

Original Research Article

**EMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTION POLICIES IN MEDIA ORGANISATIONS IN TANZANIA: EVIDENCE FROM THE IPP MEDIA, THE TSN AND MWANANCHI CORPORATION**

**ABSTRACT**

Tanzania marks 62 years of independence, but gender equity still needs much to be desired. Indeed, The Union of Tanzania Press Club Report (2016) admits that the UTPC senior staff is largely dominated by men and has a female member on the management team. The Press Clubs have taken a deliberate stance by implementing a gender equity policy aimed at ensuring the election of female journalists into leadership positions. However, the representation of women in top-level management and leadership roles remains a persistent challenge, including within media houses. The study sought to examine the employment and promotion policies used by media organisations. The study draws upon cases from prominent entities such as IPP Media, the TSN, and Mwananchi Corporation. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and an explanatory case study as the research design. Structured and unstructured interviews were used to collect data alongside a documentary review. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. The unit of analysis was media house employees, in which 12 of them were involved in the study. Data were prepared, organized, and coded by using MASQUIDA thematic data analysis software. The study findings suggested that women have all of the power to develop their careers if fair promotion policies are friendly to them. They enjoy gender equity support from international organizations to grassroots levels. It was also discovered that cultural influences are to blame for cases of gender inequity, which pervades print media corporations. The study concludes that a plethora of professional groups, research and advocacy groups, and non-profit and consulting organizations offer resources and best practices for increasing diversity and equity, many of which specifically focus on the representation and depiction of woken media and are therefore set to be used to address gender inequity. The study recommends that media organizations such as the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), and the Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF) should push for gender equity in newsrooms. The failure of media companies to have a robust journalist union is to blame for the slow pace in fighting for the rights of writers. It would be important to have an organ with the journalists' union that ensures that gender equity is implemented once and for all.

**Keywords:** *promotion and employment policies, media organisations, gender disparity, gender equity, Tanzania.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Gender disparity in leadership positions is a serious problem across all countries, whereby women are still underrepresented in administration (Windscheid, Bowes-Sperry, Jonsen, & Morner, 2018). Briefly, the percentage of women in administrative positions is lower than that of men. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2007) reveals that 71 percent of male graduates are in media management, whereas only 43 percent

**Comment [a1]:** Over all this research topic was limited and interesting. The structure, method and discussion section was complete and detail, so this article was recommended to be good references.

of female graduates work as professionals. Gender disparities in leadership positions have been dominated by men, and such domination has been observed in various organisations, including schools (Cunningham, Hazel, & Hayes, 2020).

A study conducted by (Cunha & Lúcio Martins, 2023) found a lack of longitudinal data on gender equity in the newsroom but drew upon research from other industries. They argue that improving gender diversity in the news media industry can bolster business performance by expanding the talent pool, increasing access to news markets, and potentially enhancing financial returns. It can also increase trust in media. Even those companies' executives who opt to shy away from the moral case for boosting equity in the newsroom should be moved to action in the business case.

Any assessment of the state of gender equity in news media must begin by acknowledging a substantial challenge that is associated with the lack of longitudinal data for gender representation in news media from news media companies themselves

As a result, Press Forward announced that it is partnering with McKinsey and LeanIn. Org to recruit American news organisations to LeanIn's annual Women in the Workplace study in 2019. Their goal is to produce "an industry-wide study on the state of women in American newsrooms" and "unique recommendations unique to the news business" (Press Forward, 2018). The news media industry may be better off producing its own transparent reporting rather than having watchdogs such as Press Forward managing the messaging on representation.

Zamith (2019) argue that there are important exceptions to the lack of measurement and transparency in diversity representation. For example, ProPublica prepares an annual report on the breakdown of its staff and how they are working to create a more diverse newsroom and inclusive journalism community (Groeger *et al.*, 2019). In 2017, the New York Times began publicly sharing data on the composition of its staff and the steps they are taking to improve its representation (New York Times, 2018).

More varied teams that bring a more diverse range of histories, experiences and views to their reporting can ensure the relevance, comprehensiveness, and accuracy of news coverage. At a time of unprecedented disruption, declining readership, eroding advertising revenue for many legacy news media outlets, and financial underperformance by many digital news media outlets, compounded by even more rapidly changing US demographics, any newsroom seeking relevance to its readers or viewers needs to be as diverse as the audience it seeks to serve. That depends, in part, on having both content creators and content decision-makers who themselves represent a comprehensive (or at least broad and moderately representative) array of backgrounds and perspectives (Women's Media Center, 2019).

A study by (Green, 2018) describes how hiring an employee from a previously underrepresented group can unlock new ideas and approaches for engaging members of that group as clients or consumers. In media organisations, the gender diversity of both content creators and coverage decision-makers creates opportunities to more effectively engage a correspondingly broader set of readers. In a time of unprecedented challenges to the media industry, the future health of newsrooms, legacy or digital, will depend in no small measure on their ability to attract and retain a more diverse range of employees than ever before. Consequently, gender equity is vital to both "legacy organisations, hungry for journalists with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and [new media] startups with nascent HR policies" (O'Brien, 2019)

However, principally, logic seems to keep swirling. As a Canadian journalist, Huguette Roberge put it a decade ago that one woman at a time, one at a time; we barely manage to fill the shoes left by another (D'ignazio & Klein, 2020). The situation has never changed. Roberts (2019) believe that women should be blamed for the pending stereotype predicament, which obscures them from assuming top media managerial posts, noting that if there is one in six seats at the table (management), five of them are held by men and one is held by a woman. Every other woman in the organisation thinks there is one seat open. There is no one, there are six seats open (Kite, Whitley Jr, & Wagner, 2022). Despite having more women taking media studies in tertiary colleges as well as universities, a few of them take top leadership positions in media companies. Most media outlets are devoid of gender policies that could be used as an essential monitoring tool for women journalists' advancement in managerial positions (MCT, 2019).

Tanzania marks 62 years of independence, but gender equity still needs much to be desired. Indeed, The Union of Tanzania Press Club Report (2016) admits that the UTPC senior staff is largely dominated by men and has a female member on the management team. In Mwanza, female Press Club members stated that while they faced discrimination in the past, the situation has vastly improved, and they are paid equally for their stories. "We are more trusted by media houses as there is a thinking that women journalists cannot easily be bribed," said one female journalist in Mwanza. The Press Clubs have taken a deliberate stance by implementing a gender equity policy aimed at ensuring the election of female journalists into leadership positions. It is worth noting that a significant number of women graduate from universities each year and secure employment in various sectors and ministries. However, the representation of women in top-level management and leadership roles remains a persistent challenge, including within media houses. Previous studies by (Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018) focused on gender equality in academic institutions in Tanzania. Therefore, this qualitative research seeks to address the gap by investigating gender equity in leadership positions specifically within media companies in Tanzania. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the employment and promotion policies used by media organisations. The study draws upon cases from prominent entities such as IPP Media, the TSN, and Mwananchi Corporation

## **2. THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

Gender disparities in leadership positions have been dominated by men, and such domination has been observed in various organisations, including media organisations (Dashper, 2019). Media organisation impacts society. They interpret current events, mobilise citizens on various topics, perpetuate dominant culture and society, and entertain (Musonda, 2019) The media can promote gender equity in the workplace by hiring and promoting workers at all levels and by portraying women and men fairly. Gender disparity in leadership positions in media organisations is a serious problem across all countries, whereby women are still underrepresented in administration (Julius, 2018). Statistics show that the percentage of women in administrative positions is lower than that of men. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) reveals that 71 percent of male graduates are in media management, whereas only 43 percent of female graduates work as professionals. This scenario has had an effect on global actions aimed at attaining gender equality and equity.

