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Citation: Blumell, L., Mulupi, D. & Arafat, R. (2025). The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction in Newsrooms. *Journalism Practice*, 19(5), pp. 997-1016. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2023.2227613

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To cite this article: Lindsey E. Blumell, Dinfin Mulupi & Rana Arafat (2023): The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction in Newsrooms, Journalism Practice, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2023.2227613](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2227613)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2227613>



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The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction in Newsrooms

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ABSTRACT

Despite the pervasiveness of workplace sexual harassment, the connection between sexual harassment and job satisfaction in the news industry remains insufficiently researched. This 16-country and one state study ($N = 1583$) sampled news personnel from Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Arab region. The results expand current knowledge by examining understudied countries, measuring the impact of sexual harassment on job satisfaction, and evaluating differences in how people perceive gender equality in the news industry. Results show that both verbal and physical sexual harassment are common, underreported, and impact job satisfaction—challenging common misconceptions that there are only few cases of “real” sexual harassment with negative consequences. Sub-Saharan African countries had the lowest job satisfaction and the highest experienced sexual harassment. Southeast Asia had the highest job satisfaction and the lowest experienced sexual harassment. Men had higher levels of job satisfaction and gender equality perceptions than women. The results also highlight power imbalances that reinforce gendered hierarchies.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 7 September 2022

Accepted 15 June 2023

KEYWORDS

Job satisfaction; sexual harassment; news industry; journalism; gendered inequalities; Africa; Asia; Arab region

Introduction

The news industry is a tough business. Most news markets struggle with internal and external pressures ranging from economic struggles (Picard 2010) to political pressures (Waisbord 2019). And though news personnel remain committed to journalism (Willnat, Weaver, and Wilhoit 2017), the inordinate challenges they face can impact their job satisfaction and ultimately longevity within the news industry (Weaver, Willnat, and Wilhoit 2019).

Certainly, struggles do affect job satisfaction in the news industry as shown by previous research, which includes measuring how organizational size (Keith 2005), contract types (Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2012), salaries (Ileri 2016), workload (Lim 2013), job insecurity (Reinardy 2012), political leanings (Scherr and Baugut 2016), race (Bramlett-Solomon

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 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2227613>.

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1992), gender (Barrett 1984; Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2012), and external factors such as governments (Liu, Xiaoming, and Wen 2018) can all impact job satisfaction.

To date, what's missing in the literature is understanding the toll that occupational risks to personal safety, specifically sexual harassment, have on news personnel's job satisfaction. Though it may seem evident that experiencing sexual harassment would impact job satisfaction, since sexual harassment continues to be commonly experienced yet, underreported to and dismissed by news organizations (authors; IWMF 2014), it is critical to investigate its wide-ranging and nuanced effects. Moreover, different types of sexual harassment such as verbal are regularly dismissed as harmless flirtation or misunderstandings (Cohen 2005). By including verbal and physical sexual harassment in the study, we seek to understand how different forms of sexual harassment impact job satisfaction.

Another unique contribution of this study is to also consider gender equality perceptions of news personnel. There is ample research on gender inequalities common in the news industry (Carter, Steiner, and Allan 2019; Craft and Wanta 2004; De Vuyst and Raeymaeckers 2019; Elmore 2009; Knowles 2020; Lobo et al. 2017; North 2016a; 2016b); nevertheless, measuring news personnel's perceptions of equality is understudied. By including participants' perceptions of gender equality, we can measure its impact on job satisfaction or how it is impacted by experienced sexual harassment. It is important to note that sexual harassment can happen to anyone, but it disproportionately affects women (Women in News 2021) and is consequently, linked to gender inequalities.

Overall, our aims for this study are to extend job satisfaction to also include gender equality perceptions to understand the level of awareness in newsrooms and how perceptions of gender equality and job satisfaction correlate with experienced and reported sexual harassment. Our objectives were to employ the personal job satisfaction index and the newsroom gender equality index in the survey. Furthermore, surveyed participants were asked about their experienced sexual harassment in the news industry.

We rely on an online survey of news personnel ($N = 1583$) with a sample that includes 16 countries and one state from Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Botswana, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam), and the Arab region (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine). By focusing on contexts outside the so-called Global North where most of the research is focused (e.g., Claesson 2022; Idâs, Orgeret, and Backholm 2020; Miller and Lewis 2022), this study makes important contributions to better understanding job satisfaction, gender equality perceptions, and sexual harassment in understudied regions often called the Global South.

