

"Reimagining the Narrative: The Identity of Women in Television Broadcast Journalism and the Impact of Media Representation on Gender Equity"

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative analysis explores women's identity in television news from a feminist perspective, highlighting the challenges faced by female journalists due to gender dynamics and societal stereotypes. The research aims to identify solutions for issues like over-sexualization, gender bias, and workplace harassment, working towards a more equitable media landscape. Utilizing survey questionnaires, the study will engage media professionals to gather insights for potential reforms. It focuses on the barriers that skilled female broadcast journalists encounter in satellite TV channels (Deahl, 2017) while promoting a professional and supportive workplace atmosphere that transcends gender gaps.

To conduct the research, it is essential to address the discrimination faced by broadcast journalists and propose remedies based on expert recommendations. Suggested reforms may include creating ideal regulations for television journalism to enhance accountability and reduce violence against women (UNESCO, 2015) in the industry.

Keywords: News Media, Gender, Identity, Television, Bias, Hegemony, Broadcast Journalist

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on women's identity in news media from a feminist perspective, examining their struggles to establish identities amidst significant challenges. It addresses the barriers women face in the broadcast journalism industry and the marginalization of their voices in a male-dominated environment.

Women in news experience gender discrimination and structural obstacles that limit their representation. This study aims to identify gaps in current research to propose strategies for addressing harassment and discrimination.

It explores subjective factors affecting women in media, including bargaining power, perceived work value, and access to assignments. Recognizing that women's representation is often confined to certain roles, this research emphasizes the need for continued efforts to achieve equality and recognition. The findings aim to contribute to a healthier, safer, and more gender-inclusive work environment in the media.

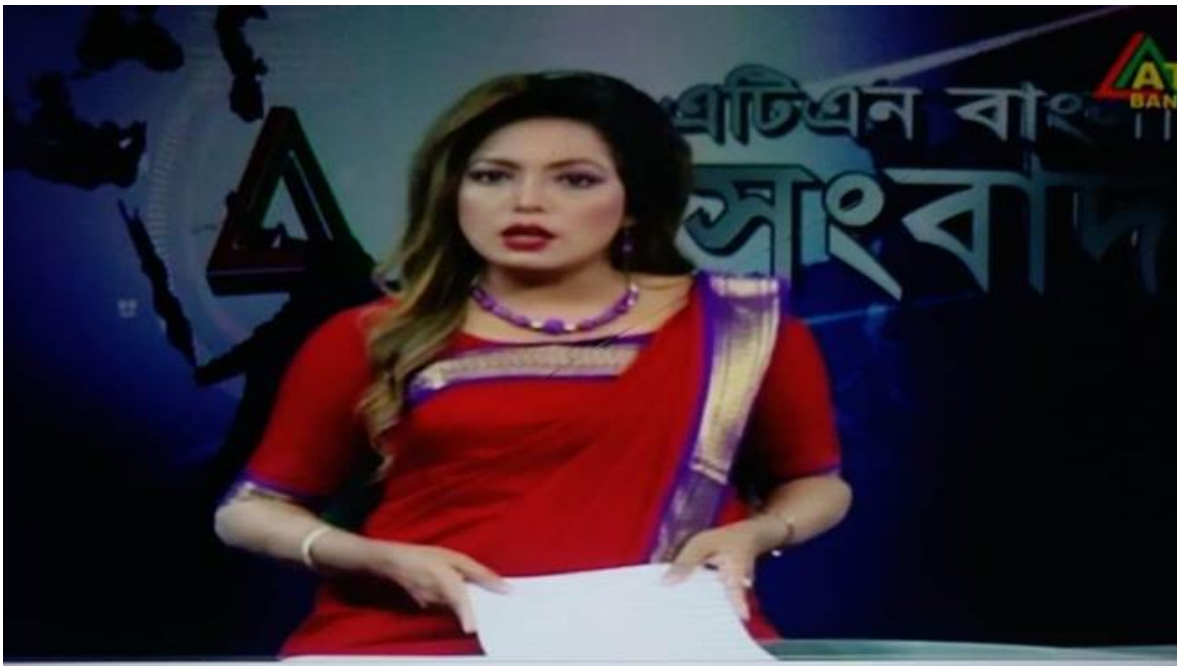
Background of the Topic

Reflecting on my 18 years in news presentation, I felt a compelling urge to conduct research focused on female news presenters who struggle to establish their identities in the face of various challenges. My study concentrates on women in television news, examining their roles and experiences as ideal presenters. For methodology, I employed a questionnaire survey targeting news presenters, reporters, newsroom staff, and journalists to gather insights from their real-life experiences. Additionally, I included opinion questions to delve deeper into their perspectives. The results chapter highlights the disadvantages faced by women in the media and the pervasive gender discrimination within the workplace. I conclude by contextualizing my findings within the media landscape of Bangladesh, addressing policy and cultural implications, acknowledging the limitations of my