Gender equity has been recognised for over 33 years. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the worldwide policy declaration on gender equality, makes it a strategic goal. In the 33 years since the Beijing Declaration, equity in leadership dispensation has

made little headway toward this strategic objective. Women continue to be underrepresented in administration, which is a severe issue across all nations with regard to the gender gap in leadership positions (Julius, 2018). Media companies have gender inequality. Even while more women are studying and entering journalism, they remain underrepresented and face major challenges to leadership, safety, support, and career advancement. According to the IWWMF, 35% of journalists globally are women, and 27% are in leadership positions.

The fact that more males than women are brought in from the outside to fill leadership roles is another tendency that can be seen, and it makes it even more difficult for women to develop their careers within the organisation. According to the findings of the survey by McKinsey (2020), the top management positions filled by external recruits consisted of 79 percent males and 21 percent women. It is very evident that women are aware that the odds are stacked against them. Comparatively, only seven percent of men working in the media and entertainment industry believe that their gender has been a factor in their being passed over for a raise, promotion, or other opportunity that would have allowed them to advance in their careers. However, twenty-seven percent of women working in these industries say that gender has played a role in them being passed over. In addition, McKinsey (2020) found that 35 percent of women, compared to only 15 percent of men, believe that it would be more difficult for them to receive a pay increase or promotion in the future because of their gender.

According to a report by the Eastern Africa Journalists Association (EAJA, 2017), men predominate in the media in Eastern Africa, with women making up under 20% of all professional journalists. Additionally, it was shown that female journalists made less money than their male counterparts and were more likely to cover "soft" news. According to the poll, female journalists were frequently targets of sexual harassment, abuse, and intimidation in media organisations, and their accomplishments, efforts, and legal rights were undercut and neglected. The study emphasises how female journalists have lower levels of schooling than their male counterparts. Country culture, religion, nationality, and low self-esteem are other factors that influence how much women participate in the media. Female media workers typically confront major societal and cultural obstacles that affect their careers. For instance, many married journalists claim that their husbands do not like the work they do. The study's findings also demonstrate how women are underrepresented and only given minor roles in the media. Less than 10% of the sources for economic, political, and sports items are female, making up just 17% of all news sources. However, 17% of the parliamentarians in the area are female.

According to the Glass Ceiling Study (2019), which looked at media outlets in Southern Africa, women make up 21% of top management and 20% of senior management roles in Tanzania. Within the SADC, this was less than average. Men are more likely than women to be employed on permanent, full-time contracts and to be given different stories to cover, according to the study. Women made up 40% of the media workforce in Tanzania, according to research into the ratios of all media personnel (including those in administration and other fields). However, only 28% of women were working as journalists. Over 40% of women work as TV reporters and presenters, which is the largest percentage of any occupation. Print journalists are least likely to be women (25%).

The data on the gender gap in Tanzania also reveal that men are more likely than women to have permanent, full-time jobs (64%) and that this gap widens for entry-level positions (36%). The survey goes on to note that women make up a sizable portion of the freelance workforce (59%), whereas men predominate in every other role, including printing and distribution (100%), technical/IT (70%), advertising/marketing (68%), and production (68%).

Human resources are another field in which women are largely relegated to administrative or secretarial tasks. The Glass Ceiling report also details other disgraceful employment policies and procedures in the Tanzanian press. Only one-third of editors are women, and even fewer editors (36%) give gender consideration during promotion exercises. Female reporters are relegated to covering "soft beats" such as gender equality and health, while their male counterparts are given the opportunity to cover "hard beats" such as politics, finance, business, investigative, and in-depth issues. No concrete goals have been set for achieving gender parity.

As a percentage of the media industry's leadership, women make up approximately one-fifth of the upper echelons. There are fewer female professional journalists (36%) than male journalists (64%) according to the employment index (Gender Links, 2009). In the largest newsroom in Tanzania, Tanzania Standard Newspaper (TSN) Limited, only 34% of the journalists were women (Gender Links, 2009). The largest disparities between the sexes were seen at Global Publishers Ltd. (79% male journalists) and Majira (78% male). According to the Tanzanian Glass Ceiling study, the lack of trained female journalists and role models, the difficulty of balancing professional and personal responsibilities, and a general feeling that media houses are not doing enough to recruit female journalists all contribute to this skewed employment outlook (Gender Links, 2009).

According to history, many leadership theories have emphasised the importance of stereotypically masculine traits in leaders and have perpetuated the myth that leadership is largely a male endeavor. In regard to the issue of gender and leadership, masculinity is typically associated with managerial success, whereas femininity is typically associated with characteristics that are known to impede professional advancement. Researchers in this field frequently make the case that women who want to fill leadership positions must, in fact, find a way to conform to this patriarchal model (Liu, 2018).

For the same reason that Geertsema-Sligh and Vos (2022) stated, "gender inequalities in communication media are entwined with inequalities in all areas of life," the theme presented in both liberal feminism and gender stereotyping theories about women and leadership should find its strong resonance in the field of women and media. Despite ongoing theoretical sophistication and the changing global communication environment, McRobbie (2020), who was among the first group of feminist media scholars to be concerned with women's representation in media content and in the media profession, cautioned that the issues that need to be addressed regarding women and media are fundamentally the same and revolve around the most fundamental questions of power, values, access, and exclusion.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study was guided by a qualitative research approach. Due to the rareness of research on the subject of women's leadership in the Tanzania media, this study defines itself as an exploratory effort. Denzin and Lincoln (2003), in their well-received three-volume series on the subject of qualitative research, argued that qualitative research methods especially fit studies that are exploratory and aim to establish a basic understanding of the overall situation. Given the nature of the study, the researcher adopted the explanatory case study research design. The explanatory case study research design is akin to causal investigation, as it is suitable for use when a researcher is interested in looking at factors that may have caused certain things to occur (Kothari, 2004).

The target population of this study consists of workers of four (4) media companies in Tanzania whose headquarters are in Dar es Salaam. Dar-es Salaam is almost the centre, where news is processed, and it is near the reach for the researcher's convenience. Print media such as the IPP, The Mwananchi and the TSN had their managements investigated to analyse the mode in which gender equity is considered in the competed leadership positions. For qualitative research, the researcher conducted 12 in-depth interviews. The researcher used semistructured questions and interview schedules to collect detailed information on gender equity (Yin, 2003a) and in-depth information (Berg 2004, 2007) from the respondents. Eventually, review guides were prepared for document analysis.

validity (credibility) and reliability (trustworthiness) were ensured before, during and after data collection to meet the standards of a qualitative research design that entailed a qualitative approach. Validation of instruments was performed by conducting a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study was to ensure that the interview schedules were clearly designed and understood for respondents to facilitate the collection of the intended information.

The reliability of the qualitative data collection instruments was confirmed through triangulation. The researcher attempted to use multiple sources of data collection instruments, such as documentary reviews and interviews, to enhance reliability. Data collected from qualitative instruments such as interviews were presented in summary or by direct quotations from informants. The researcher established patterns (themes), and MASQUIDA thematic data analysis software based on the research objectives was used to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Similarly, during data analysis, relevant voices of the informants that reflect research objectives and questions were identified, and the researcher picked up a sample of voices to support the discussion where appropriate. The sample of voices helped avoid bias and enhanced the trustworthiness of the study because the analysis was merely based on informants' views rather than the researcher's perspectives. Multiple codes were used significantly as labels and assigned symbolic meaning to describe information compiled into themes or patterns during data collection and analysis.

The researcher never violated ethical matters when administering the study. To realise this, research clearance, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of informants were observed throughout the study process.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

This study aimed to examine how the three media corporations abide by the set employment and promotion policies in view of ensuring gender equity. The essence of delving into this objective was to push for gender equity based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN in 2015. The SDGs harmonise economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Notable Specific trends observed in relation to media in line with women and communication careers based on age, education, marital status and culture

##### **(i) Age**

In an interview with key informants from the three media corporations, it was noted that, in the past, there had been little succession plan that called for a large gap between female journalists and the current youthful female correspondents. The TSN received a new female managing director in 2022, who replaced veteran and senior writers with new faces, but it

would sound much wiser to blend old and young writers, a move that would allow them to teach the young ones so that they could be removed slowly.

