; Elliott & Smith, 2004). However, women stressed the value of social networks in reaching success in the workplace, particularly for elite roles. Engaging in similar interests and activities has been found to enhance men's opportunities for promotion inside the "old boys' network," while simultaneously marginalizing women as "outsiders" in a system that mostly caters to males (Davies-Netzley & Ann, 1998, p. 347). Women are kept out from 'hard' beats (such as Politics, Foreign Affairs, etc.) in journalism, which is one of the highest-paying fields in media and allows journalists to earn more and build better networks.

Gender inequality is not only perpetuated but also created by the gendered nature of the workplace. Occupational hierarchies perpetuate cultural norms that place women behind males in terms of power and competence (Gorman & Kmec, We (Have to) Try Harder, 2007). Compared to males, women are frequently expected to perform to higher standards and go above and beyond what is required (Gorman, 2006). In gender-segregated fields, women face lower wages and lengthier

promotion wait periods as a result of workplace discrimination and segregation (Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 'The Effects of Occupational Gender Segregation across Race, 2003; Kmec, 2005). By partnering with other firms with female executives, women may advance in their organizations, which can shift the gender ratio in the workplace (Beckman & Phillips, 2005).

Additionally, women face discrimination due to institutional features of organizations, such as hiring practices and policy shifts. Open recruiting practices lessen sex ascription in hiring, but informal recruiting practices increase the reproduction of male workers (Reskin & Mcbrier, 2000). Even more so than male managers, female managers are vulnerable to the effects of organizational change, including mergers and the formation of new companies (Haveman, Broschak, & Cohen, 2009). Reasons for this include gendered sorting, which keeps women in lower-status positions and in smaller companies, where they have less room to grow (Dencker, 2008). Overall, these variables lead to the formation and preservation of the glass ceiling, perpetuating gender inequity in the workplace. Interestingly, according to a survey, 73% of female managers believe that there is a glass ceiling, whereas only 38% of male managers believe that there is such a thing (Snowdon, 2011).

Based on the information and viewpoints presented in the literature, the hypotheses of our investigation are as follows:

H1: Gender disparities vary between traditional print and digital media sectors, with different gender representation and career trajectories in each sector.

H2: Gender disparities vary significantly across hierarchical positions, with notable differences observed in high, middle, and low-rank roles.

H3: Gender disparities vary significantly based on job role and responsibility, with women more likely to be concentrated in lower-paying and labor-intensive positions.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study aims to investigate the perceptions about the barrier to advancement for women, commonly known as the glass ceiling, inside media firms in Pakistan.

Notably, out of the estimated 20,000 professional journalists in Pakistan, there are fewer than one thousand women. This is despite the fact that there has been a progressive increase in the number of women journalists working in mainstream media in Pakistan since the emergence of print and electronic media companies in 2010. Media organizations frequently fail to advance female media professionals to executive positions due to the prevailing societal misconception that women are primarily meant to fulfill familial responsibilities and are incapable of effectively managing an organization at an executive level. Feminists contend that male individuals occupy dominant positions in decision-making, resulting in economic disparities and a shortage of female presence in leadership positions.

In order to comprehend women's standing in media companies, including their hierarchical positions and employment duties in print and electronic media—which is increasingly blending digital and conventional television—this research draws on a variety of ideas and views. In this day and age of the internet and connection, every media type has a digital counterpart.

The term "critical mass" is derived from the field of nuclear physics. The concept of reaching an irreversible tipping point signifies a significant change in the media industry. Consequently, it is imperative for more women to pursue careers in journalism in order to achieve a critical mass at that juncture. However, even after the years when the proportion of women in journalism surpassed 30%, reaching beyond the critical mass, the desired transformation still did not occur. The ineffectiveness of this indoctrination led to concerns about the Pink Ghetto. The phrase "pink

ghetto" (Beasley & Theus, 1988) refers to the fact that if women were to successfully enter the field of journalism, it would lead to a fall in earnings, which would then have the effect of compelling males to quit the industry. Following the failure of the critical mass achievement, scholars shifted their focus towards the problems arising inside professional institutions. The term "glass ceiling" refers to the phenomenon where women face barriers that prevent them from reaching high-level executive jobs. The concept of the "Topping-Out Factor" (Falk & Grizard, 2003) posits that only the highest levels of executive leadership have the ability to initiate change throughout an entire business. The topics mentioned are very controversial within the profession of journalism, and Bourdieu's theory (Bourdieu P. , 1998) of the "field" and status politics provide a rationale for this phenomenon.