research, and suggesting avenues for further study. My research aims to shed light on critical issues affecting the news industry in both Bangladesh and New York while contributing to broader discussions about the challenges faced by working women in media, particularly in the developing world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Television channels constantly air news updates, and while more women are entering the field of news presentation and reporting, they encounter significant challenges linked to identity, appearance, and skills stemming from gender dynamics (Elizabeth Grosz, 1994). The media profoundly shapes public perceptions of women in journalism, often reinforcing sexist portrayals. Julia Wood (1994) emphasizes the media's role as a powerful influence on societal views of gender, a notion supported by a global survey from the University of Zurich (Humprecht & Esser, 2017), which indicates that media amplifies gender stereotypes. In journalism, identity is crucial as presenters connect with audiences. News anchors are expected to deliver information while showcasing their distinct styles (Halbrooks, 2017), and they must possess quick thinking, strong communication skills, and the ability to multitask (Geisler, 2011). Their identities are shaped by creativity, core values, and leadership that engenders trust. This research underscores the necessity for diversity in newsrooms, ensuring increased representation of women and coverage of issues relevant to them. Numerous studies (Allan, 2010; Byerly, 2004; Carter et al., 1998; de Bruin, 2000; Djerf-Pierre, 2005; Lavie and Lehman-Wilzig, 2005; Melin-Hoggins, 2004) reveal that newsroom dynamics are gendered. Stuart Hall (1998) discusses the ideological impact of media, noting that public trust hinges on its perceived objectivity. Gitlin (2003) highlights that journalists often adhere to societal norms, shaping narratives within established frameworks. Moreover, Hall (1977) points to the significance of connotative codes in news delivery, as they influence societal meaning. Presenter identity is comprised of traits such as honesty and sophistication (Santos, 2014), with women in news evolving into trusted figures worldwide. The connection between identity traits and presenters' personalities influences audience perceptions (Govers & Schoormans, 2005). Successful communication and engagement with viewers are essential for effective news delivery. Gramsci's (1985) theory of cultural hegemony highlights mass media's role in shaping norms and values (Srinati, 2004). News presenters thus have the power to impact public opinion. The auditory and visual elements at the onset of news segments create a sense of urgency, reinforcing a presenter's authority (Allan, 2010) and fostering a direct connection with viewers.



Picture: 1 Presenter's direct visual address in opening the news headlines ATN Bangla Live News at 10 pm

After the headlines, news presenters greet the audience, initially appearing in a full shot and transitioning to a medium shot, fostering a personal connection. They typically say "good morning" or "good evening" before moving to news items, enhancing viewer engagement. Trailers for upcoming stories and sign-offs mentioning

the news institution contribute to this relationship. Presenters often strive for a friendly atmosphere, though their smiles may sometimes seem forced due to audience rating pressures (Debing Feng, 2016). Rachel Deal (2018) highlights the importance of comfort on camera and audience connection for successful news anchors, alongside skills in communication, improvisation, and social media literacy. A presenter's identity is shaped by creativity and leadership, which are vital for building viewer trust while managing the emotional tone of news delivery. In Bangladesh, women news presenters face notable challenges despite increasing representation. Gender inequality remains prevalent, often sidelining women's voices and issues. Research shows they are frequently depicted as "eye candy," undermining their contributions (Keith, 2016), while underrepresentation persists in expert roles (Burke, 2008), which reinforces traditional gender norms and normalizes violence against women (Wood, 1994). David Gauntlett (2004) discusses the influence of media on identity and gender dynamics, while Anna Georgyan (2016) points out the persistence of sexist portrayals. Bordo (2013) argues that gender is a fragmented and unstable concept. Applying Derrida's deconstruction theory (1989), news presenters' identities are shaped by social and cultural contexts, often treating women as "the other." This perspective reveals how women in media can be objectified and face workplace violence. Michel Foucault (1998) examines how sex becomes a pivotal object of knowledge and power. In the postmodern era, news media reflects modern presentation styles, with thinkers like Baudrillard (1983) and Lyotard (1971) exploring the significance of symbols in communication. Television serves as a powerful medium influencing social institutions and cultural norms, with presenters playing a crucial role in shaping audience perceptions.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the role of women in television news, aiming to illuminate the current workplace environment and identify strategies to address existing challenges. The goal is to provide insights that support women news presenters, reporters, and editors, enabling them to progress in their careers while engaging in creative and artistic endeavors (David Gauntlett, 2004; Anna Davtyan, 2016). The research will emphasize practical measures to ensure gender equality and improve conditions in the news media. The primary research question targets the issues and controversies surrounding women's representation in news media, particularly regarding image-building and identity formation. The study seeks solutions to honor women in journalism and reduce their over-sexualization, aiming to transform the moral panic and biases associated with women working in media. The research proposal, titled "Reimagining the Narrative: The Identity of Women in Television Journalism and the Impact of Representation on Gender Equity in Bangladeshi Media," will address the following questions:

