



A PSYCHOSOCIAL HARM AND A HAMPERED CAREER: THE STRUGGLES OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN LEBANON

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INTRODUCTION

In Lebanon's current media world, the journey for women journalists begins with a set of sexist prerequisites and often concludes with a significant toll. These prerequisites demand adherence to specific physical standards, including conventional attractiveness, slimness, and straight hair. However, the true cost of pursuing a career in journalism for women extends beyond mere appearance, encompassing the acceptance and normalization of sexual harassment from recruiters, directors, and colleagues within media institutions. The consequence is a psychological toll and hindered career progression for many women in Lebanese journalism.

This research aims to delve into the professional and personal challenges faced by women journalists in Lebanon, shedding light on their labor rights, such as salaries, promotions, and vacations, as well as the various discomforts they encounter within the field.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Hampering refers to creating obstacles, hindrances, or difficulties that impede or restrict an individual's ability to accomplish their goals, tasks, or activities effectively, often involving intentional interference or making success and optimal functioning more challenging.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature.

Abuse of power entails exploiting one's position of power to harm, bully, or disadvantage others.

Intimidation involves inducing fear or a sense of inferiority in another individual.

Political connections, in the context of this study, is a phrase that carries a negative connotation, indicating the misuse of such connections to perpetuate unfair favoritism, inequality, and corruption.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the aim of providing an equitable portrayal of the current status of women journalists in Lebanon, the Samir Kassir Foundation (SKF) team conducted a series of **70 interviews with women journalists**, working in and/or covering Lebanon, in January 2024. Each interview, lasting approximately 40 minutes, utilized a standardized questionnaire (refer to the appendix). To uphold ethical standards and the principle of "Do No Harm," interviewees' identities were kept anonymous. Additionally, precautions were taken during cross-analysis to ensure confidentiality and prevent identity disclosure.

Following the identification of sexual harassment as a prominent theme in the findings, the SKF team conducted a Key Informant Interview (KII) with a mental health specialist who possesses extensive experience working with journalists. While primarily relying on quantitative data, this study also includes qualitative data.

The findings of the study are categorized into three sections:

- I. Workplace Challenges
- II. Sexual Harassment: Pre-, During, and Post-Employment
- III. Institutional Responses and Policies

Research Sample

The subsequent charts depict the profiles of the interviewed women journalists. This data is used for analysis in the following sections.

Figure 1. "Do you currently work as a freelancer or are you employed?"

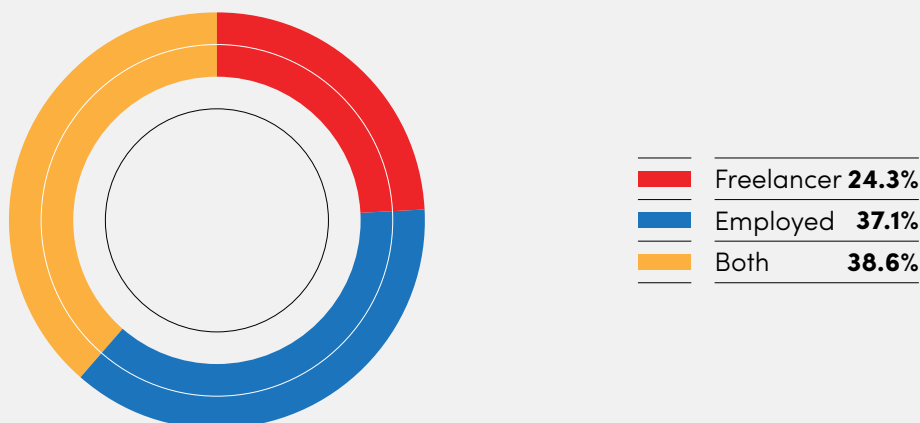
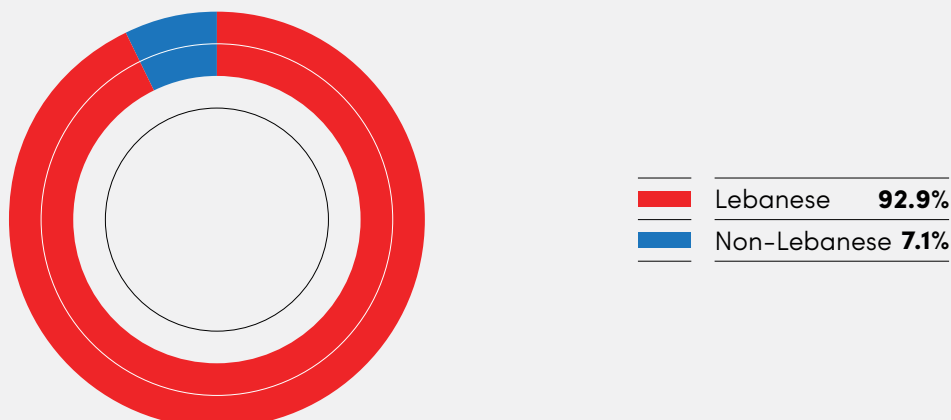


Figure 2. Interviewees' nationalities¹



¹ The nationalities of non-Lebanese interviewees are not specified to ensure anonymity.

Figure 3. Interviewees' age range

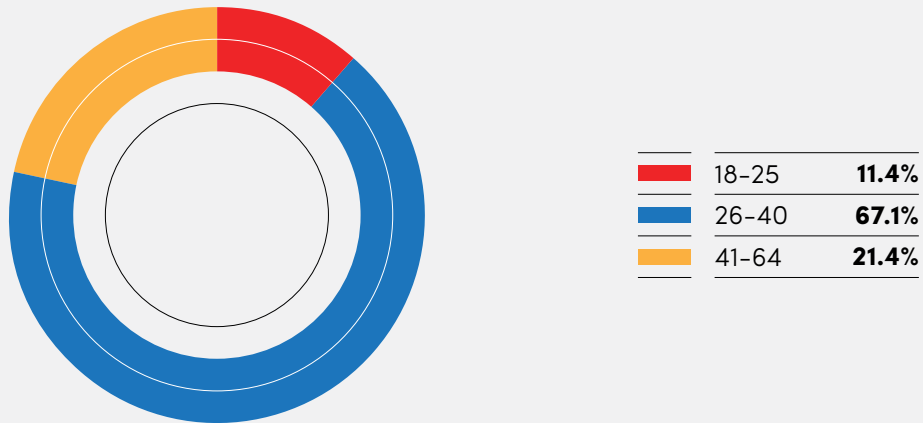


Figure 4. "How long have you been working as a journalist in Lebanon (or covering Lebanon)?"

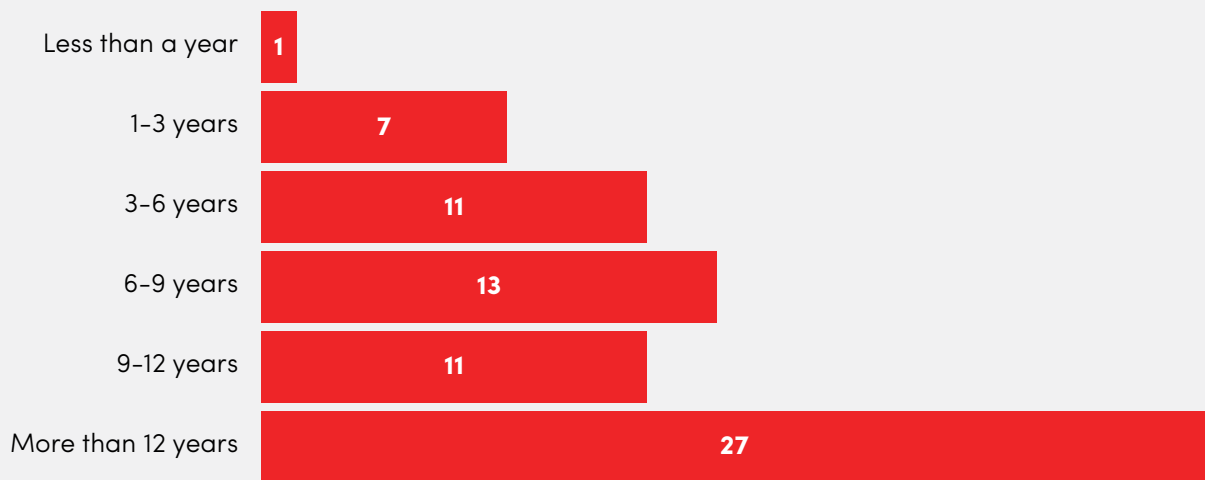


Figure 5. "What kind of topics do you cover?"

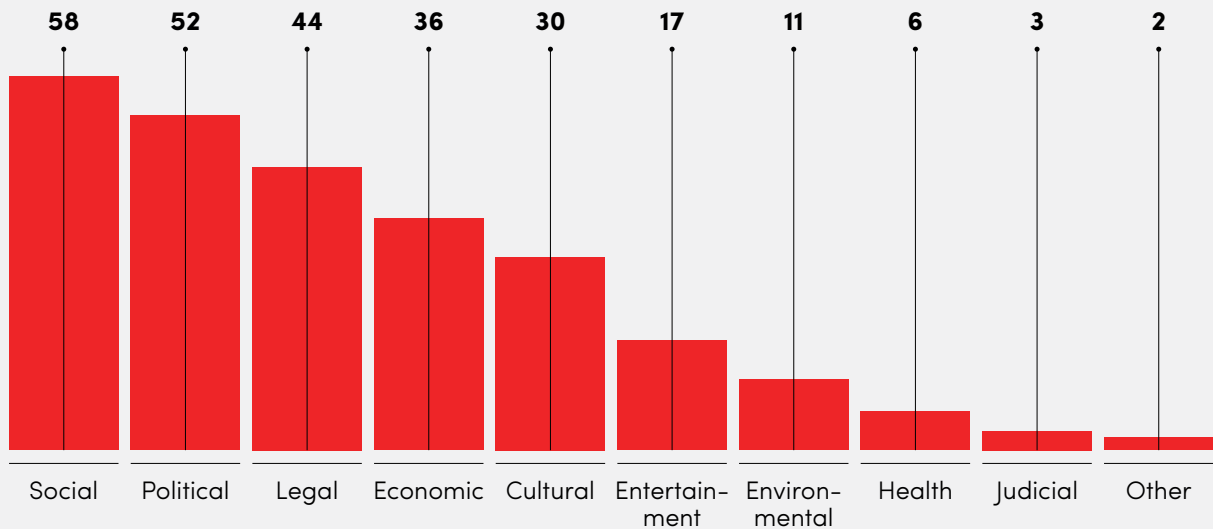


Figure 6. Notable and relevant sub-topics covered under the social and legal areas