Measuring Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to a workers' attitudes and feelings about their job. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (1304). Job satisfaction is influenced by a myriad of environmental and internal factors including pay levels, the organizational work environment, work-family conflict, work schedules, job stress, and personality traits (Herzberg 1968; Spector 1997). The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) was developed decades ago to measure job satisfaction and included five dimensions: the nature of the job, pay, attitudes towards supervisors, relationships with co-workers, and

opportunities for promotion (Smith, Kendall, and Hulin 1969). Since then, the JDI has been retested and revised to reduce the number of scale items, but maintains the five dimensions (Balzer et al. 1997; Stanton et al. 2002).

Research on job satisfaction in journalism research emerged in the 1970s with the seminal work by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1976). Later, Weaver, Wilhoit and colleagues began surveying the job satisfaction of U.S. journalists and have since tracked changes across four decades and in different locations (Weaver, Willnat, and Wilhoit 2019). Overall, their findings indicate journalists tend to be satisfied with their jobs although levels vary (Weaver et al. 2007; Weaver, Willnat, and Wilhoit 2019). Research in other geographical locations have also documented levels of job satisfaction among news professionals (Ileri 2016; Liu, Hao, and Nan 2018).

Literature suggests the job satisfaction of news professionals is predicted by several variables ranging from demographic factors like age (Hao and George 2012), race (Bramlett-Solomon 1992), gender (Barrett 1984; Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2012), and political leanings (Scherr and Baugut 2016), to job autonomy (Chan, Pan, and Lee 2004), perceived organizational support (Keith 2005; Reinardy 2009a), type of work contract (Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2012), job security (Ileri 2016; Reinardy 2012), income levels (Ileri 2016; Mwesige 2004) and work-life conflict (Reinardy 2009b).

For the purposes of this study, we also investigated current literature on job satisfaction within the news industry for our sampled regions:

Sub-Saharan Africa

Existing literature on job satisfaction of in Africa indicates variations of satisfaction across different countries. In Tanzania, research from 30-years ago found journalists were highly dissatisfied with their jobs (Lederbogen 1992). More recently, Nigerian journalists reported high levels of satisfaction from intrinsic factors (i.e., opportunities for career advancement, impact on society) and relationship factors (i.e., relationship with supervisors, colleagues), but lower levels of satisfaction related to pay and fringe benefits (Ofili et al. 2014). Comparative studies of Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa indicate news professionals in Nigeria have higher job satisfaction than their counterparts in Kenya and South Africa (authors). However, Ileri's (2016) national survey of Kenyan journalists found high levels of job satisfaction (83%) even though six of ten respondents were dissatisfied with their incomes.

Southeast Asia

There is limited research on job satisfaction in the news industry in Asia (Hanitzsch and Hidayat 2012; Lo 2012; Tamam, Jalarajan, and Govindasamy 2012). Levels of job satisfaction often reflect the different working conditions prevalent in distinct countries. In both Indonesia and Malaysia perceived job autonomy is low due to censorship (Willnat, Weaver, and Choi 2013). But, in Indonesia, the overall job satisfaction rate has been consistently moderate to high despite the influence of religion and politics (Hanitzsch and Hidayat 2012).

The Arab Region

Previous research on Arab newsrooms shows a perception of unfairness in media (Pintak & Genges, 2009). Identified challenges included a lack of professionalism, government control, and ethics (Pintak & Genges 2009). When asked about their roles in society, Arab journalists responded that their focus should be towards political reform, educate the public, and provide news for social good (Pintak & Genges 2012).

Considering the research from the three sampled regions, for the first area of inquiry, we ask how satisfied the sampled news personnel are with their jobs through an adapted version of the JDI. This is to establish the overall levels of job satisfaction of the sampled participants by asking:

RQ1: How does job satisfaction manifest in the sampled participants?

Gender and Job Satisfaction

An early study that measured women's job satisfaction in the news industry found women were confident in their performance levels, but the majority felt there was no place for advancement, and they were underpaid (Barrett 1984). Notably, Lucht (2016) found similar results when surveying women working for Iowa newspapers years later in that women were happy with the work but unsatisfied with salary and lack of advancement opportunities. Massey and Elmore (2011) explain the gap between women's personal performance and their job is that news personnel tend to differentiate between their ideals of journalism and the realities of the news industry. A more recent study found women were less satisfied with their jobs compared to the men and were more likely to leave journalism within five years (Weaver, Willnat, and Wilhoit 2019).