The following section discusses the main theoretical frameworks used to comprehend the gender disparity associated with the glass ceiling.

4. Power, Patriarchy, and Internalized Sexism

The political and economic system has inherent gender disparity, and news creation frequently prioritizes this matter. According to Bybee (1990), the authority of male reporters is related to their gender and other aspects of their professional position. Female journalists saw a decrease in their journalistic influence, since the distinction between genders is based on the specific ideological framework rather than the inherent characteristics of women and men.

During the 1970s, female journalists formed an organized movement to resist discrimination and advocate for equitable practices in the areas of recruitment, advancement, and compensation. Nevertheless, this sense of unity did not inevitably alter the conduct of professionals on an individual basis. Certain feminist scholars employed the concept of "internalized sexism" to elucidate why women did not create journalism in a unique manner and refused to identify themselves as distinctly female.

Elmore (2007) interviewed fifteen women who left journalism and described a patriarchal newsroom atmosphere where males excluded women, gendered news judgments, fostered assertiveness and toughness, and wished to "rescue" women from discomfort and unfeminine chores. A significant number of the fifteen individuals minimized gender differences, suggesting that they had unconsciously internalized the male-oriented standards prevalent in newsrooms.

Djerf-Pierre (2007) contends that women may refrain from questioning established definitions of news due to the prioritization of their ability to work as journalists above whatever grievances they may have. In addition to wanting to be called "one of the boys," they also aimed to live up to the expectations of their male editors, publishers, and coworkers.

5. Critical Mass and Pink Ghetto Theory

In nuclear physics, critical mass refers to the lowest quantity of material necessary to launch a self-sustaining chain reaction. However, social scientists have used this word to refer to a point of no return in organizational restructuring. Rosabeth Moss-Kanter (Kanter, 1977) proposed innovative leadership concepts and tactics for dealing with the condition of female journalists in the sphere of journalism in an attempt to determine the threshold at which female leaders may form alliances or coalitions and effectively raise their voices to influence the situation in their favor. The argument is that a few people can't affect big organizational transformation all at once. This hypothesis gives a reason for recruiting and promoting more women, as well as a response to feminist criticism that women have not had a significant influence.

Within companies, politics, and media, the absence of a significant number or proportion of women, specifically less than 30%, was used as a justification for employing or promoting more

women. It was also used to explain why the work done by women was not significantly distinct from that of males. Consistent influence requires a critical mass, and it is worth evaluating the significance of the 30% figure, especially considering that women currently make up more than one-third of journalists in various situations.

Even when women were present in varied work situations, most thorough studies found no significant differences in professional tendencies between male and female journalists. Critics argue that critical mass theory lacks any additional explanatory or predictive power, given the evolution of media, which has resulted in the feminization of various genres and the emergence of new standards in substance and style, rather than improving women's status in the media industry. Women journalists and academics have criticized the Pink Ghetto notion (Beasley & Theus, 1988), which holds that women entering journalism will have a negative influence on the industry. Nevertheless, the majority of comprehensive surveys did not provide any substantial proof of significant disparities between male and female journalists in terms of their professional inclinations.

Years after, when the editor of *Working Woman* was reported by *Adweek* in 1984, she said, "Women have reached a certain point "I call it the glass ceiling." This is when the term began to gain use. They are at the highest level of middle management, but they are unable to move forward and are becoming stuck, according to Falk and Grizzard's (2003). One of the concepts that came to be known as a sticky ladder was the idea of becoming stuck in middle management.

Frequently referred to as the "Topping-Out Factor," this theory proposes that women at the top of an organization are more essential than women at the bottom of the organization. It is based on the idea that gender management makes a difference. However, an Annenberg survey of Fortune 500 telecommunications, publishing, entertainment, and advertising industries revealed that women made up only 12% of boards and 15% of executives. In the year 2002, just 18% of the executives working for newspapers at the assistant vice president or higher level were female.

It is hypothesized that companies that are dominated by women employees should have greater pay parity, lower levels of gender discrimination, and a greater number of executive women than businesses that are dominated by men. However, this is not the situation at all. There was no guarantee that top female newsroom managers would hire or promote other women to management roles for themselves. Gallagher provides an argument that women journalists continue to be extremely susceptible because they have a relatively small amount of decision-making authority within media companies as well as wider political and economic institutions.