Training of young people had been done quickly with the Mwananchi Communications Corporation offering in-service training among employees, and in the recent past, a few correspondents were sent to Nairobi under the tutelage of the Standard newspapers to learn about the new mode of reporting hard and soft news. One of the respondents said,

Most of the young journalists do not last. They opt for other posts, such as Public Relations and communications officers, which they think are not so demanding. To them, spending hours in newsrooms, correcting hard news and being assigned duties in streets to cover news are some of the tedious undertakings. However, all in all, it has never been an issue; rather, it is one's ability to cover the news properly according to the set directives (Interview, March 6, 2023)

Additionally, in the other two more media corporations, respondents noted that the majority of employees were in a better position to benefit from training. For example, TSN has a special programme for in-house training, and the same is done by the IPPP regardless of gender.

**Table 1: Work experience of the respondents**

Under 5 years	6-10 years	11-14 years	15 years and above
4	3	3	2

Source: Researcher, (2023)

**(ii) Education**

When asked about the way in which education has been linked with gender equity, respondents said that women have been keener in pursuing higher education, noting that the market is demanding for professionally trained persons irrespective of gender roles. Commenting on this, one respondent said:

More women are embarking on training, although there is yearning for short courses, and currently, most of them are degree holders. This training is either funded by the corporation or an individual initiative. Another notable trend has been the registration of colleges offering below-standard journalist courses. Such learning facilities operate in major cities. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology is trying all in its powers to grapple with half-baked college graduates, but thus far, no fruitful resolutions have been seen (Interview, March 6, 2023)

**Table 2: Education Level of Respondents**

Secondary	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Master's degree	PhD
1	5	5	1	0

Source Researcher, (2023)

**(iii) Marital Status**

Responding to the marital status of female journalists in print media corporations, one of the interviewees said that most senior journalists are either single or divorced due to the

demanding nature of the career, noting that men do not seem to like aggressive women and that women at the top are viewed as having made their way by engaging in various illegitimate affairs and that pretty faces are normally viewed as cheap.

According to her, the communication career has become plumper, and society is more accepting of female journalists than it was in the recent past. More parents also support their daughters who choose to join the media fraternity. Spouses of media women understand the long hours taken at work. This knowledge has been on the increase due to technology and appreciation of the media role in a given society

**(iv) Cultural Influences in the Media**

When asked about how culture influences the media and gender equity, the respondent said culture has made women to be seen as weaker sex; thus, they were formerly not assigned hard news compared to their male counterparts, thanks to the recent trends that had seen many significant changes made to augment initiatives that push for gender equity.

He said few women do political stories because they may not be taken seriously by political figures, nothing that, for example, when conducting interviews, there is still a stereotype that women should not address leaders. He noted that successful career women are also viewed as having reached the top by offering sexual favors and not out of their own hard work.

He said that in the past, parents were reluctant to send their children to study media careers, as it was seen as a job of prostitutes, but recently, the perception has plummeted alongside the negative attitude engrained in members of society about journalists.

Parents are now happy to see their daughters in the media as correspondents. Media influences how people view the profession, and in recent days, it has targeted the employment of young people. However, rural girls are more disadvantaged than urban girls due to less media exposure. Women kept the notion of being seen as divorcees (Interview, March 6, 2023).

**(v) Employment and Promotion Policy**

Responding to whether or not the newsroom has fair employment and promotion policies that are friendly to both women and men and can promote gender equity, the respondent noted that the policy compels one to get promoted based on merits as priorities are given to women; however, there are cases where women get promoted for the sake of filling the gender gaps. She noted that in the recent past, there were positions that were given to women due to friendships and not on merit.

When asked to comment on the way promotions are undertaken and their relevance, an HR from one of the media corporations said seniority and merit have been having some limitations; thus, the print media corporation had found it of utmost importance to establish a promotion policy with due weight age to both seniority and merit.

He explained that the print media maintains a balance between the internal sources of personnel promotion and external forces by means of recruitment, noting that whatever type of promotion policy is adopted, the media has been fair and has a clear cut, which is effective and protects the interests of the employees due to promotion.

With a transparent promotion policy, media corporations would be in a better position to increase employee retention. It reduces vacancies because it reassures the staff that the opportunities are there for them to make it to the next level. This could be in the

form of higher position, higher pay, and more responsibilities (Interview, March 6, 2023).

Responding about the mode of assessment for promotion, he noted that it helps the media to know their women journalists, expounding that it was not possible to give leadership positions to women randomly; instead, they need to conduct an assessment to sift those who have the potential to fill the gaps by providing them with more skills and knowledge to grow.

Commenting on why women journalists shun away the field despite many joining the universities, the respondent noted that newsrooms lose people and resources to mentor young girls when they start their field.

The situation of many newsrooms is yet to be friendly to girls. In the past, we used to go to the field and we were given someone to help us, but currently it is very difficult to be given a mentor who can be there to give you instructions and build you up. You may sometimes spend three weeks without seeing your bylines, and you lose all hope and confidence, but if you have someone to see and express your desire, you must know how to write something that is understandable. On those days, if my memory serves me well, I was given a person who used to take me to all news sources (Interview, March 6, 2023).

Another respondent said that employment and promotion policies were very unclear in her newsroom, noting that she had worked for over six years without being permanently employed, while her colleague, who had just arrived fresh from school, was fully employed after a three-month stint in the media house.

She explained that employment and promotion policies would be an essential tool that media houses could use as a monitoring tool for women journalists' advancement in managerial positions, further explaining that having a policy, however, does not guarantee its rightful application, as most of the sugar-coated scribes aim at attracting researchers and ministers responsible for the media docket.

The respondent hinted that many advocacies should be put in place to ensure that newsroom managers make use of employment and promotion policies as they are. She commented that:

Women fight to enter leadership positions. It can be in the newsroom or in different places, but we are well versed with knowledge that to fight for a leadership post, there are some qualifications and expertise that a person may have. Indeed, the level playing field should be modelled in a way that merits outshine favouritism (Interview, March 6, 2023).

When asked to state the relevance of having employment and promotion policies, one of the respondents said that the move pushes for gender equity, explaining that more women are currently given chances for in-house training and are exposed to scholarships offered by the corporation or under individual initiatives.

She said that having employment and promotion policies ensures fair treatment of workers based on gender, which helps to fill the gaps between males and females. It aims to avoid more men or women in the media fraternity, insisting that the policy is very handy because it acts as a watch dog to check those who want to favour their cronies by ignoring the set rules. She said that promotion policy had helped women journalists to grow and have their talents nurtured.

There would be more females than males in the newsroom. There are more channels for women to secure higher posts than for men. Women do not want to fully engage themselves in print media. The majority come to start writing, but as time goes by, they run for chances of being media officers in some companies and government posts, which they think are not so backbreaking. This is why we have few women growing up in print media, unlike what is seen on TVs and radio stations (Interview, March 7, 2023).

Study findings have also shown that the politics of equity against quotas have been used to show the experiences of women in media leadership. Respondents described the promotion of women to leadership positions for the aim of outwards appearances without fixing advancement with the necessary equity to have an impact. This kind of tokenistic gesture also appears to place the burden on the few women promoted to leadership to “prove” that women can lead.

Likewise, over half of the respondents noted that the call for more transparent and gender consciousness tactics to leadership has recently come with a call for a deliberate process that allows a focused career development towards leadership. Such a process, where in attachment with adequate training and wider organisational gender awareness make attainment transparent and is likely to lead to a more balanced representation in leadership, explains that such a deliberate organisational cultural shift can also go a long way in augmenting representation and voices of women and women issues in the media context.

#### **Notable Milestones Achieved by Tanzanian Women in the Media Fraternity**

The researcher wanted to understand the achievements recorded by women journalists in the media fraternity after being favoured by employment promotion policies. Responding to the achievements recorded by women in the print media, one respondent said a lot is still desired to have women being in top decision-making organ.