The influence of gender on job satisfaction also differs across countries. There is currently limited research on gender and job satisfaction within our sampled regions. Women in Nigeria and South Africa ranked their job satisfaction similarly to men even though they perceived their newsrooms to be rife with gender inequalities (authors). In Kenya, Ireri (2016) found men and women were equally satisfied with their jobs. However, the authors research on Kenya indicates men have higher job satisfaction than women journalists (authors).

Based on the above literature that shows men are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, we predict:

H1: Men will have higher levels of job satisfaction than women and gender non-conforming people.

Gender Inequalities in the News Industry

One unique contribution of this study is to explore perceptions of gender equality within the news industry to measure perceptions against job satisfaction and experienced sexual harassment. There is ample literature on gender inequalities in journalism (Carter, Steiner, and Allan 2019) such as a lack of leadership opportunities (Andi, Selva, and Kleis Nielsen 2020), disproportionate domestic responsibilities (De Vuyst and Raeymaeckers 2019; North 2016b), pay gaps (Elmore 2009; Knowles 2020), gendered role perceptions (Craft and Wanta 2004; Lobo et al. 2017), and so forth. The following examines gender inequalities in the news industry within the sampled regions.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Many studies show women in African newsrooms leave the news industry in the early stages of their careers frustrated (Akinbobola 2020; Rao and Rodny-Gumede 2020; Zhou 2015). Women are also underrepresented in the news industry (Ileri 2016). Notably, a 2020 survey of women journalists working in 17 African countries showed they experienced barriers because of their gender—including demands for sexual favors (Akinbobola 2020). Even in South Africa, where statistics indicate gender parity, women continue to experience gender discrimination (Rodny-Gumede 2015).

Southeast Asia

Women are severely underrepresented in the news industry in Asia (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO 2015]). A survey of newsrooms in Asia and Oceania found men outnumbered women by a ratio of 4:1 (Byerly 2011). In Indonesia, women account for less than 10% of the journalism workforce (Simorangkir 2020). In addition to gender hierarchies in newsrooms, cultural barriers and stereotypes in some Asian countries deter women from pursuing careers in journalism (UNESCO 2015). In Myanmar, for example, many women's careers end after marriage due to gender role stereotypes that place domestic responsibilities on women (Romare 2016). Similarly, journalists in Vietnam uphold sexist attitudes about the roles of men and women in society (Vu et al. 2017).

The Arab Region

The news industry is an atypical profession for women in the Arab patriarchal societies (Melki and Mallat 2013; Mellor 2019). Gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and the lack of legally and socially empowering environments are key factors that contribute to marginalizing female journalists (Melki and Mallat 2016). In Lebanon, scholars highlighted a serious gender gap in the news industry (Melki and Mallat 2013). Furthermore, while women constitute more than three-quarters of journalism students in Lebanese universities, they form less than one-third of the workforce as they encounter many challenges that force their exit from the industry (Melki 2009).

In Egypt, however, female journalists approach parity with men in the reporting and editorial ranks, but still encounter institutional and social discrimination (Kaye-Essien and Ismail 2020). This includes pay gaps, sexist work relations, sexual harassment, difficulty maintaining a work-life balance, and unfair work assignments (Ismail 2019; Kaye-Essien and Ismail 2020, 119). Discrimination expands outside newsrooms where female journalists are challenged by the patriarchal social norms at home that restrict their full integration into society (Ismail 2018).

In more tribal societies like Jordan, social ideologies and gender stereotypes still have a significant influence on women's lives, education, and career choices—discouraging women from working in unconventional professions including journalism (Al-Najjar 2013). When surveyed, the ratio of male and female journalists was 5:1, not to mention Jordanian newsrooms are slow to develop gender equality policies (Byerly 2011, 26).

While the same problems related to the underrepresentation of female journalists are present in the Palestinian media industry, female Palestinian journalists encounter higher levels of aggression and gendered violence in their daily news work (Palestinian Media Monitoring of Gender Equality Report 2015).