Lacey et al. (1998) believed that bias in male-owned firms would limit the influence of women editors because it is difficult for one or two women, even in the highest position, to combat a male-dominated culture. Nevertheless, Gallagher (2001) points out that women journalists, even when the majority, remain vulnerable due to limited decision-making power within media organizations and larger political and economic institutions. The "one at a time" mentality towards women in senior editorial management hinders the possibility of women building a power base for real change in journalistic output or institutional institutions. In a humorous response to the fear of a tipping point, she mocked the possibility of women taking over journalism's top positions. She predicted that top newspaper positions will remain male-dominated until 2030 if things continue as they are.

6. Bourdieu's Field Theory

The theoretical foundation of this study is informed by Pierre Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu, 2001) that examines how individuals occupy distinct positions within overlapping fields, which in turn influences the array of choices accessible to them. In every social domain, people and

organizations engage in competition for the same rewards, employing diverse tactics to attain positions of power and exert influence. Capital, in any particular domain, might take the form of symbols representing rank, prestige, or legitimacy, as well as cultural knowledge acquired via education, or social connections derived from family or personal interactions. What is at risk here is the achievement of success, social standing, and the authority to determine who should be acknowledged as professionals and what is considered 'good' and worthwhile.

Djerf-Pierre (2007) uses field theory to elucidate the relationship between gender and power within the realm of journalism. He considers journalism to be at the intersection of political, economic, and professional forces and dynamics, which accurately represents the influence of these factors at different times in history. Djerf-Pierre argues that journalism has historically been controlled by men and continues to be influenced by gender norms, where qualities like status, prestige, and power are still linked with masculinity.

One option for women in traditionally male-dominated fields is to fight for the same highly prized resources as men, another is to find their feminine voice in journalism, and yet another is to question established standards and definitions. When it comes to the differences in position and pay that exist between men and women in the field of journalism, field theory offers some very insightful explanations. It reveals an endless loop of gender bias in which people are forced to cover particular subjects or are systematically barred from covering them.

7. Methodology

Pakistani male and female journalists from print (both English and Urdu) and electronic (both analog and digital) media were all a part of the research. People under the age of 40 and those over the age of 40 made up the two groups of participants. A nationwide online survey was conducted in Pakistan to account for the country's vast and scattered population, as well as to overcome constraints related to time and financial resources. A survey questionnaire was disseminated to each participant using several social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, with the purpose of gathering data. A grand total of 360 media professionals, including individuals of both genders, submitted their replies. There were 164 males and 196 females. The data acquired included persons' gender, age, the sort of media organization they work for, and their job title, which were then examined to test the study hypotheses.

8. Data Analysis and Findings

The designations within a typical news or media organization are categorized according to the level of authority, responsibility, and seniority that corresponds to each position in this hierarchy.

Table 1: Gender percentage at various positions in media organizations

	Bureau Chief	Editor	Sub Editor	Reporter	Anchor	Producer	Associate Producer
Male	3.0	18.3	7.9	37.8	9.1	12.2	11.6
Female	1.0	7.1	9.2	34.7	17.3	9.2	21.4

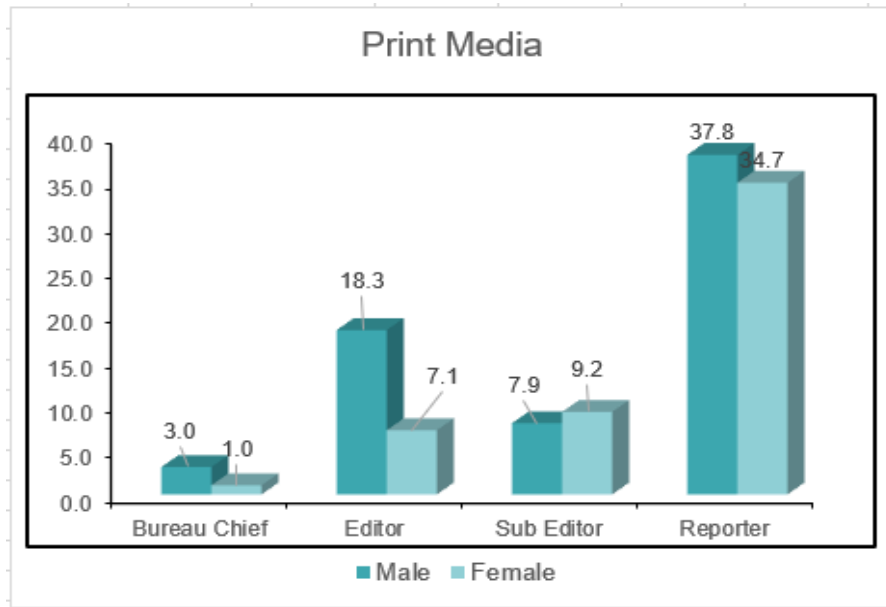


Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Employees in Print Media Across Job Titles and Gender