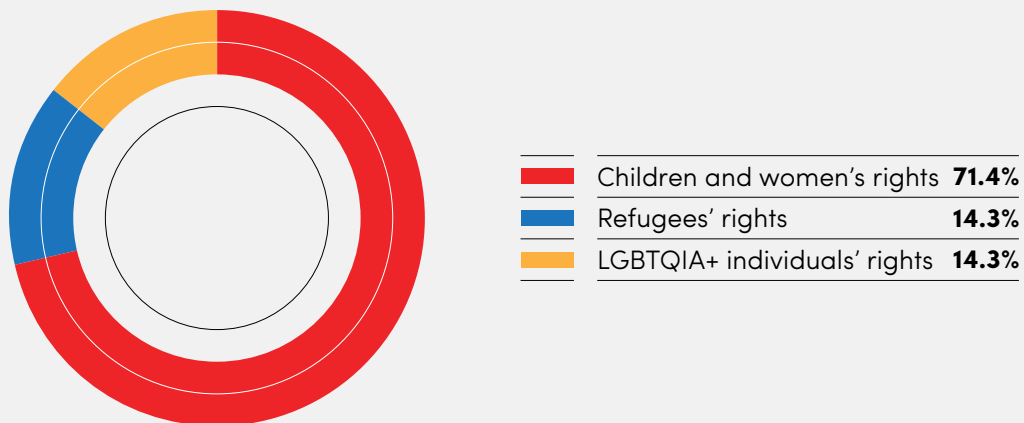


Figure 7. Types of media institutions employing the interviewees

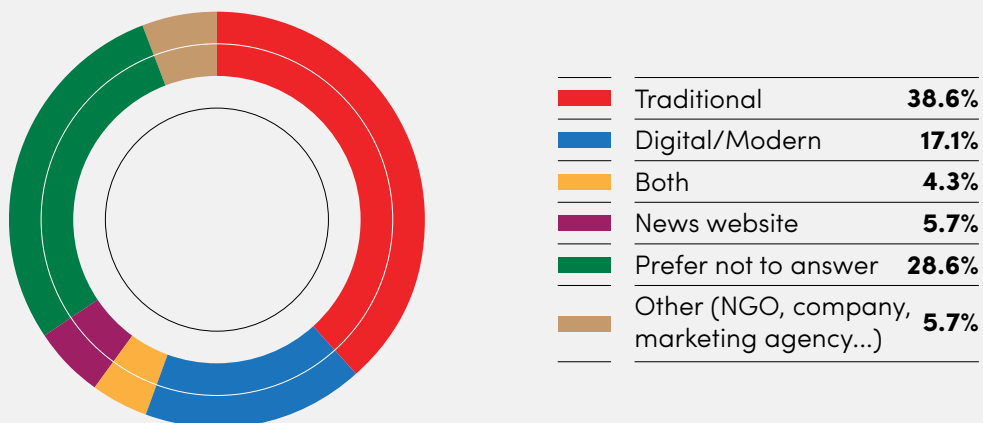


Figure 8. Distribution of traditional employers for staff respondents

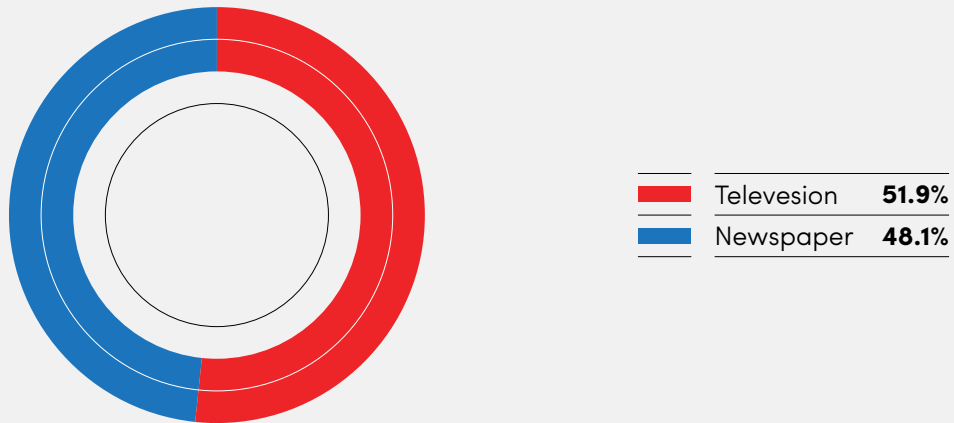


Figure 9. Distribution of traditional employers for freelance respondents

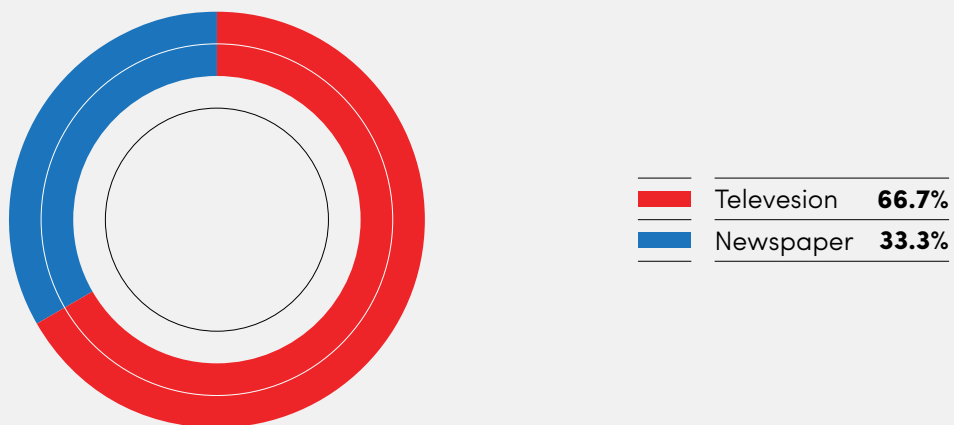
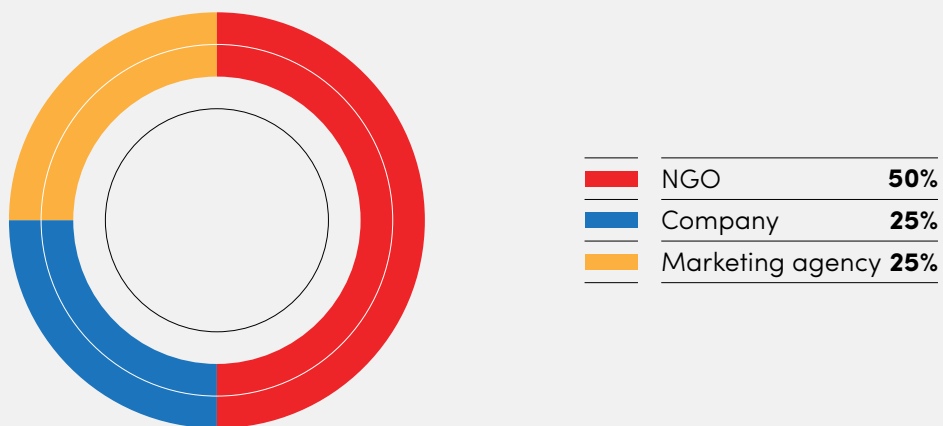


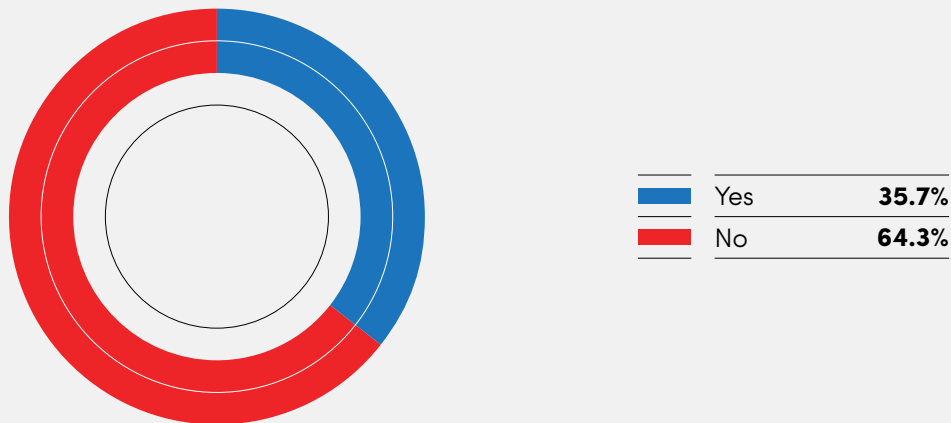
Figure 10. Distribution of "Other" type of employers



I. WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

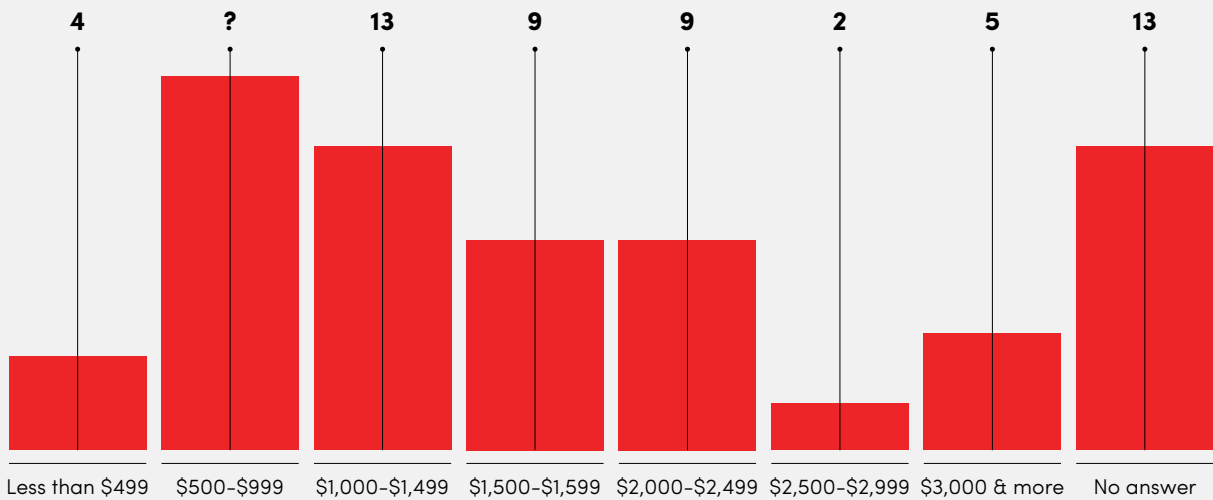
A. SALARY DISPARITIES AND PROMOTION BARRIERS

Figure 11. “Do you witness a difference of treatment between men and women in your institution?”