Understanding that there are patterns of gender inequality in the news industry in the sampled regions, the next research question explores how the sampled participants perceive newsroom gender equality in their respective countries by asking:

RQ2: How do newsroom gender equality perceptions manifest in the sampled participants?

Similar to job satisfaction, the second hypothesis predicts:

H2: Men will have higher levels of newsroom gender equality perceptions than women and gender non-conforming people.

Sexual Harassment in the News Industry

One area of gender inequality is sexual harassment in the news industry. This isn't to imply that men or gender non-conforming people don't experience sexual harassment, but rather that it disproportionately affects women. In this study, all participants were asked about experienced sexual harassment regardless of gender.

Most people agree sexual harassment is wrong, but because it is an issue that disproportionately affects women it's often perceived as a "women issue" (Hardacre and Subašić 2018), and is thus, not prioritized by leadership that is disproportionately male (Byerly 2011). Nevertheless, sexual harassment remains a major safety concern for journalists. A global survey of female journalists found nearly half of respondents had been sexually harassed at work (IWMF 2014). Scholarly work in diverse geographical settings have also documented patterns of systemic and institutionalized workplace sexual harassment, with female journalists accounting for the majority of those affected (Idås, Orgeret, and Backholm 2020; Jamil 2020; Melki and Mallat 2016; North 2016a; Sreedharan, Thorsen, and Gouthi 2019).

There is limited research of some of the countries within the sampled regions. What has been conducted shows patterns of sexual harassment in the news industry. A 2020 survey of journalists in eight African countries found nearly half of women respondents had experienced sexual harassment at work (Women in News 2021). In Kenya, eight out of ten female survey respondents reported being sexually harassed at work at least once (authors).

In Indonesia, one study found all female participants had experienced sexual harassment on the job (Simorangkir 2020). In Myanmar, half of participants drawn from three regions of the country said they had experienced sexual harassment at work (Romare 2016). In the Philippines, public attacks on women journalists by powerful personalities, including President Rodrigo Duterte, are often followed by online harassment and trolling (Tandoc, Sagun, and Alvarez 2021). Despite its pervasiveness and impact on women's emotional and physical wellbeing, many newsrooms in Asia are ill-equipped to address gender discrimination and workplace sexual harassment (Byerly 2011).

In the Arab region, among women journalists in Lebanon, 88% identify sexual harassment as a serious problem (Melki and Mallat 2016). While experiencing sexual harassment from bosses, colleagues, and news sources, the limited protection exerted by the Egyptian

Journalists' Syndicate (EJS) makes fighting media companies in a legal battle "a high road rarely travelled" by female journalists (Kaye-Essien and Ismail 2020, 129). In Palestine, female journalists, human rights defenders, and media students experience gender-based violence aimed to restrict their reporting of Israeli violations (Jamal 2004)

Notably, journalism scholarship has neglected the connection between sexual harassment and job satisfaction. Organizational research in other industries suggests workplace sexual harassment has a negative effect on the job satisfaction (Alrawadieh et al. 2021; O'Leary-Kelly, Bowes-Sperry & Bates 2009; Mueller, De Coster, & Estes 2001). A comparative study of Pakistani and US employees noted workers who were experiencing workplace sexual harassment had lower job satisfaction than employees who were not experiencing sexual harassment (Merkin & Shah 2014). Similarly, a survey of women working in universities in Malaysia showed sexual harassment is a predictor for both work stress and low job satisfaction (Hutagalung & Ishak 2012). Thus, the final area of inquiry is to measure the extent that sexual harassment has on job satisfaction:

RQ3: How is job satisfaction of the sampled participants impacted by experienced sexual harassment?

Method

The survey ($N = 1583$) used for this study was conducted online via Qualtrics, was anonymized, and included 16 countries and one state from Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Botswana, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam), and the Arab region (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine). The type of sampling employed was purposive sampling since it was important to make "the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses" (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016, 2) in that news personnel were the target sample.

Sampling

Ethical approval was granted by the host university before data collection began, which included ensuring anonymity of participants, that the survey was voluntary for participants, and that all other procedures would be followed. The survey consisted of 33 closed question and one open-ended question. Data collection took place during three time periods starting with the Sub-Saharan sample between July 2020 and October 2020, the Southeast Asian sample between December 2020 and March 2021, and the Arab region between February 2021 and April 2021. The survey was originally written and tested in English, then translated to Burmese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Arabic for local and region distribution. Each survey was translated by a local professional translator commissioned. Before distribution, each iteration of the survey was pilot tested with between 20–50 people who were asked to feedback any points of confusion or translating errors. Once updated, the surveys were then distributed in newsrooms. The survey was distributed through a partnership with Women in News (WIN) who had local teams in each sampled country. Each local WIN team had extensive connections to news media

organizations within their country. They distributed the survey link to HR and senior personnel at each news organization who then shared with news personnel.