Table 1 displays a clear gender gap in both print and electronic media sectors across hierarchical ranks, providing insight into the gender gap that still exists as well as the possibility of the glass ceiling in media organizations. The gender gap is noticeable in print media for several roles, beginning with the Bureau Chief job, where the male-to-female ratio is 5:2. This disparity shows that women are noticeably underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions in print media companies. The gender gap continues as one moves down the hierarchy. For example, the ratio for the Editor position is 30:18, which indicates a large lean toward male representation among the editorial staff. Similarly, the gender disparity is evident in the Sub-Editor role, where the ratio is 13:18, albeit the proportion of women is marginally higher. It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that the Sub-Editor position frequently entails labor-intensive responsibilities, which may be a factor in the disproportionate number of women holding lower-paying as well as more demanding jobs (Figure 1).

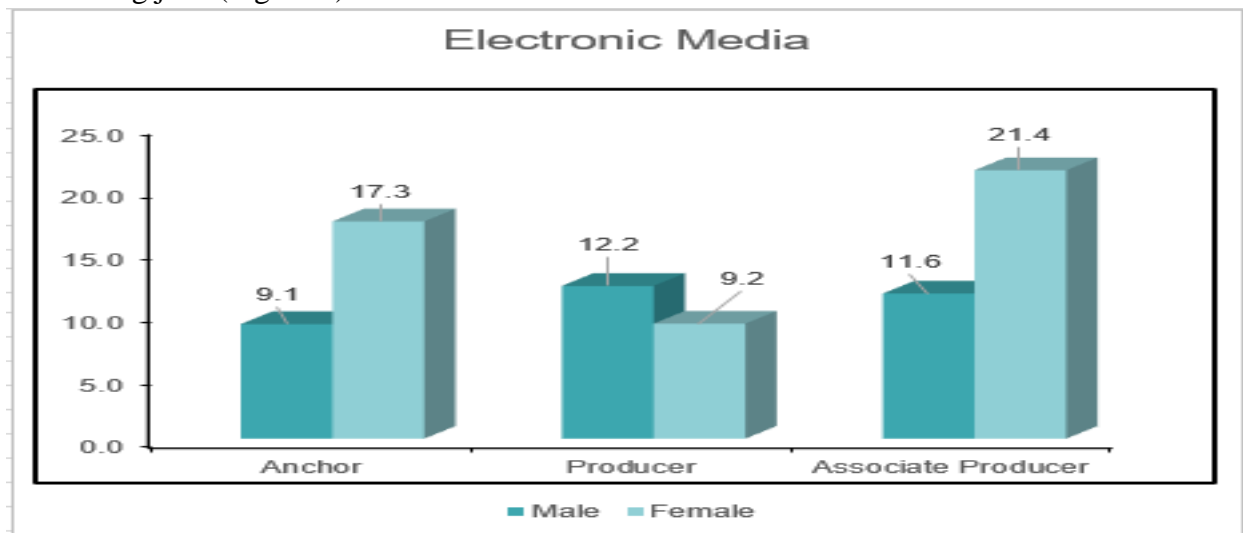


Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Employees in Electronic Media (TV Channels) Across Job Titles and Gender

In contrast, the representation of men and women in the Reporter role in print media is almost equal at 62:68, indicating a somewhat more balanced distribution of genders at the lowest level. This parity, though, might be deceptive since it suggests that women are overrepresented in physically demanding roles, which could result in different compensation for identical roles. Gender dynamics in electronic media are notably different, especially when it comes to the Anchor position, where the ratio is 15:34, indicating a large gender imbalance favoring women. This shows a different gender dynamic in electronic media organizations compared to the print industry's male-dominated leadership structure.

