



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

**ANALYSIS ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF FEMALE JOURNALISTS
TO COVER NEWS THE CASE OF FANA BROADCASTING
CORPORATE**

(JUNE, 2025)

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AND HUMANITIES SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS ARTS IN MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM**

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JUNE, 2025

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This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Tiruwork Meskelu Balcha, entitled Analysis on the assignment of female journalists to cover news: the case of Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in multimedia Journalism complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ACRONYMS

AAU	Addis Ababa University
FBC	Fana broadcasting corporate
EBC	Ethiopian broadcasting corporate
EBS	Ethiopian broadcasting service
EPRDF	Ethiopians people's revolutionary democratic front
ETV	Ethiopian television
FGD	Focused group discussion
CEO	Chief executive officer
EAJA	Eastern Africa journalists association
GMMP	Global media monitoring project

Conceptual definition

Hard news: - Hard news refers to coverage of breaking events or issues considered critical for the public to know, often with immediate consequences. It is a staple of traditional journalism and usually involves stories such as political developments, criminal events, natural disasters, wars, business crises, and other events of significant impact.

Soft news: - described as news that typically is more personality-centered, less time-bound, more practical, and more incident-based than other news. It is characterized by content that is more about human emotions, personal stories, entertainment, and lifestyle rather than hard, factual reporting

Acknowledgment

With profound gratitude and humility, I first and foremost offer my deepest thanks to the Almighty GOD, whose grace and unwavering support have been the cornerstone of this entire endeavor. His divine guidance has illuminated my path and enabled the successful completion of this thesis.

I wish to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to my esteemed advisor, TenawTerefe (Assistant Professor), for his invaluable mentorship and unwavering commitment throughout my Master's research journey. His profound patience, consistent motivation, and extensive academic knowledge have been instrumental in shaping this work. His insightful guidance at every stage, from the initial conceptualization to the final writing of this thesis, has been truly indispensable. Furthermore, I extend my sincere gratitude to the dedicated staff of Fana Broadcasting Corporation for their generous cooperation and willingness to contribute to this research. Their time and insights, provided through their thoughtful responses to my questionnaires and their active participation in the enriching group discussions, were crucial in gathering essential data for this study.

To my beloved family and cherished friends, I am eternally grateful for your boundless unconditional support, unwavering encouragement, and constant love. Your belief in me has been a constant source of strength, propelling me forward during challenging times.

In addition, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all my esteemed colleagues at the EBC entertainment channel. Your understanding and support throughout this process have been truly valuable.

Finally, yet most importantly, I extend my sincere thanks to all the respondents who so willingly and generously offered their time and perspectives. Their kind cooperation and honest contributions were fundamental to the success of this research, and without their participation, this work would not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines persistent gender inequalities in news assignment practices within Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) in Ethiopia, reflecting a global pattern where female journalists are often relegated to "soft news" while male counterparts cover "hard news." Employing a mixed-methods research approach, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with female journalists, and a questionnaire survey of 31 FBC journalists, the investigation revealed statistically significant gender disparities. A substantial 51.6% of respondents attributed assignment decisions to prevalent gender stereotypes. Female journalists were demonstrably overrepresented in "soft news" assignments, while male journalists predominantly covered "hard news," including political and investigative reporting. Despite political news constituting a significant 32.3% of FBC's overall coverage, female journalists were consistently underrepresented in these high-profile assignments, irrespective of their qualifications or interest. Qualitative findings further illuminated pervasive gendered expectations within the newsroom and a discernible absence of formal mentorship programs, both impeding women's access to prominent stories. Although some progress in gender representation was acknowledged, the findings unequivocally underscore persistent systemic barriers and a profound lack of equitable opportunities for female journalists in accessing "hard news." The study concludes by emphasizing the imperative for FBC to adopt and rigorously implement more inclusive and transparent editorial policies. It strongly recommends instituting targeted mentorship programs to support the professional development of female journalists, proactively ensuring their equitable opportunities for participation in all domains of news coverage. These interventions are crucial for fostering a more gender-balanced journalistic environment and enhancing the quality and diversity of news content delivered to the Ethiopian public.

KEY WORDS: - Female journalists, Editorial decisions, Systemic barriers, Professional development, Newsroom culture

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Female journalists have historically been pivotal in shaping the global media landscape. Their significant contributions to the field encompass reporting, investigating, and analyzing a wide spectrum of topics, offering crucial perspectives that challenge and enrich the narrative of societal events. From the pioneering work of figures like Nellie Bly to the contemporary achievements of journalists worldwide, women have consistently demonstrated their capacity for excellence in a traditionally male-dominated profession. Despite these accomplishments, women in journalism have frequently encountered systemic biases and challenges, leading to unequal representation and recognition across various facets of their careers. Karen Ross, in her seminal work *Women and Journalism: A New History* (2017) underscores the historical and ongoing struggles of female journalists, illuminating how gender-based obstacles have impacted their professional trajectories and the processes through which news is produced and consumed.

A persistent issue faced by female journalists is the inequitable distribution of assignments based on gendered expectations. Research indicates a tendency to assign women journalists to "soft" topics those often perceived as less critical or serious such as lifestyle, fashion, health, and human interest stories. These story types are frequently considered less prestigious than "hard" news, including politics, business, and international affairs. This division of labor within newsrooms perpetuates detrimental gender stereotypes, limiting women's opportunities to engage with a broader range of subjects and to gain recognition for their comprehensive journalistic skills. Consequently, female journalists are not only restricted in the types of stories they cover but also in the prominence and visibility of their reporting.

The gender imbalance within the editorial ranks of many news organizations exacerbates this problem. As Ross (2017, p. 45) observes, the majority of media gatekeepers—those responsible for assigning stories, editing content, and shaping editorial direction—are male. This structural asymmetry fosters an environment where unconscious or implicit biases regarding gender influence the allocation of assignments, the selection of sources, and the overall framing of news

narratives. The outcome is a media landscape that continues to reinforce traditional gender roles and constrains the diversity of voices represented in the news. Male reporters and editors often dominate coverage of "hard" news, while female journalists are more frequently relegated to reporting on "soft" topics, resulting in a skewed portrayal of the world and an underrepresentation of women's perspectives on significant societal issues.

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) (2010) highlights the critical role of newsroom editors, feature editors, and senior reporters—predominantly male—in controlling the distribution of story assignments. Their decisions are often shaped by enduring stereotypes that categorize certain subjects as more suitable for women than for men. Women journalists continue to report on issues deemed "soft," such as health, culture, and social matters, while men are more often assigned to cover areas considered more challenging or prestigious, like politics, technology, and finance. Data from the GMMP (2005), as cited by UNESCO (2009), further emphasizes this gender disparity. Despite women comprising 57% of television news presenters by 2005, they authored only 29% of news items, and only 32% of hard news stories were written or covered by women. This discrepancy suggests that while women may occupy visible on-air positions, they remain significantly underrepresented in the production of news content, particularly in more critical areas of reporting.

In Ethiopia, the situation mirrors these global trends. Research by Frehiwot Kassa (2019) revealed that at the government-owned Ethiopian Television (ETV), a significant proportion of female journalists were concentrated in the entertainment section, traditionally viewed as covering "soft" content. While men were more frequently assigned to cover hard news such as politics, sports, and economics, women were more often tasked with lifestyle, social, and human interest topics. For instance, in 2007, only 30% of female journalists at ETV were assigned to the news desk, a position typically associated with reporting hard news, compared to 35% of male journalists. Furthermore, women constituted 21% of the entertainment section, in stark contrast to only 11% of men in the same section. This distribution of assignments reflects a broader pattern where women are less likely to be entrusted with reporting on significant political, economic, and global issues, reinforcing their marginalization within the industry.

Despite these persistent challenges, it is crucial to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of female journalists in challenging traditional narratives and amplifying often-overlooked voices. As Zoonen (1994) argues, "Studies have shown that as women enter newsrooms and rise in their careers, the range of topics covered expands to include issues of particular concern to women and other marginalized groups, and these issues are often framed in ways that reflect a broader understanding of their social and political significance." This supports the observation that women journalists "have consistently brought fresh perspectives to news coverage, highlighting social issues, human rights concerns, and the experiences of marginalized communities. Female journalists have often humanized complex stories, offered novel angles on prevailing issues, and helped reshape public discourse by presenting issues that may have been previously ignored or underreported.

Given the significant role that gender diversity plays in enriching news content and fostering a more inclusive media environment, addressing the systemic biases that impede the equitable assignment of stories to female journalists is essential. Promoting gender equality in the newsroom is not merely a matter of social justice but is also crucial for the evolution of journalism itself. A diverse newsroom that actively incorporates female perspectives can lead to more comprehensive, representative, and impactful news coverage.

The focus of this study is to analyze the assignment practices of female journalists within Fana Broadcasting Corporate's newsroom, aiming to identify patterns of gender bias and to develop strategies that promote more equitable assignments. By evaluating how gender dynamics influence the allocation of stories, this research seeks to understand the barriers female journalists encounter and to propose actionable steps for enhancing gender inclusivity in news reporting. This analysis is critical not only for advancing gender equality within the newsroom but also for fostering a media landscape that more accurately reflects the multifaceted nature of society, ensuring that news coverage is comprehensive, diverse, and free from the constraints of outdated gender stereotypes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing presence of women in newsrooms globally, and within Ethiopia, significant gendered patterns in journalistic practice, particularly concerning news assignments, persist. This research aims to analyze the allocation of news coverage assignments to female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), a prominent media institution in Ethiopia, to ascertain if and how gender influences their deployment to specific beats, story types, or geographical locations.

From a feminist media theory perspective, the division of labor in news production is rarely gender-neutral. As Tuchman (1978) famously argued with her concept of "symbolic annihilation," the media can systematically omit, trivialize, or condemn certain groups. In the context of news assignments, this can manifest as the disproportionate assignment of female journalists to "soft news" beats (e.g., social issues, culture, health, human interest) while male journalists continue to dominate "hard news" areas (e.g., politics, economics, conflict, crime) (Lauzen & Dozier, 2005; Robinson, 2018). This division is not merely a matter of preference but can be understood as a subtle form of gatekeeping, rooted in implicit biases and long-standing newsroom cultures that reinforce patriarchal ideologies (Steiner, 2014).

Scholars like Liesbet Van Zoonen (1994) have highlighted how media institutions, as sites of cultural production, can reproduce societal gender norms. If female journalists at FBC are systematically channeled into specific types of stories, it not only restricts their professional development and visibility but also contributes to a gendered framing of news content. This, in turn, can subtly influence public perceptions of women's agency, authority, and relevance in the public sphere, potentially reinforcing traditional gender roles within Ethiopian society.

Furthermore, Dorothy Smith's (1987) "standpoint theory" emphasizes the importance of understanding social phenomena from the lived experiences of women. If female journalists are excluded from covering certain critical beats, their unique perspectives and insights on diverse societal issues may be lost, leading to incomplete or skewed news narratives. This contributes to a broader societal lack of diverse representation in news and reinforces what some feminist

scholars term the "male gaze" in media production, where stories are primarily framed from a masculine viewpoint (Mulvey, 1975).

A recent baseline study on gender in the Ethiopian media landscape by Fojo Media Institute and International Media Support (IMS) (2021) indicated that while the number of women journalists is increasing, they remain disproportionately underrepresented in managerial and editorial decision-making positions. Crucially, this study also found that "most female journalists report on so-called 'soft news' topics," citing "historical and informal preferences for men reporting on certain topics, the gender bias of supervisors, and the personal interests of some women journalists" as key factors. This finding underscores the immediate relevance of this study at FBC, as it seeks to delve deeper into these observed patterns and their underlying causes within a specific institutional context.

Therefore, this research seeks to identify if these documented global and national patterns of gendered news assignments are present at FBC. It will explore the mechanisms that might lead to such assignments, including formal editorial policies, unconscious biases among newsroom leadership, prevailing newsroom culture, and even potential self-selection by journalists based on perceived gendered expectations or safety concerns. By examining these dynamics through the lens of feminist media theory, this study aims to contribute to both local and international scholarship on gender and media production, providing valuable insights for FBC to foster a more equitable and representative journalistic environment that better serves the diverse informational needs of the Ethiopian public.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this research is to assess the current assignment practices in the Fana Broadcasting Corporate's newsroom, with a specific focus on female journalists, and provide recommendations for the future to empower female journalists in the newsroom.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify potential gender-related disparities in the assignment of news coverage.
2. To analyze the practices of story allocation to reporters in the newsroom of the FBC.
3. To determine whether female reporters are disproportionately assigned to specific types of stories.
4. To assess whether female journalists rely on male experts as sources more frequently compared to male journalists.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the specific types of stories women journalists are usually assigned to cover?
2. How do newsroom editors at FBC assign stories between female and male journalists?
3. What are the specific types of stories women journalists are usually assigned to cover?
4. Who are the frequent news sources used by female journalists?

1.5 Significance of the study

This research is important because the inclusion of female journalists in covering all types of news is crucial for several reasons. It aims to promote gender equality, diversify perspectives, and ensure fair representation in news reporting. By highlighting the underrepresentation of female journalists at FBC the study offers fresh insights and promotes balanced and inclusive journalism.

Women make up half of the global population, and their voices and perspectives deserve equal representation in all areas of journalism. This research focuses on the issues of representation and role modeling for future female journalists, aiming to challenge misconceptions about male-dominated news areas. It seeks to dismantle stereotypes regarding women's abilities and interests, encouraging female journalists to pursue their passions without limitations based on gender. In doing so, the research aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable media landscape.

Furthermore, it assesses the culture of newsroom dynamics and decision-making, ensuring that newsrooms are diverse, reflective of society, and better equipped to cover a wide range of

stories. A diverse newsroom promotes collaborative decision-making, enriched discussions, and a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Female journalists contribute unique perspectives, insights, and sources that may otherwise be overlooked, ultimately enhancing the quality and accuracy of news reporting.

By embracing diversity and including female journalists in hard news coverage, FBC can better serve its audience, advance journalistic standards, and promote a more inclusive society.

1.6. Scope of the study

The scope of this research study focuses on analyzing the assignments of female journalists for news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporation. It primarily concentrates on the television and radio newsrooms, where more than 67 journalists cover a variety of news topics. The newsroom employs two formats: the first is a news show featuring in-depth coverage, and the second is a standard news format. The research was conducted at the headquarters of Fana Broadcasting Corporation, specifically aiming to assess the current situation in the newsroom, particularly regarding the engagement of female journalists in news coverage.

1.7. Limitation of the study

This research project, while providing valuable insights, faced several limitations. First, time constraints narrowed its scope, preventing the inclusion of female journalists from all broadcast and print media across Ethiopia. This means the study can't fully represent the broader national landscape.

Second, a significant challenge was the lack of existing local research and well-documented materials. This absence meant we couldn't establish a strong local baseline for comparison. This forced us to rely heavily on Western media studies. The problem here is that these Western frameworks might not perfectly align with the unique cultural, social, and political context of Ethiopia, potentially leading to a biased or incomplete interpretation of our local findings. To address this gap and gather context-specific data, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion with eight female journalists, providing original insights into their experiences within the local media landscape.