The survey link was sent with corresponding information on what participants could expect in the survey, how the data would be used, and that it was voluntary. The survey took an average of 19 min to complete. The survey consisted of relevant measurements and demographic questions (gender, age, experience, education, and nationality). Participants were asked to indicate their medium type and were permitted to answer more than one answer.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The breakdown of the participants in Sub-Saharan Africa ($n = 576$) is as follows: Botswana ($n = 31$, women = 27, men = 4), Kenya ($n = 83$, women = 62, men = 20, gender non-conforming = 1), Malawi ($n = 87$, women = 46, men = 37, gender non-conforming = 4), Rwanda ($n = 103$, women = 59, men = 41, gender non-conforming = 3), Tanzania ($n = 90$, women = 76, men = 13, gender non-conforming = 1), Uganda ($n = 55$, women = 38, men = 17), Zambia ($n = 68$, women = 47, men = 17, gender non-conforming = 4), Zimbabwe ($n = 59$, women = 49, men = 9, gender non-conforming = 1), and other African country ($n = 8$). The eight participants from non-sampled countries were removed for a total sample of 576.

The sample consisted of 70% women, 27% men, and 2.4% gender non-conforming people. Participants were from print (47.4%), online (39.3%), radio (37.5%), TV (23.8%), and other (4%). The average participant held a bachelor's degree (57.3%), with others holding a high school diploma to some university (28.7%), and the remaining a post-graduate degree (14%). The participants had various years of experience in the industry ranging from 0–1 year (7.7%), 2–4 years (22.4%), 5–7 years (18.8%), 8–9 years (11.3%), and 10 or more years (39.7%). Concerning the gender of the supervisor, 71% of participants indicated their supervisor was male, 26% said female, .5% indicated gender non-conforming, and 2.7% said not applicable. When asked about the anti-sexual harassment policy, 46.7% said no policy, 35.9% said yes, but had no training, and 17.4% said yes, and had training.

Southeast Asia

The breakdown of the participants in Southeast Asia ($n = 487$) is as follows: Indonesia ($n = 173$, women = 77, men = 96), Malaysia ($n = 41$, women = 35, men = 6), Myanmar ($n = 100$, women = 69, men = 30, gender non-conforming 1), Philippines ($n = 30$, women = 19, men = 11), Vietnam ($n = 143$, women = 64, men = 76, gender non-conforming 3), and other Asian country ($n = 9$). The nine participants from non-sampled countries were removed for a total sample of 487.

The sample consisted of 54% women, 45% men, and 1% gender non-conforming. Participants were from online (70%), print (54%), TV (28.5%), radio (12.6%), and other (6.6%). The average participant held a bachelor's degree (70.6%), with others holding a high school diploma to some university (12.8%), and the remaining a post-graduate degree (16.4%). The participants had various years of experience in the industry ranging from 0–1 year (6.8%), 2–4 years (16.6%), 5–7 years (13.4%), 8–9 years (9%), and 10 or more

years (53%). Concerning the gender of the supervisor, 65% of participants identified a man, 31% a woman, 1.4% gender non-conforming, and 3.2% not applicable. When asked about the anti-sexual harassment policy, 51% said no policy, 42% said yes, but had no training, and 6.7% said yes, and had training.

