

# An analysis of gender discrimination in the context of media convergence of Spanish female journalists

*Un análisis de la discriminación de género en el contexto de convergencia mediática de las periodistas españolas*

# 9

DOCTORAL THESIS



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**Abstract:** In an era marked by rapid digitalization and the convergence of media platforms, gender equality, particularly within journalism, has gained prominence. However, gender discrimination remains a challenge for female journalists. This research collected 387 valid responses from Spanish media professionals through digital and other channels. Data analysis, including statistical methods like frequency analysis and chi-square tests, aims to uncover factors affecting the careers of Spanish female journalists. The goal is to provide empirically supported recommendations for gender equality in the dynamic Spanish media landscape.

**Keywords:** Spanish female journalists, media convergence, gender discrimination.

**Resumen:** En una era marcada por la rápida digitalización y la convergencia de las platafor-

mas mediáticas, la igualdad de género, en particular dentro del periodismo, ha ganado protagonismo. Sin embargo, la discriminación de género sigue siendo un reto para las periodistas. Esta investigación recopiló 387 respuestas válidas de profesionales de los medios de comunicación españoles a través de canales digitales y de otro tipo. El análisis de los datos, que incluye métodos estadísticos como el análisis de frecuencias y las pruebas de chi-cuadrado, pretende descubrir los factores que afectan a la carrera profesional de las periodistas españolas. El objetivo es proporcionar recomendaciones empíricamente respaldadas para la igualdad de género en el dinámico panorama mediático español.

**Palabras clave:** Mujeres periodistas españolas, convergencia de medios, discriminación de género.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In modern times, media companies use innovative channels to reach and engage with their desired audiences. There is a general perception that conventional media is being overshadowed by new media, with newspaper readership in particular on the decline (Richardson, 2020). In the past, the communication and expression of ideas was primarily controlled by a hierarchical framework. However, the emergence of contemporary media offers many possibilities for expanding the reach of people around the world. The mainstream media landscape has created a level playing field, giving everyone a fair chance to express their views (Barone, 2020).

Initially, when these platforms emerged, experienced professionals had the upper hand, resulting in them dominating successful independent media accounts. However, with the advancement of technology, content creation is now accessible to everyone (Wong, 2020). Major social media platforms in the Western world are primarily developed and run by the United States. These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have a substantial user base and provide private and instant messaging features. According to the special report "Digital 2021 Epaña," released by a global creative agency named We Are Social in 2021, Spain has 42.54 million Internet users and 37.4 million active Internet users. In the data for 2022, compared with 2021, the number of registered users of Spanish social networks has increased significantly. According to the "Social media usage in Spain - Statistics & Facts report released" by Statista, Spain has a large social media market in Western Europe, with an expected 41 million users by 2023 and a predicted increase to about 46 million users by 2028. Most of Spain's internet users use so-

cial networks, leading to a considerable social audience and a thriving digital and social advertising industry.

In an environment of increasing digitization on a global and domestic scale, media professionals have tremendous opportunities for advancement in the evolution of traditional media, the expansion of emerging media, and the convergence of the two into innovative forms. As the converged communications market continues to experience increasing overlap, the relevance of media convergence in the digital creative economy is clear (Latzer, 2013). More and more journalists, including female journalists, are creating accounts on social media to showcase their work experience and expertise to gain more employment opportunities.

However, female journalists still face gender discrimination in such an environment that should be equal and free of speech. We used to talk about gender discrimination issues, such as job ceilings, office harassment, etc. In the digital environment, even though their workplaces are no longer restricted by time and space transitions, female journalists still suffer from online violence and harassment as well as harsh treatment in work assignments in the high interactivity of new media.

This article tackles head-on the job opportunities and challenges faced by female journalists in Spain amidst media convergence. It fearlessly confronts the gender discrimination issues that plague this industry.

## 1.1 MEDIA CONVERGENCE

In different domains, "convergence" is employed to explore and analyze transformations

that result in integration or harmony. Concerning communication, this is known as “media convergence” and has a significant connection to the digital creative industry. Grasping the ins and outs of media convergence, such as its approaches and effects, holds great significance in comprehending the digital creative economy (Latzner, 2013). Media convergence epitomizes the seamless integration of information and communication technologies, computer networks, and media content. This holistic fusion harmonizes the spheres of computing, communication, and content, stemming directly from the pervasive digitization of media materials and the omnipresence of the Internet (Flew, 2023). In this milieu, information dissemination exhibits noteworthy speed and quality. Presently, news dissemination transcends conventional reliance on periodicals, newspapers, and television broadcasts, encompassing diverse information technologies. The internet serves as a pivotal medium for diverse forms of information propagation, catalyzing the rapid advancement of the journalism industry and actualizing news digitalization. This transformation culminates in the unparalleled swiftness of news information dissemination (Zuo, 2021).