When asked about their approximate monthly salary or income, 41 women journalists (comprising 58% of the interviewees) reported experiencing unstable incomes, a common circumstance for journalists working as freelancers. Further analysis of these 41 journalists' responses reveals that 26 operate as freelancers, while the remaining 15 are employed under what are presumed to be “fixed” employment conditions, meaning that they should have a fixed monthly salary, yet their income is inconsistent, making it difficult to provide anything but an approximate amount as a response. As illustrated in Figure 12 below, 13 interviewees (18%) chose not to disclose their income, either for personal reasons or due to the instability of their income, making approximation difficult. The survey shows that 16 respondents (23%) receive monthly salaries between USD 800 and USD 1,500, while another 16 are paid USD 800 and below. It is important to note that the five journalists who mentioned earning USD 3,000 and above are either working outside Lebanon for foreign media institutions or hold positions as founders of media institutions.

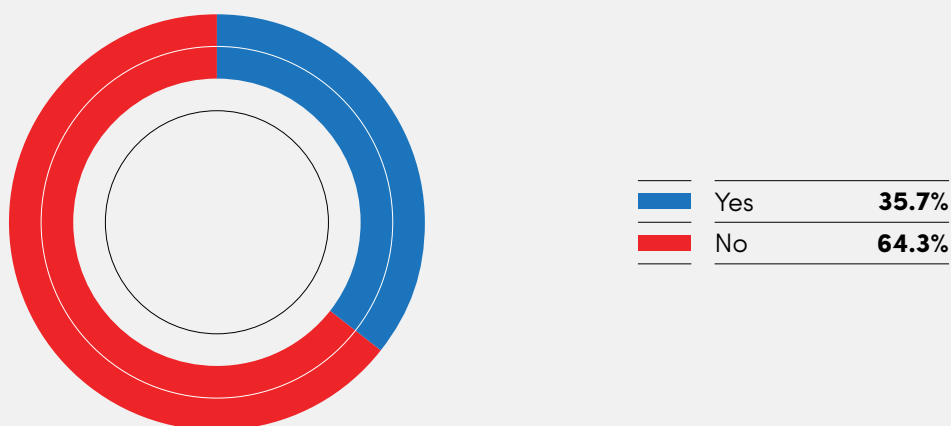
Figure 12. “What is your monthly salary/income?”



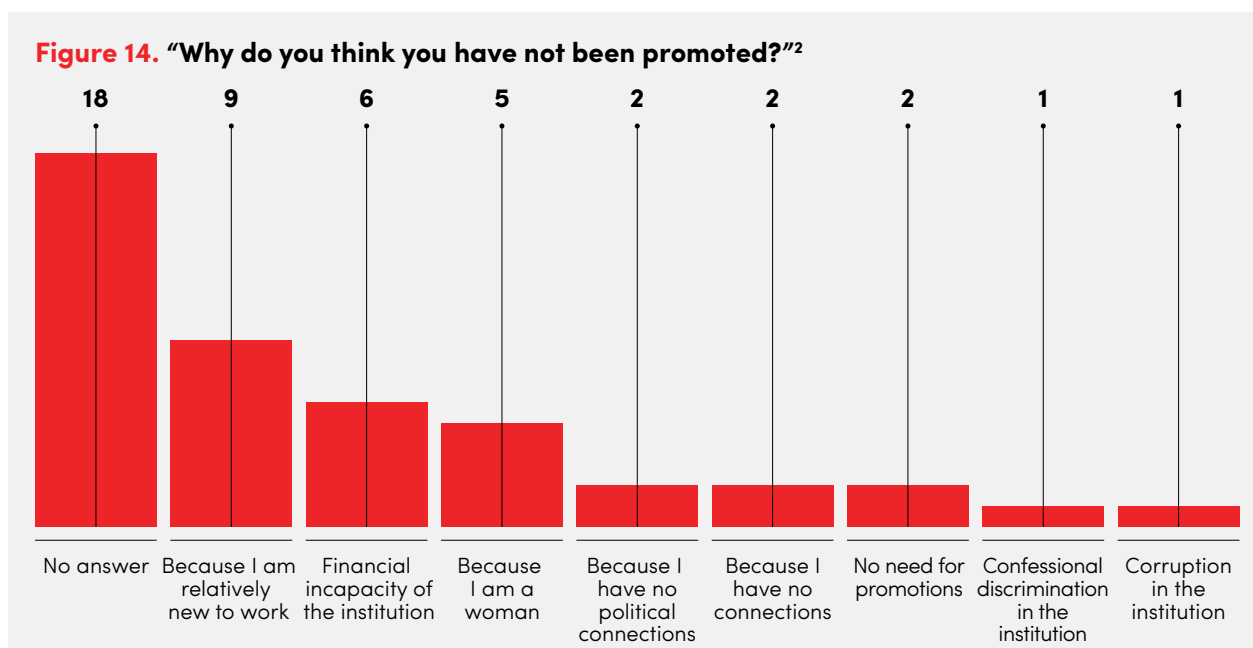
An interviewee recounted an experience in which, during negotiations for a job offer, she requested a higher salary. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the media institution responded: “We are very proud that you asked for more money because we do not give a fair amount to women unless they ask for it and embarrass us to do so.” The weight of disappointment she felt at that moment was so heavy that she eventually declined the job offer.

This incident is not an isolated one. Several interviewees stressed that **their rights would not be acknowledged and fulfilled unless they continually advocated for them**, persistently asking and vigorously fighting for recognition. Others elaborated that recruiters still perceive **women as less financially needy compared to men**, assuming that men bear greater financial responsibilities, resulting in higher pay compared to women.

Figure 13. “Have you had a salary increase and/or a promotion in the past five years?”



Out of the interviewed women journalists, 45 respondents (64%) reported not having received a salary increase or a promotion in the past five years. These distressing findings can be attributed to six main factors, drawn from the responses provided in Figure 14, along with elaboration from the interviewees.

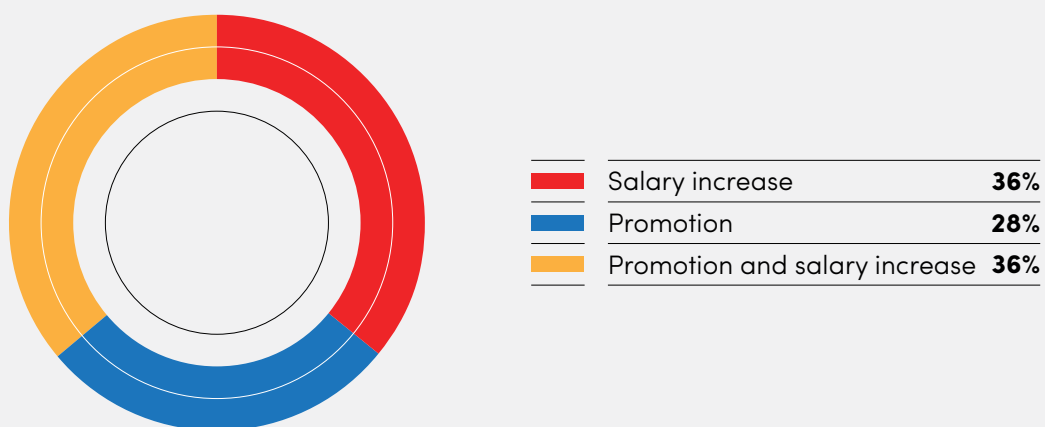


1. **Political connections and patronage** often play a pivotal role in securing promotions and salary increases, with one interviewee noting: *“Everything in the traditional media sector has become connections-based, and men tend to have wider connections.”*
2. An enduring symptom of discrimination in the Lebanese media industry is that **men are positioned as decision-makers**. Women often face the expectation to prioritize their appearance, whereas men are valued for their intellect. This dynamic restricts women to being primarily judged on physical attributes, while men are esteemed for their mental prowess and authority. As one journalist articulated, *“Light work is given to women, tough work to men. While he is appointed for investigative political journalism, she is appointed for entertainment and fun.”* Additionally, women journalists often encounter doubt, intimidation, and surprise regarding their expertise, as exemplified by inquiries such as: *“You have knowledge in economics? Really?”* Furthermore, discriminatory views persist, such as the belief that certain physical attributes, like curly hair, are unsuitable for studio appearances. Indeed, as mentioned by another interviewee: *“In Lebanon’s journalism sector, the notion of ‘good-looking’ continues to be cited as a prerequisite for women applying for jobs.”*

2 In this figure, the total number of responses is 54 as it is the sum of the 45 interviewees who said they had neither been promoted nor received a salary increase, with the nine who said they had a salary increase only.

3. **Gender discrimination** is further exacerbated by instances such as one interviewee's account: *"Despite my years of experience, the employer opted for a less competent male intern to fill the managerial position simply because they preferred a man for the role."*
4. Another significant factor contributing to disparities is **confessional discrimination**, which affects women more intensely than men. One interviewee explained: *"The veil acted as a barrier, restricting my access to higher positions. Despite my aspirations, I found myself limited and unable to reach my desired goals."*
5. A **lack of periodic or yearly employee assessments** to determine fair promotions and salary increases compounds these issues.
6. Lastly, a disturbing revelation about **sexual harassment** paves the way for the subsequent section of this report: *"I was promised a significant promotion if I agreed to sleep with the individual making the offer,"* shared one interviewee.

