

Barriers to women journalists in Rwanda



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About the Study

Barriers to Women Journalists in Rwanda is a study that identifies obstacles hindering women from entering and progressing within Rwanda's journalism industry. The findings of this report identify the strategies and interventions that will promote gender equality for women journalists in Rwanda, at various career levels. The aims and objectives of this study was broken down into three research questions.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of women in journalism in Rwanda in terms of the barriers of entry and staying in the profession?
2. Why do these barriers exist?
3. How are and might these barriers be challenged in a way that results in an increase in the number, retention and progression of women journalists in Rwanda?

The study aims to provide:

- A review and summary of **existing research** on gender and media in Rwanda, including identified gaps in research (what is missing in terms of research on gender and media).
- An analysis of data gathered through the questionnaire and key informant interviews.
- Recommendations to inform the development of the Fojo/SR MDO proposal for phase 2 in Rwanda, as well as further research areas related to gender and media.

Beneficiaries of this research include policy and decision makers as well as media managers who can contribute to positive change in media organisations and the journalism profession based on the recommendations of the report. It will also benefit grant-making bodies and other projects that support women in journalism in Africa, in identifying gaps in existing programmes, and can contribute to addressing the gaps and challenges identified in the report.

Partner Information

THIS STUDY WAS commissioned by Fojo Media Institute under the project “Capacity building of the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Rwanda and Strengthening of the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency as a Public Service Media Provider,” with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and has been conducted by African Women in Media (AWiM).

Fojo is Sweden's leading centre for professional journalism training and international media development support, with a mission to strengthen free, independent and professional journalism. Fojo is an independent institute at Linnaeus University in Kalmar with a mandate to support journalists and media development in Sweden and globally. For more than 45 years, Fojo has held mid-career training for Swedish journalists, and, since 1991, has been engaged in international media development.



African Women in Media (AWiM) is an international non-governmental organisation that aims to positively impact the way media functions in relation to African women. AWiM collaborates with a variety of partners to achieve our vision that “One day African women will have equal access to representation and opportunities in media industries and media content.” AWiM activities create opportunities for knowledge exchange, building networks, and economic empowerment of women in media through their Pitch Zone and Awards.

Research Team

DR YEMISI AKINBOBOLA is an award-winning journalist, academic, consultant and co-founder of African Women in Media (AWiM). Joint winner of the CNN African Journalist Award 2016 (Sports Reporting), Dr Akinbobola ran her news website IQ4News from 2010 to 2014. Her media work is Africa-focused, covering stories from rape culture in Nigeria, to an investigative and data story on the trafficking of young West African football hopefuls by fake agents. She has freelanced for publications including the UN Africa Renewal magazine and has several years’ experience in communication management in the third sector. Dr Akinbobola holds a PhD in Media and Cultural Studies from Birmingham City University, UK, where she is a Senior Lecturer and International Research Partnerships Manager. She has published scholarly research on women’s rights and African feminism, and journalism and digital public spheres. She was Editorial Consultant for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 commemorative book titled *She Stands for Peace: 20 Years, 20 Journeys*.

DR. RACHEL-ANN CHARLES-HATT is an international academic, consultant and media practitioner. She holds a PhD in Media and Cultural Studies from Birmingham City University, UK, where she is a Lecturer and Course Director in Global Media Management. As an academic, she has published primarily in the areas of community media in the Caribbean and on the development of post graduate education in the United Kingdom. Her current work is focused on using podcasts to capture migration stories from Caribbean nationals living around the world, which explore social issues such as identity and racism. Some of her previous work includes working at Caribbean news media organisations as well as at the United Nations Population Fund Trinidad and Tobago providing technical consultancy support for an array of projects and campaigns such as those centred around gender-based violence.

Definitions

THIS STUDY DEFINES the terms listed below as follows:

Gender

GENDER REFERS TO the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. (World Health Organisation)



Gender equality

GENDER EQUALITY IS a political concept that emphasises equality between genders. Gender equality is typically defined as women and men enjoying the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities within all areas of life. However, similar to all the other concepts, gender equality can be used in different ways and can convey different meanings. Gender equality might mean that women and men should be treated equally, or differently. For example, it may imply that women and men should be paid the same for doing the same work or that they should be treated with different medicines and methods in order to make healthcare equal. (includegender.org)

Sexual harassment

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders. (United Nations, 2008)

For more on sexual harassment and sexism read: <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/integrity-ethics/module-9/key-issues/forms-of-gender-discrimination.html>

Sextortion

THE PRACTICE OF forcing someone to do something, particularly to perform sexual acts, by threatening to, for example, publish naked pictures of them or sexual information about them. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Gender-based corruption

SOMEONE WHO IS demanding favours, such as of sexual nature, in exchange for a service. Any person who explicitly or implicitly demands or benefits from or accepts favours due to gender differences as a promise in order to accomplish a duty, or to refrain from carrying out his/her duties. (Transparency International Rwanda)

Gender bias

PREJUDICED ACTIONS OR thoughts based on the gender-based perception that women are not equal to men in rights and dignity. (European Institute of Gender Equality)

Gender norms

STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a society, culture and community at that point in time. (European Institute of Gender Equality)



Foreword

THE PATTERNS OF gendered experiences that have led to barriers of entry and progression for respondents of the study in Rwanda, when compared to an earlier study¹ conducted by Fojo and AWiM across 17 African countries, further demonstrates how many of these experiences are shared irrespective of the country. In the case of Rwanda, a country that scores highly in the shares of seats in parliament and labour force participation within the global gender equality indices, the results are perhaps more surprising for that reason. The situation in Rwanda when compared with data from the sub-Saharan Africa shows a similarity in barriers faced by women journalists, namely poor salaries, sexual harassment, and gendered roles at the workplace. Therefore, these findings, in some respects, highlight that the existence of written and well-defined gender policies does not result in their successful implementation because Rwanda is still a long way from gender equality.

The results of this study, on the one hand, speak for themselves; training and education on gender equality would go a long way in successfully addressing many of the experiences shared by participants of the study. On the other hand, socio-cultural tensions surrounding the role of women in society further complicates how male colleagues perceive women rights and its importance. These tensions also highlight women's rights and the ways in which society treat women journalists. Finally, this study outlines the extent to which women journalists in Rwanda themselves recognise gender discrimination and harassment when they experience them, because the data shows that whilst most women can identify when sexual harassment happens to them, there are few women who are unable to identify certain forms of sexual harassment.

This study, therefore, offers a clear starting point for organisations tasked with motivating and implementing change. It helps to identify the pain points from the perspective of the women journalists they seek to support. The recommendations presented by the study stems from their lived experiences, and it is through the conscious and reflective interrogation of this, that we can truly set the path towards change.

1 *Barriers to Women Journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa*. The study is a joint publication by Fojo Media Institute (Fojo) and African Women in Media (AWiM) which was made as part of the project, Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Africa (CHARM). The study surveyed 125 women journalists from 17 different African countries. <https://fojo.se/new-study-reveals-barriers-on-entry-for-women-journalists-in-sub-saharan-africa/>

Introduction

RWANDA HAS MADE significant strides in becoming a global leader in gender equality following the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Ranked at number nine (9) in the world, in the Global Gender Gap report 2020, Rwanda has made substantial progress in the percentage (83.9%) of females participating in the labour force (Schwab, Crotti, Geiger and Ratcheva, 2019). Also, ranking at the top of the league, Rwanda has maintained its position as the country with the highest percentage (61.3%) of women's participation in single and lower houses of parliament according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020) report. The high attainment in the areas outlined above makes Rwanda the strongest performer in a sub-Saharan African context.

Although Rwanda has outperformed many countries around the world, as they actively work towards gender parity and in closing its gender gap, several problems persist. Ongoing reports highlight a variety of challenges faced by Rwandan women in the workplace such as gender-based harassment in online media, gender-based corruption in public workplaces, and gaps in gender mainstreaming in media. One of the issues is that women remain under-represented at local media houses as reporters, sources as well as interviewees and gender insensitivity in the media runs rampant.

Despite the implementation of gender equality policies nationally, regionally and internationally, women working in the media continue to face a number of challenges. Gender equality has been listed as a priority in Rwanda's *Gender Equality Strategy 2019-2022* (UNDP, 2018), the *African Union's Agenda 2063* (AUC, 2015) and the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (UN, 2021). However, according to a McKinsey Global Institute report (2019) little progress has been made as gender inequality remains considerably high.

Similarly, data collected by the Global Media Monitoring Projects (WACC, 2015) reports that little progress has been made in the implementation of gender equality policies in most media organisations in African countries. According to Fojo Media Institute and Africa Women in Media (2020), some of the problems that persist include "job stagnation, salary discrepancies for women in the media, disparities between men and women in the distribution of job roles, and sexual harassment" at the workplace.

Therefore, this study examines the following three forms of barriers hindering Rwandan women in journalism:

1. Challenges faced when entering journalism.
2. Challenges faced while in the industry. (These challenges relate to factors that make it harder for women journalists to do the job); and,
3. Barriers faced in relation to progression. (These barriers relate to getting a promotion or a raise etcetera.)

Study Outline

THE REPORT STARTS with a literature review outlining some findings from previous reports, followed by the methodological approach used in this study.



The research applied a mixed method approach comprising of two components: questionnaires and interviews. Fifty-one (51) women journalists, based in Rwanda, completed the questionnaire. Four (4) interviews were conducted to further examine the findings of the questionnaire. The findings and analysis sections of this report start with an outline of the main reasons why women aspire to become journalists. This part of the study also explores the barriers to entry and progression whilst highlighting key emerging issues for women journalists namely sexual harassment, gendered roles, and poor salaries. In the concluding section of the report, there are key recommendations that are centred around **Education, Training and Research, Policy Implementation, and Support for Women.**

Literature Review

IN THIS SECTION some existing studies of women journalists, primarily on a Rwandan context, will be reviewed. A survey of current media reports and academic publications indicates that journalists face barriers of entry into the journalism field, journalists continue to be self-censored. There are ineffective gender equality policies; there is gender-based harassment, a lack of awareness about gender equality mainly among media management, and gender-based corruption within the media. Therefore, these findings will aid in identifying existing gaps and limitations in these existing studies. From this review, areas for new research can be identified within a Rwandan context.

The recent study *Barriers to Women Journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa* illustrated that women journalists are highly motivated upon entry into the media industry; however, several barriers to entry and progression remain for many women journalists. In the study the researchers identified numerous motivations and aspirations such as “passion, societal good, and women as role models.” Beyond these motivations and aspirations, an in-depth examination of the report, which contained 125 questionnaire responses from 17 African countries, provides extensive accounts of the gendered barriers faced by women journalists in this region. The gendered-barriers of entry and progression for journalists within the sub-Saharan can be summarised as the following:

- Job stagnation and salary discrepancies for women in the media,
 - Disparities between men and women in the distribution of job roles
 - Sexual Harassment, Bullying, Sexism, and Racial Discrimination
 - Family Life
 - Women in media and leadership
- (Fojo Media Insitute and Africa Women in Media, 2020:28)

Therefore, this regional study plays a critical role in re-establishing the workplace agenda for women journalists and in identifying the importance of internal gender policies of media organisations within this context. This is a useful starting point for examining the barriers faced by women journalists within a Rwandan context.