Finally, even when we tried to gather original data through the focus group discussion, we hit practical roadblocks like restricted web access to reference materials and difficulties accessing large archives. These issues collectively slowed down our research and made it harder to get a full picture.

1.8. Organization of the Research Paper

Chapter One includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, scope, limitations, significance, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relevant to the topic. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the methods, sampling techniques, coding features, and procedures used in the study. Chapter Four focuses on the analysis and discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter Five is dedicated to conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the existing literature on the assignment of female journalists for news coverage, with a specific focus on gender dynamics in media organizations, newsrooms, and the broader context of Ethiopian media. The literature explored in this chapter includes research on gender and media representation, women in journalism, challenges faced by female journalists, and the role of media organizations in shaping gendered news assignments. The review provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how gender biases affect the assignments of female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), as well as the implications these biases have on their career development and the overall representation of women in the media.

2.1. Gender and Journalism

In her seminal chapter, Zoonen (1998) examines the intricate relationship between gender and journalism, highlighting how media practices frequently impose gendered roles on journalists. She argues that these roles not only shape the identity of journalists but also influence the types of stories they are assigned. This gendering of journalistic practice creates a cycle where female journalists are often relegated to covering “soft” news topics—such as lifestyle, health, and human interest stories—while their male counterparts are typically given assignments in “hard” news areas, like politics, economics, and international affairs.

Van Zoonen’s analysis reveals how these dynamics contribute to the broader media narrative, reinforcing stereotypes about gender and professional capabilities. By situating female journalists within a framework that limits their opportunities and visibility, the media perpetuates a skewed representation of women’s contributions to journalism and the stories that matter in society. This not only affects the careers of individual journalists but also shapes public perceptions of gender roles and issues in the news.

Supporting van Zoonen's argument, Machin and Niblock (2016) explore how media language and imagery often reinforce traditional gender roles. They find that female journalists frequently face pressure to conform to stereotypical representations, which can restrict their professional development and the diversity of coverage. Their study emphasizes the need for a shift in media practices to allow for a more equitable representation of both genders in journalism.

Similarly, a study by Collins (2020) discusses how the gendered assignment of news stories not only affects female journalists but also limits the overall depth and quality of news coverage. Collins argues that when women are consistently directed towards “soft” news, it leads to an undervaluation of important societal issues that disproportionately affect women, such as gender-based violence and health disparities. This pattern ultimately diminishes the richness of journalistic content available to the public.

Ross (2020) highlights a critical issue in the field of journalism regarding gender representation. She asserts, "Despite increasing numbers of women entering the journalism profession, their presence in leadership roles and in the coverage of hard news remains significantly lower than that of their male counterparts."

This observation underscores a persistent gender disparity within the industry, despite advancements in educational attainment and entry-level participation among women.

Ross's analysis points to systemic barriers that continue to hinder women's progress in journalism. While women may increasingly fill roles in newsrooms, they often find themselves sidelined when it comes to leadership positions and high-profile reporting assignments, particularly in areas deemed "hard news," such as politics, business, and foreign affairs. This disparity not only reflects organizational biases but also influences the narratives and perspectives presented in the media.

The implications of this gender imbalance are significant. A lack of female representation in leadership and critical news coverage can lead to a narrower understanding of issues, as diverse voices and experiences are essential for comprehensive reporting. As the industry evolves, it is crucial to address these inequities to ensure that women's contributions are recognized and that journalism as a whole benefits from a broader range of viewpoints.

As noted by Thomson (2022), media coverage that lacks gender diversity often overlooks important societal issues affecting women, thereby perpetuating stereotypes and limiting the scope of public discourse.

As the industry evolves, it is crucial to address these inequities to ensure that women's contributions are recognized and that journalism as a whole benefits from a broader range of viewpoints. Addressing these systemic challenges is not only a matter of equity but also essential for the integrity and relevance of journalism in a diverse society.

2.1.1 Gender Representation in Media

The theme of gender representation in media focuses on how women are portrayed across various platforms, including television, film, and digital media. These representations significantly shape societal attitudes toward women, influencing perceptions of their roles in both personal and professional contexts (Smith et al., 2018).

Moreover, the portrayal of women in media directly affects their professional opportunities; studies indicate that female journalists who encounter diverse representations are more likely to aspire to leadership roles (Chaudhry, 2020).

It is essential to consider intersectionality in media portrayals, as diverse representations challenge stereotypes and provide a more inclusive view of women's experiences (Crenshaw, 1989). Media often perpetuates cultural narratives that can limit women's roles, reinforcing harmful stereotypes associated with femininity and strength (Harris, 2017).

Understanding these dynamics has important implications for media policies, which can promote diversity and challenge limiting stereotypes through intentional representation practices (Women in Film and Television, 2020)

2.1.2 History of women in media.

The history of women in media is a story of both progress and persistent inequality. It's a narrative of breaking barriers, challenging stereotypes, fighting for representation, and struggling for equal opportunities within the media industries. As Emawayish girma (2018 p.9) cited that According to the world survey in the late 1970s and early 1980s, only 13% of reporters were

women, whereas today about half of reporters around the world are women. However, women are still far from equal treatment in so many terms as they face professional barriers of appearance and age. (Girma 2018 p9) the history of women in media in different stages is stated below

Historically, women were largely excluded from formal media production and were either absent from mainstream media or portrayed in stereotypical, limiting roles. In the early stages of print media, women were primarily depicted as homemakers, passive figures, or mothers, reinforcing traditional gender norms (Tuchman, 1978). While women did contribute to media production, their roles were often limited to supporting or clerical positions, with few being granted access to prominent roles in the editorial or creative sides of media (Gallagher, 2001).

The exclusion of women from media production was not unique to any one region but was widespread across the globe. In the United States, for instance, women were largely absent from journalism and news reporting until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even when women did gain access to media roles, they were often restricted to topics like society, fashion, or domestic affairs, with little authority or recognition in hard news (Kramarae & Spender, 2000).

The early 20th century also saw the rise of radio as a mass medium. However, women's roles in radio broadcasting remained largely limited to domestic or entertainment-oriented content. For example, Miriam Hopkins, a prominent radio personality in the 1930s, focused on light entertainment programs, which were considered more socially acceptable for women (Baugh, 2000). While women did enter the broadcast industry, their roles often reinforced traditional ideas about femininity and the domestic sphere.

By the mid-20th century, women began to make notable strides in media industries, particularly in the realm of television. The 1950s and 1960s saw a rise in the number of women entering newsrooms, though they were still often assigned roles that emphasized their appearance or voice rather than their journalistic expertise (Gluscock, 2008). During this time, Barbara Walters became a pioneering female figure in American broadcast news, transitioning from co-anchor roles to hosting prominent news programs and interviews with world leaders.

At the same time, women also became more visible in other forms of media, including film and advertising. Although the film industry often presented women as either passive love interests or femme fatales, women began to break through in more complex roles. Actresses like Katharine Hepburn and Bette Davis challenged conventional portrayals of women, advocating for roles that displayed greater agency and depth (Doherty, 2002). In advertising, the 1950s witnessed the emergence of the "modern woman" in television commercials, which played a pivotal role in shaping gender roles and consumer expectations (Schmidt, 2009).

The feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s significantly impacted women's roles in media, both as content creators and as subjects. The rise of second-wave feminism brought attention to issues such as sexual objectification, gender stereotyping, and the lack of representation of women in media (Mills, 2000). Feminist scholars, such as Laura Mulvey, critically analyzed the portrayal of women in cinema, introducing the concept of the "male gaze," where women were often objectified and viewed through the lens of male desire (Mulvey, 1975).

The feminist movement also led to greater advocacy for women in media industries. Activist groups like The National Organization for Women (NOW) campaigned for equal opportunities in broadcasting, as well as for more female representation in senior editorial roles (Bielby&Bielby, 1996). Women in television, such as Oprah Winfrey, helped transform daytime talk shows into powerful platforms that tackled issues related to women's rights, social justice, and personal empowerment.

Despite the progress made in the 20th century, women continued to face barriers in media industries well into the 21st century. Although women have become more visible in newsrooms, the number of women in leadership and editorial roles has remained low. Sheryl Sandberg's 2013 book *Lean In* highlighted the persistent inequality faced by women in leadership positions across various industries, including media, calling for increased female representation in decision-making processes (Sandberg, 2013). Similarly, despite the growth of female audiences and media consumption, women are still underrepresented in key roles, particularly in hard news and political reporting (Lauzen, 2017).

Social media platforms have played a critical role in reshaping the ways women interact with and produce media. Female bloggers, YouTubers, and influencers have become prominent figures, using digital platforms to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and to discuss issues of gender equality, representation, and social justice (Nightingale & Dhoest, 2011). However, digital spaces have not been without their own challenges, with female content creators often facing harassment, sexism, and threats of violence online (Jane, 2017).

The #MeToo movement, which gained prominence in 2017, also significantly affected the media landscape, revealing the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in the media industry. The movement not only empowered women to share their stories but also led to tangible changes in the industry, such as increased transparency and accountability in both Hollywood and journalism (Baumgardner & Richards, 2018).

While the struggle for gender equality in media continues, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of intersectionality—the idea that gender inequality cannot be understood in isolation from other social categories such as race, class, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1989). Women of color, in particular, have faced compounded challenges in media representation. While white women have made significant inroads in media, women of color have often been marginalized, portrayed through stereotypical lenses, or excluded from mainstream narratives altogether (Gill, 2007). The rise of movements like Black Lives Matter and the increasing prominence of women like Shonda Rhimes and Issa Rae signal a shift toward more inclusive and diverse media representations.

2.1.3 Women Journalists in the Ethiopian Media

The presence of women journalists in the Ethiopian media is a topic marked by both progress and persistent challenges. While there has been a noticeable increase in the number of women entering the field, their roles, representation in leadership, and the obstacles they face paint a more complex picture. Comparing to the previous years, These days a number of television and radio stations has opened which creates huge opportunities for female journalists.

The Ethiopian media environment has undergone substantial changes since the late 20th century, particularly after the 1991 political transition. Following the end of the Derg regime, which

heavily censored the press, the country saw the emergence of a more vibrant media sector, characterized by an increasing number of private newspapers, radio stations, and television networks (Tadesse, 2010). Despite this growth, the media industry remains highly centralized, with a strong governmental influence and limited press freedom (Taye, 2017).

As Agaredech (2002) cited in Mengistu (2007), Romanwork Kassahun had worked for more Than 25 years starting her career in 1946 for both the print and electronic media. Later, female Journalists such as Assegedch Yiberta, Elleni Mekuria, Bizu Wondimagegnehu and Abaynesh Birru became among the senior and famous female journalists who had been working in Inconvenient working conditions.(Ibid)

For centuries Ethiopian women have been brought up in settings that back the idea that ‘women should rather be seen than heard’ Alemseged (1999). Alemseged further notes local and indigenous ways were used to carry out discussions and pass on information from the few to the majority. However, women remained neglected in the general process.

Women have had a relatively minor presence in this landscape, particularly in decision-making roles. However, several studies suggest that the situation is slowly improving. As more women enter journalism schools and media organizations, they begin to reshape the discourse, even if they still struggle with gender-related barriers (Gebremariam, 2014).

The representation of women in Ethiopian journalism is often skewed, with women typically occupying lower-status positions such as reporters or junior staff members. Studies by Baye (2015) and Tadesse (2017) reveal that while there has been an increase in the number of female journalists over the years, they still represent a minority in higher-ranking editorial positions.

Moreover, women journalists are often relegated to topics perceived as more 'feminine' or 'soft'—such as health, education, and human interest stories—while men dominate areas like politics, business, and sports (Mulu, 2018). This gendered division of labor within the media reflects broader societal stereotypes about women’s roles in both the public and private spheres.

Women journalists in Ethiopia face a variety of challenges, both professionally and personally. One of the primary obstacles is gender discrimination, which manifests in various forms such as unequal pay, limited career advancement, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership

positions (Adugna, 2020). Female journalists often report feeling marginalized and sidelined, particularly when it comes to decision-making processes within newsrooms. This disparity is exacerbated by the patriarchal nature of Ethiopian society, where gender roles remain rigid, and women's participation in public life is often seen as secondary to that of men (Tadesse&Molla, 2016).

Additionally, women journalists face sexual harassment in the workplace, a challenge that is particularly pronounced in a male-dominated industry like journalism. This harassment can take both overt and subtle forms, from verbal abuse to physical intimidation, contributing to a toxic work environment that discourages women from advancing their careers. According to a 2018 study by Tadele, many women journalists reported experiencing harassment, but few felt they could report these incidents without facing further victimization.

Another challenge unique to Ethiopian women journalists is the cultural stigma surrounding women's public visibility. Women in the media often face societal backlash for their outspoken roles, especially when covering politically sensitive or controversial issues. The pressure to maintain traditional gender roles in a country where cultural norms are still deeply ingrained makes it difficult for women journalists to achieve full professional and personal autonomy.

Despite these challenges, women journalists in Ethiopia have made notable contributions to the media sector, especially in advocating for social justice, human rights, and gender equality. Women have become instrumental in shifting public discourse, often challenging patriarchal structures both in media content and within their own organizations. As emphasized by Baye (2015), female journalists have used their platforms to highlight issues such as domestic violence, women's rights, and poverty—topics that have historically been marginalized in Ethiopian media.

Moreover, women journalists are increasingly leveraging digital platforms to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and reach a wider audience. The rise of social media has allowed women journalists to speak directly to the public, challenging dominant narratives and providing a platform for female voices that might otherwise be ignored (Tadele, 2020). This shift has helped

bridge the gap between the mainstream media and the general public, offering women a new avenue for advocacy and activism.

Globally, women in journalism face similar challenges, from gender discrimination to unequal representation in leadership roles (Ross, 2019). However, in countries like Ethiopia, where the media is still developing, these barriers are often compounded by limited resources, press censorship, and political instability (Taye, 2017). Compared to other East African nations, Ethiopia's media industry remains relatively underdeveloped, and its progress toward gender equity in journalism is slower.

However, Ethiopia's experience also reflects broader trends in the Global South, where women journalists are increasingly taking on leadership roles, despite systemic and cultural barriers. In many of these countries, feminist movements within journalism are gaining ground, and female journalists are becoming more vocal in advocating for gender equality, both in the newsroom and in broader society (Steiner & Haste, 2016).

2.2. News

2.2.1. Types of news

Defining "news" seems straightforward, but it's actually quite complex and subject to debate. It's not just simply "information" or "events" its more. News is difficult to classify and put it in different categories. There are debates about the type of news and how they are classified. Some are classified news by their subject matter (focus),others classified by their reporting style(format),based on medium/platforms. In terms of sensitivity of the subject matter news are classified in to two categories. hard and soft news. According to (Irvin 201 3 p41&42). Hard news includes stories of political and international nature, especially stories that were time-sensitive, like the story about a would-be bomber in New York. While soft news included health and feature stories, or stories that could be reported at any time of the week without altering their message.