Figure 15. Distribution of responses of interviewees who received a promotion and/or a salary increase

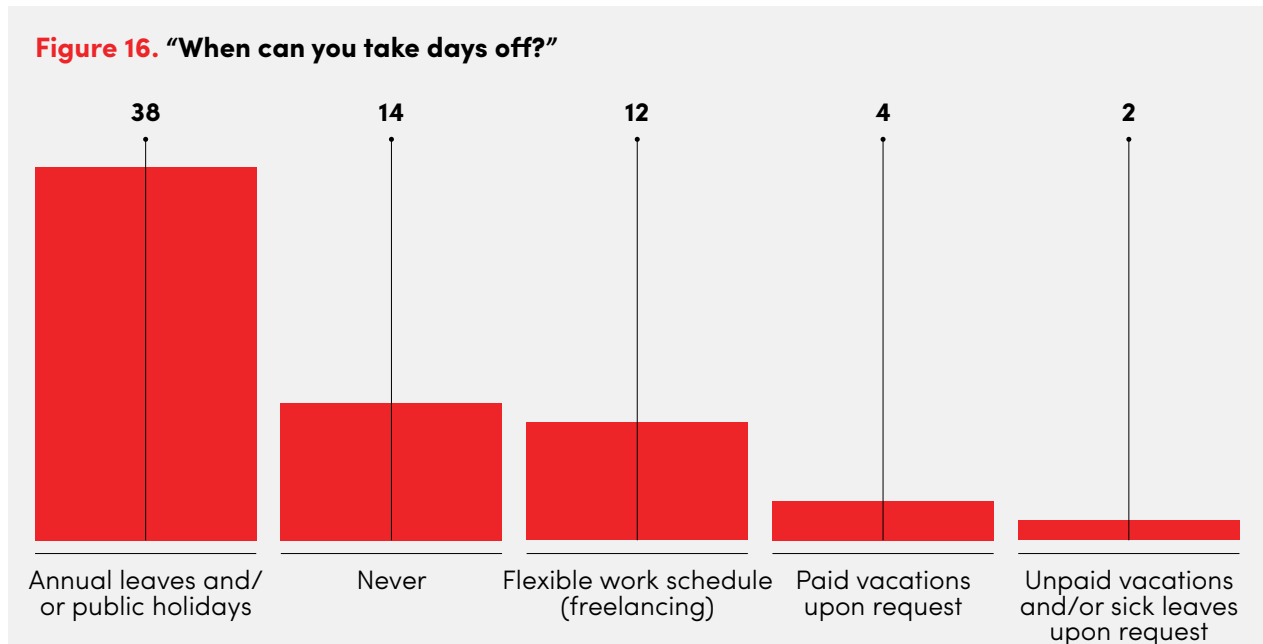


B. VACATIONS

In addition to advocating for salary increases and promotions, women journalists in Lebanon often find themselves pleading and begging for vacation time. Vacations are perceived as a luxury to some women journalists, as one explained: *"I am employed in a corrupt institution where we are still filing complaints to get our very basic right: our salaries."*

Many women journalists transition from full-time employment to freelancing because, in full-time positions, they are expected to work on holidays and are rarely granted days off. One interviewee mentioned working even on Sundays, while another stated that she had had a single day off in all her six years of work. Moreover, a journalist highlighted the toxic environment within her media

institution, recounting: “After being kidnapped because of my work, upon my return, I was expected to immediately resume work without any vacation or break.”



The survey reveals that 28 interviewees (40%) are granted paid annual leaves. Nevertheless, a significant portion of these individuals explained that they are unable to utilize these leave days due to their heavy daily workload, often resulting in forfeited opportunities for time off. Another 14 interviewees (20%) reported never taking time off.

Additionally, 30 interviewees (43%) stated that they supposedly take time off for public holidays. However, all of them mentioned that they continue working on holidays but may take other days as recuperation.

Monthly Menstrual Sick Leave



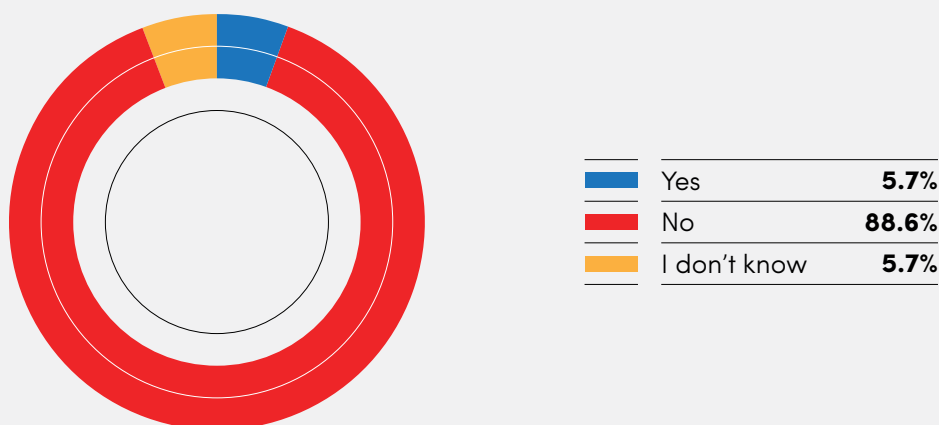
One respondent mentioned that she is allowed to take a monthly menstrual sick leave, but when she does, it becomes common knowledge among their colleagues. *“Oh, it’s that time of the month; she got her period, that’s why she’s off,”* becomes the subject of office gossip, turning what should be a personal and confidential matter into public discussion.

Another interviewee shared a distressing incident where she fell ill during her period and was denied a break by their supervisor, resulting in vomiting.

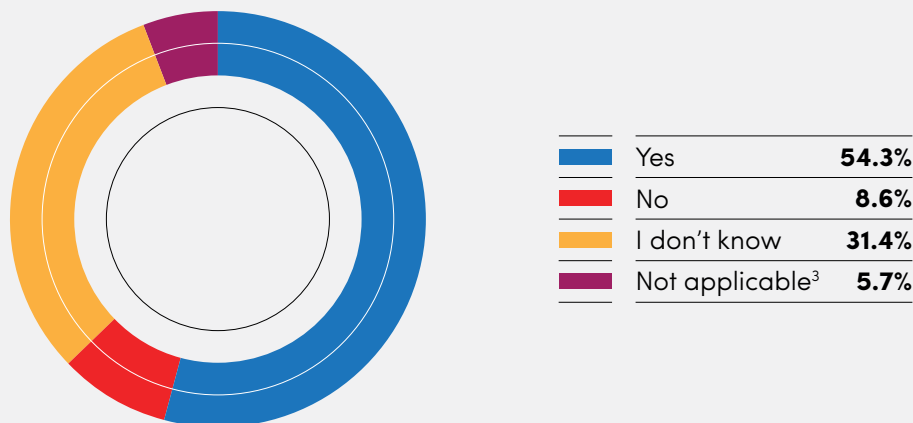
Furthermore, gender-diminishing language is not solely confined to men in positions of power; women in authority also perpetuate such behavior. One journalist recounted how her female director addressed her with phrases like *“You are too sensitive,” “Don’t be dramatic,”* and *“Don’t do the psychologist.”* She expressed that such remarks would never be directed towards a male colleague.

Maternity Leave

Figure 18. “Do you think that the Lebanese law provides women with a fair maternity leave (10 weeks)?”



A staggering 89% of interviewees expressed that they find the 10-week maternity leave provided by law to be unfair. Regarding whether the media institutions they work with respect this duration, 53% affirmed, 31% said they do not know, and 9% denied, as illustrated in Figure 19.

Figure 19. “Does your institution abide by the 10-week maternity leave duration?”

Several interviewees shared distressing experiences related to maternity leave and motherhood in the workspace:

- *“As a manager, I once had to work with my newborn and pump breast milk in **unhygienic bathroom conditions**, which eventually became too exhausting, forcing me to resign.”*
- *“The workload has caused ongoing **guilt** towards my twins, whom I felt unable to adequately care for.”*
- *“I experienced a **high-risk pregnancy** and had to take three months off before giving birth. My **salary was deducted** during these months.”*
- *“To facilitate breastfeeding during work hours, I **had to relocate** closer to the office.”*

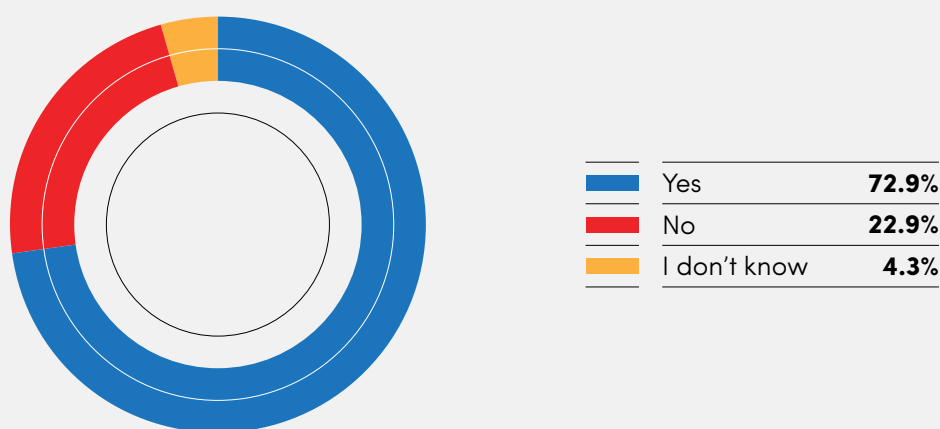
These narratives highlight the challenges faced by women journalists in balancing their professional and personal lives, especially during maternity and motherhood. Unfortunately, women journalists are often viewed as potential liabilities due to the possibility of marriage and subsequent pregnancy, leading to discriminatory practices in hiring. One interviewee recounted that a recruiter explicitly informed her that **if she were to be hired, marriage and parenthood would not be permitted.**

³ Not applicable includes women journalists who work in foreign media institutions not governed by the Lebanese law.

C. WOMEN JOURNALISTS AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

One of the journalists elaborated on the question illustrated in Figure 20 by stating: “As women, we have to prove that we have the time and skills equally to men. A woman is always questioned on the time she can give because of family obligations, while a man is not.”

Figure 20. “Do you consider that there are barriers for women journalists to acquire leadership roles and decision-making positions?”