The phenomenon of media convergence has granted users the agency to generate and disseminate content, tailor their viewing schedules through on-demand features, and engage in peer-to-peer interactions through technology. This transformative shift reflects evolving consumer preferences and is further compounded by the digitalization and deregulation of media and communication markets, exerting substantial influence on the competitive dynamics within the media industry (Picard, 2010).

On a global scale, the notion of multimedia integration was introduced quite early, with academic discourse first emerging in the late 1970s. Prominent figures like Nicholas Negro-

ponte (1979) were among the early voices to discuss the emerging phenomenon of digitalization and its implications for the convergence of textual and audio-visual languages. In Spain, newsroom research methods gained prominence around 2005. Subsequently, researchers, supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology, delved into online news studies. Convergence emerged as a prominent research topic, leading to the formation of a robust research team comprising scholars with diverse perspectives on journalism and technology. Starting in 2006, increased funding for convergence research clarified the concept and aimed to establish guidelines beneficial to the media industry and professional training (Martínez, 2009). The single-platform cooperation model, characterized by the decline of print publications and the shift of remaining resources to digital platforms, has spurred conversations regarding the necessity of enhanced cross-media collaboration in the future. Audience engagement emerges as a pivotal strategic concern within all these models, intricately linked with the formulating of cross-media strategies within organizations and augmenting journalists’ competence in engaging across diverse communication channels. Establishing cohesive social media strategies and incentivizing user-generated content represent shared imperatives in this evolving landscape (García-Avilés, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014). With increasing globalization and the rise of digital media, media organizations in Spain have begun to seek cooperation and integration with international media to expand coverage and increase competitiveness (Napp, 2022).

In the Spanish context, mobile devices have emerged as the prevailing conduit for accessing social media, with a remarkable 97% of the population utilizing them for this purpose. Messaging applications occupy a prominent

position, serving as the preferred platform for approximately 83% of social media users. WhatsApp, a property of Meta, commands a substantial presence, with over 91% of Spanish internet users adopting it as their primary choice and expressing notable satisfaction. Facebook is the second most frequently employed platform, followed by Instagram (Data source: 2023 Statista published in "Social media usage in Spain - Statistics & Facts").

A noteworthy phenomenon in Spain is the considerable inclination among its populace to maintain connections with loved ones, acquaintances, and friends through messaging apps. This predilection is underscored by the fact that over fifty percent of the population actively engages with social media platforms. This yearning for connection and closeness renders Spain an ideal market for influencers seeking to engage with local audiences. Furthermore, professionals operating within the media industry are eager to refine their digital competencies and capitalize on expanded networking prospects (Data source: 2023 Statista published in "Leading social media usage reasons in Spain 2022").

## 1.2 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality has been a longstanding issue in various industries, persisting as a problem that has taken on different forms over time. Gender disparities persist in leadership roles within the technology, information, and media sectors. Despite ongoing endeavors to advance workplace gender equality, women continue to be underrepresented in key leadership positions. This underrepresentation not only constrains organizations from realizing their full potential but also perpetuates entrenched gender biases (Baird, 2023). Therefore, gender equality has begun to be vigorously promoted in various countries, especially laws and regula-

tions on gender equality, which have begun to be promulgated one after another, and many scholars have also formed special research groups to promote it more scientifically. The Commission for Gender Equality of the UPO (now the Negotiating Commission of the Gender Equality Plan) approved, on July 6, 2017, the II Equality Plan between Women and Men of Pablo de Olavide University. The Second Equality Plan promotes gender equality through six main lines: communication, language, and institutional image; teaching, innovation, and research; advocacy and training; representation and professional advancement; communication and coordination; gender-based harassment, discrimination, and violence (Office for Equality, 2022).

Out of the emphasis on "gender equality," many countries have promulgated legal provisions to protect women's rights and interests.

Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Commission:

*Equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work, and pay.*

*The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favor of the under-represented sex.*

The mandate of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) is to advance equality:

*"...with respect to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression through the inclusion of people of all genders, including women, in Canada's economic, social, and political life. This application of a gender and diversity lens will help us better understand the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors. These factors include but are not limited to race, national and ethnic origin, Indigenous origin or identity, age, sexu-*

*al orientation, socio-economic condition, place of residence and disability.”*

However, when the bill's provisions are implemented in practice, the effect will still be somewhat compromised, and female journalists will still be mistreated in the working environment.

The 2019 cross-national comparative study, the World of Journalism Study (WJS), delves into the disparities between the perspectives of male and female professionals within the journalism profession in Spain. This examination is based on a comprehensive questionnaire administered to a representative sample of journalists hailing from 124 distinct media organizations. The study discerns noteworthy distinctions in the viewpoints and experiences of female and male journalists within the field.

The findings from the WJS study reveal that female journalists exhibit a heightened awareness of the pressures emanating from corporate profit-driven objectives. Moreover, they express a greater sense of constraint stemming from business decisions, censorship, political influences, and pressure groups. Within this cohort, those with less influence demonstrate a tendency towards greater deference to political and economic powers. In contrast, those who manage to break through the metaphorical “glass ceiling” often experience a heightened degree of autonomy, potentially attributable to their empowerment within the digital media landscape. Interestingly, they are vocal advocates for justice, albeit displaying diminished interest in the supervisory role of power structures. These outcomes can be seen as intertwined with the necessity to “permit conformity” while simultaneously revealing a comparatively reduced awareness of the quality and ethical decline within journalism (Hanitzsch, Hanusch, Ramaprasad, & de Beer, 2019).

From the data published in the “Global Gender Gap Report 2021”, it can be seen that from 2019 to 2020, Spain's labor force participation rate by gender (women to men) showed a decreasing trend (-0.39%) (Sharma, Chawla & Karam, 2021).

Critical issues within the journalism industry were underscored in a separate article published in *Textual & Visual Media* in 2021 by scholars Belén Cáceres Garrido and Sonia Parratt Fernández from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. While confirming the existence of wage gaps, glass ceilings, and barriers to accessing leadership positions in journalism, the research also unveiled hitherto unobserved challenges faced by this group. These challenges encompass difficulties in mediation, the persistence of entrenched sexism, and instances of harassment. Notably, more than half of the respondents in their study were unaware of the existence of equality programs within their respective media companies. Furthermore, their perceptions did not align with the objectives and outcomes of these programs, indicating a potential disconnection that hinders progress toward achieving gender equality within the field (Cáceres Garrido, Parratt Fernández, 2021).

Collectively, these findings illuminate a complex landscape within the Spanish journalism profession, marked by gender-based disparities and a need for comprehensive efforts to address issues of equality, representation, and workplace conditions.

Regarding the issue of gender equality, Spain has also made many efforts. On March 22, 2007, Spain promulgated Organic Law No. 3/2007 on the effective equality of men and women (Organic Law No. 3/2007, 2007), which establishes a series of measures aimed at promoting real equality at work, a program aimed at promot-

ing mediation, promoting gender equality, fertility and avoiding sexual harassment.

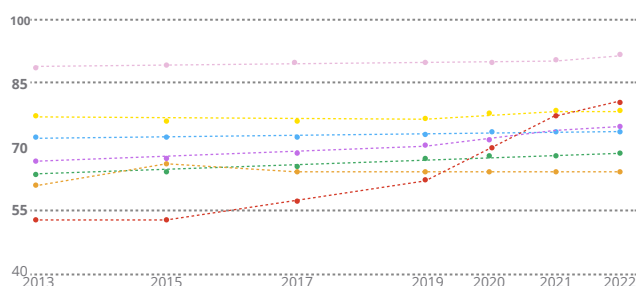
Spain ranks sixth in the European Union (EU) on the Gender Equality Index for 2022 with a score of 74.6 out of 100, 6.0 points above the European Union (EU) average. Researchers from the University of Seville (*Universidad de Sevilla*) and the University of Pablo de Olavide (*Universidad de Olavide*) conducted a study to analyze the 2020-2022 development of gender equality in the EU Member States. The study shows that Spanish society has made considerable progress in structural gender equality, reducing the gap between men and women (Eriksson, 2020).