There have been various areas of contemporary practices in the journalism industry in Rwanda yet issues such as self-censorship continues to pervade for a myriad of reasons. In a few studies undertaken by McIntyre and Sobel (2017, 2018, and 2019) they demonstrate several areas of socio-economic success in Rwanda’s

media sector post-genocide. An illustration of this can be seen in the article entitled *How Rwandan Journalists Use WhatsApp to Advance Their Profession and Collaborate for the Good of Their Country* which is based on interviews with journalists. In this study, the researchers conducted twenty-four (24) in-depth interviews, and the findings shed light on the significant uptake of technology within several newsrooms in Rwanda. Overall, journalists who engaged in the study described how much it aided them in developing “story ideas,” communicating “with sources,” and disseminating “news” (McIntyre and Sobel 2019:705). These developments promoted increased news consumption and engagement by audiences. The works by these scholars outline the contemporary news practices in Rwanda, which frames the news media environment for this study.

Although journalists in this context play an instrumental role in promoting social and economic development, studies conducted by McIntyre and Sobel (2017 and 2018) illustrate how much self-censorship has occurred to maintain peace and promote positivity. The twenty-four (24) semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists from Kigali and Butare. According to one journalist, who was interviewed in this study, “you make sure that you don’t publish things that might separate people, that might endanger national cohesion.” While another stated the following:

“BECAUSE WE ARE still in a fragile period—you know, it’s almost 22 years after [the] Genocide... and people are still having fresh wounds in their hearts... It means that we have to be careful. Because of that, some people do self-censorship to themselves... Even if you can’t get penalized, you self-censor yourself, you say “no no no, this is untouchable, I’m not going to talk on this [subject].”

These findings are important in understanding the current state of journalism in Rwanda and particularly in determining what work has been done in the areas of contemporary journalism practices.

Several current reports² also highlight several key issues affecting media workers in Rwanda, which are primarily ineffective gender equality policies, gender-based harassment, a lack of awareness about gender equality mainly among management, and gender-based corruption within the media. An example of this relates to gender equality, which has been a major focus for Rwanda post-genocide. Women were asked to join Rwanda’s labour force because most of the men had lost their lives during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Although women had taken up an array of job roles, there were still uneven gender proportion in several areas such as education. Therefore, the government of Rwanda prioritised gender equality policies to improve the quality of life for women. Although Rwanda has agreed to the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (AUC, 2015), within a media context, implementation at organisational levels appears to be ineffective (Rwanda Media Commission 2018).

Additionally, studies done by the Commission show a correlation between a lack of awareness about gender equality at leadership level within media houses, which

2 Media High Council, 2019. *Assessment Of Gender Status In Rwanda Media Sector*
Rwanda Media Commission, 2019. *Content Analysis Of Gender Based Harassment In Media “The Case Of Online Media”*
Rwanda Media Commission, 2018. *Gender Audit Of Media Organizations In Rwanda*
Transparency International Rwanda, 2018. *Gender Based Corruption In Public Workplaces In Rwanda*

has resulted in a media environment that enables a culture of gender bias. Further issues that persist, according to the Rwanda Media Commission (2018), include male domination in the media organisations, a lack of gender policies at organisational level and no established protocols for responding to sexual harassment. One of the other findings emerging from that study also revealed that staff at some of the organisations had no access to the gender policies at the workplace. These findings emerged out of research which included a series of consultations and workshops with five participating organizations and other key stakeholders such as the Media High Council (MHC)³.

A subsequent report published by Rwanda Media Commission (2019) illustrates the forms of harassment women in journalism encounter online. In this study, online content from twenty (20) media outlets and websites were examined to include news stories and social media posts. Some of the main findings in this study show that 18% of women online were harassed using offensive names. Meanwhile, 66% of the media content posted online resulted in the embarrassment of women through the intentional use of words and language on media platforms, 26% of the content (pictures and videos) were shared with the primary purpose of (direct and indirect) stalking women and 15% of the content reviewed showed unacceptable sexual comments. Other forms of harassment include threats and bullying. The findings from this study highlighted an area that necessitates further investigation particularly as the use of online platforms have increased during the lockdown as well as to capture data on gender harassment in Rwandan online media, and the way the victims are seen.

A similar study was conducted by Transparency International Rwanda (2018) on Gender Based Corruption (GBC)⁴ in Public Workplaces in Rwanda. In this study, they found that 96% of the respondents are knowledgeable of what GBC looks like and the wider implication of this. The report further stated that “nearly 1 in 10 respondents personally, or at least one of their workmates, experienced cases of gender-based corruption at [the] workplace in their current institutions over the past 12 months” (Transparency International Rwanda, 2018:6). This report describes and emphasises how much GBC remains a taboo subject, and many persons who encounter this rarely see an alternative solution to their predicament, with many women journalists not seeing how their situations can be changed.

Balancing societal traditions and norms alongside journalism career aspirations also appear to be a challenge to achieving gender equality for some women journalists. For example, in a study that examined reasons Lebanese female journalists were being marginalised, researchers surveyed 250 journalists and conducted 26 interviews with journalists working within this context (Melki and Mallat, 2014). In this study Melki and Mallat (2014) found women journalists in Lebanon from various levels of hierarchy being blamed for making the glass ceiling harder to break by taking ‘safer’ roles when they get married or have children. However, Kareithi’s (2014) work entitled *Africa: outdated representations continue to deny women autonomy of their “personhood”* provides another perspective and instead examines the impact of stereotypes on African women. This journal article asserts

3 Rwanda Media Commission (RMC), The Association of Rwandese Female Journalists (ARFEM), Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ), PAX PRESS Rwanda, Women in Media Platform (WMP), Rwanda Community Radio Network (RCRN).
4 GBC - Someone who is demanding favours, such as of sexual nature, in exchange for a service. Any person who explicitly or implicitly demands or benefits from, or accepts favours due to gender differences as a promise in order to accomplish a duty, or to refrain from carrying out his/her duties. (Transparency International Rwanda)

that “the restrictions imposed on women by tradition and social customs not only remain major obstacles to the majority of African women enjoying equal status with men” (Kareithi, 2014:334). Therefore, one’s ability to live their authentic self as a woman is denied because of these practices according to this author. The findings highlighted in both of these studies provide results that can be further explored in this study.

Based on the above literature surveyed in this section this review serves as a scoping exercise for identifying the number of challenges currently faced by women journalists more specifically in the context of Rwanda. Although a host of issues have been identified this study will focus on one of the gaps that remain. Therefore, this report explores the barriers of entry and progression for women journalists in Rwanda. This is an area that has not been examined in-depth within a Rwandan context in existing reports, which will serve as a starting point for these discussions.

Methodology

IN THIS SECTION, the methodology used in capturing the lived experiences of the Rwandan women journalists is outlined. The approach used to collect and analyse data for this study was adapted from best practice following the successful implementation of the *Barriers to Women Journalists in sub-Saharan Africa* a study by African Women in Media (AWiM) and Fojo Media Institute (Fojo Media Institute and Africa Women in Media, 2020). Although this study is on a much smaller scale, it takes on a similar structure that employed questionnaires and interviews. The data and analysis gathered informed the design and focus of the questionnaire, and combined with the outcomes of the questionnaire, was used to frame the focus of subsequent interviews. This ensured that the study built on and updated, but did not replicate, existing studies.

Questionnaire

A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS developed for wide dissemination on 16 October 2020 through various networks, including AWiM, and the Media High Council; and the data was collected over a 42-day period. For this study, a minimum of 50 respondents was required, and 58 responses were received from persons residing and working in the following areas: Kigali, Nyarugenge, Kamonyi district, Remera/Gasabo, Southern Province, Kicukiro District. Many of the respondents (57%) were from persons residing and working in Kigali, capital of Rwanda.

The length and nature of the questionnaire required respondents to allocate approximately 15-30 minutes to completing close-ended, open-ended and Likert Scale questions. The open-ended questions provided substantial qualitative data on the lived experiences of respondents, which were thematically analysed and synthesised. In an effort to engage respondents in further dialogue about some of the key themes arising in this study, respondents were prompted to provide their email addresses if they were willing to be contacted for interviews. As part of the ethical considerations in this study consent for their data was included as part of this study.

Interviews

FOR THIS DATA collection process, interviewees were randomly selected from the list of questionnaire respondents who indicated their willingness to partake in the interviews. Four (4) semi-structured interviews were conducted on 5, 6 and 8 November 2020, and one (1) on 9 January 2021. The interview questions focused on the barriers faced by women journalists, forms of discrimination, and gendered role assignments. The aim was to gather their lived experiences, further explore key findings of the questionnaire, and gather their thoughts on solutions and best practices. One of the overall strengths of this study is that interviewees had a range of career levels which aided in capturing in-depth data on the lived experiences of journalists within this context. All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis and Outputs

THE GROUNDED THEORY approach, coined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), was the main methodological process used to code, theme and analyse the data emerging in this study. The theming process involved three-stages of coding: open, axial, and selective. At the open coding stage, all data collected was reviewed and coded. Some of the codes that emerged included forms of harassment, poor pay, gendered salary, empowering others, and entry into the field. Once all the codes were identified, the next step, axial coding, was performed. During the axial coding stage, the codes were categorised into the following overarching themes:

1. Barriers to entry
2. Harassment
3. Poor Salary
4. Gendered roles
5. Barriers to Progression

The selective coding was the final step, where the core categories, as outlined above, were analysed to produce the report. In addition to the grounded theory approach, a narrative analysis, an approach developed by Figgou and Pavlopoulos (2015), was undertaken to analyse the interview discussion which further illustrated the everyday lived experiences of the journalists. In the data analysis and discussion sections of this report, graphs and charts are used to illustrate some of the key data synthesised with the narratives shared. Participants will be referred to primarily as respondents (questionnaires) and interviewees respectively in this part of the report. However, in instances where the term participant has been used it refers to both interviewees and questionnaire respondents.

Ethical Considerations

CONSIDERING THE SENSITIVE nature of the study, all the participants engaged in the study have been anonymised. The interviews were recorded via Microsoft Teams, this was solely for transcription and analysis by the researchers. In order to meet ethical guidelines and global data management laws, namely the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the recordings' viewing permissions were limited access and privacy to ensure security for participants and the data-gathering process. Similarly, transcripts were anonymised. Quotes used in this study include the location and career level of the respondent. Where the content of the quote holds greater risk of identification, the location and career level were omitted respectively.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the way this study was conducted. However, this study upheld the responsibility of not endangering its participants by collecting data remotely. With these ethical considerations in mind, this study was conducted online to ensure that all prospective participants could engage in the data collection process. As such, this study was able to maintain the validity and rigour even while being conducted remotely.

Limitations

THERE WAS A good representation in the number of responses received, though most participants were from Kigali where most media houses are located. The data analysis process considered those limitations when drawing conclusions. As a recommendation for similar future studies, data collection should include other areas of Rwanda.

There was a total of 58 questionnaire respondents; however only 51 questionnaire responses were valid. It must be noted that seven (7) questionnaire responses were invalid because respondents did not consent to sharing their information although they completed the questionnaire. This study targeted five (5) interviewees, and contacted 20 persons to participate in the interviews, however only four (4) persons agreed to participate in the interviews.

Additionally, the survey was disseminated in English which may have created a language barrier amongst participants as many journalists speak other languages such as Kinyarwanda and French. This study also considers that the views captured in the study might primarily reflect those women journalists who are privileged, educated and internationally networked, so this has also been factored as a limitation of this study.