He said that while statistics paint a greener picture of women who undergo training and enter the field, the number of executives, chief editors and publishers has remained disgracefully low. He added that in terms of media management, women journalists become obscured in middle-level positions without possibilities of advancing to top positions in media corporations.

The respondent added that the Glass Ceiling Report mentioned that only 30 percent of women occupy senior management positions, reiterating that even though there are women in other print media having top leadership positions, the struggle to have women in top decision-making organs has never been smooth. The respondent commented on the bumpy roads passed through by women who struggle to make it to the top:

Society has yet to accept women in leadership. I see them in positions but they still depend on men, who hold junior positions to decide on their behalf, a move that makes them not trusted. There is a self-ingrained inferiority complex that is difficult to grapple with. I once called a woman, who is currently my boss by her name.....she reacted angrily, arguing that I have surely failed to start with an initial which could indicate her position because I am a man. She rejected attending to my concerns. We formed a bitter argument over trivial reasons. This is why I say, these people are very emotional and it may take time to have them trusted for top-decision making positions (Interview, March 7, 2023).

Regarding the achievements marked by women in the media fraternity, one respondent argued that achievements are remarkable, insisting that by having a few women holding senior positions as news editors, it has been hard to have sexual harassment cases that were reported to male bosses without any tangible actions taken. She added that men are now precautionous when dealing with women's concerns for fear of tainting their images or being accused of gender-based violence, explaining that even the mode in which assignments are set for news coverage fairness is determined, unlike in the past when senior positions were grabbed by men. Commenting on the differences between having senior positions with men in the past and the current situation when women have top-level decision-making powers, she said:

I have more than ten years of experience in print media. On those murky days, women were not assigned to cover news at the Tanzania Ports Authority. During those days, the coverage at the port had plum allowances and good packages, but only men were allowed to go. Even the State House news was only assigned to men counterparts, thanks to the new changes that have made our good scribes seen against the odds. When I wanted to insinuate why women were not given hard news for coverage, the responses from relevant authorities had never been holding water (Interview, March 9, 2023).

Another respondent said that women have been able to front their agenda and get heard in media after holding top positions. She said that women in the newsroom project, which is supported by the Finnish Foundation for media and development, had the sole objective of enhancing gender transformation in the media houses, expounding that by having women take up leadership positions, the print media had managed to have a pull out that discusses women's agendas. She commented that:

Our newspaper, Mwananchi, has a Sunday pull out that discusses family matters with key arguments based on women's empowerment, thanks to the news editor who had made this happen against odds. We have even increased a number of readers significantly over the new pullout, which offers a lot of good advice on family planning, entrepreneurship, a fight against gender-based violence, parenting styles and women hygiene (Interview, March 6, 2023).

The respondent added that the achievements of female journalists are impeccable in the sense that they have built trust in members of the public that they are capable of leading media organisations, hinting at notable examples recorded by the TSN, whose Managing Director is a woman, alongside Nipashe and Mwananchi, whose news editors are women. She explained that most print media are aware of gender equity in news circulation, marketing and editing in a way that qualified individuals obtain equal opportunities to prosper. She commented that:

Women are given more opportunities due to economic challenges. Their needs are so dire. They have families to feed, especially single mothers. It is time to empower them to land good jobs if they meet the set criteria. In the past, women were paid little despite having similar qualifications to men. Pay discrimination was avoided after we formulated media promotion and employment policies (Interview, March 7, 2023).

She added that women have contributed significantly to the development of media by playing a major role through covering development issues affecting people's lives, citing an example

of gender and children's matters, which are mostly covered by media journalists alongside court news. She commented that:

Recently, there have been more women in the field of communication. News analysis, coverage and production have changed, which has empowered women because when women see, female editors feel encouraged to improve their lives. There is a definite shift in preparing news and an upwards trend whereby there are more female media holding positions. For example, Salome Kitomari (Nipashe), Lilian Timbuka (Mwananchi), and Tuma Abdallah (TSN) are fully in charge of editorial departments at their working stations (Interview, March 6, 2023).

### **Factors that Influenced Women's Development in the Media**

In an interview with one of the respondents about factors that have influenced women's development in the media, education was cited as one of the key factors in which the respondent noted that women have been given ways to excel academically based on the lower entry grades at ordinary levels to higher levels, further explaining that a woman who knows the opportunities set by the government could be in a better position to upgrade her career.

She said that women's media associations such as TGNP and TAMWA have acted as gateways to voice their concerns before members of society, explaining that historically, the crucial role in supporting women's professionals, in creating alternative media spaces for expression of their perspectives on the world and in criticising offensive or stereotypical media contexts have all been addressed by media associations and thus pushing for women to grow in the media.

Commenting on the role played by the newly employed female on top decision-making organs, the respondent argued that having women in leadership positions has been a factor behind their tremendous growth, noting that even in determining news sources, women are likely to prove before their colleagues to be major news sources, unlike in the past when one could find the whole article flooded by men news sources.

At least currently, we have women who are ready to be voices of the voiceless. While reporting on human rights and politics, one can hardly forget to seek advice from Hana Henga or Helen Kijjo Bisimba. These women have made headways in motivating other women in the media to grow. Career development comes after learning from successful predecessors (Interview, March 6, 2023).

Training is cited as one of the factors that has influenced women to grow. There are a number of factors that facilitate the development of women in the media. In an interview with one of the respondents, it was noted that, compared to the past, in recent days, there has been a drastic increase in opportunities in terms of education that allows women to excel in working in media coupled with self-initiatives that influence them to seek more learning opportunities, hinting that they are also empowered by the set policies on gender issues. The initial gender imbalance in favour of women that exists among students of relevant departments is then reflected in the staff composition of the sector.

He said that when women join media, they demonstrate professional and business traits (discipline, loyalty to a particular media outlet, etc.) that allow them to occupy various

positions, including the managing ones on different levels, adding that women master those types of journalistic work that used to be mostly done by competition among political elites is not enough for the agenda of the most influential media to reflect the needs of the society. Commenting on the future of career development in the media fraternity, the respondent noted:

Women in News is a programme that aims to train females to develop their careers. In-house training is done for both women and men but with a specific focus on seeing women making it in their career. There is women-tailored training. Surely, training is one of the factors that has made me to grow but can hardly ensure that I will grow professionally and be promoted because in my workplace, they do not rely on education or even experience. Our career advancement largely depends on decision makers who hardly appreciate the role played by an individual writer, thanks to the absence of a clear employment and promotion policy (Interview, March 7, 2023).

Respondents were also asked about the most important thing they learn during in-house training sessions in which more than half of the interviewed journalists highlighted specific skills such as interviewing, reporting, writing, video editing, social media management, photography, and multimedia work, among others. The main professional value discussed by respondents was objectivity. In the context of gender issue reporting, the theme of advocacy against objective reporting has historically emerged as a contentious issue due to the skills imparted through in-house training. Respondents addressed the tension between objectivity in journalism and gender advocacy to show the voice of women in news as one of the ways to push for gender equity. Interestingly, respondents mostly agreed on the importance of objectivity when they were writing for gender network organisations and said that their programmes provided effective training in understanding journalistic roles.

One respondent commented:

Writing skills have been the most recurring topics in our in-house training. Journalistic writing has been highlighted by our trainer. One thing I have noted is that each newsroom has its writing style which I have to get accustomed to. As I moved from many other media companies, upon reaching here, I have to embrace the newsroom policy at any cost. I can definitely say writing has been the most valuable thing to learn.... how to write well. Writing is the most important skill that can later lead to better positions in our career. That is something that has helped me get to the next level because I knew how to pitch a story (Interview, March 6, 2023).