In the field of communication a number of researchers have been studying For several years on what is often called hard news and soft news. However there is no consensus about what hard and soft news exactly is.The terms have been used to classify both individual news reports and

media formats. Very often, the use of these terms goes along with judgments about the quality of journalism and normative assumptions about media functions in democratic societies (Patterson, 2000; Zaller, 2003).

Despite the relevance of the potential softening of news, many authors comment that hard and soft news are often not clearly defined or not even defined at all. (Reinemann et al). To give an impression of the huge differences in definitions, Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) defined hard and soft news like this:

Hard news items are urgent occurrences that must be reported right away because they become obsolete very quickly. These items are truly 'new'. whereas Soft news items are usually based on nonscheduled events. The reporter or media organization is under no pressure to publish the news at a certain date or time – soft news stories need not be 'timely'. Shoemaker and Cohen (2006)

As we can see above, the classification between hard news and soft news is made only in terms of the topics of the news and the timelines. Whereas according to Patterson (2000) the two terms are distinguished differently.

2.2.1. Hard news

Hard news is typically defined as news that involves events or issues considered critical for the public to know, often with immediate consequences. It is a staple of traditional journalism and usually involves stories such as political developments, criminal events, natural disasters, wars, business crises, and other events of significant impact. According to Galtung and Ruge's (1965) influential work on news values, hard news tends to meet criteria such as timeliness, impact, proximity, and the involvement of prominent people. These values help journalists determine which events are most "newsworthy" and which should be prioritized for coverage.

Hard news is often factual and straight to the point, focusing on the who, what, where, when, why, and how of an event. It is typically structured using the inverted pyramid style, where the most important facts are presented at the beginning of the story, followed by additional details in decreasing order of importance (Breen, 2008). This format ensures that readers or viewers can

understand the core of the news story even if they do not read or watch the entire report. Some Characteristics of Hard News are listed below.

1. **Timeliness:** Hard news deals with events that have occurred recently or are imminent. It focuses on the present, as opposed to in-depth investigative reporting or historical analysis, which are often considered more "soft" in nature.
2. **Significance and Impact:** The event or issue reported in hard news is deemed important because it has a significant impact on the audience. This could be a political development, an economic crisis, a public health issue, or a major natural disaster (Harcup& O'Neill, 2017). Hard news aims to inform the public of events that could directly affect their lives.
3. **Objectivity and Factual Reporting:** Hard news emphasizes impartiality and factuality. The tone of hard news reporting is generally neutral, with journalists striving to present the facts as objectively as possible without personal interpretation or opinion (Schudson, 2003).
4. **Public Relevance:** The issues covered in hard news are often of public concern, such as government policy, societal issues, and events that shape the political or economic landscape (Croteau& Hoynes, 2019). Hard news provides essential information that influences how citizens make decisions, vote, or engage with their communities.
5. **Urgency:** Hard news tends to have a sense of urgency, as the information presented needs to be disseminated quickly for public consumption. This is especially true for breaking news, where the story develops rapidly and requires immediate coverage to inform the public of unfolding events (Breed, 1955).

2.2.2. Soft news

Soft news is characterized by content that is more about human emotions, personal stories, entertainment, and lifestyle rather than hard, factual reporting of political, economic, or conflict-based events. Researchers such as Wanta and Hu (1994) distinguish soft news from hard news by its focus on subjects that do not have an immediate or critical impact on society but instead entertain, inform, or engage audiences on a more personal level. Typical topics of soft news

include celebrity gossip, fashion, health, social media trends, and feel-good stories (Patterson, 2000).

One of the defining characteristics of soft news is its emphasis on storytelling. While hard news is often fact-based and concise, soft news tends to focus on humanizing the subjects of the stories and offering audiences narratives that invoke emotions, such as empathy, joy, or inspiration (Bennett, 2007). As media outlets seek to capture and maintain the attention of their audiences, soft news has become an increasingly important part of their editorial strategies. Characteristics of soft news are listed below

1. **Entertainment and Human Interest Focus:** Soft news stories often focus on individuals, personal stories, or human emotions. They include content such as celebrity gossip, fashion trends, entertainment industry events, and other topics that evoke a personal connection with the audience (Baker, 2011). These stories are generally less formal and appeal to audiences' emotions or curiosity, rather than providing hard facts or analysis.
2. **Subjectivity and Narrative Style:** Soft news is typically characterized by a more subjective approach to storytelling. It often prioritizes storytelling techniques over strict factual reporting, and it is less concerned with objectivity than hard news. The narrative style is usually more relaxed, conversational, and entertaining, which contrasts with the formal, fact-driven style of hard news (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2004).
3. **Broader Audience Appeal:** While hard news targets an audience seeking information on important, immediate issues, soft news aims to capture a wider audience by addressing topics of broad, everyday interest. These stories are often intended to appeal to people from various walks of life and are especially designed to attract viewers or readers who may not be particularly engaged in traditional political or economic news (Patterson, 2000).
4. **Lesser Urgency:** Unlike hard news, which is defined by its immediacy and relevance to current events, soft news typically lacks the same sense of urgency. Stories are not typically breaking news but are rather focused on topics that remain relevant over a longer period, such as lifestyle trends, celebrity profiles, and feature-length articles about personal experiences or emotions (Schudson, 2003).

2.2.2. Women in news

Women have long been underrepresented in positions of power within the journalism industry. Studies consistently show that women make up a significant portion of the journalism workforce but remain largely absent from leadership roles (Ross, 2012; Sreberny et al., 2016). According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2020), women constitute about 40% of the global workforce in newsrooms but hold only around 20% of the decision-making positions. The underrepresentation of women in editorial and senior roles results in the marginalization of women's voices and perspectives in the media, both in content production and organizational decision-making.

The imbalance in representation has led to questions about how newsroom culture and editorial decisions are shaped by gender. Numerous studies highlight the influence of patriarchal structures in newsrooms, where male journalists often dominate editorial direction and selection of stories (Lauzen, 2018). This gendered disparity in newsroom roles can have a profound effect on the stories that are covered, the framing of issues, and the visibility of women in the media.

Women's representation in news is not only limited by their low participation in newsrooms but also by the way they are portrayed in media content. Research consistently shows that women are often depicted in traditional and stereotypical roles, which reinforce gender inequalities (Gallagher, 2001; Tuchman, 1978). For example, women are more frequently shown in passive or decorative roles, as victims of violence or as subjects of human interest stories, such as fashion, beauty, or family matters (Lauzen et al., 2017). They are less likely to be portrayed as experts, political figures, or leaders in their fields compared to their male counterparts (Ross, 2012).

Studies also point to the tendency of the media to focus on women's appearances and personal lives, especially when reporting on public figures. For instance, female politicians are more likely to be covered in terms of their appearance or emotional responses, whereas male politicians are typically portrayed in terms of their achievements or political stance (Khalid,

2020). This type of representation not only limits the scope of women's roles in news coverage but also reinforces traditional gender norms and reduces the complexity of women's identities.

The framing of news is another critical area where gender inequalities emerge. Research on news content frequently highlights the gendered nature of news coverage. Women are often associated with "soft" news, such as lifestyle, entertainment, and human interest stories, while "hard" news—political, economic, and war-related content—is typically dominated by male sources and perspectives (Lauzen et al., 2017). The gendering of news content contributes to the marginalization of women's voices in key areas, such as politics, business, and public policy, which are generally considered to be of greater social importance.

This division is not only a product of editorial choices but also a reflection of societal norms that place women in specific roles, often limiting their agency in public life. For instance, research shows that while women may be equally engaged in social or political activism, they are underrepresented in the media's coverage of such activities (Tuchman, 1978). As a result, women's contributions to public discourse are often framed in terms of their roles as caregivers, nurturers, or emotional beings, rather than as decision-makers, thinkers, and leaders.

Women journalists face a variety of challenges in their careers, many of which are linked to gendered expectations within the newsroom and the broader media landscape. One of the primary obstacles for women in journalism is the prevalence of sexism and gender discrimination. Studies by Lichter et al. (2009) and Ross (2012) suggest that women in the media industry experience gendered biases, both in terms of salary disparities and the unequal distribution of opportunities for career advancement. Female journalists are more likely to face obstacles when seeking promotions, particularly in leadership positions, and are often expected to fulfill additional roles within the newsroom, such as administrative or "nurturing" tasks.

Sexual harassment is another significant barrier for women journalists, with many reporting that their work environments are hostile or unsafe. Research by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ, 2020) documents the prevalence of harassment, including unwanted sexual advances and intimidation, which is often compounded by the pressure to meet gendered expectations of femininity in the workplace.

Moreover, women journalists face difficulty in balancing personal and professional lives, particularly when they are expected to adhere to the demands of high-pressure newsrooms while also fulfilling traditional family responsibilities. Gendered expectations regarding motherhood and caregiving further complicate women's ability to advance in their careers (Rabe, 2013).

Despite the many challenges faced by women in the media, they have made significant contributions to the field, especially in reshaping the way gender is represented in news. Many women journalists have been instrumental in advocating for gender equality, both in the newsroom and in the content they produce. Female journalists have brought new perspectives and a focus on issues like domestic violence, reproductive rights, and gender-based discrimination, helping to diversify the scope of media coverage (Gallagher, 2001).

In the digital era, women are also playing an increasingly influential role in online journalism, where the boundaries between traditional journalism and user-generated content are more fluid. Women have used digital platforms to amplify their voices and to address issues that are often overlooked by mainstream media, such as gender equality, sexual harassment, and women's political participation. The rise of feminist journalism and women-led media outlets has given more prominence to women's issues, while also challenging traditional news norms (Miller, 2016).

Women journalists are also breaking new ground by challenging patriarchal structures within the newsroom. By advocating for editorial changes, women are pushing for greater inclusivity and diversity in media coverage. Female leaders in newsrooms are helping to reshape editorial policies, ensuring that women's voices are heard and that gender equality is prioritized in reporting and content production (Tuchman, 1978).

In conclusion the representation of women in news media is a multifaceted issue that encompasses both structural inequalities within newsrooms and the gendered portrayal of women in media content. While women have made significant strides in journalism, the challenges they face—including gender discrimination, unequal opportunities, and limited visibility in news coverage—persist. Despite these obstacles, women journalists are making important contributions to the field, helping to shift the discourse around gender, amplify marginalized

voices, and advocate for greater inclusivity in media content. For true progress to be made, there is a need for ongoing efforts to address gender-based disparities in newsrooms and to ensure that women's voices are given equal weight in the production of news.

2.3. The professional status of women in media

The role of female journalists in public media has evolved significantly, reflecting broader societal changes regarding gender rights and equality. Research indicates that female journalists play a crucial role in shaping narratives and advocating for gender rights, often serving as catalysts for change within media organizations and society at large. Historically, female journalists have been underrepresented in media, particularly in leadership roles, which can limit the diversity of perspectives presented in news coverage. Smith et al. (2016) highlight that female journalists bring unique insights and experiences that enrich public discourse; however, they often face barriers to equal participation in media decision-making processes, which can perpetuate stereotypes and undermine the media's role in promoting gender equality.

Female journalists also take on advocacy roles, using their platforms to address issues related to gender rights. According to Fuchs and Hachmeister (2019), many female journalists prioritize gender issues in their reporting, thereby contributing to social movements and raising awareness about gender-based violence, inequality, and discrimination. Their work is pivotal in challenging patriarchal narratives and emphasizing the importance of gender rights in public discourse.

Despite their contributions, female journalists encounter significant challenges in the media landscape. Gant and Gentry (2021) note that they frequently experience sexism, harassment, and a lack of mentorship opportunities, which can lead to high attrition rates among women in journalism. This limits the potential for long-term impact on gender representation and rights within the industry. Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender with other social identities, such as race and class, significantly influences the experiences of female journalists. Zamudio-Suárez (2020) emphasizes that women of color often face compounded discrimination, which affects their opportunities and the representation of diverse voices in media. This intersectional approach highlights the need for inclusive practices that recognize the varied experiences of female journalists.

The representation and roles of female journalists in public media have significant implications for policy and practice within the industry. Ross (2010) argues that promoting gender equality in journalism requires institutional changes, including policies that support work-life balance, mentorship programs, and equitable hiring practices. By addressing these structural issues, media organizations can enhance the role of female journalists in advocating for gender rights.

In conclusion, the literature underscores the critical role of female journalists in public media as advocates for gender rights and as essential voices in shaping public narratives. Despite facing numerous challenges, their contributions are vital for promoting gender equality and enriching media representation. Ongoing research and advocacy are necessary to address the barriers they encounter and to create a more equitable media landscape.

2.3.1 Female journalists' role in public media

Female journalists play a vital role in shaping narratives and influencing public discourse, significantly contributing to the diversity and balance of media coverage. According to Smith et al. (2018), increased visibility of female journalists in newsrooms leads to richer media narratives that promote gender equality. Many female journalists leverage their platforms to advocate for gender rights, addressing issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination. Fuchs and Hachmeister (2019) highlight that these journalists not only report on gender issues but actively engage in advocacy, thereby contributing to social movements and raising awareness about injustices.

Despite their contributions, female journalists often encounter significant challenges, including sexism and workplace discrimination. Gant and Gentry (2021) found that many women in journalism experience harassment and a lack of mentorship opportunities, which can hinder their career advancement and limit their ability to contribute effectively in public media. Furthermore, the experiences of female journalists are complicated by intersectionality, as factors such as race and socioeconomic status can influence their representation and opportunities. Zamudio-Suárez (2020) emphasizes those women of color face unique challenges that must be addressed to create a more equitable media landscape.

The implications of these dynamics extend to policy and media practices, as the role of female journalists is crucial for fostering gender equality in journalism. Ross (2010) argues that media

organizations need to implement policies that support equitable hiring practices and create supportive workplace environments, which are essential for enhancing the contributions of female journalists in public discourse.

In conclusion, the literature underscores the critical role of female journalists in public media as advocates for gender issues and as essential voices in shaping public narratives. Continued research and advocacy are necessary to address the barriers they face and to promote a more inclusive media environment.

2.3.2 The Broadcasting Industry

The broadcasting industry has long grappled with matters of gender representation, particularly in newsrooms, where female journalists are often underrepresented in key reporting roles. Research by Cokley et al. (2019) highlights that gender biases in assignment practices frequently sideline women from hard news stories, perpetuating stereotypes about their capabilities in journalism. Tuchman (1978) argues that this "symbolic annihilation" of women in media reflects broader societal attitudes, often relegating female journalists to softer news topics, which undermines their credibility and reinforces traditional gender roles.

Furthermore, female journalists encounter systemic barriers that limit their assignments to specific beats, such as lifestyle or entertainment. Djerf-Pierre and Löfgren-Nilsson (2014) explore how newsroom cultures can influence assignment decisions, often disadvantaging women even in organizations striving for gender equality. Their findings suggest that implicit biases can affect which journalists are selected to cover critical news events.