Figure 2 shows a closer look at roles in electronic media shows that the gender distribution in decision-making roles is more balanced; the Producer role, for example, has a ratio of 20:18, while the gender gap is marginally greater than in other roles. At 19:42, women outnumber men in associate or assistant producer positions. The presence of women at the top rank group, as anchors may show that in in electronic media, gender discrimination is diminishing. But here it is important to analyze things in context. It is a documented fact that female hosts in the television industry are required to appear slim, modern, and fair on the screen; they cannot host or report while wearing a traditional headscarf (Saeed, Saleem, & Khan, 2021). The dress code deters some hosts from entering the industry. Therefore, women are more frequent in on-screen roles like news anchors, but this trend suggests they may be in lower-level decision-making roles in electronic media companies.

Although women are more common in on-screen positions like news anchors, this trend suggests that women in electronic media companies may be occupying lower-level decision-making roles.

Table 2: Gender Distribution Across Age Categories and Hierarchical Positions in Print and Electronic Media Organizations

	Gender	Age Categories	Hierarchical Position			Total
			High Rank	Middle Rank	Low Rank	
Print	Male	20-39 years	6	5	13	24
		40 and above	11	7	15	33
	Total		17	12	28	57
	Female	20-39 years	8	14	22	44
		40 and above	6	6	6	18
	Total		14	20	28	62
Electronic	Male	20-39 years	20	13	34	67
		40 and above	12	8	16	36
	Total		32	21	50	103
	Female	20-39 years	34	12	70	116
		40 and above	2	4	10	16
	Total		36	16	80	132

9. Gender Distribution Across Hierarchical Positions and Age Groups:

Table 2 presents a cross-tabulation of gender, age groups, and hierarchical levels in the print media industry. The data is categorized into three tiers: high, moderate, and low, with additional classifications based on gender and age demographics. Among the upper echelons, there are significant disparities in the level of gender representation between males and females. There are a total of 14 individuals in the age group of 20 to 39, consisting of 6 males and 8 females. This indicates a higher proportion of older men holding senior positions compared to younger men, while the distribution of females is more evenly spread across different age groups. The medium rank group consists of 5 males aged 20-39, 7 males aged 40 and older, and 14 females aged 20-39. This indicates a greater percentage of younger males in occupations at an intermediate level compared to older males. In the low rank category, there is a more equitable distribution of both genders and age groups. Specifically, there are 22 females and 13 males in the 20-39 age range, while there are 15 individuals who are older.

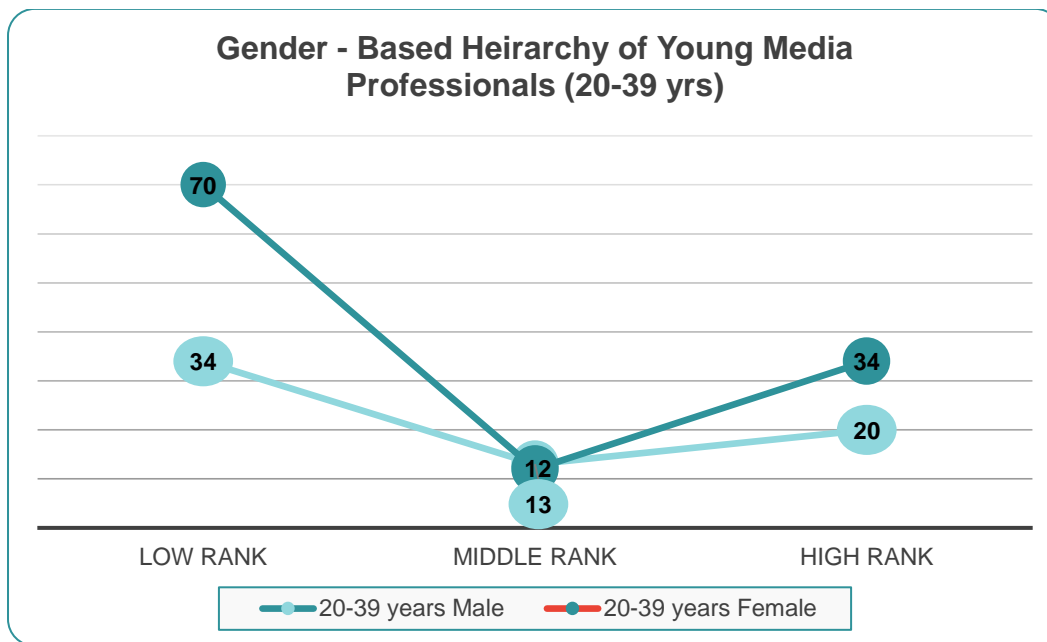


Figure 3: Gender-Based Hierarchy of Young Media Professionals (20-39 years)

Young men and women in media jobs differ greatly, as shown in Figure 3. Women are slightly more prevalent in entry-level (low-rank) positions, but men dominate middle and high-ranking positions. This suggests media industry promotion bias against young women. It raises the question of whether young women entering media careers face more advancement barriers than men.