Participant Overview

THIS SECTION PROVIDES a summary of the demographic data on the respondents involved in this study. The data captured outlines the respondents' age, ethnicity, marital status, income, education, and employment status. The chart below provides some further data on the age ranges of the respondents. Based on the data collected the highest concentration of women journalists (43%) are between the **ages** of 25-44 years old (see Figure 1). In relation to **marital status**, half of the respondents are single or never married (51%), whilst less than half of the respondents are married or in a domestic partnership (43%). Therefore, this leaves a small number of the respondents in the divorced (2%) and widowed (4%) categories (see Figure 2).

Additionally, 71% of the participants indicated having children, 24% of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they did not have children whilst 5% of the questionnaire participants did not respond to this question.

Figure 1: Age of the respondents

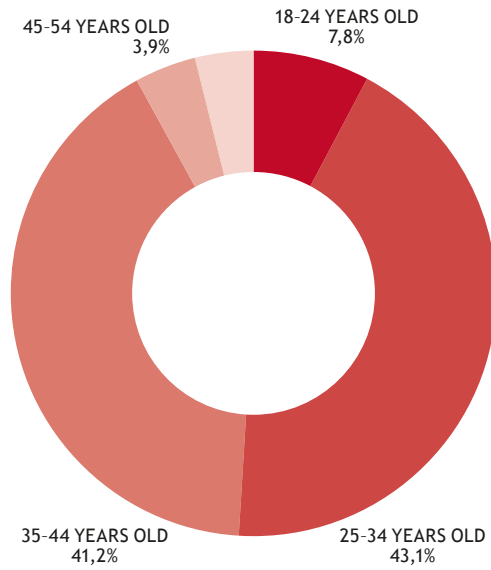
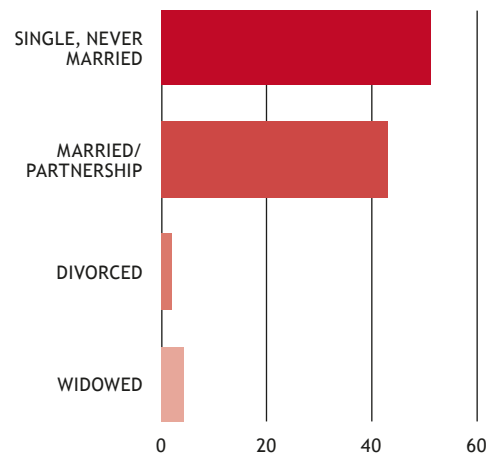


Figure 2: Marital Status



FURTHER DATA ON the respondent’s employment statuses shows that only 37% of the respondents are employed on a full-time basis, which is considerably low, leaving a sizable amount of the respondents as self-employed either as a freelancer (28%) or a media owner (28%) (see Figure 3). Meanwhile, there are a few respondents who work part-time (6%) or are students (2%). In terms of **career levels**, 43% of the respondents indicated senior or executive career levels, while 16% of the respondents are in middle level categories⁵, 24% in intermediate levels⁶, 14% at entry level, and 2% are students (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Employment Status

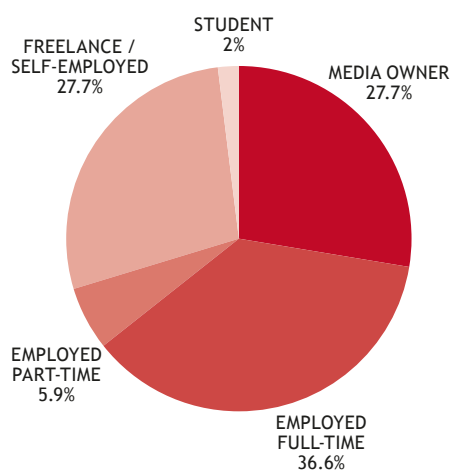
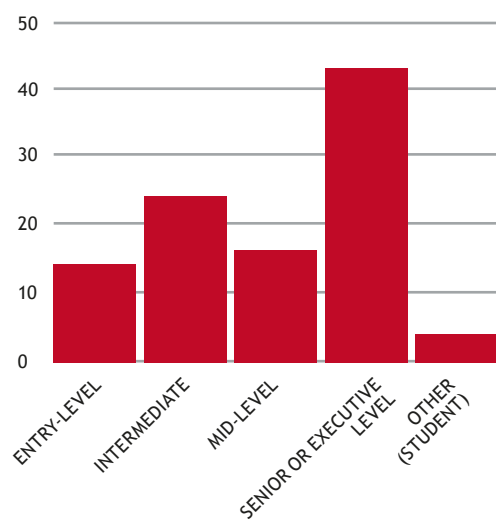


Figure 4: Career Levels



5 Middle career levels - typically one would have a number of years in the industry and would hold managerial roles. Persons at these levels work independently with limited supervision by managers in top level management.
 6 Intermediate career levels - typically employees in this category would be in their role for a few years in and they largely work independently with supervision by middle level managers.

The **annual income** data shows that most of the respondents (59%) regardless of their education, and career levels, are earning less than \$1,000USD annually from journalism, with significantly less respondents within the higher income thresholds (see Figure 5). In relation to **education**, most of the respondents (78%) hold bachelor’s degrees, whilst less than a quarter of those who engaged in this study hold an associate degree (2%), a master’s degree (4%), and other qualifications (16%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Annual Income

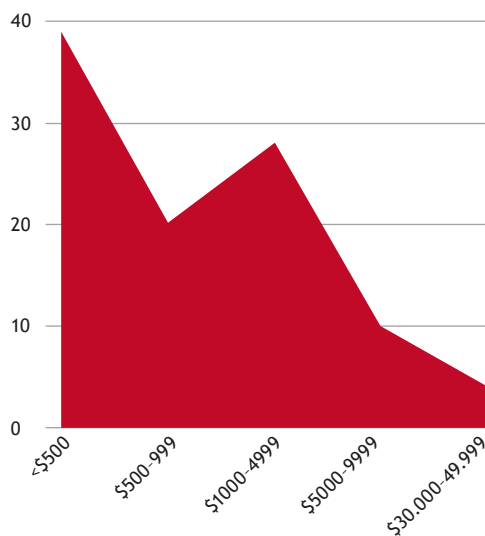
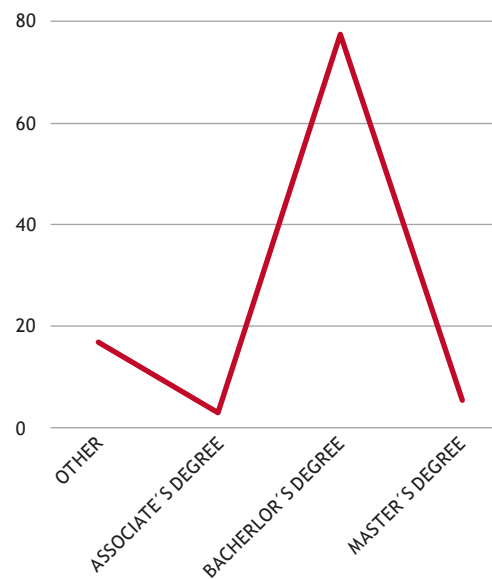


Figure 6: Educational Attainment



Section 1: Rationales for Entry into the Journalism Industry

THIS PART OF the report examines the various justifications for Rwandan women entering the journalism sector. As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked several pertinent questions that allowed for a reflection on the motivating factors for getting into the journalism industry. This was an important question to ask, especially following on from existing research attributing motivation to “glamour” (Emenyeonu, 1991) and other rationales that trivialise the ambitions and capabilities of women entering the journalism industry, as outlined in the Barriers to women journalists report by Fojo Media Institute and Africa Women in Media (2020).

When asked “*why did you become a journalist?*” several consistent terms emerged in the responses. The responses were primarily for reasons of passion and empowering others. Questionnaire respondents also expressed love and immense desirability for the media sector. In some cases, respondents talked about traumatic past events that led to them getting into journalism. Overall, the primary responses for getting into journalism relate to **passion, skills, empowerment, and resilience**. These findings are comparable to the regional report on Barriers to women journalists, which shows that 80% of the questionnaire respondents experienced passion, societal good, women as role models and entering the industry. Therefore, the following paragraphs explore these themes in more detail through an analysis of some of these responses.

Passion is one word that consistently appeared in the respondents' replies. For example, those who responded to the questionnaire used words such as **love** and **passion** to convey how they felt about getting into journalism. The words **passion** or **passionate** appeared 31 times in the questionnaire responses. According to one respondent, in executive management, "I was passionate about journalism." A majority of the responses echoed this sentiment in various ways. This finding implies passion is a key pillar that informs one's decision when considering journalism careers. Meanwhile, a smaller number of the questionnaire respondents used the word love to describe "**why they got into the industry?**". For example, a few of the respondents in intermediate career levels stated how much they loved this profession from childhood. This is akin to how respondents expressed their passion for journalism. The respondents relate the expectation of having love or passion for getting into the profession, to personal satisfaction such as self-expression.

Another area that respondents alluded to is having the fundamental **skills** required to work in this field. For some, the media industry was an attraction, while for others they felt they were gifted with journalism skills from a young age. One questionnaire respondent in executive management describes her attraction to radio documentaries. While another respondent in middle level regards herself as an excellent storyteller. Several respondents believe that the media is a suitable platform for expressing opinions and for reporting and writing stories. One individual at entry level described learning professionalism to prepare for the journalist role.

Motivations such as passion also had a domino effect on some respondents as they expressed how **passion led them to develop the skills needed for this field**. A questionnaire respondent, in a senior management capacity, expressed how her passion led her to pursue university courses in journalism and communication. Meanwhile, a number of respondents and one of the interviewees indicated that they **sought internship opportunities**, which according to the interviewee made the transition easier when entering the journalism industry.

The respondents also shared the **empowering roles** their **mentors and role models** played when deciding on entering the industry. "I was inspired by a journalist, and I like the impact they make in society", says an executive manager. Another illustration of this is where several respondents revealed that they never envisioned this career for themselves and, as such, did not select the required subjects at secondary school. However, some respondents noted that their capabilities were recognised by someone who saw their reporting potential, and who empowered them along the journey. This was also the view by some individuals in intermediate career levels, while one respondent in executive management was inspired by a relative who practiced radio journalism. Similarly, another respondent describes being empowered in the form of a legacy passed on by her relative:

"MY [RELATIVE] WORKED at the media station I worked at. When I was of age to work there, I joined the television station... I started as a technician in the TV Control room, I always loved the technical side of it. Being behind the scenes but being the one making things happen was awesome. So, from there, I added a show on the radio, and an annual entertainment TV program on New Year's Eve. Later on, I joined the editing section, but this was years later."

(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)



Many of the respondents talked about exploring and practicing basic skills in journalism with support from their mentors. According to a respondent in an intermediate career level, “my educator made me the journalist I am today, all I have now, I have got it from there.” Respondents also talked about wanting to get into the journalism industry to create a space that facilitates empowerment to others.

Several respondents shared their desire for being the “voice to the voiceless” whilst empowering themselves and creating avenues for others to **become empowered**. For one of the respondents in executive management she discussed her desire to “write stories about women’s empowerment.” According to another respondent, in senior management, she wants to advocate for those who are most vulnerable and women experiencing violence. A majority of the respondents, especially those in executive management roles, are passionate about amplifying their voices, and advocating on behalf of those marginalised audiences, especially as it relates to human rights and access to justice. An illustration of this can be seen in the following statement:

“I WAS BORN in a village where people don’t understand the law and their rights, and my family and I experienced different kinds of injustices... because of this I want to help others understand their right, through the use of the media.”
(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Even though respondents are interested in advocacy for the vulnerable, those in middle level positions expressed their desire to produce content that showcases the needs of the community.