The implementation of organizational policies promoting gender impartiality is crucial for addressing these disparities. Ross (2010) indicates that media organizations that adopt gender-sensitive policies are more likely to provide equal opportunities for female journalists in covering a diverse range of news topics. Such policies, which encourage mentorship and professional development for women, can significantly impact their assignment to important stories.

Case studies focusing on specific contexts, such as those examining Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom, provide valuable insights into local dynamics. Kumar and Aidoo (2019)

highlight how cultural factors and institutional practices influence the assignment of female journalists in Ethiopian media, underscoring the need for localized studies that consider the unique challenges faced by women in the region.

The literature illustrates that the assignment of female journalists in broadcasting is influenced by a combination of gender representation issues, cultural factors, and organizational policies. Understanding these dynamics, particularly within specific contexts like Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom, is essential for promoting gender equity in news coverage. Continued research is necessary to address these challenges and foster a more inclusive broadcasting environment.

2.3.3. Radio

The assignment of female journalists in newsrooms is significantly influenced by gender biases and cultural norms. Cokley et al. (2019) highlight how these biases often restrict women from accessing hard news stories, while Djerf-Pierre and Löfgren-Nilsson (2014) emphasize that entrenched stereotypes limit women's roles in critical reporting. Additionally, Zamudio-Suárez (2020) explores the impact of intersectionality, noting that women of color face unique challenges in their assignments. Ross (2010) argues that organizational policies play a crucial role in promoting gender equity, with gender-sensitive practices leading to more equal opportunities for female journalists. In the Ethiopian context, Kumar and Aidoo (2019) examine the cultural and institutional factors affecting female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom, illustrating how these dynamics shape their experiences. Lastly, Gant and Gentry (2021) investigate the prevalence of sexism and harassment in newsrooms, which further complicates the assignment landscape for female journalists.

2.3.4 Television

The assignment of female journalists in television news often reflects significant challenges related to representation and gender bias. Kearney (2018) highlights that women are frequently assigned to soft news segments, which limits their visibility and professional advancement compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, Meyer (2019) discusses how cultural norms within television news organizations often relegate female journalists to roles that reinforce

traditional gender stereotypes, impacting their career trajectories and the narratives presented in news coverage.

Morrison (2020) emphasizes the importance of intersectionality, noting that female journalists of different backgrounds face distinct challenges that influence their assignments and roles within newsrooms. In this context, Thompson (2021) argues that the implementation of gender-sensitive policies can enhance assignment opportunities for female journalists, highlighting the need for effective mentorship and professional development programs.

Focusing on Ethiopian media, Aklilu (2020) examines the experiences of female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom, revealing how local cultural factors and organizational structures affect gender representation in news coverage. Additionally, Holliday and Mackay (2017) explore the pervasive issues of sexism and harassment that female journalists encounter in television, which can hinder their assignments and overall professional growth.

Despite these contributions, the status and working conditions of female journalists in Ethiopia have not been thoroughly studied. Beyond numerical participation, it is essential to understand the practical challenges and root causes of the issues faced by female journalists in the Ethiopian media environment. Therefore, this research seeks to address this gap by systematically examining the current conditions and experiences of female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporation.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study drew on feminist media theory, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis to investigate the gendered dynamics of news assignments at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) in Ethiopia. By applying these frameworks, the study aimed to explore how gender biases shaped the types of news stories assigned to female journalists and how such biases influenced the broader representation of women in the media.

2.4.1 Feminist Media Theory

Feminist media theory provided a critical lens for understanding how gender influenced media production, representation, and consumption. Scholars had long critiqued the gendered division between "hard" and "soft" news. As Poindexter and Harp (2008) argued, women in journalism are disproportionately assigned to soft news or feature stories, while men are more often assigned hard news, reinforcing the gendered hierarchy of news coverage (p. 94). This division reflected broader societal attitudes about gender, where hard news—typically political, economic, or foreign affairs—was seen as more authoritative and aligned with masculinity, while soft news, often centered around lifestyle, health, or human interest topics, was feminized and less valued.

Mills (1988) expanded on this idea by noting that the language of news was itself gendered. She stated, the language of journalism is imbued with sexual connotations: 'hard news' has clear associations with masculinity, while the more 'gentle' or 'soft' stories are viewed as more appropriate for women (p. 110). Similarly, Lumby (1994) illustrated how masculine language in newsrooms worked to reinforce these gendered divisions. She wrote, "In newsrooms, the 'hard' news is typically masculine, aggressive, and authoritative, whereas the softer genres are more nurturing, relating to personal issues or human interest, deemed more appropriate for female reporters" (p. 50).

More recently, scholars like Ross and Byerly (2021) emphasized how such gendered patterns persisted in contemporary newsrooms. They noted, the gendering of hard and soft news continued to limit women's professional opportunities, as they were frequently excluded from the prestigious and powerful narratives of global politics or economic reporting (p. 188).

Feminist media theory emerged in the 1970s and has since evolved to examine various aspects of gender, power, and representation in the media. Key concepts in feminist media theory include the social construction of gender, media representation, and the role of the media in reinforcing or challenging patriarchal norms.

Patriarchy and Gendered Power Dynamics: A central tenet of feminist media theory is the critique of patriarchy—the social, cultural, and political systems that prioritize male power. Feminists argue that media organizations, like many other institutions, are shaped by patriarchal structures that affect the treatment of female journalists, including the assignment of stories. Tuchman's (1978) "symbolic annihilation" theory, for example, argues that women are underrepresented or misrepresented in the media, which reflects broader societal power imbalances.

The "male gaze" provides another essential theoretical tool for understanding media practices. The "male gaze," introduced by Laura Mulvey (1975), posits that visual media predominantly depicts women from a heterosexual male perspective, objectifying them as passive spectacles. Rooted in psychoanalysis, it describes how cinematic techniques align camera, character, and spectator gazes to reinforce patriarchal power. Beyond film, this gaze is prevalent in advertising, TV, and video games, where women are often sexualized, normalizing objectification and influencing self-perception (Gibson & Rosemary, 2000; Wotherspoon, 2024). While critiqued for its universality, the concept has evolved to include the "internalized male gaze." Nonetheless, it remains a vital framework for analyzing gender representation and power in media.

While Mulvey's original focus was on film, the idea that media is often produced from a male perspective can be extended to news coverage and journalism. Female journalists are often marginalized or assigned to specific topics that are deemed "appropriate" for women, such as soft news, lifestyle, or human interest stories, while more hard-hitting, high-profile topics like politics or economics are typically dominated by male journalists (Gallagher, 2001).

Intersectionality: Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality is also vital to feminist media theory, particularly in understanding how gender interacts with other social categories such as race, class, and sexuality. Female journalists are not a homogeneous group, and their

experiences within the newsroom can differ widely depending on their race, class, and other identity factors. For instance, women of color may face even greater barriers to career advancement and may be excluded from high-profile assignments in more pronounced ways than white women journalists (Thornham, 2009).

2.4.2 Gender and Media Representation

Theories of gender representation in the media sought to understand how media portrayed and reinforced societal understandings of gender roles. This theoretical lens highlighted how media content was shaped by the gendered labor division within newsrooms and how such representations influenced public perceptions of gender. Scholars like Tuchman (1978) had argued that women's representation in the news was often limited to certain roles, such as being depicted in relation to family, health, or beauty. More recently, McLaughlin and Muncie (2019) argued that gender stereotypes in news reporting continued to be reinforced through both explicit and implicit editorial decisions. They stated, "Women's voices were often relegated to soft news areas, while men continued to dominate the hard news space, reinforcing outdated gendered norms about expertise and authority" (p. 64).

In the Ethiopian context, Abebe (2020) discussed how female journalists faced similar patterns of marginalization. She wrote, The gendered assignment of news stories, particularly in government-affiliated media organizations like FBC, tended to concentrate women in areas considered less prestigious, such as lifestyle or entertainment reporting, thus limiting their professional advancement (p. 37). Assefa (2019) also emphasized this point, noting, The underrepresentation of women in hard news coverage in Ethiopia's mainstream media was part of a broader global trend, but it was also influenced by local cultural and institutional factors that prioritized male-dominated perspectives (p. 53).

2.4.3 Intersectionality

An intersectional approach was essential for understanding how gendered dynamics in media organizations were further complicated by other social identities, such as class, ethnicity, and age. Building on Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality, it was crucial to

examine how female journalists' experiences at FBC were shaped not only by gender but also by Ethiopian cultural and ethnic contexts. Intersectionality recognized that the ways in which gender inequality played out in newsrooms were not monolithic and could be exacerbated or mitigated by factors such as ethnicity, class, or age.

As Collins (2015) argued, the intersectional lens provided a more comprehensive understanding of how women's experiences in media organizations differed across social groups, allowing for a deeper analysis of the complexities women faced within the newsroom (p. 154).

2.4.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offered a tool for examining how language reflected and reinforced societal power relations, including gendered power structures. Fairclough (1995) explained that discourse did not simply reflect reality but actively shaped and constructed it. By analyzing the language of newsrooms, CDA enabled an understanding of how gendered assumptions were embedded in editorial practices, including the types of stories that were considered "appropriate" for female journalists.

As van Dijk (2001) noted, discourse analysis could reveal how power was maintained and contested in communication, and how gendered stereotypes in media discourse reflected the unequal distribution of power between men and women in the newsroom (p. 105).

2.4.5 Fana Broadcasting Corporate Evolution and Cultural Influence

Cultural studies of journalism provide essential insights into how media act as sites of ideological and cultural production. News organizations, as integral components of a larger cultural system, contribute to the construction and reinforcement of dominant ideologies, including gender norms. In a government-affiliated media organization like Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), state-sponsored ideologies, including those related to gender, can significantly shape how news assignments are made and how stories are framed. As Gitlin (2003) argued, journalistic practices are never neutral; they reflect the cultural and political climate of the society in which they operate (p. 19). This perspective is crucial for understanding how FBC, a state-owned media institution, navigates the political and cultural contexts in which it operates,

particularly with regard to the representation of gender and other cultural issues in its programming.

Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) began its operations in 1994 with limited resources, including outdated equipment and a small staff. Despite these initial challenges, FBC introduced a pioneering and innovative approach to Ethiopia's broadcast media industry. Over the years, FBC has made significant progress, improving its organizational structure, program content, and addressing operational challenges. The organization is well-known for its community-centered programs and its commitment to improving the political and socio-economic welfare of Ethiopian society. As a result, FBC has gained substantial popularity, attracting a wide audience and forming strategic partnerships across its television, radio, and online platforms.

FBC has played a key role in the evolution of Ethiopia's media landscape, particularly through its educational, informational, and entertainment offerings. The organization has achieved this transformation by investing in skilled personnel and cutting-edge technologies. With extensive experience in radio and online media, FBC constructed its own 11-story media complex, establishing itself as one of Ethiopia's leading media houses and working towards becoming a prominent media organization in East Africa.

A significant milestone in FBC's development was the establishment of a full HD studio within its media complex, making it the first Ethiopian media house to offer full HD television transmission. After several months of test broadcasts, FBC began full-capacity transmission in January 2017, an event marked by an inauguration ceremony led by former President Dr. MulatuTeshome.

In terms of online media, FBC has invested in the necessary personnel and tools to produce diverse content across multiple platforms, including its website, Facebook, and Twitter. The organization broadcasts in Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, and English, providing a variety of content, including photos, videos, and audio. Currently, FBC reaches an average of over 6 million viewers per week, further solidifying its influence in Ethiopia's media landscape.

In radio broadcasting, FBC operates its national station and Fana FM 98.1, in addition to establishing a network of FM stations in 11 regional cities outside Addis Ababa. These stations,

all equipped with the latest radio technologies and staffed with trained personnel, broadcast in a range of languages, including Amharic, Afan Oromo, Afarigna, Somaligan, Tigrigna, Wolaitigna, and Sidamigna. This rapid expansion has significantly enhanced FBC's presence across the nation.

Beyond its broadcasting services, FBC is committed to the development of media professionals and the broader media industry. The organization has established a technology, journalism, and communication training center, offering essential training and counseling services. Currently, FBC employs a dedicated workforce of 1,000 staff members, all contributing to its ongoing success and growth.

2.5. Editorial Policy of Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC)

Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) adheres to an editorial policy that emphasizes responsibility, integrity, and balance in its media coverage. This policy serves as a guiding framework for FBC's approach to reporting and content creation, ensuring the organization operates within ethical boundaries while prioritizing the public interest.

Key features of FBC's editorial policy include:

1. **Objectivity and Accuracy:** FBC is dedicated to providing accurate, well-researched, and factual information in all of its broadcasts, including news reports, analysis, and commentary. The organization tries to maintain objectivity and impartiality, ensuring that a variety of perspectives are represented fairly.
2. **Public Interest:** FBC places a strong emphasis on serving the public interest by prioritizing content that is relevant to Ethiopia's social, political, and economic development. The organization's programming is designed to inform, educate, and empower the public on key issues impacting the nation.
3. **Diversity and Inclusivity:** FBC promotes diversity and inclusivity by reflecting Ethiopia's rich cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in its content. The organization ensures equitable representation across its programming, providing a platform for a wide range of voices from different communities.

4. **Independence and Freedom:** FBC maintains editorial independence, ensuring that its coverage is free from political, commercial, or external influence. The organization upholds press freedom and provides a space for open dialogue and diverse viewpoints.
5. **Ethical Standards:** FBC adheres to high ethical standards in its journalistic practices, avoiding sensationalism, bias, and misinformation. The organization is committed to respecting the rights and dignity of individuals and takes steps to prevent harm or discrimination in its reporting.

Through its editorial policy, FBC aims to produce reliable, engaging, and relevant media content that serves the public interest. By doing so, FBC contributes to a more informed and engaged society, while reflecting the cultural and ideological climate of Ethiopia.

2.6.1 National and Institutional Context of Media Policies in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's media environment, especially in state-run outlets like FBC, has undergone significant changes over the past few decades. The government plays a substantial role in regulating media content, which affects the representation of gender in the news and the assignments given to journalists.

- Ethiopian state-owned media, including FBC, often reflect the policies and values of the government, which can influence how gender issues are approached. Female journalists in state-run media outlets may face traditional gender stereotypes and biases, both in the content they produce and in the assignments they receive. According to *Teshome (2014)*, media institutions in Ethiopia, including state-controlled outlets, have generally been slow to implement policies that promote gender equality, often limiting women to roles in softer news areas like culture, health, and lifestyle.
- The Ethiopian government has made commitments to gender equality, and this is reflected in various national policies, including the *National Policy on Women (1993)* and the *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995)*, which advocate for equal rights and opportunities for women across all sectors, including media. However, studies by *Tsegaye (2018)* suggest that while these policies are aspirational,

their implementation within media organizations, particularly in terms of leadership and decision-making, remains limited.

2.6.2 International Standards and Influences

FBC's media policies on gender representation may also be influenced by international frameworks that promote gender equality in the media. The United Nations' Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and UNESCO's gender equality in media guidelines encourage media organizations worldwide to improve women's representation both in front of and behind the camera. These international standards push for the implementation of gender-sensitive editorial practices and equitable newsroom policies.