1. To what extent does the identity crisis affect the status of women in the news?
2. Are women in Bangladeshi media victims of gender bias and sexual objectification?
3. How can the challenges faced by women in broadcast journalism be effectively overcome?

METHODS AND DESIGN

This study utilizes survey questionnaires as the primary research method, targeting women in news roles across various TV stations, including news editors, reporters, and print media journalists. This quantitative approach is designed to effectively address the research questions. The researcher, a Senior News Presenter with 18 years of experience at ATN Bangla, brings valuable firsthand insights from her work in the news media, including her roles at ATN Bangla UK and Time Television in New York. The quantitative method will gather statistical insights to identify challenges faced by female broadcast journalists. Surveys will be distributed to a representative sample of professionals, with information sheets and consent forms provided to participants. The sample will consist of at least 30 news presenters, 30 news reporters, 20 news editors, and 20 journalists, selected by experience, gender, and age, with voluntary self-selection.

Collecting and Analyzing Data

This study follows a quantitative approach based on a literature review, contrasting with qualitative methods. While qualitative research can inspire new insights, this study adopts a deductive approach to test existing theories (Bryman, 2001), here I used inductive method. The literature review helped define the research problem and guide comparisons with previous findings (Potter, 2006). The research will analyze the current state of the

TV news industry in Bangladesh and its impact on female news presenters, using insights from newsroom staff behaviors. Using quantitative methods allows for a robust analysis of the challenges faced by women in news (Dawson, 2006). Secondary sources such as journal articles and reports will augment the analysis through triangulation techniques. Given the study's focus on the opinions of female news presenters around sensitive issues, quantitative methods are essential for measuring current challenges. The final report will provide a systematic presentation of findings, addressing key issues affecting women in TV news broadcasting.

Description:

To address my research question, I used survey questionnaires, leveraging my 18 years as a Senior News Presenter at ATN Bangla and experience on ATN Bangla UK. The quantitative method effectively tackles the challenges women face in Bangladeshi media. I will survey news presenters, reporters, editors, and journalists from various private channels in Bangladesh and New York. This group comprises seasoned professionals familiar with the TV news landscape. The study will employ structured survey questions and closed-ended interview questions to gather standardized data on gender differences and discrimination. It will also examine attire choices—female presenters often wear traditional outfits, while males opt for Western styles—reflecting societal attitudes towards gender in the media. The sample includes at least 30 news presenters, 30 reporters, 20 editors, and 20 journalists, whose responses will inform recommendations. Ultimately, the study aims to promote respect for women in media and reduce their over-sexualization, addressing the moral panic and prejudice they face in the industry.

The questionnaire for the survey that was conducted is attached here.

"Reimagining the Narrative: The Identity of Women in Television Broadcast Journalism and the Impact of Media Representation on Gender Equity"

(Please put a Tick mark on your preferred box)

Are you satisfied with the present position of women in TV Media in Bangladesh?

Strongly satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Disturbed	No Comment
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Do you feel that Gender based discrimination prevails in News Media in Bangladesh?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Are the Women in Media treated as object of sexualization in TV News Presentation?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Do you think 'Women in Media' face any obstacle/harassment/abuse (mental, physical) in work place?

Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Never	No Comment
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"Women News Presenter are more popular than Male presenters", Do you agree?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Which kind of dress-code you prefer to watch the presenters to wear as their attire?

Traditional	Modern	Western	Indifferent	No Comment
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Do you feel that the 'Women in Media' are subject to unfair favoritism, victim of unconscious resentment and unknown envy in the workplace?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Are Women in TV Media capable of forming their own image in male-dominated society in Bangladesh while suffering from grievance and injustice?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Are the female presenters facing family pressure to quit their jobs in TV media of Bangladesh?

Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Never	No Comment
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Is there any moral panic regarding the working women in News media in Bangladesh?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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To what extent the media in Bangladesh is concerned towards women empowerment?

Strongly Concern	Concern	Not Concerned	Indifferent	No Comment
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Do you think that News Presentation (Live) is a Risky Job during any crisis period of the state, (ex: Natural disaster, Social and Political Unrest, War, Accident etc.)?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Oppose	No Comment
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Combined Percentage Table (N = 100)

Question	Strongly Agree / Strongly Satisfied	Agree / Satisfied	Disagree / Not Satisfied	Oppose / Disturbed	No Comment / Neutral
Q1	8%	22%	40%	25%	5%
Q2	45%	35%	10%	5%	5%
Q3	35%	38%	15%	7%	5%
Q4	12%	30%	40%	10%	8%
Q5	38%	37%	10%	8%	7%
Q6	40%	30%	12%	13%	5%
Q7	28%	40%	18%	8%	6%
Q8	22%	48%	18%	7%	5%
Q9	8%	20%	35%	30%	7%
Q10	30%	42%	15%	8%	5%
Q11	12%	38%	30%	15%	5%
Q12	28%	47%	13%	7%	5%

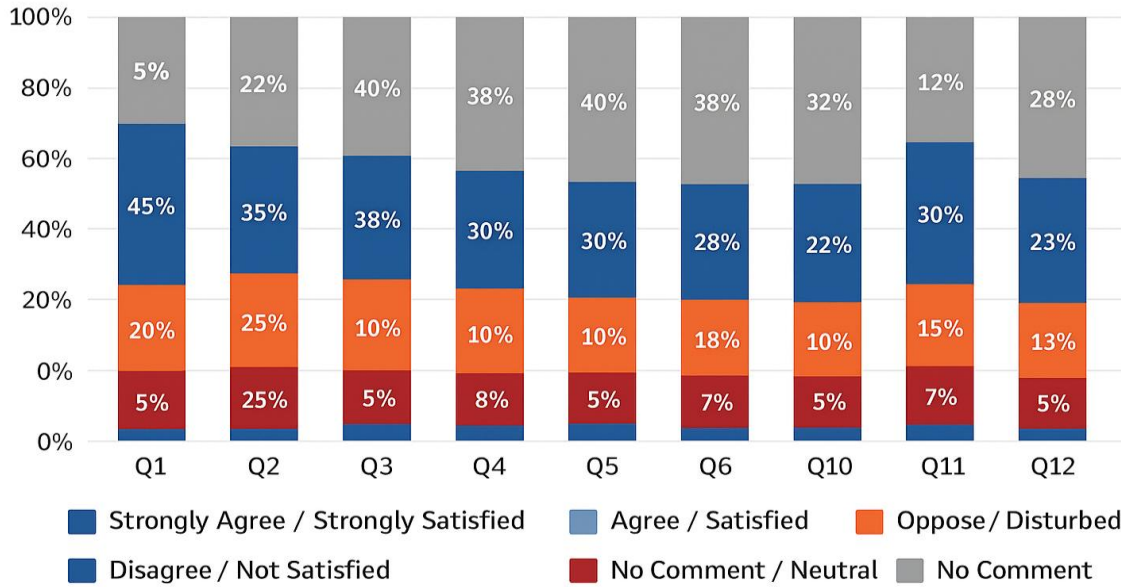
Across all 12 questions, the overall trend is clear:

- Majority **acknowledge discrimination & harassment exist**
- Moderate responses on **empowerment / capability**
- Mixed views on **satisfaction, dress, and family pressure**

Women in Bangladeshi television media are widely perceived as *popular on-screen but vulnerable off-screen* — gaining visibility but still struggling with discrimination, sexualization, harassment, moral panic, and family pressure, while media institutions are seen as only moderately supportive of real empowerment.

I have focused on the questions 3,4,7 and 11 much because those responses show the percentage which is near the outcome of my expectation to come up with the answer of research questions. I focus on the value while most of the participants are agree with one point.

Perception of Women in TV Media – Survey Responses (N=100)



Operationalization: This research can be explored through quantitative interviews focusing on women journalists' career trajectories, their strategies for dealing with challenges, how they perceive their professional identity, and how they believe their gender influences their work and media acceptances. This can be assessed by analyzing gender representation in different roles and levels within news organizations, examining salary disparities, and tracking women's career paths over time. The percentage of data on women's experiences with promotion opportunities and workplace recognition can also provide valuable insights.