Respondents noted an interesting phenomenon that concerns in-house training: journalists drill may be a response to the lack of a formalised structure for further education, but, significantly, it develops in media companies that already invest heavily in the training of their journalists. One respondent commented:

It is imaginable to argue that leading news media provide special forms of professional training dedicated to their journalists, which underscores i) the reflection on the development of professional skills of companies in a competitive news media market and ii) the transformation in terms of economic and human resources between leading news media and other competitors for the professional improvement of journalists, with an impact on the quality of journalism among news media companies. In situations where professionalisation is high, national and company training projects struggle with those same confines that have been identified as the

most significant challenges that call for investigative journalism: issues related to digital journalism and gender inequity (Interview, March 6, 2023).

On another development, the respondent noted that an individual journalist is at liberty to seek their own mode of advancing career and benefit from the available resources. Elaborating on that the respondent said, the corporation has no problem with a woman who seeks her own chances to advance her career.

When asked who they think should be responsible for addressing barriers to the progression of female journalists, over half of the respondents noted that, from the experiences, the truth appears to be that most have opted for and are forced to embark on individualised approaches to dealing with the challenges they face. Half of the respondents highlighted the need for women journalists to take an entrepreneurial approach to both skilling up and using their skills as a way to grapple with the issue of job security. Nevertheless, study findings show that the notion of individualised women's empowerment, which places the responsibility on the female journalist herself, has the danger of missing the barrier beyond the control of women and assumes only that it is due to the reason that a woman is not hard-working enough to possess these experiences.

### **Cultural Influence on Women's Development in the Media**

When respondents were asked a direct question about the existence of gender inequity in the media, which they think is attributed to cultural norms, the majority gave negative answers, even though widespread discriminatory practices towards women in the media sector were detected. To a certain extent, this can be explained by common gender stereotypes about the role of women and men in the family and society that are widespread in communities, including journalists themselves, which is something the study has proven. In such circumstances, gender segregation is perceived as a norm more than a violation of social and labour rights. It increases the probability of translating and recreating social norms and gender stereotypes that limit women's opportunities in terms of work and social impact through media.

One of the respondents argued that, following the patriarchal nature of family structures in Tanzania, it is difficult for many female journalists to acquire leading positions in the media due to the necessity of combining family and work responsibilities. This means that women are working "double or triple", as they try to balance family demands while simultaneously pursuing a full-time career.

Media policies and regulations support the merging of family and work obligations but are proving much harder in practice. Social resolutions provide many complications in putting this lifestyle into full effect, with being discriminated against performing major beats when one is pregnant as one such example, adding that women are well represented in middle management positions, but men still dominate positions at the highest level, with the highest wages.

Revelations that women can hardly combine motherhood and training are also rife. Often, women are not even approached for an answer! Hilarious excuses by those in charge, such as "Mrs. or Miss X, we could not send you for further studies or on a lucrative assignment because we feared confrontation from your husband!" are usually given. This situation as far as women are concerned not only leads to demoralisation and consequent high turnover among them but also acts as an effective barrier against vertical advancement in these organisations. I am a victim of those who lost training that was set to

be conducted in South Africa because of my pregnancy. I knew I could make it, but my seniors underrated my capability (Interview, March 7, 2023).

The respondent added that male dominance is to blame for the continuation of gender inequity in the media. Men have developed an attitude of regarding women as weak and incapable of pursuing their courses, alongside performing tasks without their backing. She expounded that even when a woman has done well in her duty, the rumours would still linger that there was a man who had done it for her.

When asked about the fair treatment in assigning duties to journalists, the respondent said mostly women were exposed to sexual harassment, explaining that naturally women were not born as lobbyists, hinting that the assignments that would compel a female journalist to convince the source for news details can be translated by the latter as asking for favor, thus using the rare opportunity to ask for illegitimate affairs, a situation that had placed women into a bullying work environment. She further hinted that men are accused of enjoying the favour from their fellows holding top positions compared to their female counterparts.

A good number of respondents said that they were married and others were already in domestic partnership, one of the respondents said this status had an impact on their entry into print journalism, and only two said it impacted their career progression. Indeed, only four respondents said they have children, who negatively impacted their career development.

Nonetheless, societal impacts on the experiences of respondents associated with being married and/or having children ranged from having to slow down career progress to concentrating on family and childcare needs; the sexual harassment of women in media considered 'loose' because they work in media; and the diverse faces of missed opportunities.

Experiences with employers ranged from lack of policy regarding employment promotions alongside childcare responsibilities as a reason to bound the advancement and opportunities for women journalists in the study.

The impact of societal attributions of gender roles and such cultural perspectives have also been described as leading to gender-based discrimination in the workplace, with male colleagues and superiors maintaining such perspectives in their interactions in the newsroom.

The many faces of the gendered pay gap also come in underfamily life, with some instances given by interviewees of this study emphasising practices of employers paying men more because of their assumed familial breadwinner role. The impact of societal attributions of gender roles and such cultural perspectives in their relations in the newsroom.

The issue here is, according to the study findings, the extent to which organisations are gender-conscious enough to, first, be flexible to adjust to the needs of parents and, second, not allowing impact promotion, or rather having a more gender-conscious approach to work apportionment and promotion, that commensurate these societal allocations of roles. Maternity policies and women mentors, among others, were also considered to be examples of how challenges to family life and work can be addressed. One of the respondents commented:

At this period, I was married and had children. Yes, when married responsibilities are increased, more challenges come in my way. The issue is; I am working towards a

successful career, but people think that a woman can no longer give more attention to work and they also make some decisions for you based on your status without consent. For example, when pregnant, your employers may not recommend you for some training or other opportunities just because they think it is too demanding... There are also opportunities given to unmarried females, like some training trips outside town that required them to spend one or two nights away, but not grant them to you because they think you can't leave your husband. The point is; they think and decide on your behalf without your consent (Interview, March 7, 2023).

The respondent added that it is a well-held notion among many men and women that females' life mission is to care for husbands, children, and the family as a whole. For women leaders and women who seek to become leaders, one of the most discouraging barriers they face is the double challenge of balancing work and home responsibilities. Conservative male perceptions of leadership often regard family responsibilities as counterproductive to job dedication and productivity. Many women are often supposed to work much harder than their male counterparts to combat the bias that women desist of sacrificing family life for their careers.

Study findings, therefore, conclude that there is almost no suitable way for a woman to bridge the gap between her feminine nature and the traditional "masculine" demands of the leadership function. The dual bind of femininity and masculinity is what has particularly triggered the discussed social barriers that have obscured women from advancing their careers to the very top.

#### **Role of Media and Government in Improving Female Journalists' Working Conditions**

When asked about what should be done to improve female employees' working conditions, the overwhelming majority of respondents noted that the government should check and see the status of women's education and promote them accordingly to observe and see their capabilities. He hinted that there was a need to check and balance to avoid the complaints levelled against either a male or a female. There should be meetings that aim to listen to workers' concerns through which some notable grievances can be easily addressed.

Another respondent noted that supervisors should be more trained to monitor their workers, observing that a good journalist may fail to grow due to bad supervision. The respondent said that it is not uncommon to see a journalist idling in the newsroom, writing stories that end up unpublished over claims that they are below standard and thus unworthy, while the company had employed such a worker, who reports on a regular basis and gets paid. Instead of mentoring such a journalist, a supervisor continues to discourage them. Ethics should be upheld in a way that no female journalist should face working hurdles over gender-based violence.

Commenting on the role that the media should play in improving female journalists' working conditions, a respondent said that media organisations such as The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) and the Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF) should push for initiatives to enhance equal opportunities for both males and females in media houses. He said, "It is also time we placed much emphasis on having a robust journalists union which could fight for their rights. Journalists should have an organisation that fights for their welfare."

She explained that it has been recently well known that the hindrances to female journalists' progress have been news editors and managers suggesting that the TEF should come up with

the framework to follow and if a member will be accused of distressing subordinates, stern measures should be taken against them, alongside having their names put in the limelight.

Responding to the issue of training, she said, drills on gender equity should be conducted transparently in media houses, illustrating that the involvement of male staff members in training will be of utmost importance and, if possible, that drills should be mandatory for all workers.