- **Gender Equality in Journalism Training:** The UNESCO recommendation for gender-sensitive media content suggests that media organizations should provide training for journalists to recognize and avoid gender bias in their reporting. FBC, as a prominent media outlet, may have implemented some of these training programs for its journalists. However, scholars such as *Eid & El-Shinnawy (2013)* suggest that media organizations in Ethiopia, including FBC, may need to further develop gender-sensitivity programs to ensure that both male and female journalists are trained to recognize and address gender inequality in their reporting.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this research to examine the assignment of female journalists for news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). It provides a detailed description of the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and data analysis procedures. The aim of this chapter is to ensure transparency in the research process and offer a clear understanding of how the study was conducted. The methodology is designed to explore the influence of gender on news assignments, assess the challenges female journalists face, and analyze the impact of these assignments on their career progression at FBC.

1.2. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach, which is operationalized through a convergent parallel research design. This design systematically combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to gather a comprehensive understanding of the assignment of female journalists at FBC. The mixed-methods approach, and specifically this convergent design, allows for the triangulation of data from different sources and perspectives, thereby providing deeper insights into the gender dynamics within the newsroom.

Given the descriptive nature of the research, qualitative data were primarily gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). These methods allowed for the collection of comprehensive insights that quantitative methods alone might not capture. As MacDonald and Headlam (n.d.) note, FGDs are a flexible tool capable of producing both qualitative and quantitative information, depending on their structure and analysis.

To complement the qualitative findings, a quantitative aspect was incorporated through questionnaire surveys. Questionnaires offer advantages such as cost-effectiveness and ease of data compilation due to standardized answers, making them efficient for gathering broad data (Sajjad, 2016, p. 9). However, it is also acknowledged that, like other opinion polls,

questionnaires can present challenges related to question construction and wording (Sajjad, 2016, p. 9).

This mixed-method approach enhanced the overall robustness of the research findings, allowing for a more holistic view of the dynamics within news production. A mixed-methods design offers numerous benefits for addressing complex research issues, as it integrates philosophical frameworks from both post-positivism and interpretivism (Fetters, 2016). By interweaving qualitative and quantitative data, research issues can be meaningfully explained, offering a logical foundation, methodological flexibility, and an in-depth understanding of specific cases (Maxwell, 2016). In essence, using mixed methods enables researchers to answer research questions with sufficient depth and breadth (Enosh, Tzafrir, & Stolovy, 2014).

3.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The targeted research department of FBC is the Amharic news department. Fbc formerly called radio fana began its operations in 1994 with limited resources, including outdated equipment and a small staff. Despite these initial challenges, FBC introduced a pioneering and innovative approach to Ethiopia's broadcast media industry. September 2017 the television started streaming. Over the years, FBC has made significant progress, improving its organizational structure, program content, and addressing operational challenges. The organization has got a reputation for its community-centered programs and its commitment to improving the political and socio-economic welfare of Ethiopian society. Serving in different local and international languages fbc has different kinds of news format both in radio and tv. For television zetena dekika aired twice a day morning and night transmitted every day except Sunday which consists political news, entertainments, social and human touch stories are covered. There is also a news aired 6:00 local time which urgent local and international issues covered. Both news are prime time for the company

For the radio station there are 5 news formats. The morning short news, zetenadekika, yeken zenametsihet, 120 dekika (metohaya dekika) and Yemishit zenametsihet.

This study focused on all female journalists employed in radio and television at Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) newsroom as the sample population. Female and male

journalists who met the selection criteria were invited to complete a self-administered questionnaire. This research used purposive sampling technique.

Female journalists who have worked at FBC for at least one year has been selected for in-depth interviews and FGDs. This purposive sample ensures that the participants have enough experience within the organization to provide valuable insights into the assignment process and challenges faced by women in the newsroom.

"Purposive sampling is recruiting specified types of people because they have characteristics of interest to the theoretical concerns of the researcher" Howitt& Cramer (2014, p.271).

A total of 67 journalists were identified as currently working at the institution, of which 31 purposively selected because they have the same experience and level of education. The data collected from these questionnaires were subsequently analyzed

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments included in-depth interviews, conducted with 7 senior female journalists to gather detailed narratives about their knowledge in news production. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to share insights freely, allowing for the appearance of themes and patterns. There are different ways to record interviews including paper-based, self-reports, and tape-record interviews, etc. It can be also noted that they are useful to gain both qualitative and quantitative data using open-ended and close-ended questions. Researchers rely on interviews, generally, when they face complex or sensitive concepts and need detailed and high-status information (Frechtling, 2002).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): This in-depth field method gathers a group of individuals, normally between 6-12 people in each group, commonly with a shared Address Entry Requirements Such as Suitable Appearance Introduce yourself and the Organization for Maximum 20-30 sec Explain the Concept of Study Ask the Provided Questions by the Order Given Reach Enough Responses and Record Them Conclude the Interview and Thank the Participants Data Collection Methods and Tools for Research; A Step-by-Step Guide to Choose Data Collection Technique for Academic and Business Research Projects Hamed Taherdoost www.elvedit.com 21 characteristic such as sex, age, and educational status to discuss a specific

study field. The mediators aim to stimulate and discover the behavior of the participants and the reasons of each behavior using social dynamic of the group (Frechtling, 2002) (Kabir, 2016). Groups of 7 female journalists who have at least one year experience at fana broadcasting corporate were also brought together to discuss their collective experiences and perceptions. They have been discussed on the issue for 52 minutes. This interactive format fostered rich discussions and revealed shared challenges or insights that might not surface in one-on-one interviews. 7 senior journalists with at least three years of experience have been purposively selected for in-depth interview

Questionnaire Surveys: A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data on participants' demographic characteristics and their views on newsroom practices and gender dynamics. This facilitated statistical analysis and provided a broader context for the qualitative findings. 31 journalists (16 male , 15 female) have been selected based on their experience(more than 1 year experience at FBC) to fill the questioner

To ensure the internal consistency and reliability of the Likert-scale questions used in the survey, Cronbach's alpha (α) was employed. This statistical measure assesses how closely related a set of items are as a group, indicating their reliability as a scale. A higher Cronbach's alpha value suggests greater consistency among the survey items, meaning they are likely measuring the same underlying construct.

The interpretation of the calculated Cronbach's alpha values for this study followed established guidelines:

- $\alpha \geq 0.9$: **Excellent** reliability, indicating a very strong internal consistency among the items.
- $0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$: **Good** reliability, suggesting a strong and acceptable level of internal consistency.
- $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$: **Acceptable** reliability, meaning the scale is generally consistent but might benefit from minor refinement.
- $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$: **Questionable** reliability, indicating that the internal consistency is weak and the scale's items might not be measuring the same construct effectively.

- $\alpha < 0.6$: **Poor** reliability, suggesting that the scale is not internally consistent and the items are likely measuring disparate concepts.

By conducting this reliability analysis, we aimed to confirm the consistency and trustworthiness of the quantitative data gathered from the Likert-scale questions, ensuring that the insights derived from them were dependable.

In addition to the structured Likert-scale questions, the questionnaires also incorporated 8 open-ended questions within their qualitative sections. The purpose of these open-ended questions was to go beyond the fixed response options of the Likert scale and gather richer, more nuanced, and deeper insights from the participants. This allowed respondents to express their perspectives, elaborate on their experiences, and provide context in their own words, uncovering themes and patterns that might not have been apparent through quantitative measures alone. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive understanding by combining measurable data with detailed, personal narratives.

3.5. Procedures of Data Collection

Data collection was systematically organized around a defined timeline, focusing on a one-year bulletin of news that typically aired during primetime on FBC. This timeframe ensured the study seized a relevant and inclusive sample of news coverage. The research specifically analyzed bulletin or short news segments, as these were key areas where hard news was produced and disseminated. The data collection process was carefully documented to uphold ethical considerations, particularly regarding participant confidentiality and informed consent.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data analysis is the process of converting gathered data into meaningful information, employing various techniques to identify trends, relationships, and draw conclusions (Start, 2006). Prior to analysis, data preparation was conducted to convert raw data into a numerical format suitable for specific analytical programs such as SAS or SPSS (Taherdoost, 2020, p. 9).

Qualitative Analysis: The qualitative data, primarily derived from in-depth interviews with senior female journalists, along with insights from focus group discussions, were meticulously transcribed verbatim. These transcripts formed the basis for a rigorous thematic analysis, a widely recognized method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The process involved several systematic steps:

1. **Familiarization:** The researcher began by repeatedly reading through all the transcribed data to gain a comprehensive understanding and immerse themselves in the participants' narratives.
2. **Initial Coding:** This involved generating initial codes from the data, identifying interesting features of the data that were relevant to the research questions. Each of the respondents for in-depth interview was coded as **sj1, sj2, sj3, sj4, sj5, sj6, sj7**. These codes were applied systematically across the entire dataset.
3. **Searching for Themes:** The initial codes were then reviewed and grouped into broader, overarching themes that captured significant patterns of meaning within the data. This stage involved identifying connections and relationships between different codes.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** The identified themes were critically reviewed against the entire dataset to ensure they accurately reflected the meanings expressed by the participants and that the themes were distinct and coherent.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Each theme was then clearly defined and given a concise name, accompanied by a detailed description of what it represented and how it contributed to understanding the phenomenon under study. This involved identifying the "essence" of each theme.
6. **Writing Up:** Finally, the themes were presented in a coherent narrative, supported by illustrative quotes from the interviews and discussions.

This systematic approach to coding and theme development allowed the study to identify recurring patterns, significant insights, and nuanced perspectives related to the dimensions of gender dynamics, challenges, and opportunities within the FBC newsroom. The aim was to uncover the underlying meanings and lived experiences that quantitative data alone might not fully reveal.

The FGDs were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to understand the collective perceptions and shared experiences of female journalists at FBC.

1. **Familiarization:** Transcripts of the discussions were thoroughly read and re-read to grasp the overall content and recurring ideas.
2. **Coding:** Key phrases and ideas from the journalists' statements were identified and given descriptive codes (e.g., "gendered assignments," "safety concerns," "motherhood challenges").
3. **Theming:** These codes were then grouped into broader, overarching themes, such as "Perceived Barriers to Hard News" or "Impact of Gender Stereotypes," reflecting the dominant shared experiences.
4. **Interpretation:** For each theme, the analysis focused on interpreting what the collective insights meant, highlighting underlying reasons (like societal norms or implicit biases) and their impact on the journalists' careers.
5. **Reporting:** The findings were then presented thematically, using selected quotes and paraphrased collective sentiments to illustrate and support each theme, as you see in the provided sections.

Quantitative Analysis: The questionnaire data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This software was employed to calculate correlations and other statistical measures, particularly useful when analyzing relationships among multiple variables (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' demographics and key variables, as well as inferential statistics to explore relationships between these variables. The integration of quantitative findings allowed for a clearer understanding of trends and patterns within the broader context provided by the qualitative data.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research on the assignment of female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate, several ethical considerations were prioritized to ensure the integrity of the study and the respect of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their data was anonymized to protect privacy. The study was carried out with sensitivity, ensuring that

gender stereotypes were not reinforced and that female journalists were not stigmatized. Privacy was strictly maintained, particularly when deliberating cases of gender bias, and no individuals were identified without clear consent.

Empathy and respect were central to the data collection process, creating a safe space for participants to share their knowledge. Additionally, the research considered the cultural situation of gender roles within the Ethiopian media landscape, ensuring that the findings were both accurate and respectful of local standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the research on the assignment of female journalists for news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaire surveys. The chapter is systematically divided into sections that address the main research questions and objectives, including gendered assignment patterns, the challenges faced by female journalists, and the overall impact on their career development and job satisfaction. The results will be presented through both quantitative and qualitative lenses, offering a comprehensive and triangulated view of the current state of gender dynamics in the newsroom at FBC.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

This section details the demographic characteristics of the journalists who participated in the quantitative survey, providing essential context for the findings.

4.2.1 Overall Gender Distribution at FBC

Prior to the survey, an assessment of the total journalist workforce at Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) revealed a notable gender distribution. FBC employs 41 male journalists and 26 female journalists. This results in a female-to-male ratio of approximately 38.8% for female journalists and 61.2% for male journalists within the overall workforce. This ratio indicates a significant gender disparity, underscoring the underrepresentation of female journalists within the organization. Addressing this imbalance is crucial for fostering diversity and promoting a more inclusive and balanced approach to media coverage.

4.2.2 Gender Distribution of Survey Participants

The questionnaire survey was completed by 31 journalists. Their gender distribution is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Survey Participants (N=31)

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	15	48.4	48.4	48.4
Female	16	51.6	51.6	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 1, among the 31 journalists who participated in the survey, 16 (51.6%) were female, and 15 (48.4%) were male. This specific distribution within the survey sample differs from the overall FBC workforce ratio mentioned above, reflecting the purposive sampling strategy that aimed to ensure adequate representation of female journalists for the study's focus on gender dynamics.

4.2.3 Educational Level of Survey Participants

The educational qualifications of the 31 survey participants are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Educational Level of Survey Participants (N=31)

Educational level	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Associate degree	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
Bachelor degree	17	54.8	54.8	64.5
Masters degree	11	35.5	35.5	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 reveals that a significant proportion of the surveyed journalists at FBC hold higher education degrees. Specifically, 17 journalists (54.8%) possess a Bachelor's degree, and 11

journalists (35.5%) hold a Master's degree. Cumulatively, this means that 64.5% of the surveyed journalists have at least a Bachelor's degree or higher. This indicates a well-educated workforce within the surveyed sample at FBC, equipped with substantial academic qualifications relevant to the media industry. This strong educational background is foundational for success in the competitive media landscape, equipping journalists with necessary skills and knowledge.

4.3 Quantitative Findings on News Assignment and Dynamics

This section presents the quantitative findings from the questionnaire surveys, exploring perceptions related to news assignments, types of stories covered, and sourcing practices.

4.3.1 Perceived Influence of Gender Stereotypes on Hard News Coverage

Figure 1 illustrates the extent to which surveyed journalists believe gender stereotypes influence the types of news stories assigned to female journalists, specifically regarding hard news topics.

Figure 1: To what extent do you, as a female journalist, cover hard news topics such as politics, crime, or investigative stories? (N=31)

Response	frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	8	25.8	25.8	25.8
Agree	8	25.8	25.8	51.6
neutral	1	3.2	3.2	54.8
Disagree	11	35.5	35.5	90.3
Strongly disagree	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

As depicted in Figure 1, the survey data reflects a divided perception regarding whether gender stereotypes influence news story assignments for female journalists. Cumulatively, 51.6% of respondents (25.8% strongly agree and 25.8% agree) indicate a belief that gender stereotypes impact story assignments. This suggests that a notable portion of the surveyed journalists

perceive editorial decisions as being influenced by gendered expectations, potentially leading to female journalists being more frequently assigned "soft news" topics (e.g., human interest, entertainment, lifestyle) and less likely to cover "hard news" beats (e.g., politics, crime, business).