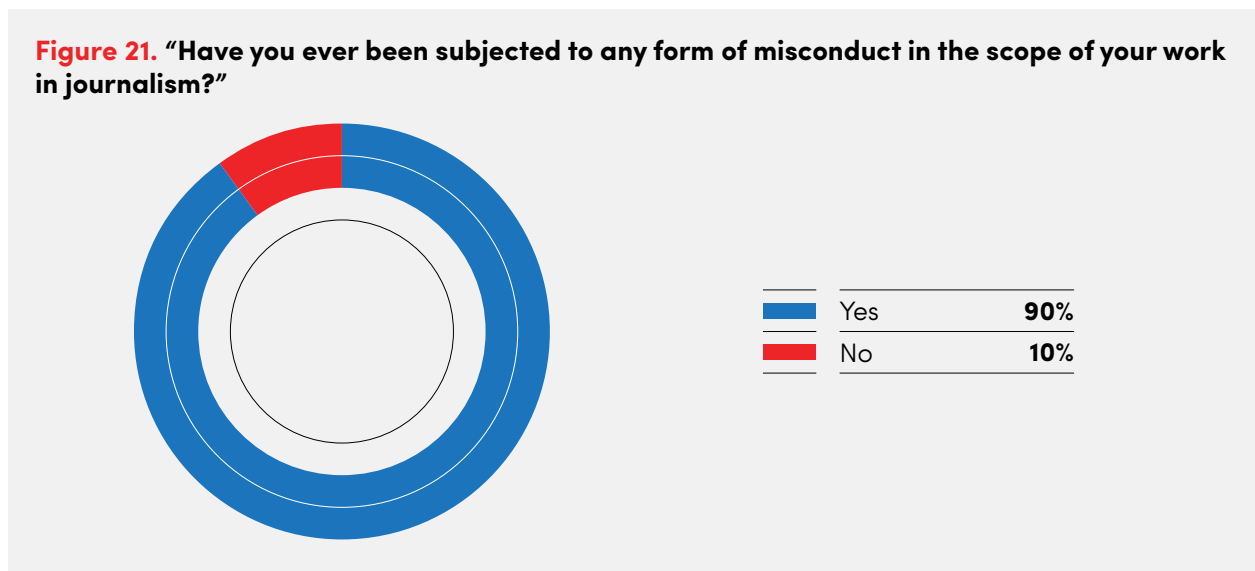
While 73% of respondents acknowledge that women journalists encounter obstacles in reaching leadership positions, numerous interviewees have highlighted the absence of women in such roles, regardless of whether the recruiter is male or female. It is disheartening to note that even women contribute to this phenomenon by not promoting other women.

Despite boundaries being surpassed in the digital and modern media landscape, traditional media still lags behind. Even when women hold leading positions, their authority is often tethered to the main owner or founder, typically a man (such as his wife, daughter, sister, or girlfriend). One interviewee elaborated: “Even when I attained a senior-level position at an international media institution, I continued to encounter decision-makers who were exclusively men.” Moreover, if a woman journalist is promoted to a managerial position, she often finds herself not taken as seriously as a man would be in the same role. In a patriarchal environment, women are frequently denied the authority to direct men or give them instructions.

D. EXPERIENCING MISCONDUCT

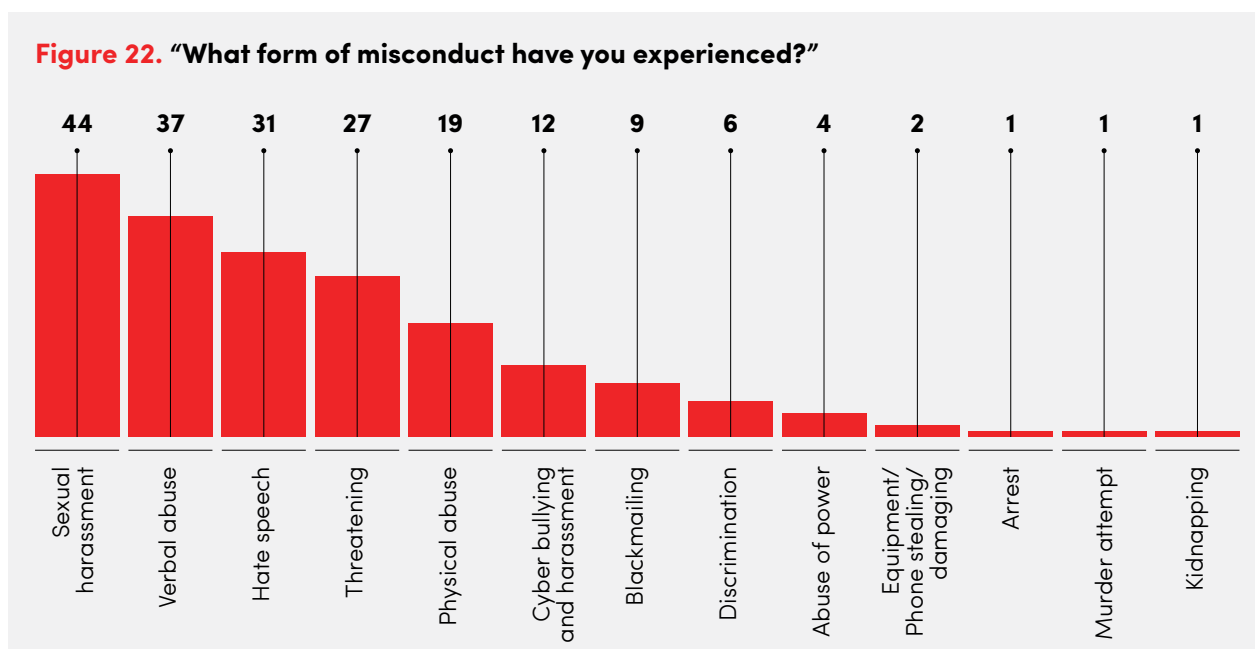
In terms of misconduct experienced, 90% of respondents have encountered some form of discomfort in their journalistic work.

Figure 21. “Have you ever been subjected to any form of misconduct in the scope of your work in journalism?”



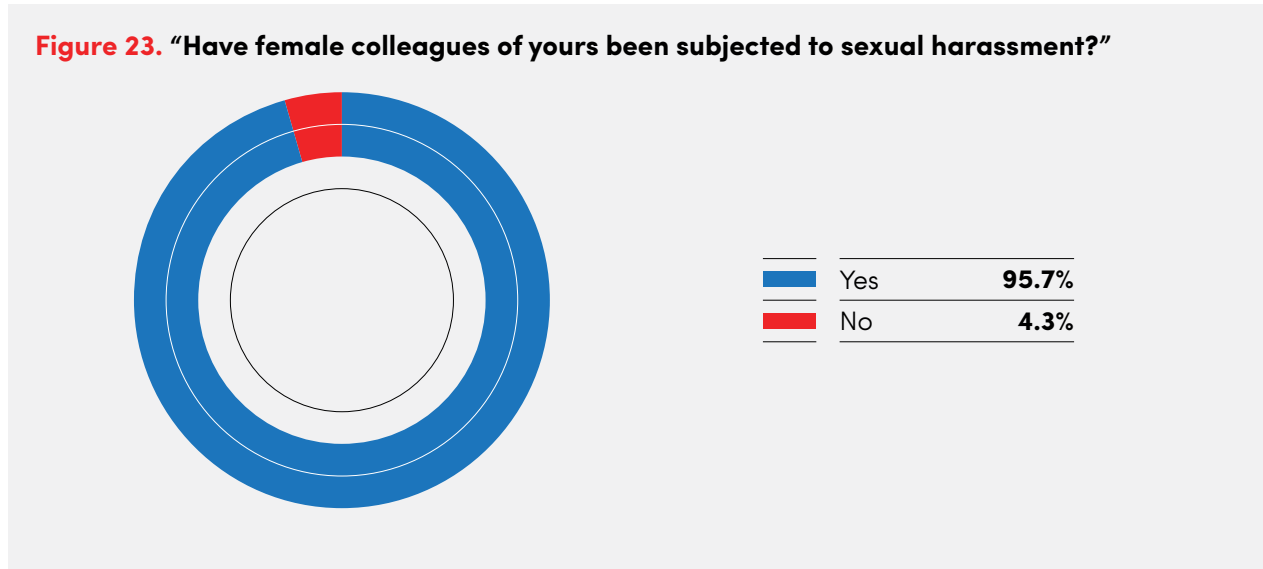
When asked about the form of misconduct experienced, among those who answered “yes” to the question illustrated in Figure 21, the following breakdown was observed: 70% mentioned experiencing **sexual harassment**; four of whom specified that they experienced sexual harassment when they were young trainees but did not take action due to fear and inexperience. In addition to sexual harassment, 59% reported **verbal abuse**, 49% encountered **hate speech**, 43% faced **threats**, 30% experienced **physical abuse**, and 19% were subjected to **cyberbullying** and **online harassment**.

Figure 22. “What form of misconduct have you experienced?”



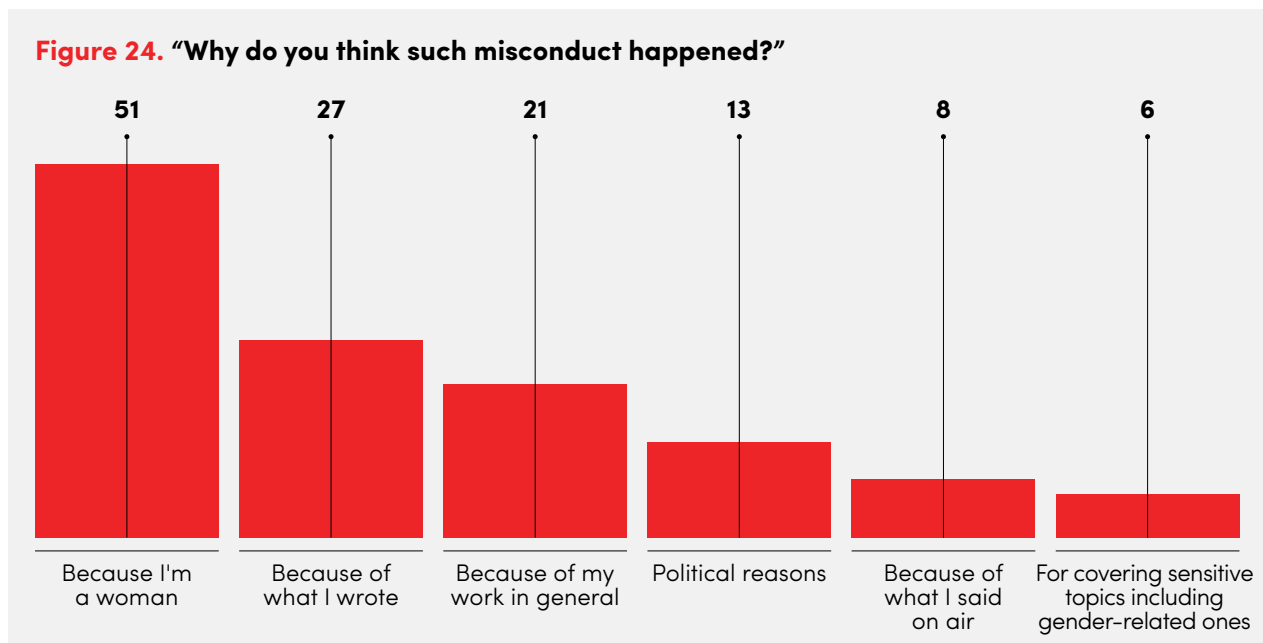
A crucial finding of the study was that although 37% did not mention being subjected to sexual harassment themselves, 96% of the respondents confirmed that other female colleagues experienced it, as shown in Figure 23. According to insights from the KII, this phenomenon can be explained by the **emotions of fear and shame** that many women consequently feel, which often push them towards silence.