Resilience, particularly in response to past trauma, was also one reason that motivated respondents to get into the journalism industry. One respondent in middle level of her career stated the following:

“MY EDUCATOR IS a passionate senior journalist. She always encouraged us to love journalism and to use the news media as a platform to lobby for the rights of women in the media industry.”
(MIDDLE LEVEL)

Meanwhile another respondent shares a devastating event she witnessed which is captured in the following extract:

“DURING THE GENOCIDE Against Tutsi in 1994 here in Rwanda... I saw many things like sexual violence and many deaths amongst my family members... My motivation was caused by bad situations throughout our history.”
(ANONYMOUS)

For another respondent, it was the death of her relative that motivated her to become a journalist which is captured in the following excerpt:

“MY RELATIVE WAS killed, and one of the private radio stations of my country reported on the case of my relative, which helped to arrest those who committed the crime. It had been something which helped

me and my family, having journalists working on your cases, helping you just to get justice with no other interest.”

(ANONYMOUS)

Summary - Rationales for entry into the Journalism industry

This section focused on the background of the women journalists in this study and the major factors that lead them to become journalists. Based on the responses, participants are motivated to enter the field of work primarily for reasons of **passion, skills, empowerment**, and to demonstrate **resilience**. The overall data in this section shows that prior to entering the journalism industry most of the participants do not experience barriers but instead passion appears to be the primary lived-experience of aspiring journalists during this phase. Therefore, the next section is critical in chronicling the lived-experiences of the subsequent phases of the women journalists in this study.

Section 2: Barriers to Entry in Journalism

THE PREVIOUS SECTION outlined the rationales for women joining the journalism industry, and the dataset shows the unencumbered and freeing nature of these motivations. However, it is upon entry that these feelings of passion, empowerment and resilience are put to the test as women journalists encounter major obstacles. The data in this section shows a shift that occurs between aspiring to a job role and actively entering the media industry. As a consequence of these shifts, **barriers to entry** emerge. Therefore, this part of the report explores the specifics of these obstacles.

More than half of the respondents (59%) experienced barriers when entering the industry. While approximately 16% of the persons across all career levels, who participated in the questionnaire, stated they never experienced barriers of entry at any stage in their career (see Figure 7). There were very few respondents at entry level who listed the competitive nature of the journalist role as a barrier of entry. Meanwhile one respondent in middle career level shared her experience of her unfamiliarity with the Kinyarwanda language, which she stated is the chosen language of most media houses. While another respondent at entry level outlined the professional and technical barriers encountered at the start of the job role. However, the vast majority of responses cited **misogyny, poor salaries and sexual harassment** as the main barriers of entry faced. The following excerpts from questionnaire respondents and an interviewee capture a number of these experiences:

“MY EXPERIENCES APPLYING for this role for the first position was actually offered to me by a man... I was the most suitable candidate for the role... but after I accepted the offer, he then invited me to his room for a meal which I found a little bit inappropriate and I suggested that we meet at his office or a restaurant/coffee shop, he then told me that I acted immature, and I was ignorant and that I did not deserve the position, and he could find other girls who can do what he asked for who know what they want... In my second experience of trying to enter the industry, I was removed from the team because for refusing physical sexual harassment.”

(ENTRY LEVEL)



“AT THE START of my carrier my chief editors harassed me sexually, by kissing me without permission, and I also encountered verbal sexual harassment... in the end I was unable to attain this role.”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

“I EXPERIENCED BARRIERS when I was trying to enter the industry because the roles given were against my ethics and I did not fulfil them so I would end up being rejected because of this.”
(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

“I HAVE EXPERIENCED barriers because firstly getting the job is not an easy feat, and when I got the job, I had to volunteer without pay...”
(MIDDLE LEVEL)

“I WORKED HARD but I didn’t get a salary”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

“MY BOSS DID not send me to the field alone because of the fact that I am a woman.”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

“FROM THE BEGINNING when I joined in the profession as journalist it was not easy because my boss wanted me to do a marketing. I wanted to do journalism, but my boss always encouraged me to do marketing.”
(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

A number of the respondents expressed how male journalists undermined their roles once they entered the industry; and in general, the evidence shows that women are at a disadvantaged position compared to that of men. In reviewing a previous report from the Media High Council (2019), the data highlights some hindrances (internally and externally) women journalists face when entering the field. The result of this study shows that the “business perspective is one of the leading factors justifying why males outnumber females in Rwanda’s media sector with 36.6%... other factors include the nature of the profession 28.6%, belief/fear/ low self-esteem⁷ 18.6% and cultural barriers 3.1%.” One of the most interesting finding of this report is that “The number of girls that graduate from schools of journalism/media are few compared to the number of boys.” As per this report, these hindrances are the main causes for male outnumbering female media practitioners in Rwanda. Therefore, one of the main issues arising out of this, based on the data set provided, is that women do not begin or enter the industry on equal grounds. This finding has been echoed in the extracts above and has been factored in the questionnaire responses contained in Figure 8 below.

7 “i. The number of girls that graduate from schools of journalism/ media are few compared to the number of boys; ii. Females tend to fear the media due to failure of some media houses to operate because of limited means; iii. Some females fear sexual harassment; iv. Cultural barriers. In the Rwandan culture ladies are reserved, not talkative, yet the media profession requires people to talk much; v. The media profession has been predominated by males. So, there is a general thinking that females are less productive; vi. Female practitioners are stressed due to prolonged working hours per day or to be available day and night; vii. Females struggle with self-confidence and they choose less exposing carriers; viii. Ladies are not given equal chances like their male counterparts and when it happens, they are assigned to soft programs and discouraged to explore their potential; ix. Some females confessed that the media sector is part of the under looked sectors” (Media High Council, 2019:26).

Figure 7: At what stage in your journalism career did you experience barriers?

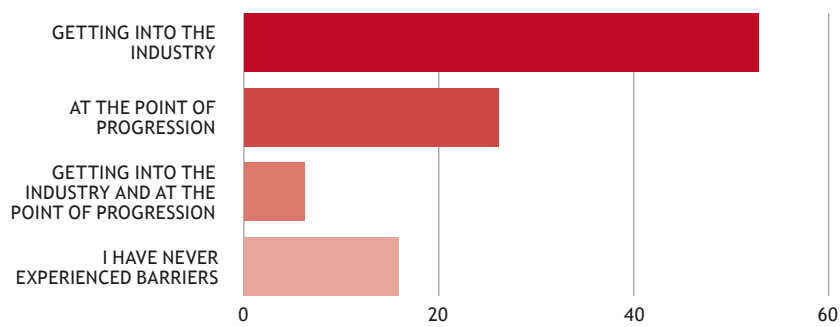
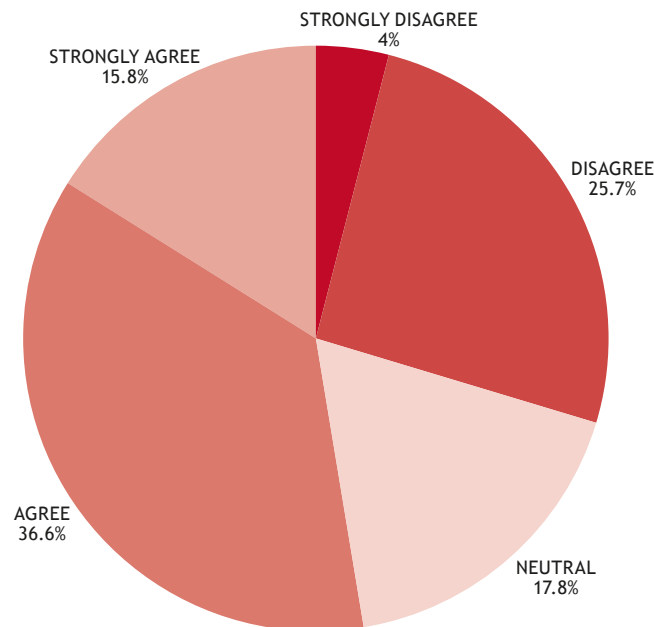


Figure 8: I have experienced barriers of entry into the journalism because I am a woman



However, there is often a tendency by women journalists to accept these realities rather than challenge them for a number of reasons as evidenced in this study. See an example of this in the quote below:

“BEING A WOMAN born and raised in a sub-Saharan country, I understand where the barriers would come in. Women in many traditional societies like ours are not privileged to attend university and work in the same roles that men would occupy.”
(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

This statement above is supported by the most recent gender inequality index where 10.9% of women over the age of 25 had attained a secondary school education Schwab, Crotti, Geiger, and Ratcheva (2019). Therefore, this demonstrates that the social construction for women journalists wishing to enter the industry within a Rwandan context is often undermined by practices such as the tradition

of a lack of education for women. It speaks further to the deep-rooted issues within the culture that requires further examination.

Summary - Barriers to Entry in Journalism

In exploring the main issues confronted by women when entering the journalism sector, **poor salaries, harassment, and gendered roles** appear to be the three themes based on the responses received. The responses further show that the main perpetrators of these barriers are men at top level managerial roles at the workplaces as well as within the education setting. These findings are useful for rethinking practices in journalism within a Rwandan context.

Section 3: Sexual Harassment

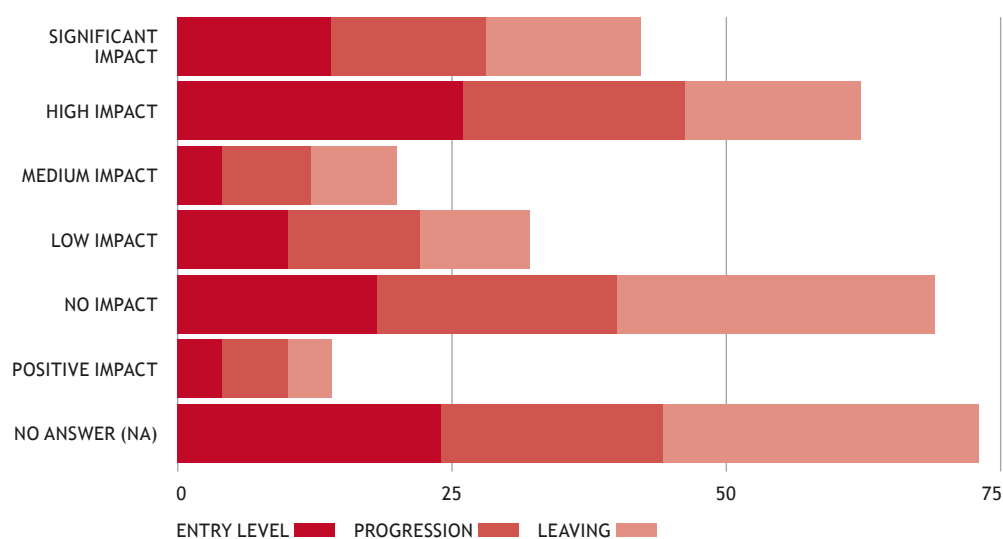
THIS PART OF the report explores sexual harassment as a challenge for women journalists in Rwanda. Sexual harassment at the workplace is one of the most traumatic experiences which can be traced back to slavery and the industrial revolution period. Whilst sexual harassment happens to men, women have been the main target of this form of workplace harassment. From the Barriers to Entry regional report, sexual harassment report was the most shared experience and testimonies across the participants in the Southern, East, and Western African regions. The forms of sexual harassment experienced by women journalists in the sub-Saharan region include suggestive propositions for a sexual relationship in exchange for work, to online sexual harassment and physical assault including aggravated assault at gunpoint. Therefore, this study will explore what sexual harassment looks like for women journalists in Rwanda.