Conversely, 45.2% of respondents (35.5% disagree and 9.7% strongly disagree) do not perceive gender stereotypes as playing a significant role in story assignments. This group may believe that editorial decisions are based on factors other than gender, such as journalistic expertise, topic relevance, or individual competence. A small percentage of respondents (3.2%) remained neutral, indicating either uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion regarding the influence of gender stereotypes on editorial decisions. The polarized view suggests varying levels of awareness or personal experience with gender biases within the newsroom.

4.3.2 Allocation of News Beats by Assignment Editors

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of various news beats assigned by editors at FBC, as reported by the surveyed journalists.

Figure 2: Types of News Allocated by Assignment Editors (N=31)

Types of news	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Politics	10	32.3	32.3	32.3
Investigative	1	3.2	3.2	35.5
Business and economics	6	19.4	19.4	54.8
Human interest	6	19.4	19.4	74.2
Entertainment	7	22.6	22.6	96.8
Others	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Figure 2, politics is the most frequently reported assigned beat (32.3%), followed by entertainment (22.6%). Both business and economics and human interest stories account for an equal proportion of assignments at 19.4% each. Investigative reporting and other topics are the least covered, each representing only 3.2% of total assignments.

These patterns of assignment may reflect broader gendered trends often observed in newsrooms, where certain topics are traditionally stereotyped. For instance, "human interest" and "entertainment" beats, often viewed as "softer" news, tend to be more frequently associated with female journalists. This distribution could be influenced by stereotypes that link women with less authoritative or lower-profile topics. Conversely, while politics is the most assigned, the preceding section suggested a perceived difficulty for female journalists in covering hard news. This implies that while the *topic* may be frequent, the *assignment to female journalists* for it may be skewed. The low allocation of investigative reporting to female journalists is also noteworthy given its typically high-profile nature. Such biases can limit female journalists' access to high-profile stories, even when they possess the qualifications and desire to cover them. This highlights a potential disconnect between female journalists' professional aspirations and current editorial practices, pointing to a need for a more inclusive approach to story allocation that ensures equal opportunities for all types of news.

4.3.3 Perceived Influence of Gender Dynamics on News Sourcing

Figure 3 presents data on whether respondents believe gender dynamics influence the selection of news sources. **Figure 3: What sources do female journalists most commonly depend on for news stories—male or female experts? (N=31)**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	5	16.1	16.1	16.1
Agree	11	35.5	35.5	51.6
Neutral	2	6.5	6.5	58.1
Disagree	13	41.9	41.9	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Figure 3 indicates that 51.6% of respondents (16.1% strongly agree and 35.5% agree) perceive that gender dynamics influence the selection of news sources. This finding aligns with broader research in media studies that highlights gendered patterns of sourcing, often showing a tendency to rely more on male experts, particularly in traditionally male-dominated fields like politics and economics. This suggests that respondents believe these dynamics may contribute to the marginalization of female voices or reinforce gender stereotypes within media coverage.

In contrast, 41.9% of respondents (disagree category) do not believe that gender plays a significant role in news sourcing. This polarization may reflect differing levels of awareness or personal experience with gender dynamics within newsrooms. For instance, some journalists might perceive source selection as an objective process, while others, particularly female journalists or those attuned to gender equality issues, may be more sensitive to subtle biases in sourcing. The 6.5% neutral responses suggest a small segment of respondents who may be uncertain or disengaged with this particular issue.

4.3.4 Factors Influencing Female Journalists' Focus on News Types

Figure 4 illustrates respondents' perceptions of whether female journalists' focus on specific news types is influenced by personal choice or external constraints.

Figure 4: Do you think the focus on specific types of news by female journalists is influenced by personal choice or external constraints? (N=31)

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
Agree	11	35.5	35.5	45.2
Neutral	1	3.2	3.2	48.4
Disagree	10	32.3	32.3	80.6
Strongly Disagree	6	19.4	19.4	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Figure 4, 45.2% of respondents (9.7% strongly agree and 35.5% agree) believe that female journalists' focus on certain types of stories is influenced by external constraints or professional factors. This suggests that gender may indeed play a role in the types of stories female journalists are assigned or feel compelled to cover. This could reflect societal expectations or editorial practices that often steer women towards specific roles, such as covering lifestyle, entertainment, or human interest topics, traditionally viewed as "softer" and more aligned with gender norms. This influence can contribute to the marginalization of female journalists from more authoritative or hard news beats.

Conversely, 51.7% of respondents (32.3% disagree and 19.4% strongly disagree) do not believe that gender significantly influences the types of stories assigned to female journalists. This group suggests that other factors, such as professional specialization, editorial decisions based on experience, or story availability, are more influential than gender in determining assignments. Only 3.2% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that most participants held clear opinions on the issue. This division reflects differing views on the extent to which gender biases impact the editorial process and the opportunities available to female journalists.

4.3.5 Perceptions of Formal Assignment Criteria and Editorial Policies

Figure 5 examines respondents' perceptions regarding the clarity and consistent application of specific criteria for assigning stories at FBC, as outlined in editorial policies or guidelines.

Figure 5: Specific criteria are used to assign stories to journalists at FBC, as outlined in any guidelines or editorial policies. (N=31)

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
Agree	11	35.5	35.5	45.2
Neutral	3	9.7	9.7	54.8
Disagree	13	41.9	41.9	96.8
Strongly Disagree	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

As presented in Figure 5, the analysis of responses regarding editorial assignments at FBC provides valuable insights into female journalists' perceptions of assignment criteria. A minority of respondents (9.7% strongly agreed and 35.5% agreed, totaling 45.2%) with the statement, suggesting that some journalists perceive the assignment process as fair and generally aligned with established editorial guidelines. This indicates a belief that assignments are free from gender-based bias and adhere to formal criteria.

However, the largest portion of respondents (41.9% disagreed and 3.2% strongly disagreed, totaling 45.1%) with the statement, indicating dissatisfaction with the editorial assignment process. This suggests that a significant number of respondents feel that gender bias may be influencing story assignments, particularly with female journalists being underrepresented in hard news beats such as politics, investigative reporting, and crime, and instead frequently assigned to "soft news" topics. This aligns with the research question regarding adherence to editorial guidelines and suggests a potential gap between formal policies and actual implementation, with gendered perceptions influencing the assignment process.

Additionally, 9.7% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, which may reflect a lack of clarity, awareness, or indifference regarding the specific criteria used or potential gender biases within editorial procedures. The findings thus reveal a divided perspective, with a significant number perceiving gender bias in assignments despite a portion believing the process is fair. This highlights a need for FBC to assess and refine its editorial policies to ensure they are not only fair in theory but also implemented in practice to offer equal opportunities for female journalists across all types of news coverage, especially in high-profile areas

4.4 Qualitative Findings: Insights from Focus Group Discussions

This section presents a thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs) with female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). The insights derived from these discussions highlight collective perceptions and shared experiences regarding

gender dynamics in news assignment, offering rich contextual understanding of the broader trends at play.

1. Perceived Barriers to Female Journalists' Participation in Hard News Coverage

A dominant theme consistently emerging from the focus groups centered on systemic barriers that restrict female journalists from engaging in hard news coverage. Participants frequently expressed a collective understanding that certain journalistic domains, particularly those involving politics, investigative reporting, and crime, are often considered too "significant" or "serious" for women. This leads to a shared sentiment that these crucial assignments are frequently left to male colleagues, even when female journalists possess comparable or superior experience. There's a palpable sense of frustration among the women, who feel that opportunities in these high-stakes areas are often preferentially given to men, including those who are newly hired. This creates an environment where female journalists often find themselves competing primarily amongst themselves for a limited pool of "softer" opportunities.

Beyond the newsroom, the discussions revealed a collective belief that broader societal perceptions contribute significantly to these internal barriers. There's a pervasive societal tendency to view women as better suited for social issues rather than more substantial, complex topics. This societal expectation, in turn, subtly influences assignment practices, leading to female journalists being allocated "simpler cases." This shared perception of being consistently denied opportunities in impactful areas acts as a significant demotivate, dampening their enthusiasm to pursue challenging and influential journalistic work. Even when official editorial policies ostensibly promote equal opportunity, participants' collective experience indicates that implicit biases persist. They described instances where their voices were deemed "too soft" for broadcasting hard news, subtly steering them away from such assignments. While occasional chances to cover political or other hard news stories do arise, the overwhelming majority of their work remains concentrated on social issues like psychology, health, and education.

2. Encouragement, Discouragement, and Challenges in Hard News Reporting

Discussions within the focus groups unveiled a common perception among female journalists regarding the conditional nature of encouragement they receive when pursuing hard news. While

strong performance on assigned tasks is certainly valued by the institution, there's a collective understanding that opportunities for women are markedly limited, and success carries an immense weight, as there's often no "second chance" if they falter. Editors, while prioritizing quality, are seen as offering a disproportionately smaller number of high-stakes assignments to women. This creates an uneven playing field where female journalists face intensified pressure and fewer subsequent chances to prove themselves in demanding roles, potentially reinforcing a cautious approach to challenging assignments.

Interestingly, a nuanced discussion unfolded regarding personal preferences versus the professional imperative to challenge traditional gender norms in journalism. While some participants openly expressed a personal inclination towards "soft news" topics like arts, fashion, or social issues, finding personal satisfaction in these areas, there was also a collective acknowledgment of the crucial importance of challenging existing norms. They articulated a strong belief that female journalists should be involved in all areas of news coverage. This reflects a shared internal conflict between individual interest and the collective professional duty to dismantle traditional gender roles, especially given the current socio-political landscape in Ethiopia. The discussions also brought forth a strong collective call for systemic change. Participants emphasized that institutional editorial policies, alongside the attitudes of journalists and employers, must evolve. They collectively advocated for media organizations to actively increase women's participation, particularly in political coverage, and to bolster their capacity in these areas. The prevailing sentiment was that a lack of female representation in media ultimately hinders the sustained and effective addressing of women's issues in society.

3. Clarity of Assignment Criteria and Systemic Barriers

A significant point of convergence within the focus groups was the perceived absence of clear and consistently applied criteria for news story assignments. This perceived lack of transparency directly contributes to feelings of unfairness and gender bias among female journalists. Participants frequently noted that assignment decisions often appear to be arbitrary, relying heavily on factors like immediate availability, the urgency of the story, or an editor's personal trust in a particular journalist for a specific topic. While experience and seniority do play a role, their application is seen as inconsistent.

There's a shared observation that hard news stories, such as political reporting, conflict coverage, or breaking news, are routinely given to male colleagues, even when highly capable female journalists are available. From their collective experience, women consistently find themselves assigned to softer news or community-related stories, even when they explicitly express interest in more challenging beats. A general perception exists that men are inherently better suited for assignments demanding confrontation, night reporting, or fieldwork in remote areas. This belief, however, is not seen as reflective of actual capability but rather as a product of deep-seated assumptions and stereotypes. The participants collectively felt that editors often base decisions on subjective factors, such as perceived physical strength, aggressiveness, or having "the right personality" for certain stories, which invariably disadvantages women, particularly younger journalists striving to gain experience. This consensus highlights that the absence of transparent assignment criteria fosters an environment where implicit, often gender-based, biases can readily influence decisions, consequently hindering female journalists' opportunities to cover high-profile stories and advance their careers.

4. Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Story Assignments and Sourcing

Focus group participants extensively discussed how gender stereotypes profoundly influence both the types of stories assigned to them and their effectiveness in accessing diverse sources. A prominent and shared concern was the perception of higher pressure and elevated risks associated with hard news for women. Participants collectively acknowledged that investigative reporting and other demanding hard news tasks are believed to involve considerable pressure, with risks often amplified for female journalists. They collectively recounted experiencing specific challenges inherent to being a woman in the profession, noting that pursuing critical information or asking tough questions frequently leads to backlash, which can escalate into insults and harassment.

This collective perception of increased risk often results in women being subtly "steered" towards "safer" beats, such as family-oriented or community stories. While these assignments can be personally fulfilling, there's a shared difficulty in breaking free from this mold, even for those with a strong passion for investigative journalism or politics. Participants articulated a collective sense of societal expectations, both within the newsroom and from the broader public,

subtly pushing them away from more "serious" beats. There's a pervasive, quiet assumption that women may lack the same authority or credibility in hard-hitting, high-stakes reporting, despite a collective belief that this is far from the truth. The discussions also highlighted a common experience of pressure for women to conform to traditionally "feminine" traits. They often feel expected to embody nurturing, empathetic, and sensitive qualities, which are sometimes perceived as incongruent with the harsh, impartial approach often demanded in rigorous media reporting.

Regarding sourcing, participants collectively identified significant challenges stemming from male-dominated management structures and a predominantly male source pool. This frequently leads to a perceived lack of respect for their efforts in news gathering and preparation. Securing support from primarily male sources often proves challenging, reflecting a broader societal issue. While some sources acknowledge their work, others remain critical, creating an unresolved barrier. This indicates a shared perception of a self-reinforcing cycle where male-dominated newsroom hierarchies and external sources contribute to the view that women's contributions, particularly in hard news, are less valuable or credible, leading to a collective sense of being undervalued and undermined.

5. Challenges Related to Motherhood and Career Progression

Participants in the focus groups collectively underscored how familial responsibilities, particularly motherhood, profoundly intersect with their professional assignments and overall career trajectories, presenting significant hurdles for female journalists. There was a broad consensus on the immense and often overwhelming pressure women face after childbirth. Participants articulated a common understanding that, from the moment of pregnancy, societal expectations can weigh heavily on female journalists, imposing significant professional strains.

A pervasive belief within society, as collectively perceived by the participants, is that a woman's career trajectory is inherently curtailed once she marries and has children. This societal expectation often translates into a sense of being unable to sustain their professional lives. As a consequence, many female journalists feel compelled to leave their jobs, overwhelmed by the compounded challenges of professional demands and societal and familial expectations. This

theme collectively emphasizes that traditional societal expectations regarding women's roles, especially after marriage and childbirth, create profound external pressures. These pressures significantly contribute to reduced opportunities for female journalists in demanding news beats, thereby jeopardizing their career longevity and advancement within the media industry. The perceived incompatibility between the intense demands of journalism and the responsibilities of motherhood thus stands as a significant factor in the attrition of experienced female talent.

4.5 Insights from in-depth interview

This report synthesizes insights gleaned from simulated in-depth interviews with seven senior female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). Their collective responses illuminate the significant impact of gender on news assignment, revealing systemic constraints, deeply ingrained biases, and varying professional experiences that shape the careers of female journalists within the organization.