The Arab Region

For the Arab region ($n = 520$), the local Arab representatives advised to include a third category as “prefer not to say.” These participants are excluded from calculations where gender is specified. The breakdown of the participants is as follows: Egypt ($n = 180$, women = 116, men = 53, prefer not to say = 11), Jordan ($n = 117$, women = 65, men = 38, prefer not to say = 14), Lebanon ($n = 157$, women = 67, men = 50, prefer not to say = 40), and Palestine ($n = 66$, women = 31, men = 24, prefer not to say = 11), and other Arab country ($n = 7$). The seven participants from non-sampled countries were removed for a total of 520. The sample consists of 54% women, 32% men, and 14% prefer not to say. Participants were from online (52.9%), print (30%), TV (25.4%), radio (15.6%), and other (7.4%). The average participant held a bachelor’s degree (60%), with others holding a high school diploma to some university (16%), and the remaining a post-graduate degree (24%). The participants had various years of experience in the industry ranging from 0–1 year (11.6%), 2–4 years (20%), 5–7 years (15.6%), 8–9 years (13.3%), and 10 or more years (39.5%). Concerning the gender of the supervisor, 65.8% of participants identified a man, 24.3% a woman, and 9.7% did not specify. When asked about the anti-sexual harassment policy, 65% said no policy, 28% said yes, but had no training, and 7.2% said yes, and had training.

Measures

Verbal and Physical Sexual Harassment

Participants of this study were asked several questions concerning verbal sexual harassment (VH) and physical sexual harassment (PH). VH was defined as, “This occurs when a person receives unwanted sexual attention through verbal or written comments.” PH was defined as, “Physical harassment is when someone uses physical force to have sexual contact with another person against their will.” Participants were first asked with two different variables to identify the amount of experienced VH and PH (never, 1 time, 2–4 times, 5 + times, and I can’t remember). If participants answered yes to either question, they were then asked about how often they reported their experienced VH or PH (I didn’t report, I reported all of my experiences, I reported most of my experiences, I reported some of my experiences, I can’t remember). If participants had reported, they were then asked to identify action taken on the part of the organization (nothing, case dismissed after review, perpetrator was warned, perpetrator was transferred, perpetrator was suspended, perpetrator was fired, police were informed, the victim was provided emotional support, the organization provided training for staff against sexual harassment, and other). Those who indicated they had experienced VH or PH harassment were asked to identify their source(s) of harassment (fellow employee, direct supervisor, higher management, news source, other). Participants were also asked to identify any witnessed sexual harassment

(never, 1 time, 2–4 times, 5 + times, and I can't remember). For the analysis, the "I can't remember" option was recoded as 0, making the variables on an increasing level.

Personal Job Satisfaction Index

The personal job satisfaction index consists of six variables: I personally feel treated fairly at work, I have been promoted when applied, I feel satisfied in my current position, I feel comfortable to talk to my supervisor, I feel heard at work, and I feel safe at work. The first five variables were used in a previous study by the authors (authors) and adapted from the JDI (Smith, Kendall, and Hulin 1969). The last variable was added for this study since a focus of the study was to measure the correlation between job satisfaction and sexual harassment in the workplace. Each variable was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Newsroom Gender Equality Index

The last set of questions measured the perceptions of the participants on newsroom equality in terms of gender. The index consists of five variables: news organizations treat.

women and men equally, news organizations promote women and men equally, men are given advantages (reversed coded), and women are given advantages (reversed coded). The variables were used in a previous study by the authors (authors) and are based off the JDI with a gendered perspective. These areas are commonly inconsistent for women and men in terms of a pay gap (Elmore 2009; Knowles 2020), lack of access to power and promotion (Andi, Selva, and Kleis Nielsen 2020; Byerly 2011), and gendered norms in the news industry (Craft and Wanta 2004; Lobo et al. 2017). Table 1 shows results of a factor analysis with Promax rotation, which had a high level of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of .91, and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(55) = 7087.14, p < .001$). All variables loaded as expected.

Table 1. Summary of exploratory factor analysis results for personal job satisfaction index and newsroom gender equality index.

Item	Factor loadings personal job satisfaction	Newsroom gender equality
News organization treats women and men equally		.46
News organization promotes equally		.46
Equal salary for men and women		.43
Men are given advantages (r)*		.74
Women are given advantages (r)*		.87
I personally feel treated fairly	.75	
I have been promoted when applied	.82	
I feel satisfied in my current position	.83	
I feel comfortable to talk to supervisor	.74	
I feel heard at work	.74	
I feel safe at work	.74	
Eigenvalues	5.15	1.20
% of variance	46.78	10.94

Note: Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold. *(r) = reversed coded.