Contrary to the prevailing male dominance in leadership roles among younger professionals, this data indicates a potential shift in the opposite direction, as shown in Figure 4. In this context, senior women occupy a substantial majority of top-level positions. The gender distribution in middle-level positions seems to be more equitable. Nevertheless, lower-ranking positions continue to exhibit a greater proportion of males.

This data could indicate two possible explanations. In the first place, it could imply that senior women are now well-represented in leadership roles because they have overcome previous career obstacles. On the other hand, it's plausible that women quit the media business earlier in life than men do, but those who stick with it are more likely to wind up in positions of leadership.

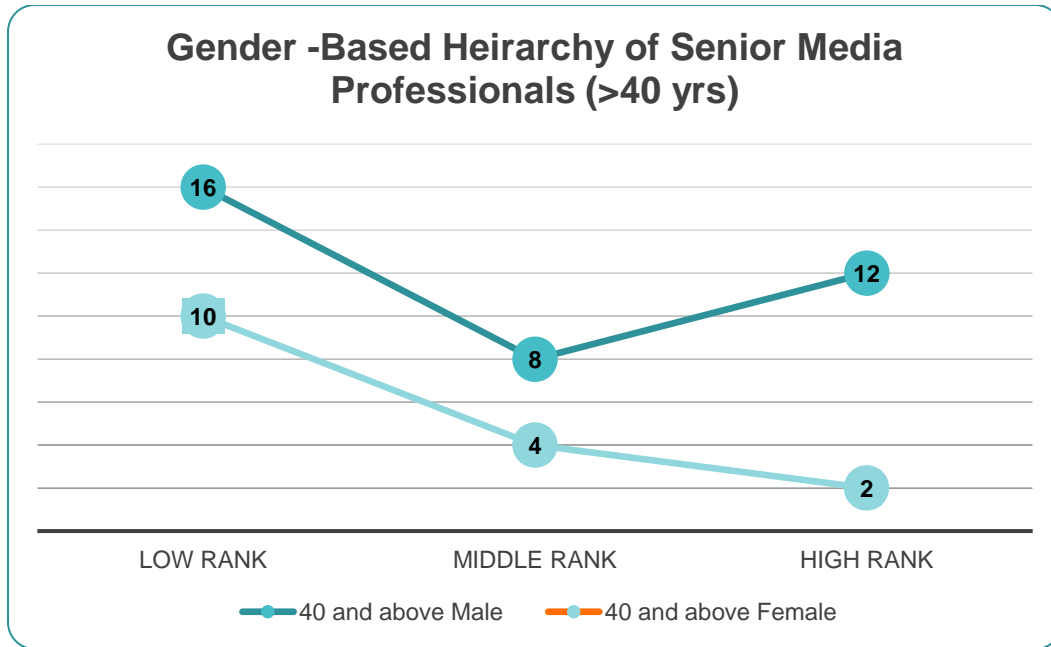


Figure 4: Gender-Based Hierarchy of Senior Media Professionals (Above 40 years)

10. Impact of Age on Gender Representation:

The data sheds light on the gender distribution across various positions in the media industry, highlighting the impact of age on this particular demographic. The gender gap in the middle and upper ranks shows that men dominate the media industry. Older men hold many leadership positions, worsening the gender gap. This supports the idea that men can achieve long-term success in the field. In print media, entry-level positions are more common among women in their middle and later years. This highlights the obstacles older women may face in advancing their media careers, perpetuating the glass ceiling. The detailed data analysis shows the media industry's complex gender, age, and organizational relationships. In light of this, it is crucial to take steps that encourage gender diversity, level the playing field for career advancement, and get rid of institutional barriers to create a more fair and welcoming media environment for people of all genders and ages.