Although the overall score shows an upward trend, in the analysis of specific indicators (work, money, time, knowledge, power, and health ),

*“Since 2019, Spain’s score has stalled in the domain of work (- 0.1 points), with a setback of 0.8 points in the sub-domain of participation. As a result, Spain’s ranking in this sub-domain has dropped from the 21st to the 23rd place (European Institute for Gender Equality: Gender equality index).”*

**Table 1.**

*European Institute for Gender Equality: Gender equality index, 2022*



In the line chart, it is not difficult to see that, except for the “work” item, other indicators are more or less showing an upward trend, only this item does not rise but falls. Women still face a relatively large problem of gender discrimination in the workplace.

Reuters Institute’s report of 2023 covered 180 leaders from 240 media outlets, in which just 22% of the 180 hierarchical positions in 240 media outlets are held by women, even though, on average, women represent 40% of the total number of journalists who practice the profession in the 12 markets (Andi, Selva & Kleis Nielsen, 2023).

### 1.3 SPANISH FEMALE JOURNALISTS

Since the 19th century, journalistic activities have become one of the activities for women to gain economic independence. The publication of facts and opinions has always been a tool for the development of social movements and the defense of women’s rights. The authors made it clear in *La feminización de los estudios de Periodismo: análisis del caso español* that women play a vital role in journalism and have been involved throughout Spain’s transition period (Santamarina, Ayerdi & Fernández, 2015). As with many college majors, graduates of all disciplines in Communication Studies are overwhelmingly female. In the journalism profession, this male-female ratio should normally be reflected (Puerto, 2022). Women journalists have consistently contributed to the media landscape, introducing a distinctive perspective into news coverage and fostering greater diversity and inclusivity within the industry. As the media field evolves, ensuring equitable opportunities for women’s

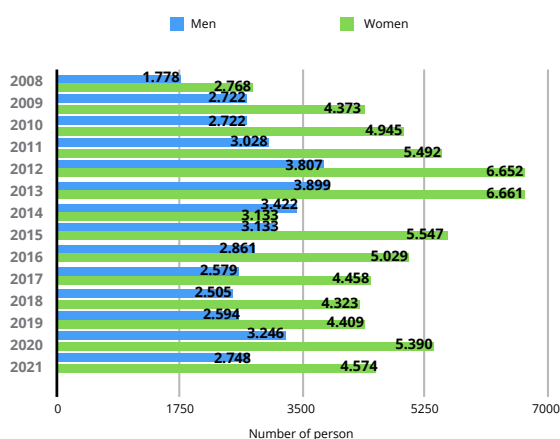
success and advancement in journalism remains a compelling imperative (Dhiman, 2023).

However, judging from the actual implementation, female journalists still face unfair treatment due to gender discrimination in the working environment and even suffer from online violence brought by social networks. According to the data published by APM in the 2018-2021 annual report, discrimination against women still exists objectively. Especially when it comes to the choice of management positions, women are at a disadvantage (2018-2021 APM Annual Report), which has to be done. We think of the decline in Spain's gender equality index score on the "work" indicator in recent years (2022 Gender Equality Index Report), which is also reflected in the news media industry.

María Grijelmo García's book *Claves para periodismo feminista* also mentions that management fired experienced journalists and hired professionals with junior qualifications or training scholarships to save costs. The most significant impact of this move was on female journalists group (2023). Regarding the unemployment rate, female journalists are also much higher than male journalists (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Unemployment journalists by gender, 2008-2021.*



(Data from Reports annual of APM)

For women, there are usually externalized "sexual" stereotypes and a derogatory image of being consumed. Female journalists are often concerned about their appearance rather than their abilities in the working environment (2019 APM Annual Report).

## 2. METHODS AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this article, we address the following key inquiries:

- To what extent do female journalists acknowledge the evolving landscape of the journalism profession and the transformative impact of media integration?
- Do female journalists continue to contend with harassment within the digital work environment, and if so, what forms and frequencies characterize these experiences?
- Within the context of media convergence, do persistent workplace barriers, often referred to as "glass ceilings," remain discernible for female journalists in their career trajectories?

Then, we designed a meticulously crafted questionnaire comprising 41 discrete variables, including demographic information such as gender and age, which was developed to facilitate data collection. These questionnaires were distributed across various prominent social media platforms, encompassing Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Surveycircle, WhatsApp, WeChat, among others. It is noteworthy that the distribution strategy was underpinned by a deliberate focus on soliciting participation primarily from female journalists, with an overarching goal of ensuring the utmost authenticity and reliability of the ensuing dataset.