Another respondent said that the government should have the training incorporated in journalism curriculum training institutions at both tertiary and university levels to push for professionalism and the capacity to report on news in a gender-sensitive and socially inclusive manner. Much emphasis should be placed on the coaching and mentoring of female journalists so that they gain confidence and respect their seniors and male colleagues. Reminiscing the relevance of coaching, the respondent said:

Being a leader holding a senior position at this media company, I had witnessed a female journalist struggling to have bylines for some months but to no avail. She was under probation. The assignments were set equitably early in the morning. On those days, we had no social media to share responsibilities, thanks to the availability of WhatsApp, Facebook and club houses, but this writer did not have her stories published. She came to complain to me about the scenario, but I had no good response because by that time I was not holding any title. You can now see that mentoring was not being encouraged. An employee enjoyed salaries and worked hard, but her stories remained substandard and thus unpublished. I think this is lack of reputable supervisory skills (Interview, March 9, 2023).

### **Tanzania's Progress in Gender Equity compared to Other African Countries**

The cumulative opinions from the majority of respondents are that Tanzania women in the media are fairly better than their African counterparts. Indeed, this situation only started making enormous progress, and the situation started improving with a change in power, especially since 1992, thanks to the gender equity initiatives put forth by organisations such as TAMWA, TEF and TGNP.

Tanzania was lagging behind, but now it has started to record significant strides. Kenya, the DRC and South Africa were ahead of Tanzania if statistics are anything to go by, but now Tanzania is better and women are coming into the profession, some are running their own stations like: Lilian Mtei who owns over 75 percent shares of the *Tanzania Daima* Print Media Corporation, Lilian Timbuka and Salome Kitomari, who are the news editor with *The Mwananchi Communications Limited* and *Nipashe*, respectively. Women stand tall among male-dominated news rooms as managing directors such as Tuma Abdallah at the TSN and Beatrice Bandawe, the news editor with *The Guardian* print media.

South Africa and Ghana are some of the countries making enormous progress in terms of gender equity in print media corporations alongside producing high standards of work. Women in Kenya are liberated, speak out in their minds and are assertive and aggressive compared to other countries where the woman's voice is more suppressed. Media houses owe a role to play because international stations such as BBC have made women known compared to local stations. Pioneer women journalists in Tanzania had set a good pace and raised the standards.

Tanzania's representation at communication conferences in Africa is always full, and it is always asked to make presentations. CNN Africa Journalist awards have also proven that Tanzania is good at journalism because of the large number of awards and nominations. Tanzania has made significant progress in the media, but compared to other countries, the

country lags behind in the number of women holding senior positions. Nevertheless, this is gradually changing.

Responding to how Tanzania media women have a enormous role to play, one of the respondents commented that:

Tanzania still lags behind in terms of gender equity in the media fraternity. We can definitely be above Rwanda, which brags of 50/50 in political milestones but not in vibrancy for print media quality. Kenya's education system made women aggressive. They are very capable leaders and have managed to set up platforms and blogs that promote women against all odds. Tanzania has relatively few women bloggers compared to Kenya, whose quality of women print news content is superior to that of ours if fair assessment is anything to go by. Tanzanian women in print journalism hardly engage in writing hard news. They are overly focused on soft news, fashion and sports, unlike Kenyans, who dare to make hard news about politics in their countries. Even in international media such as VOA, Aljazeera and BBC, we have more Kiswahili women journalists from countries other than Tanzania, who are almost all owners of the language (Interview, March 6, 2023).

The first research question looked into the status of women in the media according to their qualifications and how the promotion policy is being used to recognise their potential. The findings indicated that women's attitudes stifle their progress in the media. Some successful female journalists have left journalism for public relations, social work and teaching. Some have even decided to leave jobs to be housewives. The level of tolerance is still shockingly low when compared to women in other fields who probably face similar ordeals.

Regarding the way in which stereotypes contribute to women's slow pace in holding senior posts, the study findings showed that women who stay in the media often stagnate in the same position for a long time. Promotions in print media are often not based on merit but rather on personal relationships and connections. Most women who make it to the top have to sacrifice their personal integrity for career progression. The position women hold in print media can hardly enable them to make decisions that are favourable to them.

Affirmative action compelling statutory institutions to have at least 30 percent women's representation at the board level has increased representation at the oversight level. Statutory media houses such as the TSN are compelled to ensure that at least 30 percent of their boards are women. This, however, has not gone down to senior and middle levels since affirmative action does not apply there.

The Global Media Monitoring Report, which monitors media (newspapers, radio, television, the internet, and Twitter) globally on a single day each year, reports that "women's points of view are hardly heard in the topics that dominate the news agenda" (WACC, 2015). In the United States on March <sup>25</sup>, 2015 (the most recent report available), women represented 38 percent of reporters overall: 40 percent of reporters in print media, 67 percent of reporters in radio, and 32 percent of reporters in television. The proportion of women goes down still further in higher-visibility roles (presenters, who truly convey the news): women represented 32 percent on television and just 12 percent on radio.

Tan *et al.* (2006) analyse Chinese gender stereotyping in job recruitment, arguing that most media employers often prefer men to women in recruitment in the free-market economy. Media employers who desist on employing women often justify their practice by using excuses based on the social attitude of women's work/family

responsibility. They point out that women lack the same level of devotion to work and aspiration for career success as men do. They worry that when women workers get married, housework will obscure their attention from work, making them less productive than men. Nevertheless, married women workers will become pregnant, which will cost employers. Indeed, women with children will have child care responsibilities, which is another distraction from their commitment to the job. Supporting themselves from the perspective of the well-established social (and women's) attitude toward work and career, media employers make it seem legal and justifiable not to recruit women or not to offer equal career development opportunities for men and women and therefore harm the possibilities for advancement of journalists who actually choose career over family (Wang, 2002; Tan *et al.*, 2006). Obviously, employers regard these family duties as burdensome to their organisation, which they have neither the obligation nor the willingness to bear.

Defending by principles of the market economy—using the least cost to produce the most value, which is regarded as the modern and advanced mode of economy by postMao Chinese society—this kind of attitude about the link between productive and reproductive work is justifiable. This mindset, together with the acuity that women tend to have lower career aspirations, makes women seem less-than-ideal workers when compared with their male counterparts.

It is worth noting, however, that an organisation that ensures that employees represent a greater diversity of backgrounds and experience is better positioned to pick and effectively tap into a correspondingly diverse swath of customer segments. According to Thomas and Ely (2016), hiring an employee from a previously underrepresented group can untap new ideas and approaches for engaging members of that group as clients or customers. In media corporations, the gender diversity of both content creators and coverage decision makers creates opportunities to more effectively engage a correspondingly broader set of readers. In a time of unparalleled challenges to the media industry, the future health of newsrooms, legacy or digital, will depend in no small measure on their ability to attract and retain a more diverse range of employees than ever before. Therefore, gender equity is vital to both “legacy organisations, hungry for journalists with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and new media startups with nascent HR policies” (Goldstein, 2017).

A study by Bridge (as cited by Bulkeley, 2005) points out that there is a widening interest and growing acceptance of alternative leadership models that are hinged on teamwork and consensus building, which women leaders exude more in their work. According to some recent research, women score higher than men on many attributes regarded as crucial to being a successful leader (Sharper, 2000). For example, women function as consensus builders, cope with the future and enjoy more harmonious relationships among colleagues and subordinates.

Kenter (2003) points out that observation, women with power in a system and an interest in empowering subordinates (sharing power with them) were the most successful and effective, and they were also the most collaborative and humane. Eagly and Carli (2003a) thus are capable of debating that between the fact that women possess good qualities to be effective leaders and the reality that women make to it the top positions lies the stereotyped lag of people's perceptions of women's ability.