One of recurring themes in this study is sexual harassment of varying forms, serving as both a barrier of entry and progression. At entry and progression levels 54% of respondents reported being negatively impacted by sexual harassment, while 38% reported that sexual harassment influenced their decision to leave the news media organisation or they contemplated leaving the organisation. Those journalists who left their jobs took several routes, such as switching to freelancing as a journalist, working in part-time journalist capacity, and/or setting up their own media organisations. More of this data can be found in Figure 9. Additionally, the term **sexual harassment appeared 40 times in the questionnaire dataset with 45% of the respondents explicitly stating that they were sexually harassed.** Upon further examination this finding was supported in the narratives shared, as one of the respondents in senior management described sexual harassment as one of the biggest barriers women journalists encounter in Rwanda. Unfortunately, this is the reality for most of the interviewees as they all mentioned sexual harassment either as having directly experienced it, or as the experiences of their colleagues. Therefore, this section closely examines a number of these experiences shared by the women journalists who engaged in this study.

Several respondents across career levels express **sexual harassment as a critical issue.** In reviewing the data obtained in this report, at entry and progression levels 14% of the questionnaire respondents respectively were significantly impacted by sexual harassment, however only 4% of the respondents were significantly impacted by sexual harassment which either led to their departure or contemplation of their departure at that media organization. The chart further demonstrates that at least 26% of the questionnaire respondents were highly impacted by sexual harassment at entry level, whilst 20% were highly impacted at progression levels

and 16% of respondents were impacted leading to their departure or thoughts of wanting to depart. Meanwhile 14% of respondents were impacted by sexual harassment at medium and low levels when entering the industry, whilst 20% of the respondents were impacted at progression at medium and low levels, as well as 18% of women journalists either left or contemplated leaving the industry because of medium and low levels of impact. The chart below (Figure 9) also shows that sexual harassment experiences were used as motivation and resulted in a type of positive impact to a small percentage of the respondents across entry and progression levels as well as when departing or contemplating departure from their respective workplaces.

Figure 9: The impact of sexual harassment



The lived experiences of women journalists involved in this study depicts harassment at different levels. On one end of the harassment spectrum, women journalists are typically **harassed for being women**, states one journalist in senior management. Based on the responses, **men appear to be the main perpetrators of sexual harassment at the workplace with one incident occurring within an educational setting**. One of the interviewees describes that her refusal to sleep with a lecturer resulted in a missed internship opportunity and lower grades. However, when closely reviewing the responses from this interviewee, she did not indicate having gendered experiences when attempting to enter the industry. However, said interviewee later mentions sexual harassment as a barrier to entry from a media lecturer from whom she requested a reference. Therefore, this begs the question whether participants recognise what gendered experiences look like? As such this concern will feed into the solutions coming out of this report.

Furthermore, the stories shared in this section also overlap with forms of **sexual corruption**, which is often used interchangeably with the term sextortion. Sexual corruption occurs when one is coerced into performing sexual favours typically for work and pay. One respondent in senior management talks about losing her job because she refused to have sex with her director. Whilst another questionnaire respondent described various levels of harassment, which also affected her daughter:

***“I WAS REPORTING** on Gender Based Violence, especially on child abuse cases and I received some harassment... It became on an extreme level where a journalist raped my daughter to shut me down. When my daughter got raped my fellow journalists [males] supported their male colleague [the rapist]. Even journalists’ organisations led by men were on the side of the rapist.”*
(ANONYMOUS)

The excerpt above details one of the harrowing accounts of sexual harassment, faced by women journalists. Moreover, this particular case of sexual harassment led to a crime of rape without redress. Therefore, one of the reasons this research is critical is to shed light on these ongoing injustices and develop a plan to protect women journalists from impermissible behaviours that remain prevalent within the news media industry.

The data also shows that one of the participants admitted to being **unaware of what sexual harassment is** and how to handle instances of sexual harassment by colleagues. An instance of this can be captured in the following excerpt:

***“I WAS STILL** new ... I mean I had no idea how to handle such things. So, it went on for a while and I tried to talk to one of my bosses at the time, who was a very understanding woman. I didn’t understand what sexual harassment is. I just knew it was annoying to me.”*
(ANONYMOUS)

Meanwhile a questionnaire respondent expressed that it is in fact the men who do not understand what sexual harassment is. This is an interesting finding and highlights the need for outlining and enforcing clear policies about sexual harassment at the workplace. The experiences for women journalists who find themselves in this position, that is as new entrants into the industry whilst encountering barriers such as sexual harassment, suggests the importance of **including sexual harassment training in the onboarding process, for both men and women journalists.**

For some respondents, **bullying and sexual harassment occurred simultaneously** and individuals were finding it most difficult to handle. Some of the women in Middle Level positions considered leaving their workplace because of the various forms of harassment such as bullying. Here is another woman’s experience of sexual harassment, bullying and some evidence of sexual assault:

***“I WAS SELECTED** among a few people to write... and it was far from Kigali where we all lived. We got rooms but the team leader suggested that he and I share a room and suggested that in a very rude manner that I felt offended. He would also get very handsy with me even after I told him I did not approve of it. So, he removed me from the team because I refused his advances and his offer to share a room.”*
(ENTRY LEVEL)

These findings are somewhat similar to the Rwanda Media Commission’s report (2019) that highlights the prevalence of bullying within the media environment. Another respondent speaks of **sexual harassment and assault** occurring when covering stories:

***“WHEN I STARTED** working... I encountered the problem of sexual harassment. Some wanted to touch me, kiss me forcibly as I went to interview them. Some men asked for my phone number to call me later. This discouraged me a lot from being a journalist while I was practicing this profession.”*

(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

Although the respondent above struggled to work whilst resisting sexual harassment and assault, she continued to practice in the profession and progressed. However, the problem remained unresolved which the respondent believes relates to a mindset especially of the aggressors. Yet, the respondent has expressed that she continues to encounter these inexcusable acts of sexual harassment, but she chooses to move forward with her profession. Therefore, based on the perception of this respondent, **one of the concerns emerging out of this report is how to prevent cases of sexual harassment from recurring.**

These forms of harassment also impact on other areas such as the way others perceive women journalists. One respondent, in a middle level role, describes an instance when a male colleague made her feel like she was a sex object, and she was denied equal opportunities in the field as well as in the newsroom. While another respondent in senior management shared a similar narrative:

***“[THEY] HARASSED ME** because I am a girl, other women harassed me and told me that I am a sex worker because I work during the night.”*

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

The quote above shows how stigmas around sexual harassment impact on opportunities to cover stories. It further demonstrates ways in which harassment stems from the wider society as well as other women, particularly in relation to the traditional roles’ society places on women and victim-blaming. According to Ange Ashimwe (2019), a gender activist in Rwanda, “society hasn’t regarded sexual harassment as a serious problem yet and most of the time, they blame the victim for being assaulted or even make it a joke.” According to Ashimwe women are held to this standard that emerges because of the false narratives, and myths which nurtures the toxic masculine culture leading to the muzzling of women.

This connects closely with some of the work by Kariethi (2014) on denying women of their autonomy. Therefore, if a woman is required to work a late-night shift as a journalist to cover a story, she is met with stereotypes surrounding her job role such as being labelled as a sex worker. These findings reinforce the importance of conducting this research particularly in identifying the issues faced by women journalists.

Based on the overall data, both the questionnaire respondents and interviewees are of the view that **sexual harassment and any other forms of discrimination, force women journalists to leave the industry.** From the data, at least 38% of respondents admitted that sexual harassment has caused them to leave their place of work and seek employment as a journalist elsewhere.

Previous studies by North (2014) point to the fact that several journalists refuse to speak out about issues of sexual harassment for fear of victimisation. In the case of Rwanda, however, there are women journalists who can put fear to one

side to file formal complaints on their sexual harassment perpetrators within the workplace. For example, one of the women journalists in this study admitted in the questionnaire responses that sexual harassment had occurred to her. Here is what the interviewee stated:

***“IT STILL DISTURBS** me that I had to go through processes of providing evidence, text messages and being a witness in the boardroom with my boss. But I did it, and he was fired. That’s one of the most extreme cases of gender and sexual harassment that I experienced.”*
(ANONYMOUS)

In terms of how organisations deal with such cases, the following experience of one interviewee suggests a need for sensitive approaches. In her case, the onus was on her to prove that the harassment happened. This experience is an example of why there needs to be more sensitive and thought-out approaches to dealing with such cases, in order to avoid further trauma of the victims. A lack of sensitivity can inadvertently contribute to women staying quiet. In the case of the interviewee mentioned above, she attributes the successful termination of the perpetrator to the **organisational policy**.

In the following extract another interviewee details her experience of the way sexual harassment was dealt with at organisational level:

***“I THINK INSTITUTIONS** or companies need to have clearly explained policies against sexual harassment and gender discrimination... explaining that sexual harassment is a company offence. ...People understood really well that it was an offence and there were punishments, so it was helpful because although I had to go through that process of trying to prove that he actually harassed me. At least the people were understanding and there was a policy in place, so I couldn’t imagine if there was no policy... I would say companies need that policy and not just having it but explaining it to the employees and making sure that they know and understand. What the policy says.”*
(ANONYMOUS)

However, it begs the question of what happens when there are **no organisational policies** to address sexual harassment complaints. Based on the responses the lack of organisational procedures suggests that women journalists are left to fend for themselves when reporting cases of harassment. The following interview extract shows how some women journalists establish a type of courageous character to deter potential perpetrators:

***“NO ONE CAN** come to me with that kind of harassment. Because I have that character, if I can say of confidence. They fear me because I have been in the field for many years, so it’s not easy to harass me because some of the men fear me.”*
(ANONYMOUS)

Journalists who engaged in this study have taken an **individualised approach to tackling sexual harassment**. In the case above the journalist chose to create a persona of fearlessness and being tough so that their reputation helps to avoid experiencing harassment. At least two interviewees attributed their successful tackling of

challenges they faced as women journalists, to their development of an unintimidated and strong persona, so that their reputation preceded them. This individualised approach to tackling sexual harassment is reflected in the questionnaire data where at least 5% of the respondents reported that they turned the sexual harassment barriers into positives and used their experiences to motivate them in their roles.