To mitigate potential sources of bias and enhance data validity, the distribution strategy was thoughtfully structured as follows:

#### *Targeted Dissemination on Social Media Platforms:*

Within the Facebook ecosystem, discrete alliances and thematic groups predominantly composed of Spanish journalists were meticulously identified as ideal channels for disseminating the questionnaires.

On platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, the questionnaires were judiciously distributed to individuals whose social media profiles bore the professional designation of “Journalist”. Further, they evidenced a discernible history of occupational experience within the Spanish journalistic landscape.

For chat software applications such as WhatsApp and WeChat, distribution was focused on groups known to comprise journalists or individuals pursuing journalism degrees and internships.

On LinkedIn and Surveycircle, a transparent and unequivocal stipulation was articulated, explicitly specifying that participation was exclusively sought from actively practicing journalists either currently employed in Spain or possessing prior professional engagements within the Spanish journalism milieu.

#### *Data Analysis*

The questionnaire instrument was designed with utmost care to elicit a comprehensive spectrum of data relevant to investigating gender disparities among journalists. Specifically, it was tailored to capture multifaceted aspects of reporters’ experiences and perspectives, grounding the research in real-world job roles and responsibilities.

A rigorous analytical process was undertaken after the meticulous data collection phase. The acquired dataset was subjected to exhaustive scrutiny and interpretation through statistical software tools, most notably SPSS and Excel. This analytical framework was instrumental in affording a comprehensive and empirically substantiated exploration of the research findings.

In summation, this research approach, characterized by the systematic construction of a robust questionnaire, targeted distribution to specific demographic groups, and methodologically rigorous data analysis, underpins a nuanced and academically sound inquiry into the dynamics of gender within the field of journalism.

## **2.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

Determine the sample size required to estimate the proportion of female journalists in the Spanish journalist population in Spain with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Assume a population ratio of 0.5 and no limit on population size. The  $z$  at the 95% confidence level is 1.96. Then, we conclude that 384 samples are expected to be collected.

A meticulous data curation process was conducted from the pool of collected questionnaires, adhering to stringent criteria to ensure the reliability and coherence of the dataset. The data curation process involved the following key steps:

#### *Geographic Filter:*

Questionnaires originating from IP addresses located outside of Spain were systematically excluded from the analysis. Exceptions were made for respondents with known identities who were invited to participate despite being outside of Spain.

#### *Validation of Multiple-Choice Questions:*



A comprehensive examination of questionnaires featuring multiple-choice questions was carried out with precision. Specifically, questionnaires that did not meticulously adhere to the prescribed number of choices were identified and subsequently omitted from further consideration.

*Logical Consistency Assessment:*

Rigorous scrutiny was applied to assess the logical coherence of responses. Instances of illogical or inconsistent responses were detected and addressed. For example, if a respondent affirmed a previous question with a “yes” response but subsequently continued to answer subsequent questions that should logically have been skipped, such discrepancies were flagged and rectified.

Frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, and chi-square test were used in the following analysis.

### 3. RESULTS

Following the application of these meticulous data-cleaning criteria, a total of 387 response sheets emerged as valid and were retained for subsequent analysis. These responses were distributed as follows: 317 emanated from female participants, while 63 were attributed to male participants. In the dataset comprising collected samples, female respondents constituted a predominant segment, representing 81.91% of the total, whereas male participants comprised a notably smaller fraction, accounting for a mere 13.7%. This gender distribution can be attributed to two probable factors: One plausible explanation pertains to the heightened enthusiasm exhibited by fe-

male respondents in their active participation in the questionnaire. This enthusiasm implies a heightened inclination among women to contribute their perspectives on issues pertinent to the field under scrutiny. Furthermore, the distribution strategy employed for disseminating questionnaires may have inadvertently favored reaching and engaging a predominantly female demographic. This unintentional gender bias in the distribution process likely contributed to the observed gender disparity in the collected samples (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Gender*

| Gender                           |           |         |                    |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories                       | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Female                           | 317       | 81.91%  | 81.91%             |
| Male                             | 53        | 13.70%  | 95.61%             |
| Non-Binary                       | 2         | 0.52%   | 96.12%             |
| Don't know/<br>Don't want to say | 15        | 3.88%   | 100.00%            |
| Total                            | 387       | 100.0%  |                    |

Among the participants, the largest category of responses was “*Ha aumentado*” (Increased), which accounted for 50.90% of the total responses. The following most frequent response was “*Ha aumentado mucho*” (Increased significantly), with 9.56% of respondents choosing this option. The cumulative percentages provide insight into the overall trends. When we add the percentages of respondents who believe harassment has increased or increased significantly, we find that approximately 60.47% of participants perceive an increase in workplace harassment (Table 2).