The survey responses offer a valuable framework for understanding the complex and often challenging landscape faced by women in the news media. By identifying and explicating the key pressures stemming from masculine hegemony, societal gender norms, workplace discrimination, aesthetic expectations, and voice criticism, (Thompson, 2018), the operationalization provides a more holistic and nuanced perspective than focusing on any single factor in isolation. Its explanatory power, heuristic value, and testability make it a useful tool for guiding future research and informing interventions aimed at fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment for women in television journalism. Ultimately, by recognizing and addressing these intersecting pressures, the media industry can move towards honoring the contributions of women journalists and ensuring that their professional identities are shaped by their skills and expertise rather than by limiting gendered expectations and biases

Justification

The research methodology utilizes survey questionnaires to gain insights into the challenges faced by women in news, enhanced by the researcher's field experience. However, there are notable limitations. Most participants, being media professionals, may express bias in their responses due to fear of repercussions or personal circumstances. Additionally, their views could be shaped by the political and economic agendas prevalent in the media sector. This methodology, while aiming for a humanistic and interpretive understanding of participants' experiences, requires careful consideration of potential biases. There is a lack of extensive study materials in this area, making the analysis challenging. As a result, I will prioritize conversation analysis (Seale, 2004) over scientific analysis. During data collection, some participants may hesitate to answer questions due to fear or embarrassment.

Analysis of Data

Literature reveals that women's identity in news is precarious, supported by Simon de Beauvoir (1997) and Anna Georgyan (2016), who highlight the impact of stereotyping in gendered media. Beckers et al. (2024) criticize the state of female news content, while Kempton and Walter (2014) address sexual harassment of female journalists

in the U.S. The hegemonic media system, analyzed by Stuart Hall and Gitlin, emphasizes the socially constructed nature of women's identities, which remain impacted by bias and stereotypes. Despite extensive discussions within feminist literary theory, practical solutions to eliminate these problems remain elusive. My study focuses on how women in news can navigate this identity crisis and what measures can promote gender equality in the media.

Presentation and Discussion of Research Results

The research findings are illustrated through tables, charts, and graphs that depict the current situation in Bangladesh's media. Participants included news presenters, reporters, newsroom employees, and journalists, chosen for their experience. The respondents were eager to provide insights, having been informed of the study's objectives through Participants' Information Sheets and consent letters from their organizations. This transparency encouraged their participation without external motivation.

Question 1- Is women's participation higher in news presentations than male news presenters in Bangladeshi media?

Name of TV Media	Number of total News Presenter	Number of females	Number of males	% of Female Presenter
BTV	112	76	36	67.86
ATN Bangla	18	15	3	83.33
Channel I	18	12	6	66.67
Bangla Vision	17	15	2	88.24
IBTV USA	24	15	9	62.50
NTV	20	15	5	75.00
Voice of America (Bangla Service)	18	6	12	33.33
Time Television	26	17	9	65.38
ETV	21	12	09	57.14
BBC Bangla	28	10	18	35.71

The Secondary data Source: The representative of the News presenters of each the mentioned channels

Table 1: women’s higher participation in News presentation

This table signifies females' interest in working in the visual media, where they can create their position and status through active interaction with the viewers. In the forms of information in a news bulletin, people need to trust what a news presenter says to their audience or viewers. As a result, a relationship of faith and confidence builds up between the viewers and a new presenter. So, in a social context, the image of a TV presenter becomes very familiar to regular news viewers. Thus, an ideal figure of a news presenter becomes the icon of society that helps to create women's identity in the new media.