A study conducted by WEF (2017) shows that women's location within organisations is affected by a variety of social factors, noting that despite the global feminist movement, which has advanced women's opportunities and status in society, in areas such as education,

endurance, political leadership, and professional success, current data indicate that gender equality still varies from nation to nation and that the most industrialised nations have not mainly made the greatest gains. While the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) shows that women have generally advanced over these years, other studies show that axes of power on these advances are not always reliable, particularly within the corporate sector.

One recent report shows that women had plunged 2 percent in standing between 2015 and 2016, now representing only 27.8% of corporate boards of directors (MCGregor, 2016). More significant to the media-world, corporate websites show men decidedly in control in the 1000 largest media corporations, where women hold only 6% of the chief executive officer positions, 17% of the positions in top management, and 20% of the seats on boards of directors (Edström and Facht, 2018).

In earlier studies, feminist researchers documented progressive inequality in news content, where journalism still speaks mainly in a male voice and places emphasis disproportionately on men's ideas, achievements, and analyses of current events. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which has conducted global-level research on gender in news content every five years since 1995, shows that progress has been slow. In 2015, the cumulative data for the 114 participating nations revealed that women still constitute only 245 of the people in the news (as sources or subjects), published, broadcast, or posted online statistics that have been relatively fixed since 2005 (Gallagher, 2015). This figure for content on women in online news was only slightly better at 26 percent.

The largest global-level study to date on women's occupational standing within the news industry is the Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media, led by Byerly (2011) for the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). Researchers in that study of 59 nations interviewed executives at 522 companies to learn the numbers of women and men in reporting, production, management, and governance roles, as well as whether company policies and practices incorporated gender equality. Aggregated data showed men occupying three-fourths of the positions in top management and on boards of directors, as well as two-thirds of the reporting positions. The findings deviated from that pattern in a number of nations, where women near parity with or even exceeded men in many occupational ranks within their news companies. Such relevant exceptions of greater participation by women were found in some of the Nordic and Eastern European nations; nevertheless, the explanations by Carolyn M. Byerly and Katherine A. McGra for women's greater ascendancy in journalism in these two regions.

Generally, countries have few or no women in power (e.g., South Korea, 0%; Chile, 9%; Hungary, 13%; and Japan, 16%), while others reach a higher share of women in governance (e.g., Zimbabwe, 37.5%; New Zealand 41%; and Finland, 46%). The Nordic nations command a long history of social consensus on gender equality, as well as the legal and political structures to support equality, over the last 50 years (Edström, 2013; Øvrebø, 2013; Savolainen and Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2013). In contrast, in the nations of Eastern Europe, the field of journalism went through a process of feminisation under Soviet occupation, when pay was relatively low and news workers were subject to "news management" and censorship by communist authorities. Under these conditions, men were less likely to be attracted to the profession, and women filled the professional gap, remaining to the present time (Byerly, 2011; 2013; Nastasia and Nastasia, 2013; Nastasia *et al.*, 2013; Nastasia and Bondarenko, 2013; Ross and Padovani, 2017). The Nordic nations of note in the IWMF report include

Sweden, Finland, and Norway, and the Eastern European nations include Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Russia.

The conclusion one can draw is that unless media organisations develop clear policies that promote fairness and transparency in the recruitment and promotion of journalists, addressing sexual harassment accusations in the workplace, the issue of gender-based biases would continue to demand continuous education and sensitisation. For women's representation in the media to be entirely grappled with, the question of ownership must be answered first. Male-dominated (read-owned) media houses hardly promote gender parity. This pushes for the holistic empowerment of women economically, socially and politically to own and run media houses. Affirmative action in the interim can be pursued.

Regarding the notable milestones achieved by women in the media, the study findings showed that education had shaped women to aspire to higher positions at the top as key decision makers. Education has been cited as one of the reasons pushing women to the top. Study findings show that achievements recorded by women in the media are profound in the sense that by having a few female journalists holding middle-level positions as news editors, subeditors and bureau chiefs, junior female reporters escape from sexual harassment because men are forced to be precautious when dealing with women's concerns for fear of tainting their images or being accused of being gender-based by female bosses. It was noted in the study that the mode in which assignments are set for news coverage has fairness being determined, unlike in the past when senior positions were grabbed by men. While statistics paint a greener picture of women who undergo training and enter the field, the number of executives, chief editors and publishers has remained disgracefully low. It has been noted that in terms of media management, women journalists become obscured in middle-level positions without the possibility of advancing to top positions in media corporations. The Glass Commission Report mentions that only 30 percent of women occupy senior management positions. Even though there are women in other print media having top leadership positions, the struggle to have women in top decision-making organs has never been that smooth.

The 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report paints a bad picture on gender representation in the media. The document indicates that women are totally underrepresented in the news, with only 21 percent of news subjects being female. In the report, women's points of view are hardly heard as part of the themes that dominate the news agenda. This is also seen in the number of professional women in the media—only 37 percent of news items are reported by women journalists (Gallagher, 2005). The gender and Media handbook (2001) by Africa's Gender and Media Initiatives (GEM) posits that although women constitute the majority of media consumers, little attention is given to what they would be interested to know. The think piece puts forth the argument that assumptions have been made about the closed-mindedness of men to steady coverage on gender issues and levels the blame on the masculine nature of the media as the culprit in propelling the attitudes and stereotypes about women in the media.

In the article 'Women and Media: Progress and Issues; Corsini, Luc, and Antonoff (2021) puts forth the argument that the media appraises women according to how they look and not their abilities, citing an example from the beauty competition where a beautiful woman has fair and unblemished skin and is slim to accentuate her aptitudes. The dynamics of the media market have also shaped how women should conduct themselves within the home. Bello argues that women's bodies are progressively used to sell products such as cigarettes, liquors, cars, male perfume and other male-dominated merchandise, as well as

magazines, newspapers and television programmes. The major issue in the above discussion is the mainstreaming of gender in and through media, increasing consumers' access to media content and the expression of their voices in the media, especially with regard to images portrayed and language used. Another important concern was the transformation of media through the representation of women and the review of media policies and their impact on women.

According to equity theory, fairness in any organisation increases the perceived quality of the service and deal value with information systems. For example, the equitable needs fulfilment suggested by the theory successfully predicted information system implementation. Fairness in assigning duties, especially in the media house, indirectly affects values and cocreation behavior, mediated by the sense of a virtual community (Chou, Lin and Huang, 2016).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The study examined the status of women in the media according to their qualifications and how the promotion policy is being used to recognise their potential. The findings indicated that women's attitudes stifle their progress in the media. Some successful female journalists have left journalism for public relations, social work and teaching. Some have even decided to leave jobs to be housewives. The level of tolerance is still shockingly low when compared to women in other fields who probably face similar ordeals.

Regarding the way in which stereotypes contribute to women's slow pace in holding senior posts, the study findings showed that women who stay in the media often stagnate in the same position for a long time. Promotions in print media are often not based on merit but rather on personal relationships and connections. Most women who make it to the top have to sacrifice their personal integrity for career progression. The position women hold in print media can hardly enable them to make decisions that are favourable to them.

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A study by Bridge (as cited by Bulkeley, 2005) points out that there is a widening interest and growing acceptance of alternative leadership models that are hinged on teamwork and consensus building, which women leaders exude more in their work. According to some recent research, women score higher than men on many attributes regarded as crucial to being a successful leader (Sharper, 2000). For example, women function as consensus builders, cope with the future and enjoy more harmonious relationships among colleagues and subordinates.

Kenter (2003) points out that observation, women with power in a system and an interest in empowering subordinates (sharing power with them) were the most successful and effective, and they were also the most collaborative and humane. Eagly and Carli (2003a) thus are capable of debating that between the fact that women possess good qualities to be effective leaders and the reality that women make to it the top positions lies the stereotyped lag of people's perceptions of women's ability.

A study conducted by WEF (2017) shows that women's location within organisations is affected by a variety of social factors, noting that despite the global feminist movement, which has advanced women's opportunities and status in society, in areas such as education, endurance, political leadership, and professional success, current data indicate that gender equality still varies from nation to nation and that the most industrialised nations have not mainly made the greatest gains. While the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) shows that women have generally advanced over these years, other

studies show that axes of power on these advances are not always reliable, particularly within the corporate sector.