**Table 2**

Probability of workplace harassment in the context of media convergence

| In the context of media convergence, consider that workplace harassment... |           |         |                    |
|--|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories   | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Has increased  | 197       | 50.90%  | 50.90%             |
| Has increased a lot  | 37        | 9.56%   | 60.47%             |
| Has decreased  | 30        | 7.75%   | 68.22%             |
| Has decreased a lot  | 40        | 10.34%  | 78.55%             |
| Has not experienced any changes  | 83        | 21.45%  | 100.00%            |
| Total  | 387       | 100.0%  |                    |

The majority of female respondents, 55.84%, indicated that they perceive workplace harassment as "Frecuente" (Frequent). Another noteworthy segment, 25.55% of respondents, described workplace harassment as "Poco frecuente" (Infrequent), implying that they perceive harassment as a less common occurrence in their work environment. Just a smaller proportion, 11.36%, indicated that they consider workplace harassment to be "Bastante frecuente" (Quite frequent), and 7.26% described workplace harassment as "Inexistente" (Non-existent), signifying their belief that harassment is virtually absent in their professional milieu. From the data of female respondents, we can better feel that they suffer harassment at work (Table 3).

**Table 3**

Frequency of harassment occurs at work (Data source: 317 female respondents)

| Given your professional experience, in a journalist's work environment, harassment is... |           |         |                    |
|--|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories   | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Quite frequent   | 36        | 11.36%  | 11.36%             |
| Frequent   | 177       | 55.84%  | 67.19%             |
| Non-existent   | 23        | 7.26%   | 74.45%             |
| Infrequent   | 81        | 25.55%  | 100.00%            |
| Total  | 317       | 100.0%  |                    |

As can be seen from the table above, Chi-square test (cross analysis) was used to study the differential relationship between job stability and the work experience of being harassed by social networks. The table above shows that different job stability samples have different effects on the work experience of being harassed by social networks. The experience sample showed significance ( $p < 0.05$ ), and the work stability sample showed 0.01 level significance for the work experience sample that suffered from social network harassment ( $\chi^2 = 41.383$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ ). By comparing the differences in percentages, it can be seen that the proportion of Buena (Good) choosing No is 65.52%, and it will be Significantly higher than the average of 33.75%. The proportion of Muy mala (very bad) choosing No is 62.07%, which is significantly higher than the average level of 33.75%. The proportion of Mala (Bad) choosing Sí is 81.02%, which is significantly higher than the average of 66.25% (Table 4).

**Table 4**

The correlation between job stability and whether you have experienced online harassment (Data source: 317 female respondents)

| Items   | Categories | Work stability(%) |            |           |           |                               |           | Total      | χ <sup>2</sup> | p       |
|---|------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|---------|
|   |            | Good              | Bad        | Very good | Very bad  | Don't know/ Don't want to say | Regular   |            |                |         |
| Have you ever suffered harassment for your professional work through social | No         | 19(65.52)         | 26(18.98)  | 6(46.15)  | 18(62.07) | 11(52.38)                     | 27(30.68) | 107(33.75) | 41.383         | 0.000** |
|   | Si         | 10(34.48)         | 111(81.02) | 7(53.85)  | 11(37.93) | 10(47.62)                     | 61(69.32) | 210(66.25) |                |         |
| Total   |            | 29                | 137        | 13        | 29        | 21                            | 88        | 317        |                |         |

\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01

Most respondents (59.69%) indicated workplaces where both genders hold leadership positions, but men are more prevalent in these roles. A significant minority (11.89%) reported environments where both genders are in leadership, with women having a stronger representation. In some workplaces, exclusively male superiors were reported by 9.82% of respondents under “*Siempre hombres*” (Always men). Similarly, 7.24% of respondents indicated workplaces where women exclusively hold leadership roles, termed “*Siempre mujeres*” (Always women). The gender ratio distribution underscores an enduring disparity in leadership positions, with men maintaining a significant majority in decision-making roles (Table 5).