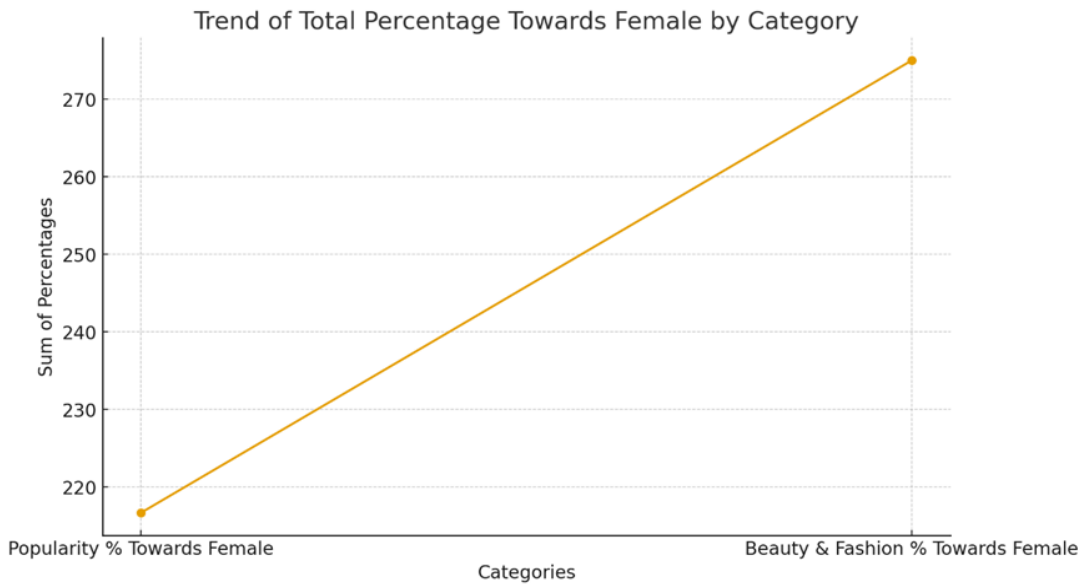
Question 2: Do you think that Women are sexually objectified in TV media, even in News?

Type of Respondents	Popularity of the News Presenters by Gender		Percentage Towards Female (%)	Beauty and Fashion focused on TV Screen		Percentage Towards Female (%)
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
News Presenters (30)	10	20	66.67	05	25	83.33%
News Reporters (30)	15	15	50%	10	20	66.67%
Newsroom Employee (20)	20	10	33.33%	10	10	50%
Journalists (20)	10	20	66.67%	05	15	75%
SUM of percentage (N)			216.67%			275%

Table 2: Women are sexually objectified in TV media even in News presentation

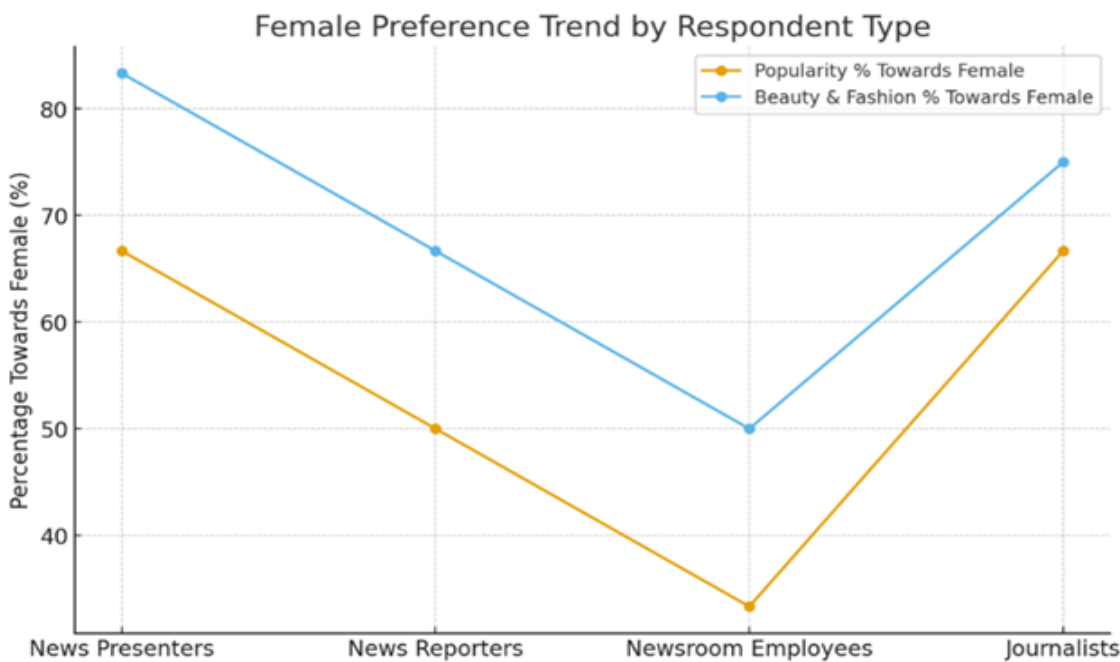
Females are generally more favored than males on TV, especially in beauty and fashion content. While popularity varies by respondent type, journalists and news presenters show the strongest preference for female presenters. Overall, female presence dominates both popularity and beauty/fashion perception.

LINE-GRAPH



Comparing the total percentage towards female preference across the two categories.