One recent report shows that women had plunged 2 percent in standing between 2015 and 2016, now representing only 27.8% of corporate boards of directors (MCGregor, 2016). More significant to the media-world, corporate websites show men decidedly in control in the 1000 largest media corporations, where women hold only 6% of the chief executive officer positions, 17% of the positions in top management, and 20% of the seats on boards of directors (Edström and Facht, 2018).

In earlier studies, feminist researchers documented progressive inequality in news content, where journalism still speaks mainly in a male voice and places emphasis disproportionately on men's ideas, achievements, and analyses of current events. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which has conducted global-level research on gender in news content every five years since 1995, shows that progress has been slow. In 2015, the cumulative data for the 114 participating nations revealed that women still constitute only 24% of the people in the news (as sources or subjects), published, broadcast, or posted online statistics that have been relatively fixed since 2005 (Gallagher, 2015). This figure for content on women in online news was only slightly better at 26 percent.

The largest global-level study to date on women's occupational standing within the news industry is the Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media, led by Byerly (2011) for the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). Researchers in that study of 59 nations interviewed executives at 522 companies to learn the numbers of women and men in reporting, production, management, and governance roles, as well as whether company policies and practices incorporated gender equality. Aggregated data showed men occupying three-fourths of the positions in top management and on boards of directors, as well as two-thirds of the reporting positions. The findings deviated from that pattern in a number of nations, where women near parity with or even exceeded men in many occupational ranks within their news companies. Such relevant exceptions of greater participation by women were found in some of the Nordic and Eastern European nations; nevertheless, the explanations by Carolyn M. Byerly and Katherine A. McGraw for women's greater ascendancy in journalism in these two regions.

Generally, countries have few or no women in power (e.g., South Korea, 0%; Chile, 9%; Hungary, 13%; and Japan, 16%), while others reach a higher share of women in governance (e.g., Zimbabwe, 37.5%; New Zealand 41%; and Finland, 46%). The Nordic nations command a long history of social consensus on gender equality, as well as the legal and political structures to support equality, over the last 50 years (Edström, 2013; Øvrebø, 2013; Savolainen and Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2013). In contrast, in the nations of Eastern Europe, the field of journalism went through a process of feminisation under Soviet occupation, when pay was relatively low and news workers were subject to "news management" and censorship by communist authorities. Under these conditions, men were less likely to be attracted to the profession, and women filled the professional gap, remaining to the present time (Byerly, 2011; 2013; Nastasia and Nastasia, 2013; Nastasia *et al.*, 2013; Nastasia and Bondarenko, 2013; Ross and Padovani, 2017). The Nordic nations of note in the IWMF report include Sweden, Finland, and Norway, and the Eastern European nations include Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Russia.

The conclusion one can draw is that unless media organisations develop clear policies that promote fairness and transparency in the recruitment and promotion of journalists, addressing

sexual harassment accusations in the workplace, the issue of gender-based biases would continue to demand continuous education and sensitisation. For women's representation in the media to be entirely grappled with, the question of ownership must be answered first. Male-dominated (read-owned) media houses hardly promote gender parity. This pushes for the holistic empowerment of women economically, socially and politically to own and run media houses. Affirmative action in the interim can be pursued.

Regarding the notable milestones achieved by women in the media, the study findings showed that education had shaped women to aspire to higher positions at the top as key decision makers. Education has been cited as one of the reasons pushing women to the top. Study findings show that achievements recorded by women in the media are profound in the sense that by having a few female journalists holding middle-level positions as news editors, subeditors and bureau chiefs, junior female reporters escape from sexual harassment because men are forced to be precautious when dealing with women's concerns for fear of tainting their images or being accused of being gender-based by female bosses. It was noted in the study that the mode in which assignments are set for news coverage has fairness being determined, unlike in the past when senior positions were grabbed by men. While statistics paint a greener picture of women who undergo training and enter the field, the number of executives, chief editors and publishers has remained disgracefully low. It has been noted that in terms of media management, women journalists become obscured in middle-level positions without the possibility of advancing to top positions in media corporations. The Glass Commission Report mentions that only 30 percent of women occupy senior management positions. Even though there are women in other print media having top leadership positions, the struggle to have women in top decision-making organs has never been that smooth.

The 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report paints a bad picture on gender representation in the media. The document indicates that women are totally underrepresented in the news, with only 21 percent of news subjects being female. In the report, women's points of view are hardly heard as part of the themes that dominate the news agenda. This is also seen in the number of professional women in the media—only 37 percent of news items are reported by women journalists (Gallagher, 2005). The gender and Media handbook (2001) by Africa's Gender and Media Initiatives (GEM) posits that although women constitute the majority of media consumers, little attention is given to what they would be interested to know. The think piece puts forth the argument that assumptions have been made about the closed-mindedness of men to steady coverage on gender issues and levels the blame on the masculine nature of the media as the culprit in propelling the attitudes and stereotypes about women in the media.

In the article 'Women and Media: Progress and Issues; Corsini, Luc, and Antonoff (2021) puts forth the argument that the media appraises women according to how they look and not their abilities, citing an example from the beauty competition where a beautiful woman has fair and unblemished skin and is slim to accentuate her aptitudes. The dynamics of the media market have also shaped how women should conduct themselves within the home. Bello argues that women's bodies are progressively used to sell products such as cigarettes, liquors, cars, male perfume and other male-dominated merchandise, as well as magazines, newspapers and television programmes. The major issue in the above discussion is the mainstreaming of gender in and through media, increasing consumers' access to media content and the expression of their voices in the media, especially with regard to images portrayed and language used. Another important concern was the transformation of media

through the representation of women and the review of media policies and their impact on women.

According to equity theory, fairness in any organisation increases the perceived quality of the service and deal value with information systems. For example, the equitable needs fulfilment suggested by the theory successfully predicted information system implementation. Fairness in assigning duties, especially in the media house, indirectly affects values and cocreation behavior, mediated by the sense of a virtual community (Chou, Lin and Huang, 2016).

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The study results show that the number of female journalist graduates outweighs that of their male counterparts, but a few women make it to the top as key decision-makers in media organisations. Female journalists have a particular influence on human rights issues and development matters affecting society. The study results posit that women have all of the power to develop their careers if fair promotion policies are friendly to them. They enjoy gender equity support from international organisations at grassroots levels. Companies tend not to think that now a certain female worker has such responsibilities, how do they help her and make her grow in her career at the end of the day what the corporation needs is a worker's knowledge and skills but very few women today have the patience to go inclusive of the editors. Study findings showed that media houses have no policy that excludes women, but they are not interested in improving their careers and climbing the leadership ladders on merit. Therefore, it is time for female journalists to struggle to win posts on merits instead of blaming the male-dominated governing machinery, which has now become too flexible to welcome changes. News organisations need not start from scratch in assessing the operational and cultural dimensions of gender inequity. A plethora of professional groups, research and advocacy groups, and nonprofit consulting organisations offer resources and best practices for increasing diversity and equity, many of which specifically focus on the representation and depiction of women in the media.

## **7. IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS**

Gender equity prevents violence against women and girls. It is essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equity is a human right. Gender inequity has serious and long-lasting consequences for women and other marginalised genders. Exposure to violence, objectification, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequality can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Companies tend not to think that now a certain female worker has such responsibilities, how do they help her and make her grow in her career at the end of the day what the corporation needs is a worker's knowledge and skills but very few women today have the patience to go inclusive of the editors. Female journalists may then be compelled to quit the organisation for greener pastures somewhere else, as was the case for women journalists, who are accused of not being interested in growing in the print media and opt for public relations and information officers' posts, which they think are well paying and less demanding.

It is recommended that the government take proactive measures to implement the key findings of this study. This may involve enacting policies or regulations that align with the identified needs and challenges.

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