**Table 5**

Gender ratio in leadership positions

| Your bosses or senior managers in the environment where you work have been... (please choose the gender here) |           |         |                    |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Women and men, but more men than women que mujeres  | 231       | 59.69%  | 59.69%             |
| Women and men, but more women than men  | 46        | 11.89%  | 71.58%             |
| Others  | 44        | 11.37%  | 82.95%             |
| Always men  | 38        | 9.82%   | 92.76%             |
| Always women  | 28        | 7.24%   | 100.00%            |
| Total   | 387       | 100.0%  |                    |

The majority of respondents, accounting for 59.17%, answered “Sí” (Yes), indicating that they have indeed witnessed cases where women were not promoted despite having similar qualifications to men. This suggests a prevalent perception of gender-based career advancement disparities in the field (Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Gender discrimination in selection for promotion positions*

| Have you experienced a case in journalism or communication in which a woman has not been promoted because priority has been given to a man with the same abilities for said position? |           |         |                    |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| No  | 158       | 40.83%  | 40.83%             |
| Yes   | 229       | 59.17%  | 100.00%            |
| Total   | 387       | 100.0%  |                    |

43.93% of respondents indicated that a significant portion of respondents perceive instances where their current workplace occasionally prioritizes men in the allocation of responsibilities and higher professional levels. A minority (17.83%) experienced frequent instances of men being prioritized in their workplaces. These findings shed light on the prevalence of perceptions regarding the prioritization of men in allocating responsibilities and higher professional levels within the respondents’ current workplaces. A notable portion of respondents indicates that such practices occur to varying degrees, ranging from occasional to frequent (Table 7).

**Table 7**

*Gender discrimination in job assignments*

| In the environment for which he/she currently works and when assigning the most important responsibilities and professional levels, priority is given to men... |           |         |                    |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Categories  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Sometimes   | 170       | 43.93%  | 43.93%             |
| Many times  | 69        | 17.83%  | 61.76%             |
| Never   | 50        | 12.92%  | 74.68%             |
| Seldom  | 64        | 16.54%  | 91.21%             |
| Always  | 34        | 8.79%   | 100.00%            |
| Total   | 387       | 100.0%  |                    |

## 4. CONCLUSION

In synthesis, adopting a macroscopic lens reveals that the rapid proliferation of digitalization, propelled by technological integration, along with the integration of traditional and new media paradigms, has ushered in a transformative era replete with enhanced prospects for female journalists. This confluence has effectively dismantled the temporal and spatial constraints that hitherto circumscribed their professional domain, thereby endowing female journalists with a heightened capacity to reconcile their occupational commitments with their multifaceted roles in society, encompassing marital and maternal responsibilities. Of particular significance, the advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 precipitated the widespread adoption of remote working modalities, ostensibly augmenting the professional autonomy of female journalists.

Within the ambit of our research, it becomes patently evident that despite the presence of legislative mandates and regulatory frameworks ostensibly designed to propagate the principles of gender equality, a conspicuous lacuna exists in the translation of these policy intentions into effective implementation. This lacuna is particularly manifest in the persistent conundrum of gender discrimination that continues to afflict female journalists, most notably concerning the constricted landscape of career advancement prospects.

In the crucible of the evolving digital media ecosystem, the conspicuous proliferation of interactivity has engendered a burgeoning tide of online violence, constituting a deeply disconcerting conundrum. The virtual expanse now

facilitates the dissemination of commentaries by individuals who often remain unacquainted with the female journalist under scrutiny. Regrettably, these digital dialogues often become reprehensible critiques of their physical appearance. Consequently, the intrinsic worth of female journalists, as measured by their professional contributions and competencies, is all too frequently consigned to the margins, eclipsed by undue fixation on superficial attributes. This troubling dynamic perpetuates pernicious gender-based stereotypes and subverts the rightful recognition of their expertise and adeptness within the contours of their chosen vocation.

These findings engender a clarion call for a more concerted and holistic approach that seeks to bridge the chasm between the original legislative mandate and its effective enactment. In confronting the pervasive quandary of gender discrimination and the ominous specter of online violence, an intricate tapestry of strategies must be woven, encompassing heightened consciousness, educational initiatives, and vigorous advocacy. Moreover, it behooves media institutions and society at large to shoulder collective responsibility in dismantling ingrained discriminatory practices. In this endeavor, a cultural metamorphosis is necessitated, one that truly appreciates the professional contributions of female journalists, valorizing their competencies and dexterity rather than perpetuating a myopic fixation on superfluous attributes. Only through such a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach can the authentic spirit of gender equality be fully actualized within the precincts of the journalistic profession.

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