Summary - Sexual harassment

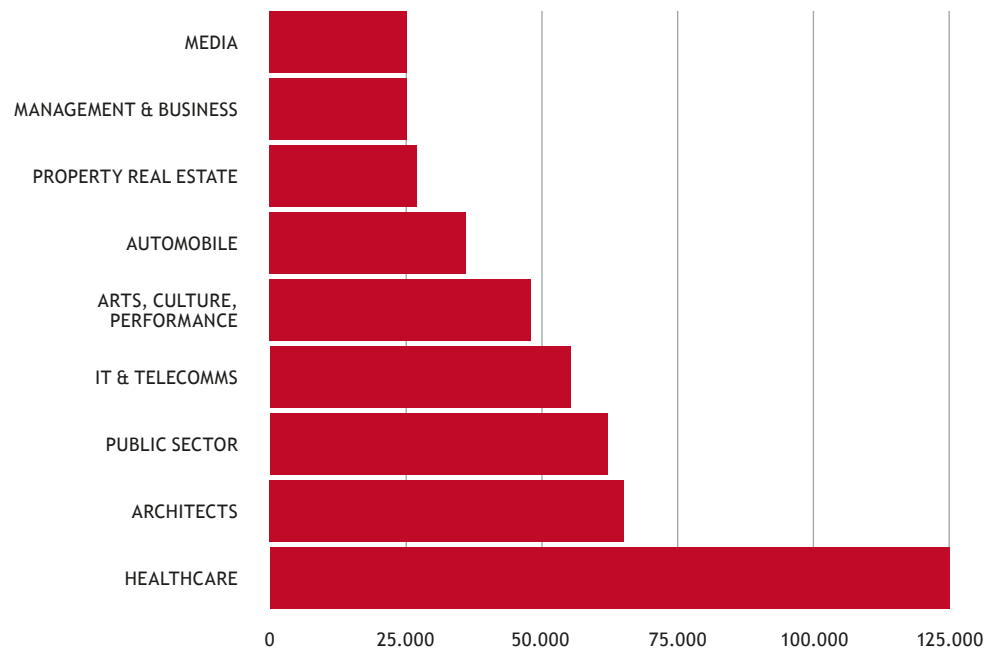
This section provided a summary of the forms of sexual harassment experienced by women journalists involved in this study. The data highlights the experiences and impact of sexual harassment upon entry, progression and retention in Rwanda's news media industry. The evidence shows that men are the main perpetrators of sexual harassment cases and is perpetuated by tradition roles of women in Rwandan society. The forms of sexual harassment typically occurred within media organisations as well as a university environment. The data also shows that one woman journalist remain unaware of what sexual harassment looks like. However, another questionnaire participant is of the view that men also are unaware of what sexual harassment is. It begs the question regarding the implementation and access to policies. One of the interesting facts discovered in this study is that sexual harassment forces some women journalists to leave workplaces in search of better environments, while others take an individualised approach to tackling it. Overall, the findings in this section reiterates the need for solutions to issues that women journalists face as the widespread lack of organisational policies is hindering change.

Section 4: Poor Salary

THIS PART OF the report explores another barrier identified by the respondents in this study: poor salary. In a report done by Stapleton in 2004, she highlights the critical role of having good wages for skilled and experienced journalists primarily to improve quality of reporting. This statement emerged after the Noble Journalist data project, conducted in 2014, revealed that Rwandan journalists are poorly paid. The findings from the Noble Journalist study, which assessed 100 journalists, shows that “43% earn less than \$293 U.S. monthly. One third of the respondents earn between \$150 and \$293 U.S. monthly.” Therefore, this report plays a critical role in outlining the earnings for women journalists in Rwanda and is utilised to analyse the various implications of poor salaries of the participants in this study.

An overview of the annual income shows that 41% of the respondents have an annual income that is under the internationally agreed poverty line of United States Dollar (USD) 1.90 a day (UN, 2021). The data shows journalists in Rwanda making less than USD1,000 per annum from journalism, as highlighted earlier in this report. Based on a comparison of pay scales in Rwanda, illustrated in Figure 10, media workers receive an average of USD 25,000 per annum within this context (Average Salary Survey, 2021). Therefore, from the data presented in this study, it can be deduced that most of the respondents engaged in this study **receive poor salaries.**

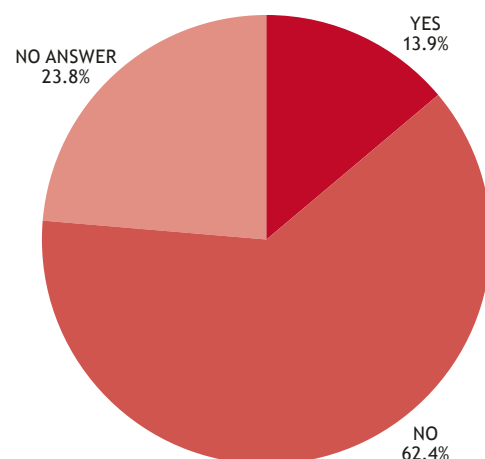
Figure 10: A comparison of pay scales in Rwanda



A further examination of the data provided by the Average Salary Survey (2021) also shows that women earn less than men. The average gross salary for women is USD 20,036 while for men the average salary is USD 24,200. Therefore, the issue of poor salaries for women are not only within the field of journalism but lies within the wider work force in Rwanda and would appear as a wider systemic problem that needs addressing.

However, there were mixed views amongst the respondents in this study regarding the cause of the poor pay. When asked if poor pay can be attributed to being a woman most of the respondents said no, while almost a quarter of the respondents provided no answer (see Figure 11). Meanwhile, only a few of the respondents said yes. However, this begs the question of the underlying reason for poor pay. The findings point to several factors, including gender.

Figure 11: If you selected poor pay, do you think it is because you are a woman?



Here is a snapshot of some mixed views of respondents. A respondent in senior management talks about being paid less salary than men and has remained in the same position for a significant period without progression. While another respondent, who is a student, attributes poor salary to being a woman. A respondent in an intermediate level shared the following:

“JOURNALISM IS A good profession but there is sometimes a lack of sufficient salary especially for freelancers...”

(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

From an organisational outlook one of the respondents, a student, attributes poor salaries to a lack of financial resources within the media industry. A similar sentiment has been echoed in the Media High Council report (2019) regarding a lack of finances in the news media industry. One of the interviewees also stated that media is a poor sector in Rwanda.

As a consequence of this, some respondents and an interviewee **describe experiences of poverty as a consequence of poor salaries**. The annual income dataset supports this concern expressed by those engaged in this study. Meanwhile, other respondents listed other barriers as implications of poor salary, consider the following excerpt:

“CAN YOU IMAGINE working 15 years and not gaining enough money to feed your family and your job is at risk?”

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

While an interviewee stated the following:

“I WAS NOT paid even when I wrote stories. It was hard to get money to my parents for their landlord.”

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

As a result of the experience of poor pay some respondents in intermediate levels highlighted having to supplement their income with full-time jobs, which eventually led to them practicing journalism only on a part time basis only.

Poor pay is also intertwined with sexual harassment. Although sexual harassment has been discussed in the previous section, it is important to note that participants are devalued by media organisations because of the poor compensation received for their job roles even when placed in positions where they continuously face harassment by sources and colleagues. As such women journalists are caught in a vicious cycle of sexual harassment alongside poor pay.

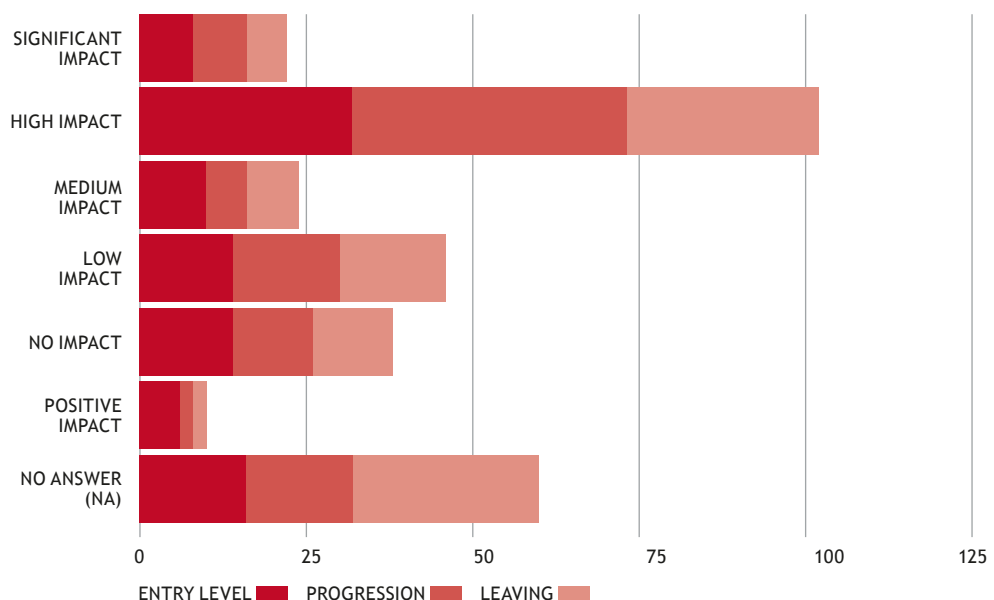
Social structures, such as families, are also affected by poor salaries. The impact of poor pay is also experienced in cases where families depend on the salary. This issue is further complicated by some women journalists not having employment contracts, and access to rights within the workplace. Here is one respondent describing this:

“I EXPERIENCE POOR pay as a journalist considering I have a family to take care of.”

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Several respondents in intermediate levels also express **poor pay as the most discouraging issue**. In reviewing the data obtained in this report, at entry level 8% of the questionnaire respondents were significantly impacted by poor pay, at progression point similarly 8% of the respondents were significantly impacted by poor pay, and 6% of the respondents were significantly impacted by poor salaries which either led to their departure or contemplation of their departure from the workplace. At least 32% of the questionnaire respondents were highly impacted by poor salaries at the entry level, whilst 41% were highly impacted at progression level and 29% of participants were impacted leading to their departure or thoughts of wanting to depart. Meanwhile 24% of respondents were impacted at medium and low levels when entering the industry, whilst 22% of the respondents were impacted at progression level medium and low levels, whilst 28% women journalists either left or contemplated leaving the industry because of medium and low levels of impact. The chart below (Figure 12) also shows that poor pay positively impacted a small percentage of the respondents across entry and progression levels as well as when departing or contemplating departure from organisations.

Figure 12: The impact of poor pay



Reasons to stay on as journalists. Although respondents feel a general sense of disenfranchisement, some of them stay in their roles because they have a passion for defending the rights of others. While a lack of salaries and financial sustainability leaves a number of respondents unhappy in their job roles. The data of this study shows that a number of women journalists have left the industry because of poor salaries.

For those women journalists who continued earning low wages, some of them created solutions to their dilemma. One of the respondents and one of the interviewees shared their solutions to addressing poor salaries:

“THE ORGANISATION I worked for told me that there is no money to pay me a salary and they asked me to work for free, so I left and started my own media house, so at least I can work for free for myself and not for another person.”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

“THEY CAN GIVE you transportation (in lieu of payment) at work, so I survived on that transport for a long time, long time in the absence of a salary.”
(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Summary - Poor Salary

This section on poor salary provided a spectrum of examples of poor pay among women journalists. The data shows that poor pay not only exists within this industry, but women are typically paid less than men in Rwanda. Existing reports as well as those who engaged in this study stated that the media industry itself lacks financial support. Overall, the payment of poor salaries remains a critical issue that is negatively impacting most of the women journalists. The evidence suggests that poor compensation is interwoven with issues of sexual harassment; and as an additional consequence of this women journalists who encounter both of these aforementioned barriers feel undervalued. Several of the participants disclosed the implications of poor pay on their families and other social structures emerging out of this barrier. It has impacted women in various ways but overall, it has been in negative ways. Despite these negative implications many women journalists continue in their field as evidenced by all the women who participated in this study. However, there are several actions that needs to be taken to ensure women are paid equally and these will be discussed in the recommendations section.