Figure 23. "Have female colleagues of yours been subjected to sexual harassment?"



When asked about the reason why they think such incidents happened, a striking 81% answered "because I am a woman," as per Figure 24.

Figure 24. "Why do you think such misconduct happened?"



Those who experienced cyberbullying believe that it occurred because they are active and outspoken on social media platforms. Additionally, numerous interviewees mentioned that they use nicknames when writing about gender-related topics such as the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Below are statements expressed by women journalists explaining the misconduct they were subjected to:

- *“A political party started threatening me and contacting my family, all in order to remove the article I had written about them.”*
- *“I always fear taking pictures in certain places because I am a woman.”*
- *“I am perceived as an alien who does not know what they are doing, just because I am an Arab woman holding a camera.”*
- *“While I worked with my male colleague on the same project, I was subjected to harassment and threats, while he was not.”*
- *“Whenever I look more queer, the threat is higher.”*
- *“A threat I received explicitly was: ‘You would cost me a bullet.’”*
- *“My director said to me: ‘Your problem is that you are a mother.’”*
- *“Live on air, a politician said to me: ‘When I want to speak, you shut your mouth’. This would have never been said to a male reporter.”*

II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT: PRE-, DURING AND POST-EMPLOYMENT

"I can no longer look at men. I am traumatized and depressed!" This heartbreaking expression was shared by an interviewee who broke down in tears. She used to believe that she was the problem, attributing her lack of success in her career to incompetence, until she realized that her only perceived path to success was through sexual compliance to men in power. This narrative underscores the pervasive nature of sexual harassment experienced by women journalists, occurring pre-, during and post-employment.

Before delving into the three subsequent subsections, it is essential to note that one part of the questionnaire addressed to interviewees focused solely on sexual harassment. Women who were subjected to such experiences answered the following questions.

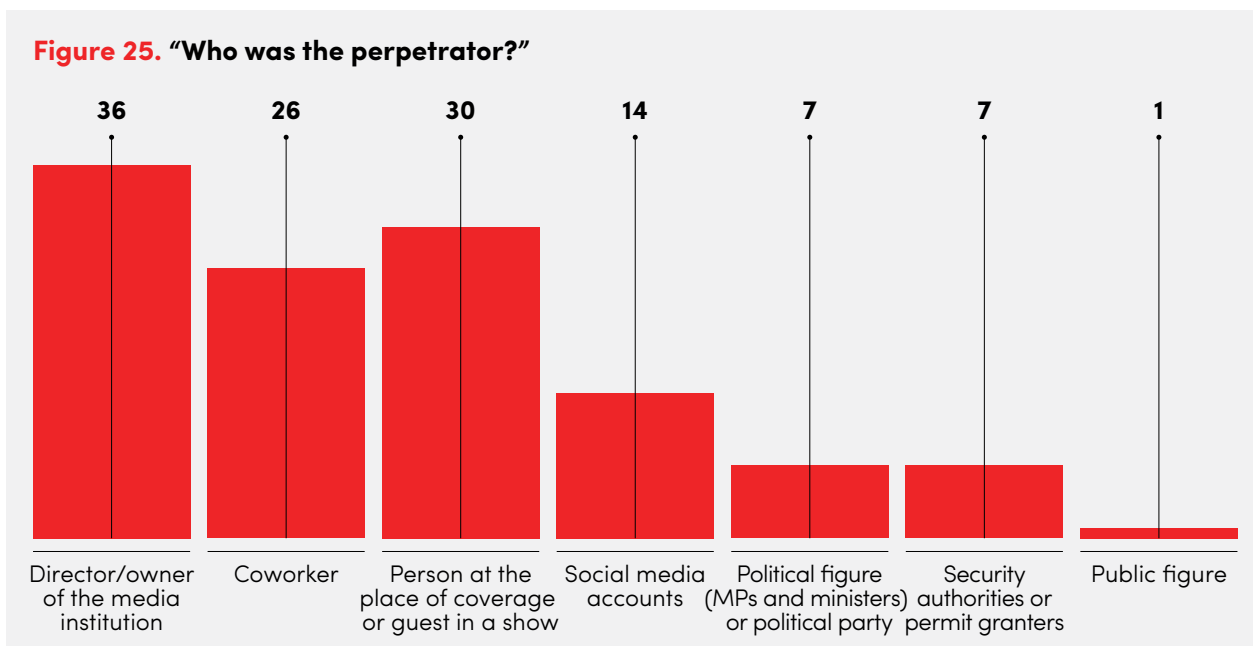


Figure 26. “Did it happen more than once?”

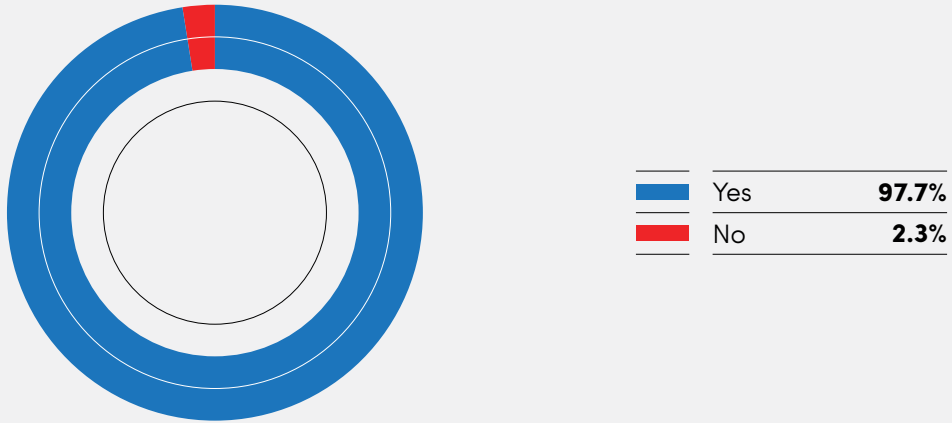


Figure 27. “If we were in a country where accountability prevailed, would you submit a complaint against the perpetrator?”

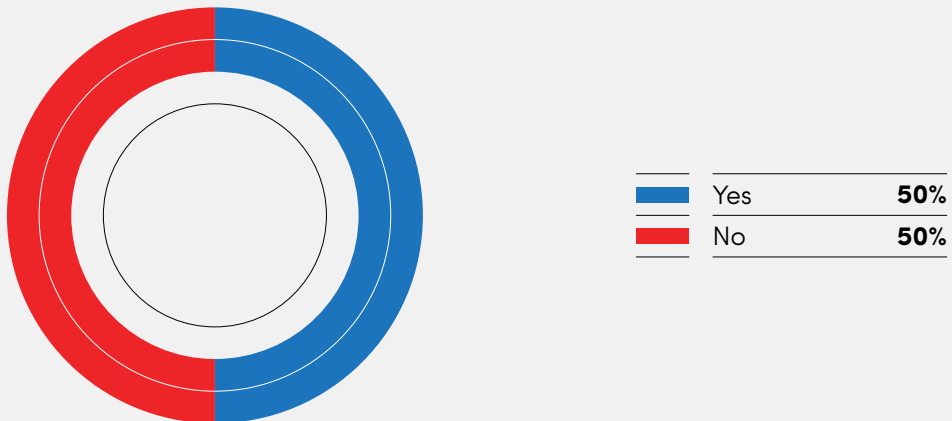
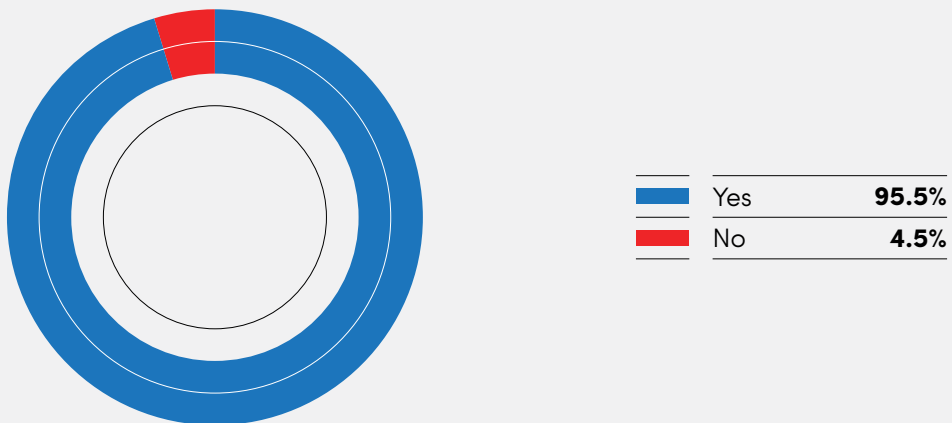


Figure 28. “Do you think the perpetrator has his own argument to justify his behavior?”



A. PRE-EMPLOYMENT

The tragic finding is that **sexual harassment is normalized within journalism in Lebanon**, becoming an inseparable part of the media sector. It often begins even before employment.