Here, the objectification of female news presenters is measured through two main qualities. The Popularity of female news presenters is higher than that of males, according to the opinion of most participants. Women are being objectified as fashion icons and the symbol of beauty on the TV screen, as the visual media always prefer the outward beautification of women more than men to make them more attractive and to fulfill the 'eye catcher' demand of the viewers.



Here is another LINE GRAPH comparing Popularity vs Beauty & Fashion female preference across different respondent categories, which symbolizes the over-sexualization of female news casters in Bangladeshi media

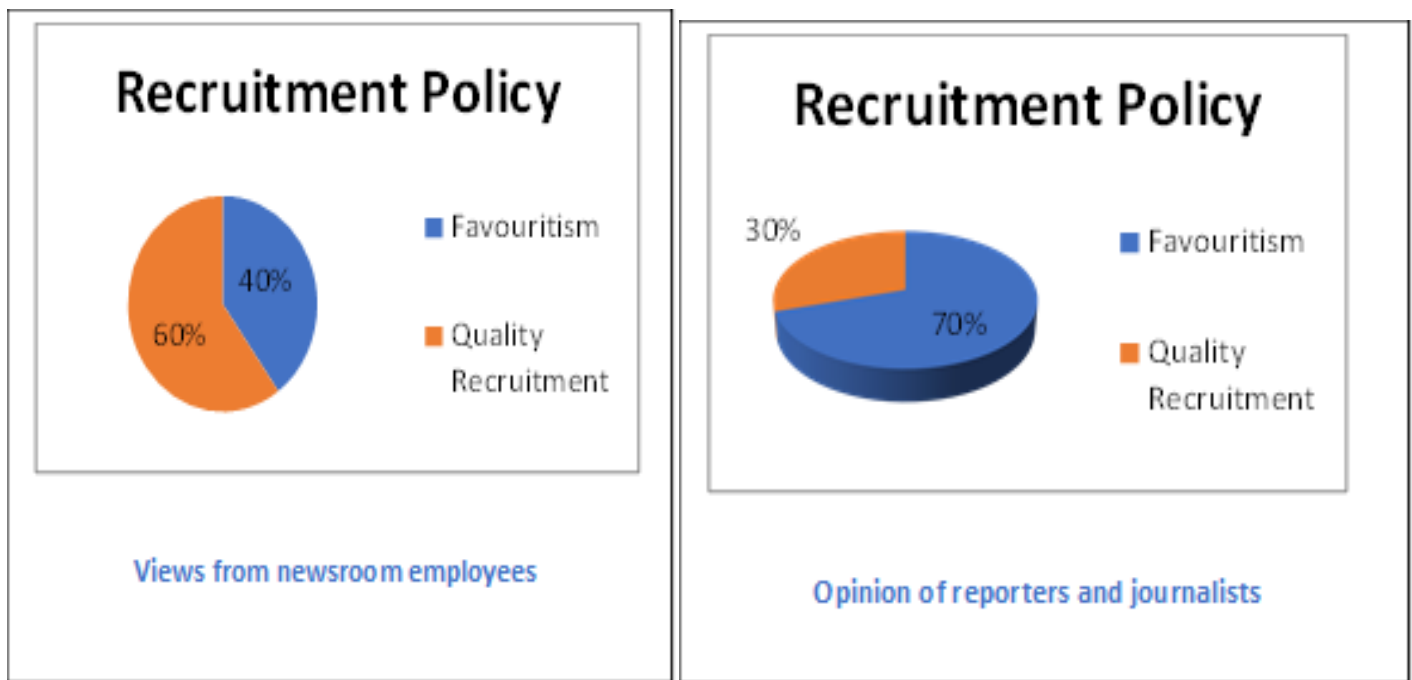
Question 3: The Experience and skills of News presenters are sometimes undermined by favoritism. The newsroom employees, reporters, and journalists expressed their views on that opinion.

Types of respondents	Recruited through Nepotism (%)	Quality Recruitment (%)
Newsroom employee (20)	60%	40%
Reporters (30)	30%	70%
Journalists (20)	30%	70%

Table 3: Quality aspects and skills of News presenters are sometimes undermined by favoritism

This table shows that more than 55% of the women in media are recruited through favoritism, according to the newsroom employees, reporters, and journalists. In contrast, the actual scenario of the recruiting policy is not well known in the media. This is a confidential result that I had to discover by closed-ended questions with the respondents. Being a news caster of a TV Channel since 2006, I have gone through various experiences and have been trying to find out the drawbacks and shortcomings of favoritism that obstruct the real sense of professionalism in the art of news presentation. The nepotism in news presentation sometimes gives undue scope to less qualified presenters to enter this job, which ultimately ruins the goodwill of the channel and hinders the quality of news presentation, since news presentation is a live performance.