Section 5: Gendered Roles

EXISTING STUDIES SHOW that although there is an increase in women journalists covering news in areas of “politics and business,” women are typically assigned to stories in areas of “arts, education and health” and consequently they face issues of progression (North, 2014). The findings from the Barrier to entry report are similar to North’s report. Therefore, this part of the report focuses on **gendered roles** and the way these stereotypes affect women journalists who also fulfil the duties of mothers and wives. the data gathered in this study support the idea that societal structures in Rwanda promote gender stereotypes. Consider the following quote:

“EDITORS THINK THAT the big stories of interviewing people are for male and they cannot choose you [a woman].”
(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

One of the respondents in entry level outlines the following repeated phrase, “many people say journalism is not for women.” Men also perpetuate the stereotype that “they deserve better than female journalists” according to a respondent in middle management. Both of these findings indicate the type of struggle that occurs in getting accepted by seniors and convincing editors that women journalists are capable.

Those engaged in this study reported that **more opportunities are given to men than women and that women are often underestimated at the workplace.**

Both respondents and interviewees said that men are typically assigned stories considered as “strong.” These types of stories are typically described as hard news to include politics, crime, economics, and human rights. Meanwhile, a respondent in senior management described how women are treated as “lazy” and are assigned what is described as soft stories such as celebrity news and human-interest stories.

When women are forced into only reporting what is categorised as soft stories and men have all opportunities to cover both soft and hard stories it appears as though men get the best of both worlds and women experience an unfair advantage on account of their gender. According to one respondent:

“IN THE PROGRESSION phase, it was exactly the same, just different characters but the same stories, not being believed in because I’m a young female. Without even reading my portfolio or checking my career background my colleagues/employers assumed that I would not add value, and I heard comments at the workplace such as young females get “distracted” and cannot work as hard as young males. As a result of this, women do not have as many responsibilities as men.”
(MIDDLE LEVEL)

The general views collected in this study support the fact that women must continuously work twice or three times as hard to be promoted. Otherwise, the media will remain a male dominated industry. In reviewing an extensive study conducted by North (2014) she talked about the historical foundations of these practices in journalism as a male-dominated field since the mid-twentieth century around the world. Which implies that these types of practices are not only reserved to countries on the lower scale of the gender equality index but instead this relates to the patriarchal structures within society.

An interviewee’s description of gender parity in leadership positions suggests **forms of tokenism**⁸. In this case there are two senior leaders and five editors but, among these seven positions, only one is occupied by a woman. All the editors are men, as such, according to her, this impacts the beats assigned to her male colleagues. According to the interviewee:

“THEY TRIED TO mix, but when you come down in the newsroom, it’s different. It’s different because we have editors who are men.... every morning for us we bring a story idea. The editors try to shape it and give it a direction. When it comes to these stories like economic stories, big business stories, political stories, they are assigned to men, especially like politics and business. Men are the first people to come into the editors’ heads. For us, we do health, we [women] do social [stories]. There’s a disparity between the kind of stories that are assigned.”
(ANONYMOUS)

The responses also reflect the impact of having an **all-male editorial leadership**. Respondents described preferences for men to do politics and business stories. Meanwhile, the other respondents highlight a **difference in treatment between both genders**. For instance, this difference in treatment is often demonstrated

⁸ “the practice of making only a symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from under-represented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.” Oxford Dictionary.

in editorial meetings says a respondent who is in an Intermediate Level. One respondent elaborated on this point in the following extract:

“...EDITORS THINK THAT *there are stories related to gentlemen and those of ladies, but they are wrong because both of us have equal ability to work effectively.”*

(MIDDLE LEVEL)

This issue is compounded when women leaders imitate the same leadership style of males. One of the interviewees describes how she hired male journalists for organisation and hired women for work in advertising capacities because it was convenient. Here is what this interviewee had to say:

“80-90% OF THE *journalists are male, so I started with people who were already in the media so it was easy to find men to work for me because I don't want to take those who are at entry level. I wanted the people who are on the field who knows what to do.”*

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Unfortunately, this extract demonstrates that **women are also guilty of discriminating against each other**. This response by the interviewee shows that her decision-making was driven by gender stereotypes. As a media manager, this woman is positioned to provide opportunities for women at the workplace. However, this excerpt above shows that followed the practice of her male counterparts and did not offer opportunities to women which does beg the question of whether women are willing to take risks on themselves. When the interviewee was further probed, she shared that gender equality was never on her mind. However, the interviewee admitted that she had some training on gender equality and now supports other women in the industry.

Issues of gendered roles are also intertwined with poor pay. In this study, one respondent in a middle level capacity talked about a fellow male journalist being assigned to more jobs than her and being paid accordingly. Throughout the dataset there were very few instances where a respondent described equal opportunities at the workplace. One respondent described the following positive situation:

“IN MY NEWSROOM *everyone is free to cover his or her story idea...”*

(MIDDLE LEVEL).

In sharing another viewpoint, one interviewee stated that she is afforded with opportunities to cover stories that most women would avoid because in her view other women journalists fear doing some types of assignments. This position is captured in the following quote:

“THE SCOPE OF *work is the same for men and women in the newsroom. While some may fear going to the field, I go on assignments and I have no problem. I can do any story. I used to travel throughout the country meeting people. But women fear that kind of journalism.”*

(ANONYMOUS)

Based on the extract from above, the interviewee's experience shows how individualised attempts at pushing back against gendered role assignments can be,

and the notion that to progress, the onus is on the woman to be strong enough to push back against the norm. A similar approach is taken by another interviewee who stated the following:

“I COVERED STORIES that men are also capable of doing.
I also tried to do business stories, political stories.”
(ANONYMOUS)

In the excerpt above, it is interesting that the interviewee attributes hard stories as “stories produced by men.” The response also shows an implied sense of accomplishment and success related to the fact that she can produce stories in these areas. Whilst business and politics have always been considered as hard, other topics such as health, environment, and human rights are often seen as “harder and harder” categories of news. Therefore, the discussion about the definition on what is a hard story needs to be reframed so that women can contribute to the redefinition of what constitutes hard and soft stories. This finding further adds to the argument of **the danger of role assignment in limiting progression**. The stereotypes have infiltrated even how women view themselves as captured in the following questionnaire response:

“IF YOU WANT to succeed in this industry you have to work hard to show that you are able as a woman. Also, it is not easy to balance professional and family life, this is a big problem.”
(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Women are typically shoehorned into roles such as caregivers as media organisations rarely accommodate mothers and the flexibility needed to complete their role as caregiver at home. This has become a barrier for women as narrated in the excerpt below:

“HAVING CHILDREN IMPACTED on my career because society does not prioritise the needs of single mothers. Societal stereotypes impact the way we are perceived in the companies we work at.”
(MIDDLE LEVEL)

There were similar instances of this, for example one woman stated the following:

“I LOST MY job because I became pregnant.”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

While another respondent stated the following regarding a **lack of flexibility** at the workplace when compared to their male counterparts:

“GETTING MARRIED/BEING IN a domestic partnership limited the opportunity for progression.”
(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

Another respondent describes the **isolation** she faces while sacrificing to maintain her job role as a woman journalist:

“IN MY CAREER, as a mother living alone, it is not always easy. My husband stays in our home country and comes for visits

sometimes. I must manage my professional responsibilities alongside my responsibilities as a wife and mother... but with children there is no negotiation you have to abandon or postpone something in order to take care of them. Sometimes I feel discouraged at the workplace, but I persist because I like my job and would like the opportunity to progress..."

(MIDDLE LEVEL)

While another respondent talks about being a mother, whilst **struggling with society's expectations**, as well as fighting for her rights to retain her career:

***"HAVING CHILDREN AND** a career in our generation was something many didn't agree on and we had to fight for our rights."*

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

Most respondents reported getting support from their family members, which is evident in the following extract:

***"MY MARRIAGE HAS** a positive impact because my husband understands me, supports me and helps me in my work. He has also been a journalist and knows the necessity of the job."*

(MIDDLE LEVEL)

Some of the respondents did challenge the idea of using marriage and children as barriers for entry or progression in the workplace based on their own circumstances. This is demonstrated in the following statements:

***"I AM THE** one who had the children, so this cannot be a barrier to me."*

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

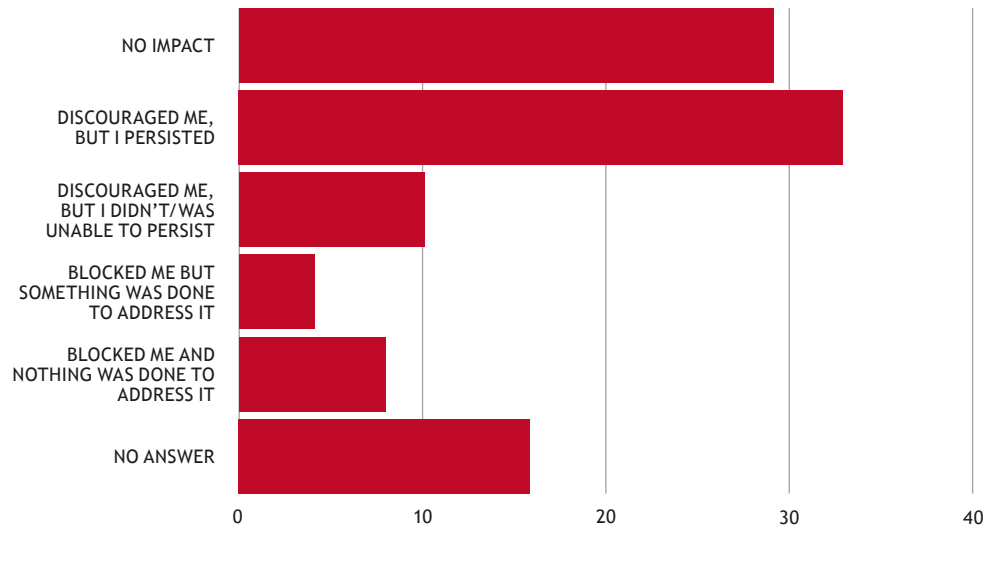
While another said:

***"I GOT MARRIED** when I was already a journalist. My marriage couldn't hinder me."*

(MIDDLE LEVEL)

The quotes captured above do not confirm what Melki and Mallat (2014) found in their study where women are seen to take safer roles when they get married or have children. The quotes above in fact reinforce that women journalists in this context are willing to break the glass ceiling and remain determined while in their job roles.

Figure 13: How has gendered role assignments impacted your career progression?



Despite all those barriers women journalists face as outlined above, many of respondents reported displaying a sense of determination and resilience. Once in the field respondents discuss how much they try to maintain motivation whilst in the field. They talked about the various avenues that aid in motivating them whilst working as a journalist. Many of the respondents, for example those in intermediate job roles, described how they remain in the workplace amidst difficulties and feelings of discouragement primarily for their love of journalism. For some respondents they described a resilient approach taken amidst the gendered differences in role assignment as captured in the following quote:

“I WANT TO thrive no matter what it is going to take.”
(ENTRY LEVEL)

Summary - Gendered Roles

This section of the report provided a spectrum of issues surrounding gender roles faced by women journalists in Rwanda. Some of the key issues raised were the fact that more opportunities in the newsroom are given to men than women. The findings proved that women journalists are often underestimated at the workplace. In a number of cases participants described the implications of having an all-male editorial leadership. When gender parity in the form of leadership occurs, it is done in a tokenistic way. The findings show that some women continue to struggle with society’s expectations of the role of a woman as the care giver, therefore not much flexibility is given to women at the workplace for instance as it relates to standard paid maternity leave. Interviewees mentioned that social constructed norms, traditions, and culture in Rwanda remains an underlying barrier. Throughout the section there were connections between gendered roles and poor pay and there appears to be a lack of awareness as to the extent of the differences. There are also no unions for journalists to advocate and raise a number of these issues. These findings aid in contributing to the development of solutions at the news media organisations in Rwanda.