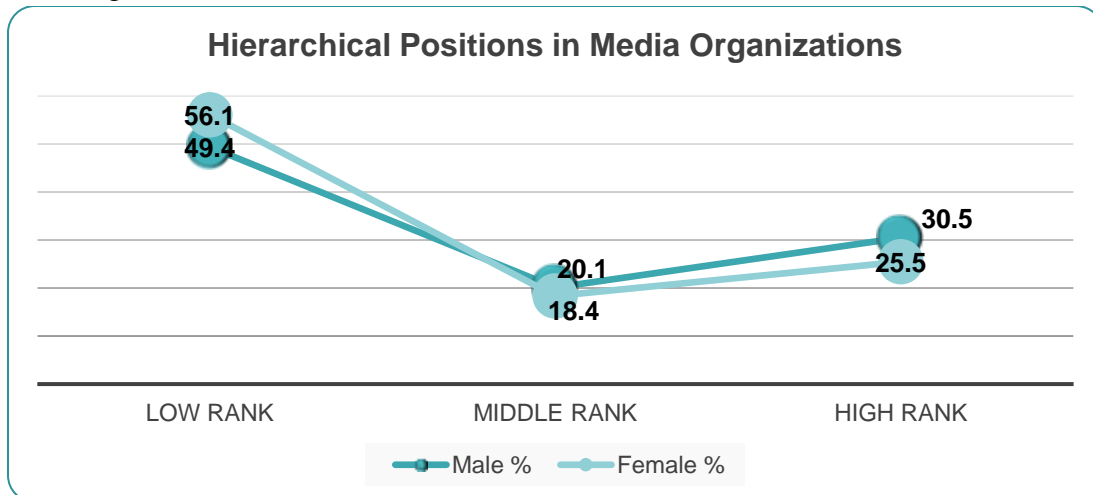


Figure 5: Gender-Based Hierarchical Positions in the Media Industry (N = 360)

11. Discussion

The data support the first hypothesis. The evidence suggests that gender inequalities exist in the hierarchical ranks of media organizations, particularly in the traditional print media and television channels sectors. Gender ratios at high ranks in Pakistani TV stations exhibit a positive trend, which is contrary to expectations. However, print media and digital media, particularly television, possess distinct operational structures and dynamics. In the age of the internet and constant, rapid information dissemination, it is crucial for traditional media outlets, whether in print or on TV, to have a corresponding digital version. Digital media platforms have the potential to attract a workforce that is more diverse in terms of gender, as these platforms cater to the specific needs and skills of individuals. New digital media platforms provide remote work and flexible hours, which may appeal to women, particularly those with families, resulting in the presence of women in these positions. Nevertheless, conventional television broadcasting may not reap significant advantages from these technological advancements. Culture may provide a plausible explanation for the anomaly of women occupying seemingly high positions in television and visual media. Pakistan's patriarchal social norms and gender roles have a significant impact on career decisions. TV networks may select women as anchors due to societal norms regarding physical attractiveness and gender-specific roles. Hence, the disparities in TV channel offerings based on gender are indicative of societal and institutional prejudices. The media industry in Pakistan must confront cultural and structural obstacles to achieve gender equality and diversity. However, this also suggests that television channels have the potential to support and encourage diversity and inclusion efforts, leading to more equitable gender representation in specific occupations.

The data provided evidence for both hypotheses H2 and H3, which propose that there are career disparities at every level of organizational hierarchy and that women predominantly occupy positions that are low-paying, labor-intensive, and have low autonomy. The study demonstrates that men and women tend to pursue distinct career trajectories within the media industry, regardless of the specific media platform. Both genders begin their job at entry level at the same age. However, the data indicates that women typically occupy positions only up to the middle rank. Women over the age of 40 are often found in mid-level positions, whereas men who begin their careers at a young age in entry-level positions are more likely to advance to higher levels and less likely to become stuck at the mid-level. Women in the print media often attain high-level positions as editors, but they rarely achieve the rank of bureau chief, which is the position with the most power, prestige, and financial advantages. Similarly, statistical data indicates that women are employed as anchors or program hosts, positions that are regarded as prestigious and lucrative. However, this statement holds specifically for males. Nevertheless, female anchors and program hosts do not possess the same level of authority and independence as their male counterparts. The problem can be partly attributed to patriarchal cultural norms and societal expectations in Pakistan, which restrict women's opportunities to attain prestigious positions. Various additional factors contribute to disproportionately restricting women to low-level positions.