Many interviewees recounted being asked for sexual favors in return for recruitment opportunities. For instance, one recruiter once told a female candidate, *"I want to make you a star!"*

All five interviewees who identified a political figure as the perpetrator reported experiencing sexual offers before recruitment. Similarly, many of those whose perpetrator was the director experienced harassment during the recruitment phase.

The **causes** for sexual harassment pre-employment are concluded to be the following.

1. Abuse of power
2. Impunity
3. Lack of accountability
4. Patriarchal culture
5. Acceptance of sexual offers by other women journalists
6. Normalization

B. DURING EMPLOYMENT

The sexual harasser of 51% of respondents was the director (in a managerial decision-making position), while it was a colleague for 37% of women journalists interviewed in this survey.

Writing about sexual reproductive health and prostitution often made women journalists targets for sexual harassment, as harassers assumed they would be "open-minded."

Some journalists alter their appearance to prevent sexual harassment, with one respondent recounting a director's critique of her attire, saying: *"Why do you dress so manly? Why don't you wear a skirt?"* To which she responded assertively: *"Do I write articles using my feet? I write with my intellect."*

Many journalists remain on guard after experiencing harassment, fearing further incidents that may hinder their professional endeavors.

As previously highlighted, a journalist's young age unfortunately increases the risks of sexual harassment. One interviewee shared her experience: *"When I was younger, my supervisor used to follow me to the bathroom and sexually harass me. I tried to stop his behavior, but he persisted and eventually began treating me terribly at work, just because I refused."* Another woman journalist

shared a disturbing incident: *“While the institution’s owner is always promoting justice and defending rights, he approached me physically and offered me a high position in return for sexual activity. When I refused, he threatened that if I told anyone, he would know and chase after me.”*

Women journalists are often pressured by their employers to avoid conflict and maintain harmony so that work gets done. This expectation can create a toxic environment where harassment can go unchecked.

Verbal harassment is also prevalent, with insults such as “bitch” and “whore” commonly used to attack women. Unlike men, women are targeted with personal, sexual, and intimidating comments that degrade their honor and dignity.

C. POST-EMPLOYMENT

The media sector is tainted, and it seems that women are always forced to bear a cost. One interviewee shared that she still feels that everyone in the field sees her as merely a body, as if she has no ambition and no intellect.

The **consequences** of sexual harassment do not cease when the employment ends; instead, they often linger long after. When asked about the consequences, interviewees mentioned the following:

- Diminished self-esteem and self-confidence, potentially leading to hating on journalism
- Hindered career growth and job obstruction leading to resignation
- Fear, anxiety, isolation, and depression
- Prejudging all men as potential harassers, pushing women journalists to remain alert and on guard
- Anger, stress, and trauma
- Feelings of guilt, insecurity, inferiority, and failure
- Self-regulation and censorship
- Food disorder, becoming anti-social, and aggressivity

One respondent mentioned that a government minister met with her just to harass her sexually, and that was after her resignation from a journalism position.

These profound accounts underscore the urgent need for systemic change to address the pervasive culture of sexual harassment within the Lebanese journalism sector.

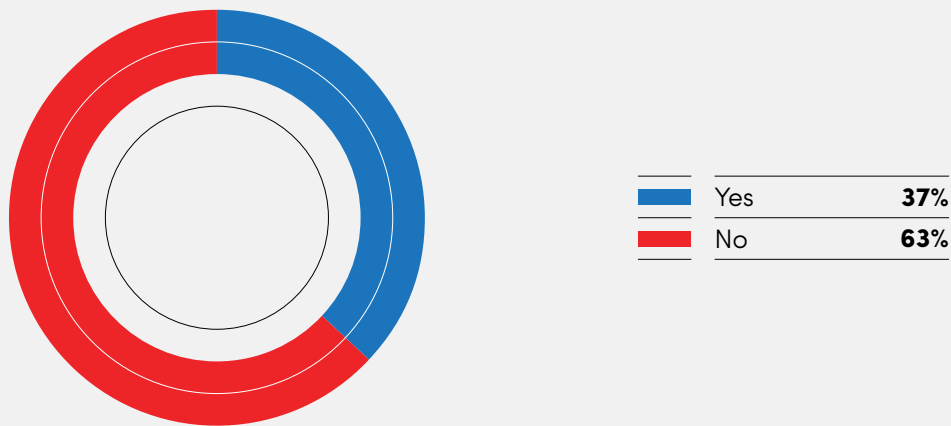
III. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES AND POLICIES

The most distressing finding drawn in this study is the stance of media institutions, i.e., employers, regarding the daily struggles faced by their female employees.

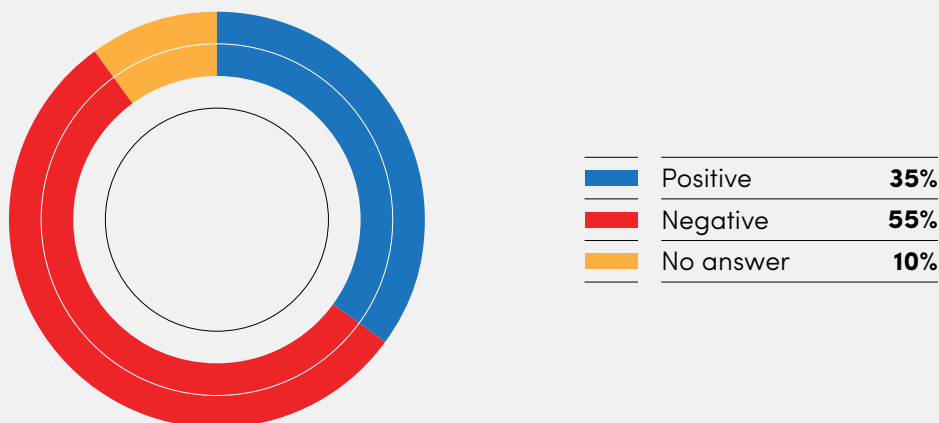
A. MEDIA INSTITUTIONS' REACTION

In Lebanon, the reality of witnessing harassment and other misconduct against female reporters live on air has become all too common. Shockingly, 37% of those who were subjected to sexual harassment encountered it live on air.

Figure 29. "Were you ever subjected to misconduct live on air?"



Regarding their employer's reaction to these incidents, 55% of respondents explained that it was negative, with no action taken.

Figure 30. “What was your institution’s reaction to the misconduct that happened on air?”

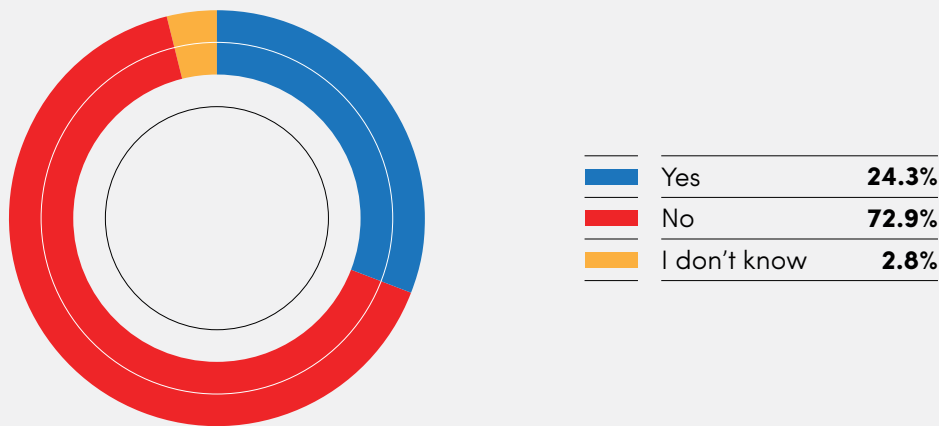
When asked to elaborate on the institution’s reaction, several interviewees provided troubling accounts. Here are some of the responses collected:

- *“The institution considered it [the incident] a way to have a higher reach and was happy about the assault on air.”*
- *“The institution is aware and considers that we are in this society, and we should not respond; we should ignore and not engage in disputes.”*
- *“The institution attempted to conceal the assault because the perpetrator was a politician, and the institution aligned itself with his political stances.”*
- *“No one asks about anyone in our institution. We are always in a rush to get the job done.”*
- *“The reaction was not to cover such incidents anymore.”*
- *“A colleague of mine once reported to the Human Resources officer and had to encounter obstacles at work for six years because of that.”*
- *“The institution proposed this solution: You resolve things with the offender or you will be both dismissed.”* In this case, the offender was an actual colleague of the victim.

B. MEDIA INSTITUTIONS' CURRENT POLICIES AND MECHANISMS

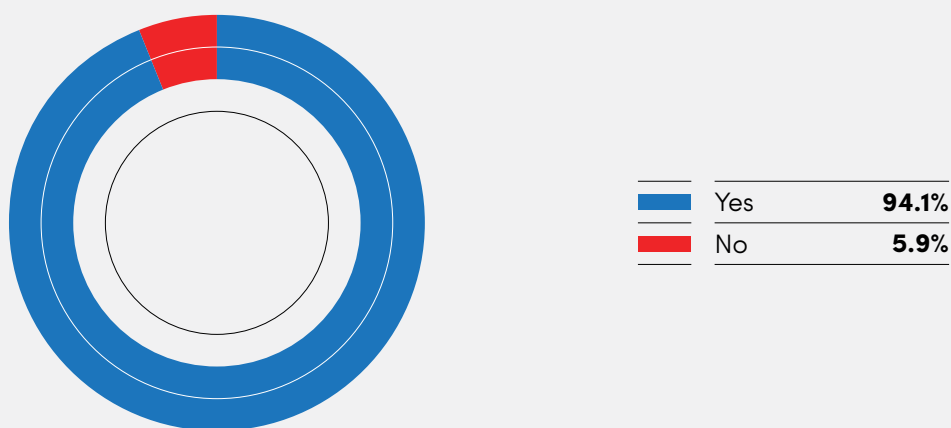
Interviewees were asked if their institution currently has a clear **policy to prevent internal sexual exploitation and assault** (PSEA). Unfortunately, 73% answered negatively.

Figure 31. "Does your institution have a PSEA policy?"



Among those who answered "yes" to the question illustrated in Figure 31, almost all confirmed having clear complaint mechanisms understood by all employees.

Figure 32. "Are there clear complaint mechanisms understood by employees?"



On the other side, other women considered that in case such policies exist, they are surely not circulated to all employees clearly.