Section 6: Barriers to Progression

THIS PART OF the report focuses on the various barriers that women journalists encounter as it relates to progression. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the reality of this has affected job sustainability or progression for some respondents. According to one respondent in middle level role, she lost her full-time communication's officer role and has had to rely on freelance journalism opportunities. Although the inability for progression for this respondent was as a consequence of a global health crisis, most cases associated with barriers of progression have been ongoing. The data shows a correlation among progression, poor pay and sexual harassment. When examining the aggregate data across the entire study, 32% of the questionnaire respondents, they experience a form of barrier to progression. A total of 43% of the respondents reported that their progression was negatively impacted by sexual harassment. Meanwhile, 71% of the respondents reported that their progression was negatively impacted by poor pay. The following paragraphs detail various instances where respondents encountered barriers to progression.

A number of respondents in this study described their **frustrations with the barriers** of progression. For example, one respondent shared organisational practices that hindered progression in the following quote:

"I HAVE BEEN undermined; I have been told that I am not skilled enough when compared to the men I work alongside. My workplace has been paying me less salary than my male counterparts, yet I am being encouraged to function in the same position with little to no chance of being promoted."

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

Another respondent in senior management expressed that it took her an extremely long time to get into higher levels of management. Similarly, a few of the respondents described the lengthy process and forms of harassment that occur when getting promoted at the workplace.

For some respondents in intermediate levels and senior management roles, once in the field women journalists appear to experience further barriers and are mistreated. Although sexual harassment was discussed in the previous section, it is important to highlight the **impact of sexual harassment on progression in the workplace**. One respondent said the following:

I WAS NOT promoted because I refused sexual action with my director and I lost my job.

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

While some individuals are of the view that there are limited opportunities for progression for women because of a **lack of policy at the organisational level**. Other respondents in intermediate roles are of the view that many women journalists lack the knowledge and skills needed for progression. One respondent who functions in an executive management capacity shared her concerns about the lack of a gender strategy and an implementation gender policy for progression at her workplace.

Ultimately, most women involved in this questionnaire shared how much they had grown to dislike their career over a period of time because of the toughness of the



profession. For example, one woman in senior management described **feeling less valued than men because of a lack of progression**. She stated the following:

“WOMEN ARE REGARDED as less able than men consequently they do not get promoted in their career.”

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

Meanwhile, another respondent outlines the role she played in affecting change and **breaking the glass ceiling at her place of work**, which is captured in the quote below:

“I CONVINCED HIM I will perform well, even if I was a woman. Finally, I got the position. And I’m happy because after my success I was able to open doors for other women.”

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

Although the outcome of this particular situation described above was a positive one, it does beg the question of why women journalists are met with such high levels of difficulty when seeking progression in the field? As underscored by a questionnaire respondent women and men should be treated equally at the work.

“WHEN I WAS promoted two (2) years after I started my job as a journalist... one of my male peers told me. “I don’t want to be supervised by women.”

(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

Ultimately, some men **resist women’s leadership**, and this is one reason women are not promoted to senior roles. One respondent stated the following:

“...IF YOU WANT to progress you should be able to progress... the management of radio should not make a difference based on gender.”

(INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

However, not all respondents in this study have encountered barriers of progression. The data shows that 29% of the respondents did not encounter barriers when progressing at the workplace. One such respondent stated the following:

“I HAVE HAD no negative impact on my career progress.”

(MIDDLE LEVEL).

Other respondents shared similar sentiments:

“I DIDN’T HAVE any problem with my career, and I haven’t experienced any lost opportunities because of being a woman.”

(EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT)

While another respondent stated the following:

“IT WAS EASY because I started as an internee on a radio station. The first day I took a recorder I did a vox pop, and that was the beginning.”

(SENIOR MANAGEMENT)

These views above only reflect those of some questionnaire respondents. Furthermore, this viewpoint seems to be reserved for women journalists in higher career levels, as more than 50% of the respondents experienced some type of barrier to progression.

Summary - Barriers to progression

This part of the report focused on the barriers women journalists encounter when making attempts to progress within the workplace. A number of female journalists listed feelings of frustrations especially when men resist their leadership. Some findings show that some respondents feel less valued than men because of a lack of progression. The dataset in this study showed a relationship between the impact of sexual harassment on progression at the workplace.

Recommendations and Conclusion

THIS SECTION FOCUSES on some recommended best practices to curb the challenges faced by women journalists in Rwanda. The recommendations draw on several the best practices outlined in Barriers to Entry report and by the Rwanda Media Commission as well as recommendations from the participants in this study, several steps can be taken in the case of Rwanda. As a reminder, the three (3) main barriers to entry and progression, in this context, are sexual harassment, gendered roles and poor salaries. The recommendations, geared at addressing these obstacles and are summarised in three (3) key areas: **Education, Training and Research, Policy Implementation, and Support for Women.**

Education, Training and Research

BASED ON THE feedback from the questionnaire respondents, they underscored that education and training should be carried out in the following key areas:

- To educate women about their rights, particularly as it relates to sexual harassment and all related matters. These sessions can be carried out over a series of workshops. Additionally, individual assessments and sessions are also encouraged to identify women journalists who many need further support.
- To provide training for media managers on gender and sexual harassment. This form of workplace training can occur over a series of workshops with follow-up sessions for managers so that they are also up to date on the gender equality trends within the workplace.
- To investigate the factors affecting women's pay. This can be conducted in the form of a research or study so that detailed insight can be obtained in this area.
- To increase training and mobilisation for women so that they are better equipped to practice journalism. These sessions can be developed at differing levels and made accessible all year round as refresher sessions as well as for first timers.
- To carry out training in basic life skills particularly in learning how to face obstacles. This type of training can be carried out in the workplace with a professional facilitator or as a series of online sessions.
- To train women journalists on Rwandan law N° 60/2018 of 22/8/2018 on prevention and punishment of cybercrimes as well as cyberstalking.
- All forms of education and training outlined above can be

packaged under a development programme that is reviewed periodically for the provision of updated content.

Policy Implementation

IN THE BARRIERS to Women Journalists in sub-Saharan report, South Africa was presented as an example of best practice of successful gender policy implementation. South Africa is ahead in increasing the presence of women on the editorial team with 47% of editors being women. Their gender policies are implemented nationally and have had a positive impact on the media.

The report outlined that South Africa placed importance on the national implementation of the gender policy as a key catalyst in the development and implementation of gender policies in media organisations. It also highlighted that **identifying and accepting that there is a problem of gender inequality is critical before these problems can be addressed**; as well as a need for a multi-layered approach to gender policies, at national level, buy-in at industries level, and then at organizational level (Fojo Media Institute and Africa Women in Media 2020). Therefore, following on from these practices outlined in Barriers to Entry report and Rwanda Media Commission as well as recommendations from the participants in this study, several steps can be taken in the case of Rwanda.

- To ensure that gender policies are implemented at organisational level. This will entail training those in managerial capacities to monitor journalists. This move ensures compliance, give managers the ability to discipline journalists who are non-compliant, ensures discipline is consistently carried out and warns journalists about future violations to gender policy.
- To allocate equal tasks for both female and male journalists. This move will promote the development of a culture where journalists can work together regardless of their gender. This also aids in ensuring that journalists are all-rounded in their job roles.
- To engage local media organisations in Rwanda as part of the solution, through a series of consultancies. The discussions emerging from these consultancy sessions should be drafted and used to change and develop the news media organisational practices. This level of consultation also promotes higher chances of parity in policy implementation across news media organisations.
- To set a system that provides technical support for media houses to develop gender-specific guidelines that ensure equal working conditions and anti-harassment policies
- To ensure that women journalists are given equal opportunities to men for entry and progression in the industry, thereby removing all institutional restrictions and boundaries. For this to be successful, management must firstly prioritise gender equality to ensure consistency across the leadership team. Women should also be promoted to leadership positions so that they can be included in boardroom discussions especially relating to gender equality.
- To ensure that women working in the media are provided with employment contracts. This move will aid in promoting transparency in job roles and pay between men and women.
- To provide an environment that supports women through various stages such as marriage and motherhood, while at the workplace. This can be done by ensuring that policies accommodate standard paid leave for mothers, to consider childcare provision at the workplace setting. This move will provide flexibility for staff members to be able to create a work life balance.

- To review salary discrepancies so that pay is standardised between both genders. To achieve this, all news media organisations should review the pay gap of their employees to identify the disparities between the salaries. Payments should then be matched accordingly. Once there is transparency in the process women too will feel valued at the workplace.
- To review the workplace culture. This can be done by assessing the existing workplace culture. Through consultation with employees, the organisation can co-create a healthy workplace culture.
- To review the Rwanda’s journalists and media practitioners’ code of ethics particularly for online media as it is currently the biggest media operating in Rwanda now (Rwanda Media Commission 2019).

Support for Women

- To establish networking and mentorship as a keyway to support women journalists. Mentorship support for women journalists is critical, especially for new journalists as they transition into the media sector. Typically, these types of spaces facilitate empowerment and promote confidence, perseverance, success and hope for young women journalists. These types of networks will work together to promote gender policy implementation, education, training and research.
- To encourage women to seek progression within the workplace setting. To identify where women journalists are getting stuck and provide them with the support to ensure they can seek progression into new roles.
- To encourage women to join male-dominated spaces. To identify male-dominated spaces where women are blocked; and hold discussions on how to enter and co-exist in these spaces.
- To develop a support system to be put in place for women reporting cases of harassment (both physical and online).
- To provide social, technical, and financial resources that prioritises the safety of women alongside mental health and wellbeing support for women journalists.
- To encourage women to write stories about women, and to utilise the networking opportunities to create trusted relationship with other women who can contribute to news sources.

Conclusion

THE OBJECTIVE OF this study is to examine the barriers of entry, progression and retention for women journalists in Rwanda. The report emphasised that participants are motivated to join the journalism industry primarily for reasons of passion, skills, empowerment, and to demonstrate resilience. In taking a wider look at the *Barriers to Women Journalists in sub-Saharan Africa* report there are more barriers experienced within a sub-Saharan context for women journalists; whilst in Rwanda they are confronted by three main barriers:

1. Sexual harassment
2. Poor salaries
3. Gendered roles

For the barriers of entry, men at top level managerial roles appeared to be the main perpetrators of these barriers. There is also an example from the educational

sector that relates to sexual harassment. The evidence shows that men were also the main aggressors of sexual harassment. However, the finding shows that there are a few of the participants of the study who appear to be unaware of what constitutes sexual harassment. The results show that several women journalists' who have are victims of sexual harassment left their places of employment and search for safer job roles at other media organisations. However, it was for the reason of poor salaries that most of the journalists had to adjust their work as journalists, especially as poor salaries have wider implications on social structures, such as families. In spite of a national gender equality strategy in place at national level, generally men are still afforded more opportunities than women, especially as women journalists are often underestimated in the newsrooms. In terms of the barriers participants encounter when making attempts to progress within the workplace, a number of them feel a general sense of disenfranchisement. Overall, these findings aid in contributing to the development of solutions at the news media organisations in Rwanda. Drawing on best practices from the Rwanda Media Commission and the *Barriers to Women Journalists in sub-Saharan Africa* report to address these concerns raised in this report the recommendations in three (3) broad areas: **Education, Training and Research, Policy Implementation, and Support for Women.** AWiM and Fojo hope that this study will contribute to the creation of enabling environments for Rwandan women who work in media industries and change the way Rwandan women are represented in media content.

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