Workplace attributes, such as the arrangement of the organization and methods of leadership, can also play a role in creating gender disparities across various levels of hierarchy. Gender inequality can be perpetuated by biases in the hiring, promotion, and decision-making processes within media companies.

The study's findings are highly anticipated and consistent with existing literature. The gender disparities in Pakistan's media industry, as well as the barriers that impede progress in achieving gender equality, are well-documented. However, we have inadvertently increased the

representation of women in the media industry to a level beyond the critical mass threshold, as proposed by Kanter (1977), which is 30% to achieve a substantial presence of women in the industry. However, despite the efforts made, achieving the anticipated transformation remains challenging. The alleged "pink ghettoization" (Beasley & Theus, 1988) appears to be a true situation. There is concern over the potential negative consequences of many media jobs being classified as 'pink collar' jobs that increased female participation in the media will inevitably result in lower pay and the departure of male coworkers. The concept of a "glass ceiling" is a direct consequence of the phenomenon known as "pink ghettos," in which women become trapped. A significant proportion of women encounter the 'sticky floor' phenomenon, wherein they become trapped in low or mid-level positions and are unable to progress as if they are firmly adhered to the floor.

Pierre Bourdieu's field theory examines how people's positions within overlapping fields affect their alternatives. A field refers to an organized, independent social region with specific norms and dominance structures. He believes that individuals and organizations strive for the same stakes in any social sphere, utilizing various techniques to gain positions and influence. Achieving a position requires access to valued capital in the field. Not all capital is monetary. Workers in any profession may value and fight with symbolic (status, prestige, legitimacy), cultural (education), and social (family, personal ties) capital. In the end, success, prestige, and the authority to determine what makes someone 'good' and worthwhile are all on the line (Djerf-Pierre, 2007). Gender is another symbolic capital possibility. If femininity has negative symbolic value, women might compensate by accumulating professional, cultural, economic, or social capital. Djerf-Pierre claims that journalism has a male-dominated history and maintains a gendered logic. Masculinity is still connected with status, prestige, and power, especially in journalism's basic ideas.

Although more women are working in journalism, their work has been undervalued due to its perceived femininity and focus on serving audience needs and interests, consulting women as sources, and including empathy, personal sentiments, and thoughts. This type of journalism lacks the symbolic significance of masculine journalism, which focuses on the public realm, and masculine interests, references power holders, and depicts reality objectively. To succeed in a male-dominated sector, women must either compete for the same resources, specialize in feminine journalism, or challenge traditional norms.

Furthermore, the "Topping-Out Factor" developed by Falk and Grizard in 2003 states that significant reform can only be launched by persons in high positions in the leadership hierarchy. Unfortunately, women get to the top by adapting men's methods of thinking and acting. They dread being feminine, thus the system persists. They engage in a new fight of becoming a 'man' while failing to contribute to any constructive change.

12. Conclusions and Recommendations

Gender disparities exist in the media industry, with variations between the traditional print and digital media sectors, according to the study's findings. The concentration of women tends to be higher in labor-intensive and lower-paying positions, with significant variations in gender disparities observed throughout different levels of the hierarchy. Additionally, cultural and societal expectations, hiring and decision-making process biases, and societal norms and expectations all appear to contribute to these disparities, according to the study. Confronting cultural and structural barriers is essential for achieving gender diversity and equality in the media industry. Furthermore, the research underscores the issue of media organizations functioning as "pink ghettos," which would hinder the professional development of women and present a myriad of obstacles in the field. We advise women in the media industry of Pakistan to consider the symbolic value of

femininity in journalism and the necessity for women to challenge traditional norms to succeed in a male-dominated sector, in addition to all the leadership development, mentorship, and gender-sensitive policies that aim to foster inclusive and equitable work environments for the advancement of women at all levels of hierarchy in the media industry of Pakistan.

13. Limitations and Future Directions

There exist three notable limitations in the study. First, the small number of samples hinders the ability to generalize the findings. Moreover, the data in question was collected at a single point in time. Longitudinal research is better suited for measuring and analyzing career trajectories. Moreover, it is advisable to gain a deeper comprehension of the decisions made by both males and females in their professional endeavors, in addition to taking into account the evident career trajectories and positions they have occupied. To achieve a thorough comprehension of the situation and make informed deductions, it is imperative to integrate a broader context, surrounding circumstances, and personal objectives into the data.

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