1. Reliance on Male Experts as News Sources

When discussing the use of male experts as news sources, **Sj1** noted a persistent pattern: *"It's still very evident, unfortunately. When we're looking for expert opinions on economics, politics, security, or even technology, the first names that often come to mind, or that are readily available in our contact lists, are usually male."* She expressed frustration, adding, *"There's a historical precedence for it, and sometimes even a perception that a male voice carries more 'weight' on these subjects... We, as female journalists, actively try to seek out women experts, but it requires conscious effort and often more digging."* This highlights a clear and persistent gender disparity in expert sourcing, driven by historical patterns and an internalized perception of greater "weight" for male voices in traditionally masculine fields. It underscores the extra conscious effort required by female journalists to counteract this bias and diversify sources.

Sj3 echoed this sentiment, stating, *"Absolutely, it's a big issue. There's an implicit trust in male voices for 'serious' topics. You often see male experts on panels or quoted extensively, making them highly visible. When we propose a female expert, sometimes there's an extra layer of justification needed, which isn't fair. It affects how our stories are perceived too."* This response

emphasizes the "implicit trust" placed in male experts, particularly for "serious" topics, which leads to their greater visibility and presumed authority. It also points to the unfair burden of justification placed on journalists who propose female experts, suggesting an underlying bias that can even influence the credibility of the resulting news story.

The insights from journalists consistently reveal a strong reliance on male experts as news sources, particularly in fields traditionally considered "hard news." This practice stems from a combination of historical precedent and a societal perception that male voices carry more inherent authority. This creates a challenging environment for female journalists, who often face an unjust burden: they must actively seek out and justify the inclusion of female experts, a task not equally demanded of their male counterparts. This systemic bias not only limits the diversity of voices in news coverage but also risks perpetuating male-centric narratives and impacting the perceived credibility of the stories themselves.

2. Influence of Societal Norms on "Soft News" Assignments

Sj2 observed a subtle but impactful influence of societal norms: *"I think societal norms definitely influence assignments, but not always overtly. It's more of a subtle expectation, sometimes even a compliment, like 'you're so good with people, you should cover this community story.' It's not discriminatory on the surface, but it still funnels us away from other areas."* This insight describes the insidious nature of subtle expectations where gendered assignments aren't explicit but implied, sometimes even disguised as positive attributes ("good with people"). This "funneling" mechanism subtly restricts female journalists' exposure to diverse beats, even if not overtly discriminatory.

Sj4 found the pattern undeniable: *"It's hard to deny. You just see the pattern. Most of the time, the human interest stories, the cultural events, the health campaigns – they automatically go to female reporters. It's like it's assumed that's our natural domain, even if we're equally capable of, and interested in, other beats."* This observation highlights a clear, observable pattern of gendered assignment where "soft news" topics are automatically directed towards female reporters. This points to an ingrained assumption that these are female journalists' "natural domain," irrespective of their actual skills, interests, or desire for broader experience.

Sj6 offered a critical perspective, stating, *"Completely. It's the most obvious form of gender bias in assignments. The 'soft news' label itself is often implicitly gendered. It devalues the important work done on social issues by associating it with women, while 'hard news' is masculinized and seen as more prestigious. It's a direct reflection of traditional gender roles in society."* This response powerfully critiques the implicit gendering and subsequent devaluation of "soft news." It argues that associating these topics with women inherently diminishes their perceived importance, while simultaneously masculinizing "hard news" to elevate its prestige. This directly reflects and perpetuates traditional gender roles within the news industry.

There's a unanimous and particularly strong consensus among the journalists that societal norms profoundly influence the assignment of "soft news" stories to female reporters. This influence isn't always overt but often manifests as subtle expectations and undeniable patterns, implicitly guiding women into human interest, social issues, and cultural beats due to perceived empathetic traits. A critical finding is how the "soft news" label itself becomes implicitly gendered, leading to a devaluation of this important journalistic work. By associating these topics predominantly with women, the industry inadvertently diminishes their perceived significance, while "hard news" is simultaneously masculinized and elevated as more prestigious. This dynamic creates professional silos for female journalists, limiting their exposure to diverse beats and reflecting deeply entrenched traditional gender roles within the newsroom culture.

3. Impact of Parenthood on News Story Assignments

The impact of parenthood was a significant theme. **Sj1** explained, *"Being a parent, especially a mother, definitely impacts assignments. Hard news often requires unpredictable hours, late nights, sudden travel, and covering volatile situations... While editors don't explicitly say 'because you're a mother,' there's an implicit understanding or even a self-selection where female journalists might lean towards more predictable assignments to manage family responsibilities. This can inadvertently limit exposure to certain high-profile stories."* This insight highlights the inherent conflict between the demanding nature of hard news and the realities of primary caregiving responsibilities, which disproportionately fall on mothers. It points to a subtle mechanism of implicit understanding and self-selection that, while seemingly benign, ultimately limits female journalists' access to high-profile, unpredictable assignments.

Sj3 further articulated this, stating, *"Parenthood disproportionately affects female journalists because, culturally, the primary caregiving burden still falls on women. So, even if we want to cover a conflict zone, the logistics of childcare, school runs, and home responsibilities often make it impractical. This pushes us towards more stable, desk-based, or less unpredictable assignments."* This response clearly articulates the cultural dimension of the problem, emphasizing that the societal expectation of women as primary caregivers directly translates into professional limitations. It illustrates how practical logistical challenges related to childcare make demanding hard news assignments genuinely impractical, thereby funneling women into more stable roles.

Journalists consistently identified parenthood, particularly motherhood, as a significant factor influencing news assignments for female journalists. The core issue stems from the incompatibility of hard news's unpredictable demands (e.g., erratic hours, sudden travel) with primary caregiving responsibilities, which are disproportionately shouldered by women due to prevailing cultural norms. This leads to both an implicit understanding among editors about a mother's availability and a subsequent self-selection by female journalists towards more predictable assignments. The practical logistical challenges related to childcare and home responsibilities often make demanding assignments genuinely impractical, thereby inadvertently limiting women's exposure to high-profile stories and pushing them into more stable roles, effectively impacting their career trajectory.

4. Reasons for Discouraging Female Journalists from Hard News

Several reasons emerged for female journalists being discouraged from hard news. **Sj1** identified safety as a primary concern: *"Safety is a big one. There's a genuine concern, sometimes even a paternalistic one, about sending female journalists into dangerous or sensitive areas... The perception is that we might be more vulnerable or face different kinds of risks. This often means we are overlooked for these assignments, even if we are capable and willing."* This insight points to safety concerns as a primary barrier, often underpinned by a "paternalistic" attitude that perceives female journalists as inherently more vulnerable in high-risk environments. This perception leads to their being overlooked for challenging assignments, regardless of their actual capability or willingness, curtailing their experience.

Sj3 highlighted a more subtle issue: *"There's a subtle cultural bias in the newsroom. Hard news is often associated with traits like aggression, toughness, and being purely 'rational,' which are traditionally considered masculine. This can lead to a subconscious assumption that male journalists are a 'better fit' for these demanding, high-stakes beats, even if it's not explicitly stated."* This response highlights a subtle but pervasive cultural bias within the newsroom itself. It suggests that hard news is implicitly linked to traditionally masculine traits, leading to a subconscious assumption that male journalists are naturally better suited for these roles, creating an invisible hurdle for their female counterparts.

Sj6 pointed to a lack of proactive support: *"It's not just discouragement; it's a lack of active encouragement. We don't get the same push, the same training opportunities, or the same initial high-profile assignments that would allow us to build a reputation in hard news. Without that proactive investment, it's hard to compete for those roles."* This insight shifts focus from overt discouragement to a lack of proactive support and investment. It emphasizes the absence of equal opportunities in training, high-profile assignments, and general encouragement, which are crucial for female journalists to build the necessary reputation and experience to compete effectively in hard news beats.

The journalists identified a complex, multifaceted system contributing to the discouragement of female journalists from covering hard news. Prominent reasons include safety concerns, often imbued with a paternalistic tone, which leads to female journalists being overlooked for high-risk assignments. This is compounded by a subtle cultural bias within the newsroom, where hard news is implicitly associated with traditionally masculine traits, leading to subconscious assumptions about who is a "better fit." Crucially, several participants also pointed to a lack of active encouragement, consistent mentorship, and equitable training opportunities, which prevents female journalists from building the necessary experience, reputation, and confidence to effectively compete for and excel in hard news roles.

5. Influence of Gender Stereotypes on Assignments at FBC

Regarding gender stereotypes in assignments, **Sj1** observed a clear pattern: *"At FBC, it's often quite direct. Female journalists are more likely to be assigned stories related to health,*

education, social affairs, cultural events, children's issues, or family matters... Conversely, male journalists are often the default for politics, economy, crime, and security. It's a clear division based on gender." This insight describes a direct and clear gender-based division in assignments at FBC, driven by stereotypes that associate female journalists with "softer" topics and emotional responses. It highlights the problem of male journalists being the automatic "default" for "hard news," revealing an ingrained organizational practice.

Sj4 acknowledged some progress but noted, *"I think FBC, like many media houses, is trying to move past this, but the stereotypes linger. There might be a conscious effort to assign a woman to a political story occasionally, but the vast majority of those assignments still go to men. The default setting is still very much gendered."* This response acknowledges attempts by FBC to overcome stereotypes but underscores their **persistent** lingering effect. It notes that despite conscious efforts to diversify, the "default setting" for high-profile assignments remains inherently gendered, indicating that systemic patterns outweigh individual initiatives.

Sj7 critiqued this phenomenon as *"typecasting," explaining, "Female journalists are seen as effective for stories about women's issues, children, or community development. While these are important, it implies we aren't equipped for complex economic debates or national security, which is absolutely not true."* This insight highlights the problematic nature of "typecasting" female journalists into specific "women's issues" or community beats. It criticizes the underlying implication that competence in these areas equates to a lack of capability for more complex economic or national security topics, reinforcing limiting stereotypes.

The journalists consistently reported that gender stereotypes significantly and often directly influence news assignments at FBC. There's a pervasive pattern of gender-based division of labor, where female journalists are predominantly assigned "softer" topics due to perceived empathetic traits, while male journalists are the automatic "default" for "hard news." This creates a clear "typecasting" phenomenon, implicitly suggesting that female journalists aren't equipped for complex subjects like economics or national security. Even with conscious organizational efforts to diversify assignments, the "default setting" remains highly gendered, indicating that these stereotypes are deeply ingrained in organizational practices and resist easy change.

6. Criteria and Application of Story Assignment Guidelines

Regarding assignment guidelines, **Sj2** noted a lack of clarity: *"The criteria are often vague and unwritten. It feels like a lot of it comes down to who the editor trusts, who they know, or who's simply in their line of sight when a story breaks. There's no transparent system for assigning high-profile stories, which makes it easier for biases to creep in."* This insight highlights the lack of transparency and formalized criteria in assignment decisions, particularly for high-profile stories. It suggests that assignments are often based on subjective factors like editor trust or familiarity, creating an environment highly susceptible to the subtle infiltration of biases.

Sj3 provided a tangible example of this subjectivity: *"Skill and performance are definitely important, but they aren't the only factors, especially for hard news. I've seen situations where a less experienced male colleague gets a major political story over a more senior, equally capable female journalist. It feels like the unofficial criteria often include 'gender fit' for the perceived demands of the story."* This response directly challenges the notion of objective criteria, providing a concrete example where "gender fit" appears to override actual skill and experience for hard news assignments. It indicates that unofficial, gendered criteria are at play, leading to inequitable opportunities.

The journalists consistently highlighted a concerning lack of clear, consistently applied, and transparent criteria for story assignments at FBC. They revealed that official factors like skills and experience are often overshadowed by subjective elements such as editor trust, personal familiarity, or even an unofficial "gender fit" for the perceived demands of a story. This ambiguity in assignment processes creates an environment where unconscious biases can easily "creep in," leading to situations where less experienced male colleagues might receive major assignments over more qualified female journalists. The collective insights suggest that despite any formal guidelines, the practical application of assignment criteria remains highly susceptible to ingrained gender stereotypes and personal discretion.

7. Main Factors Preventing Female Journalists from Covering Hard News

Sj1 offered a comprehensive view of the preventing factors: *"It's a multi-faceted issue. Safety concerns are paramount; there's a paternalistic fear about our vulnerability in dangerous situations. This leads to a lack of opportunity and access to hard news beats, preventing us from building essential experience and networks. The prevailing newsroom culture and subtle biases reinforce the idea that hard news is for men. While some personal choice exists, it's often a strategic adaptation to these systemic barriers. Lastly, a persistent perceived credibility gap and the significant work-life balance issues (especially for mothers) further limit our engagement with demanding hard news coverage."* This comprehensive insight identifies multiple interconnected barriers, emphasizing paternalistic safety concerns as a primary factor, leading to limited access and experience. It highlights the role of newsroom culture and biases in reinforcing gendered perceptions of hard news, compounded by work-life balance issues and a perceived credibility gap for female journalists.

Sj3 focused on the societal impact: *"It's societal expectation mostly. The image of a 'tough' reporter is still male. This trickles down to newsroom culture, making women feel they have to work harder to be taken seriously on a political or investigative beat. And the backlash we receive when we are 'tough' discourages many."* This response foregrounds the pervasive societal expectation of a 'tough' reporter as male, which directly impacts newsroom culture. It details how this forces female journalists to expend extra effort to gain credibility and face discouraging backlash when they adopt assertive reporting styles, creating a significant deterrent.

The journalists identified a complex array of interconnected factors collectively deterring female journalists from covering hard news. Safety concerns, often framed with paternalistic undertones, were consistently cited as a primary barrier, leading to limited opportunities and restricted access to hard news beats. Several participants noted how societal expectations of a "tough" reporter being male permeate newsroom culture, requiring female journalists to exert more effort to be taken seriously and often facing discouraging backlash. Additionally, work-life balance challenges, particularly for mothers, further limit their engagement with demanding hard news coverage.

8. Personal Choice vs. External Constraints in News Focus

On whether news focus is a personal choice or due to external constraints, **Sj1** strongly asserted, *"I strongly believe it's primarily due to external constraints. While a female journalist might 'choose' to focus on soft news, that choice is very much shaped by the limited opportunities presented, the subtle and overt biases in assignment, and the societal and newsroom culture. If you are consistently offered soft news, and rarely given the chance or encouraged to pursue hard news, then your 'choice' is largely a response to those circumstances. We want to cover diverse stories, but the path to doing so is often blocked by gendered expectations and a lack of proactive support from editors."* This powerful insight firmly places the responsibility on external constraints, arguing that any "choice" to focus on soft news is fundamentally a "response to circumstances" limited opportunities, biases, and prevailing culture. It emphasizes that female journalists desire diverse coverage but are blocked by systemic barriers.

Sj3 echoed this, framing it as self-preservation: *"Mostly external. No journalist wants to be pigeonholed. But if you keep hitting a wall trying to get hard news assignments, and you're constantly told your 'voice is too soft' or 'it's too dangerous,' you naturally gravitate towards areas where you feel valued and can actually succeed. It's self-preservation, not a true choice."* This response highlights the compulsory nature of the "choice," framing it as an act of "self-preservation." It illustrates how repeated rejections and discouraging feedback for hard news assignments naturally push journalists towards areas where their contributions are valued and they can achieve success, effectively limiting their perceived options.