Pie chart:1 and 2



The two Pie charts focus on the real scenario of Newsroom's favoritism towards the recruitment policy of a news presenter, since it is a job that is attractive to women. Both pie charts mirror that there is a great practice of favoritism in the recruitment of News Presenters in Television media.

Question 4: Do you think a Broadcast Journalist's job is risky?

In response to the question of the Job riskiness of the news presenters, newsroom editors, and journalists expressed their view as the data focused.

Types of Respondents	Job Riskiness
News Presenters (30)	80%
Newsroom editors (20)	60%
Journalists (30)	70%

Job Riskiness

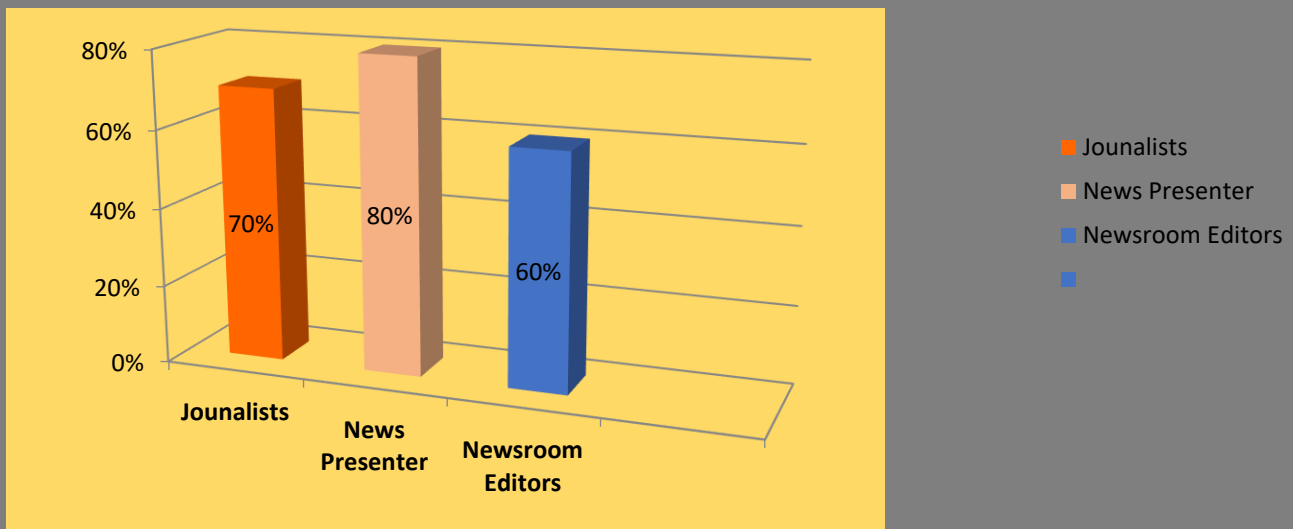


Chart 2: The insecurity and risk analysis in the TV News presentation in the media

News presentation is a live performance conducted by TV presenters, regardless of gender, at all hours. They must be prepared to broadcast during political unrest, disasters, wartime, or personal trauma. Many respondents believe that male presenters face fewer risks, suggesting they are better suited for high-risk roles. In contrast, reporters and newsroom staff argue that reporting can be even more hazardous. Women are often viewed as preferring roles emphasizing subtlety and style, yet female news presenters effectively manage live broadcasts, often in challenging situations.

CONCLUSION

This research provides valuable insights into the current status of women in media, particularly focusing on broadcast journalists. While there has been a notable increase in the number of women in media roles, many still find themselves in administrative capacities rather than in pivotal production positions. Studies from the Rabindra Bharati Educational Institute (2002) and Ryan (1999) highlight the ongoing challenges of gender discrimination and the barriers that prevent many women from breaking through the "glass ceiling" in media organizations.

The findings of this study serve as a positive step toward empowering women in the media. By creating an environment where female journalists can flourish without biases or obstacles, we can support their growth and success. This initiative aligns with broader societal movements aimed at addressing gender disparities and fostering inclusivity, ultimately working towards a more equitable workplace for women in media. Together, we can build a supportive framework that encourages diversity and innovation, benefiting the entire industry.

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