Freelancers find it very challenging to deal with internal sexual harassment because although they work alongside the institution's employees, they do not feel it is safe to speak as they are not themselves an actual part of the institution.

One interviewee mentioned that the sole available process for victims is to report the incident to their managers or superiors. However, given the previously highlighted abuse of power and the fact that **most perpetrators hold directorial positions**, it is evidently not a safe environment to voice concerns, particularly when the perpetrator is the individual to whom a complaint should be submitted. She explained: *"My colleague sent a complaint email about watching another colleague being harassed by someone at the institution. Eventually they investigated and dismissed the woman considering that she was the one lying."*

Many journalists voiced their concerns regarding the absence of confidentiality, anonymity, and a safe space within their institution.

C. COVERAGE OF DANGEROUS PLACES

Despite their lack of responsibility in the previous findings, one can say that when it comes to female journalists' physical safety, institutions might play a better role.

Figure 33. "Do you cover dangerous places?"

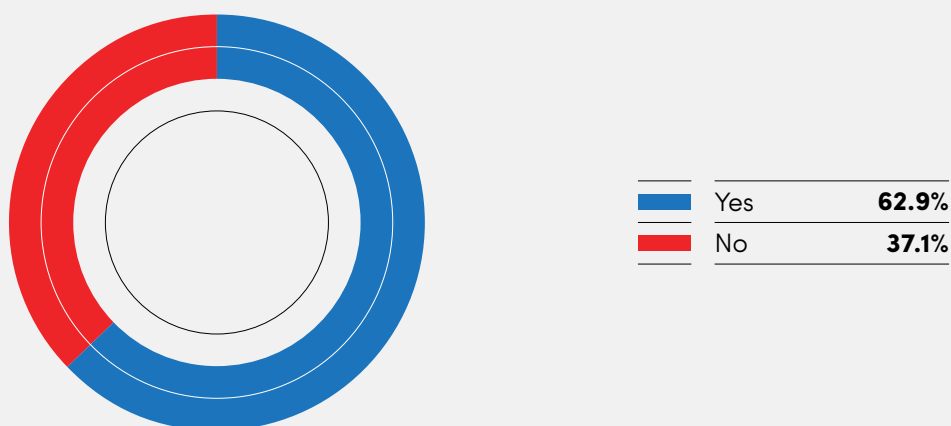
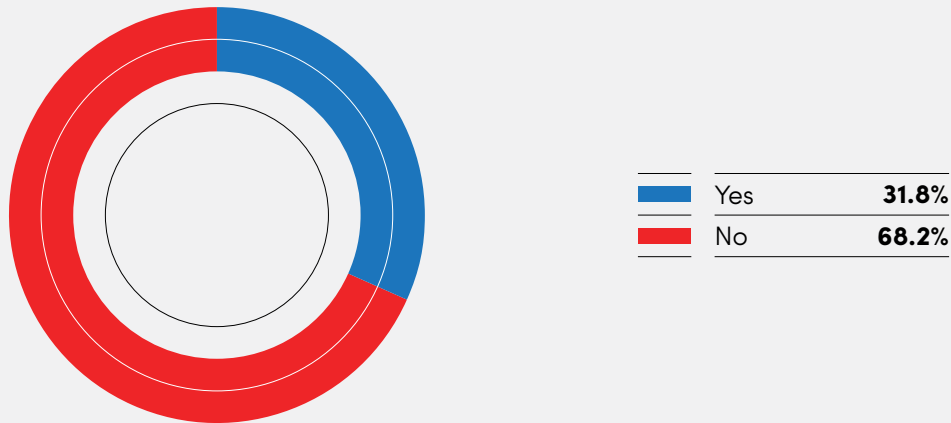


Figure 34. “Have you ever been dismissed from such coverage and had a man replace you?”



Of the 44 interviewees who cover dangerous places, 14 respondents (31%) have been dismissed from such coverage and had a man replace them. One of the interviewees said she had worked really hard to prepare for the coverage, but then the employer decided that a male colleague would go, citing safety reasons. Moreover, many interviewees said they were never dismissed but oftentimes intimidated with the sarcastic question: “*Will you be able to do that?*”

Most respondents said they are always accompanied by male colleagues when covering dangerous places.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"We should normalize that any kind of harassment is violence," said the KII specialist.

The situation for female journalists in Lebanon reveals a complex landscape marked by numerous challenges and deficiencies within institutions. Despite efforts to address issues such as sexual harassment and unequal treatment, there remains a pervasive lack of accountability and support mechanisms. Female journalists face obstacles such as limited access to paid leave, concerns about confidentiality and safety, and a lack of effective recourse for addressing harassment and abuse of power. While there may be some recognition of the need to improve conditions for female journalists, tangible progress is hindered by systemic issues and entrenched power dynamics. Moving forward, concerted efforts are needed to enact meaningful reforms, promote gender equality, and create a safer and more supportive environment for female journalists in Lebanon.

Following are some recommendations suggested by women journalists and the KII specialist.

On the institutional front:

- Requiring all staff to attend a Hostile Environment and Emergency First Aid Training (HEFAT) before dangerous coverage.
- Prioritizing mental health support group sessions within institutions.
- Mandating media institutions to establish PSEA (Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) policies, with directors and managers taking the lead in their development.
- Clearly defining and adhering to internal complaint mechanisms within institutions, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Introducing these mechanisms to new employees on their first day.
- Prohibiting the re-employment of former offenders, as their dismissal from one institution should preclude their employment in another.
- Improving recruitment processes within media institutions to promote diversity and inclusion.

On the educational front:

- Raising awareness among students and youngsters in general to challenge ingrained cultural norms, particularly within small societies like families.
 - Training women journalists on how to submit complaints and access legal support when needed.
 - Educating women journalists about their labor rights and providing legal training to empower them in the workplace.
-

- Educating young women in newsrooms about the importance of setting and pursuing future career goals, addressing barriers such as a lack of empowerment and reluctance to pursue managerial positions.

On Civil Society Organizations' front:

- Launching awareness campaigns targeting media institution owners and directors to promote gender equality and diversity.
- Advocating for increased representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles in the media sector.
- Encouraging victims to speak out against offenders and publicly identify them, potentially increasing accountability through media and social media exposure.
- Advocating for amendments to Lebanese laws that perpetuate gender discrimination, such as the Personal Status Laws and the Labor Law.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN LEBANON

This questionnaire acts as a standardized sample utilized in all interviews conducted as part of a research study by the Samir Kassir Foundation. Respondents' anonymity is strictly maintained, adhering to the "Do No Harm" principle and ethical considerations.

Part I. General Information

1. Name (optional)
2. Do you work as a freelancer or are you employed, or both?
 - Freelancer
 - Employed
 - Both
3. What is the media institution you work with?
4. Nationality
 - Lebanese
 - Other, specify
5. Age
 - 18-25 yo
 - 26-40 yo
 - 41-64 yo
 - More than 64 yo
 - Prefer not to answer
6. What is the kind of work you do?
 - Reporter
 - Editor
 - News anchor
 - Program host

- Program producer
- Opinion writer
- Investigative journalist
- Social media / communications
- News director
- Other, specify

7. What topics do you cover?

- Social
- Political
- Economic
- Cultural
- Entertainment
- Health
- Judicial
- Other, specify

8. For how long have you been working as a journalist in/for Lebanon?

- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 3-6 years
- 6-9 years
- 9-12 years
- More than 12 years

9. Approximately, what is your monthly income/salary?

Part II. Questions related to gender disparities

10. If your institution follows promotion and salary increase policies, have you been promoted or your salary increased in the past 5 years?

- Yes
- No

Indicate if men have higher chances in getting promoted at your institution.

11. If you answered "yes", then what was the promotion? Why was it granted?

If you answered "no", why do you think you have not been promoted yet?

- Because I am a woman
- Because I am relatively new to work
- Other, specify

12. In your opinion, are there obstacles or limited opportunities for women to reach leadership roles in media institutions in Lebanon? Kindly elaborate.
- Yes
 - No
- Elaboration
13. When can you take days off?
14. Do you have the right to take a monthly menstrual sick leave day?
- Yes
 - No
15. Do you think the Lebanese law gives a fair maternity leave (10 weeks)?
- Yes
 - No
16. Do you think, in your institution, there is a threat of job dismissal or not being employed related to the pregnancy? Elaborate.
- Yes
 - No
- Elaboration
17. Does your institution respect the 10-week leave?
- Yes
 - No
18. Have you ever been subjected to any kind of misconduct in the scope or because of your work?
- Yes
 - No
19. If you answered "yes":
- A. What was the reason for the misconduct?
- Because I am a woman
 - Because of what I said on air
 - Because of what I wrote
 - Because of my work in general
 - Other, specify

B. What kind of misconduct?

- Sexual harassment [go to next subsection]
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Hate speech
- Blackmailing
- Threats
- Other, specify

C. Who was the perpetrator?

- Colleague/coworker
- Director at the institution
- A person present at the place of coverage
- A guest at a show
- Other, specify

D. Were you ever subjected to misconduct live on air?

- Yes
- No

E. Did you report to the institution the misconduct that happened? What was their reaction?
What was your institution's reaction to the discomfort that happened on air?

The following subsection is exclusively addressed to interviewees who were subjected to sexual harassment.

- In your opinion, what are the consequences of this act on your mental and social well-being?
- Did it happen more than once? Elaborate.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration
- If we were in a country where accountability prevailed, would you submit a complaint against the perpetrator? Elaborate.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration

- Do you think other women journalists have been subjected to sexual harassment? Elaborate.
[This question is addressed to all interviewees, not only those subjected to sexual harassment]
 - Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration

- Do you think the perpetrator has his own argument as to what he did was not wrong? Elaborate.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration

Part III. Last Section

20. Does your institution have a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Assault (PSEA) policy?
- Yes
 - No
 - If you answered “yes”:
Are there clear complaint mechanisms understood by employees? Elaborate.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration
21. Do you cover dangerous places?
- Yes
 - No
22. Have you ever been dismissed from such coverage and had a man replace you? Elaborate.
- Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration
23. Do you witness a difference of treatment between men and women in your institution? Elaborate.
- Yes
 - No
 - Elaboration
24. What are the solutions you propose to help enhance women journalists’ situation in Lebanon?
25. Comments (optional)

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