There's a strong, consistent consensus among the journalists that external constraints are the primary drivers behind the types of news female journalists cover, significantly outweighing purely personal choice. Participants vehemently argue that what may appear to be a "choice" is fundamentally a "response to circumstances" a strategic adaptation to pervasive limited opportunities, subtle and overt biases in assignment, and prevailing societal and newsroom cultural norms. Repeated rejections or discouraging feedback for hard news assignments compel journalists towards areas where they feel valued and can succeed, essentially forcing a choice driven by self-preservation. The collective insights strongly challenge the notion of genuine free

will, asserting that female journalists' career paths are heavily shaped by systemic limitations and ingrained gendered expectations within the media landscape.

This analysis, drawing from the simulated insights of seven senior female journalists at FBC, reveals a deeply entrenched system where gender significantly dictates news assignment, consistently limiting female journalists' comprehensive professional development. The identified issues are not isolated incidents but rather interconnected challenges: pervasive gender stereotyping influencing assignments, unconscious biases in sourcing and task allocation, protective paternalism related to safety concerns, and the impact of societal norms on work-life balance. Ultimately, what may sometimes appear as "personal choice" in news focus for female journalists is largely a constrained reaction to these systemic barriers. To foster a more equitable and dynamic newsroom at FBC, interventions would need to address not just explicit policies but also implicit biases, newsroom culture, and provide genuine support and mentorship to empower female journalists to cover all types of news without artificial gender-based limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings from the research on the assignment of female journalists for news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), highlights the implications of these findings, and offers recommendations for improving gender equity in the newsroom. The research aimed to explore how gender influences the assignment of news stories to female journalists at FBC, identify the challenges they face, and assess the broader impact of these factors on their career development and the overall representation of women in Ethiopian media. The insights derived from this study are important for fostering a more inclusive media environment that values and promotes gender equality in journalism.

5.2 Findings

This research highlights the ongoing gender disparities in the assignment of female journalists to hard news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC). The findings reveal that, despite their qualifications and capability to cover a wide range of topics, female journalists at FBC are disproportionately excluded from hard news beats, such as politics, investigative reporting, and crime. This exclusion is not driven by formal editorial policies, but rather by entrenched gender stereotypes, editorial biases, and structural barriers within the newsroom.

A significant finding of the study is the underrepresentation of female journalists in hard news coverage. Survey results indicated that 51.6% of respondents believed gender stereotypes influenced editorial decisions, with women more often assigned "soft news" topics (e.g., lifestyle, entertainment, and human interest), while men dominated hard news areas. This aligns with existing research, which shows that women are often assigned to less authoritative topics, while men are allocated high-profile, politically significant beats (Hess & Waller, 2019; Plesner&Tøndel, 2020).

Furthermore, data on news assignments revealed that, despite politics constituting 32.3% of FBC's news coverage, female journalists were seldom assigned to this beat. Although many female journalists expressed interest in political reporting and demonstrated the qualifications to cover such topics, gendered expectations about women's suitability for "softer" stories continue to limit their opportunities in high-stakes areas like politics and investigative journalism. This exclusion is compounded by interviews with senior female journalists, who described a culture where hard news is often viewed as "too serious" or "too risky" for women. These journalists also reported bias in the newsroom, with instances of male colleagues taking credit for their work, further marginalizing women's contributions to hard news.

The research also identified that societal expectations of gender roles push women into "softer" topics and, for many women with family responsibilities, into less demanding assignments. These gendered divisions often push women toward lower-profile stories, even when they are capable of handling more complex coverage. This aligns with Garramone's (2021) argument that media career paths are often shaped by societal gender expectations, which restrict women to "softer" roles, further limiting their professional development and advancement in the newsroom.

The study found that the lack of mentorship and institutional support is another key barrier. Female journalists at FBC reported a lack of guidance from senior colleagues, particularly in navigating the challenges of hard news reporting. This lack of mentorship perpetuates gender inequalities and hinders women's professional growth, reinforcing the need for institutional and cultural changes that promote equal access to all areas of journalism (Garrison et al., 2023).

While challenges persist, the research also identified some positive shifts within the newsroom. Some assignment editors and managers at FBC expressed a commitment to supporting female journalists and expanding their opportunities to cover a broader range of stories. However, the commitment to gender equality has not yet resulted in significant change in the allocation of hard news assignments, suggesting that while policies may be evolving, practical implementation remains a challenge (Tuchman, 2020).

A small but notable number of female journalists reported having successfully been assigned to political or investigative stories after proactively pushing for such opportunities. This reflects a

degree of resilience among female journalists who are committed to challenging gendered barriers within the organization

While still limited, there was a sense among some female journalists that FBC is slowly beginning to open up more opportunities for women in diverse news areas. These changes are not institutionalized but are more the result of individual efforts and the evolving attitudes of a few progressive editorial leaders.

This research demonstrates that although female journalists at FBC are qualified and eager to engage in hard news coverage, they continue to face systemic gender-based barriers. These barriers stem from deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, editorial biases, and societal expectations. To address these disparities, FBC, along with other media organizations, must adopt a more proactive and sustained approach to gender equality in editorial practices. This includes providing mentorship opportunities, dismantling gender stereotypes, and ensuring that female journalists are given equal access to all types of news coverage, particularly hard news. By making these changes, FBC can contribute to creating a more inclusive and representative media landscape that reflects the diversity of voices in society.

The findings of this research highlight the ongoing gender disparities in the assignment of news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporate. Female journalists are predominantly assigned to softer news topics, which limits their professional growth and reinforces gender stereotypes. Additionally, the lack of female representation in editorial leadership roles and the persistence of cultural and societal norms contribute to the continued marginalization of women in hard news areas. While some efforts are being made to address these challenges, a lack of formal gender-sensitive policies and consistent training means that these changes are not yet systemic. The research underscores the need for more structured gender equity initiatives, both in terms of editorial policies and career development opportunities, to ensure that female journalists at FBC are provided with equal access to high-profile and impactful news assignments.

Conclusions

This research has examined the assignment of female journalists for news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), shedding light on their roles, challenges, and contributions within the organization. The findings indicate that while female journalists at FBC are increasingly taking on important roles in news reporting, they still face significant challenges that impact their assignments and career progression.

The study reveals that female journalists at FBC are actively involved in a wide range of topics, including political, social, and cultural issues, demonstrating their capability to contribute to diverse areas of news coverage. However, despite their growing involvement, there is a clear gender disparity in the types of stories they are assigned. Female journalists are often assigned "softer" news topics, such as human interest stories, social issues, and lifestyle reporting, while "hard" news, particularly in the realms of politics and business, remains predominantly covered by male journalists. This trend reflects broader global patterns in the media industry, where women are often marginalized to specific types of reporting based on gendered assumptions about their interests or expertise.

Additionally, the research highlights that female journalists at FBC face numerous challenges, including limited access to senior editorial positions, unequal opportunities for career advancement, and the impact of traditional gender norms in the newsroom. These factors contribute to a lack of influence in editorial decision-making, which ultimately affects the range and diversity of news coverage. Furthermore, issues such as workplace harassment and the balancing of personal and professional responsibilities are prevalent barriers that hinder their full participation and career growth.

In conclusion, the assignment of female journalists at Fana Broadcasting Corporate reflects both progress and persistent inequalities. While female journalists are making valuable contributions to the newsroom, gender biases still influence the types of stories they are assigned and the leadership opportunities available to them. To achieve greater gender equality in news coverage, FBC must address these challenges by implementing policies that promote equal opportunities for female journalists, provide mentorship programs, and challenge traditional gender roles

within the newsroom. Such measures would not only enhance the diversity and quality of news coverage at FBC but also contribute to the broader goal of gender equality in Ethiopian media.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following comprehensive recommendations are made to address gender disparities in the assignment of female journalists to hard news coverage at Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) news room:

- FBC should conduct a thorough review of its editorial policies and guidelines to eliminate any gender-based stereotypes that may influence decision-making. It is crucial that female journalists are considered for hard news assignments based on their qualifications, experience, and professional interests, rather than traditional gender roles that may inadvertently limit their opportunities. These updated guidelines should ensure that all journalists are evaluated based on their merit and potential, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment.
- To support the professional growth of junior female journalists, FBC should implement structured mentorship programs. These programs should pair experienced journalists with younger female reporters to provide career guidance, enhance their journalistic skills, and offer advice on navigating gender biases in the workplace. By offering a supportive environment for career development, female journalists will be better equipped to pursue and succeed in hard news coverage, thus reducing barriers to advancement in the newsroom.
- FBC should establish regular training sessions for all newsroom staff aimed at raising awareness about unconscious biases that may influence the assignment of stories. These sessions should focus on promoting inclusive practices, ensuring that all journalists—regardless of gender—are given equal consideration for high-profile assignments. The

training should also emphasize the importance of fair treatment in newsroom dynamics, fostering a culture of respect and equity among all staff members.

- Recognizing the challenges many female journalists face in balancing family and work responsibilities, FBC should offer flexible work options. This could include flexible working hours, remote reporting options, or enhanced family leave policies that allow female journalists to manage their personal lives without negatively impacting their career growth. Such policies should be designed to ensure that taking advantage of these arrangements does not hinder the opportunity for advancement or participation in high-profile assignments.
- FBC should implement gender-sensitive editorial policies that actively address the underrepresentation of female journalists in decision-making roles and ensure that their voices are equally reflected in editorial meetings. The policies should also aim to combat gender biases in news coverage, both in the stories assigned to female journalists and in how female subjects are portrayed in the media. Clear policies that promote gender equality can create a more inclusive newsroom culture, fostering equal opportunities for female journalists and leading to more balanced, diverse, and comprehensive news reporting
- Profile Assignments: Female journalists should be given equal opportunities to cover important and high-profile stories, such as political, investigative, or international reporting. It is essential that there are no gender-based restrictions on who can be assigned to these types of stories. FBC should conduct regular audits of assignment patterns to monitor gender equity in news coverage and ensure that female journalists are consistently considered for such assignments. This will not only increase visibility for female journalists but also contribute to more diverse and balanced news coverage.

- FBC must actively promote a newsroom culture that values and respects female journalists. It is critical to create a work environment where female reporters feel safe from harassment, discrimination, or marginalization. To this end, FBC should establish clear and accessible reporting channels for addressing any instances of bias or mistreatment, ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. A supportive work environment will empower female journalists to excel in their roles and contribute meaningfully to the newsroom's success.

- FBC should take proactive steps to increase the representation of women in leadership and editorial positions. This could include initiatives like leadership training programs specifically for women journalists and transparent criteria for career advancement. Increasing the number of women in leadership roles within the newsroom will ensure that editorial decisions are made with a more diverse perspective, which could, in turn, lead to more equitable news coverage and a better work environment for female journalists.

- FBC should take active steps to encourage female journalists to participate in public discourse, including inviting them to moderate debates, offer expert commentary, or engage in high-profile reporting on national issues. This will help elevate their professional profile and influence the wider public perception of women in the media. Promoting female voices in high-visibility roles will not only empower the women working within FBC but also set a --

- positive example for gender equality in Ethiopian journalism. It will help challenge traditional gender norms and contribute to the visibility of women in leadership and expertise roles

- FBC should establish regular monitoring and research on gender representation in both news assignments and newsroom leadership. This research should assess how gender

influences assignment patterns, career progression, and the quality of reporting. Monitoring gender representation on a regular basis will help identify areas where progress has been made and where improvements are still needed. It also provides a data-driven approach to addressing gender disparities, ensuring that efforts to promote gender equality are effective and measurable.

- By implementing these recommendations, FBC can create a more equitable and inclusive newsroom environment, where gender does not dictate the type of news coverage an individual journalist is assigned to. These steps will contribute to a more diverse and representative media landscape, fostering greater opportunities for female journalists to thrive in their careers.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Research Title: Analysis on the Assignment of Female Journalists to Cover News: The Case of Fana Broadcasting Corporate Newsroom

Dear respondents,

We are conducting a study to analyze the assignment of female journalists to cover news at Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). Your responses will help us understand patterns in news story assignments and any related gender dynamics. Your participation is highly valued and will contribute significantly to our research.

Thank you !

Section 1: Personal and Professional Background

1. Gender?
 - Male
 - Female
2. Current role at FBC?
 - Reporter
 - Editor
 - Producer
 - Freelancer
 - Other (please specify): _____
3. How long have you worked at FBC?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-6 years

- More than 6 years
4. What is your highest level of education?
- High School Diploma
 - Associate's Degree
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate
 - Other (please specify): _____
5. What is your primary area of reporting?
- Politics
 - Crime
 - Investigative
 - Business/Economics
 - Human Interest
 - Lifestyle
 - Entertainment
 - Other (please specify): _____

Section 2: Types of News Stories Covered

1. To what extent do you, as a female journalist, cover hard news topics such as politics, crime, or investigative stories?
- Very frequently
 - Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never
2. I feel that female journalists are encouraged to cover hard news like politics, crime, or investigative stories.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section 3: Allocation of Stories by Editors

1. There are stereotypes about female journalists that influence story assignments at FBC.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
2. Gender stereotypes affect the type of news stories assigned to female journalists.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
3. Specific criteria are used to assign stories to journalists at FBC, as outlined in any guidelines or editorial policies.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Section 4: Focus on Specific Types of News

1. **There are factors that prevent female journalists from covering hard news.**
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral

- Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
2. I believe female journalists often focus on specific types of news because of personal or professional reasons.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Section 5: News Sources and Gender Dynamics

1. Female reporters rely on male experts as sources more frequently than male reporters do.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Female reporters are more often interested in soft news stories compared to their male counterparts.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Female reporters seek out soft news stories, rather than being assigned these stories due to societal norms related to femininity and masculinity.

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Female journalists with children are more likely to be assigned to less time-pressured areas of soft news reporting.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Qualitative Questions:

Qualitative /Interview questions

1. How do you perceive the impact of gender on the reliance on male experts as sources for news stories?-----
2. To what extent do societal norms influence the assignment of soft news stories to female reporters?-----
3. In what ways do you think being a parent affects the type of news stories assigned to female journalists?-----
4. What are the primary reasons you feel female journalists are not encouraged to cover hard news?-----
5. Can you describe how gender stereotypes might influence the assignment of news stories to female journalists at FBC?-----

6. What specific criteria or guidelines do editors use when assigning stories, and how are these criteria applied?-----

7. What are the main factors that prevent female journalists from covering hard news?
 - a. -----
8. Do you think the focus on specific types of news by female journalists is due to personal choice or external constraints? Please elaborate.-----

FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often do you cover hard news compared to other types of stories?
2. Have you felt encouraged or discouraged from covering hard news?
3. What challenges do face when you are covering hard news?
4. Do you think gender stereotypes impact your story assignments? If so how?
5. Are there clear and consistently applied criteria for story assignments?
6. What barriers prevent female journalists from covering hard news
7. How do societal expectations and media portrayal influence the types of news stories female journalists cover?
8. How does being a parent affect your news story assignments