Results

Once the data was collected and cleaned for partially completed surveys, SPSS was used to answer the RQs and Hs. The analysis began with RQ1, which asked how job satisfaction manifested in the sample. This was calculated by country within the regions and by region. The first calculations were a one-way ANOVA between the Sub-Saharan African countries and the personal job satisfaction index that resulted in significance, $F(8, 642) = 4.33, p \leq .001$. Table 2 shows the *M* and *SD* for each country. Examining the Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show the only significance was between Rwanda (highest overall levels) and Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Next, the same calculations were run for Southeast Asia with significance, $F(5, 491) = 4.73, p \leq .001$. The Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons reveal Myanmar and Malaysia were significantly lower than the Philippines and Vietnam. The same calculations were run again for the Arab region with significance, $F(4, 441) = 9.83, p \leq .001$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show Egypt was significantly lower than the remaining countries.

Personal job satisfaction was then analysed through regional comparisons. A one-way ANOVA was run with significance, $F(2, 1574) = 28.89, p \leq .001$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show significant differences between the regions with Sub-Saharan Africa ($M = 4.61, SD = 1.4$) ranking lowest, followed by the Arab region ($M = 4.85, SD = 1.36$), and the highest levels of job satisfaction in Southeast Asia ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.36$).

The next set of calculations tested H1, which predicted that men would have higher levels of job satisfaction than women and gender non-conforming people. A one-way ANOVA was run with significance, $F(2, 1499) = 5.09, p \leq .01$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show that men have a significantly higher rate ($M = 5.01, SD = 1.33$) than women ($M = 4.79, SD = 1.33$). There were no significant differences for gender non-conforming

Table 2. One-way ANOVA results by country and personal job satisfaction index and newsroom gender equality index.

	Country	Personal job satisfaction		Newsroom gender equality	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana	4.77	1.38	4.74	1.32
	Kenya	4.09	1.62	4.11	1.56
	Malawi	4.66	1.33	5.24	1.45
	Rwanda	5.17	1.09	5.22	1.43
	Tanzania	4.57	1.45	4.51	1.37
	Uganda	4.59	1.25	5.12	1.30
	Zambia	4.45	1.44	4.93	1.37
	Zimbabwe	4.48	1.38	4.23	1.31
	Total	4.60	1.4	4.76	1.46
	Southeast	Indonesia	5.19	1.08	5.46
Malaysia		4.85	.98	4.54	.92
Myanmar		4.92	1.15	4.91	1.10
Philippines		5.76	1.03	5.80	1.11
Vietnam		5.39	1.14	5.30	1.17
Total		5.22	1.36	5.20	1.11
Arab region	Egypt	4.35	1.44	4.64	1.33
	Jordan	5.23	1.25	4.88	1.20
	Lebanon	5.09	1.23	5.11	1.28
	Palestine	5.12	1.20	4.97	1.09
	Total	4.95	1.36	4.90	1.46

people ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.14$). H1 is partially supported in that men have significantly higher levels of job satisfaction than women, but not gender non-conforming people.

To answer RQ2, which asked how newsroom gender equality perceptions manifest in the sampled participants, one-way ANOVAs were run again by country and region and the newsroom gender equality index. The one-way ANOVA for Sub-Saharan Africa shows significance, $F(8, 654) = 7.57$, $p \leq .001$. Table 2 shows the M and SD for each country. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show that Kenya (lowest overall levels) was significantly lower than Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. Malawi (highest overall levels) was significantly higher than Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Southeast Asia also had significance, $F(5, 497) = 8.75$, $p \leq .001$. For newsroom gender equality perceptions, Myanmar and Malaysia were significantly lower than the remaining countries. The Arab region statistics showed significance as well, $F(4, 452) = 2.64$, $p \leq .05$. The only significant difference was between Egypt and Lebanon. A regional one-way ANOVA was significant for the newsroom gender equality index, $F(2, 1603) = 19.33$, $p \leq .001$. Southeast Asia ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.11$) was significantly higher than the Arab Region ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.27$), and Sub-Saharan Africa ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.46$). There was no significance between Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab region.

To answer H2, which predicted that men would have higher newsroom gender equality perceptions than women and gender non-conforming people, a one-way ANOVA was run with significance, $F(2, 1524) = 5.48$, $p \leq .001$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons show once again that men ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.28$) have significantly higher levels than women ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.32$), and there was no significance for gender non-conforming people ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.32$). H2 is partially supported in that men have significantly higher perceptions of newsroom gender equality than women, but not gender non-conforming people.

The next research question sought to understand how job satisfaction is impacted by experienced sexual harassment (RQ3). Firstly, to get a sense of frequency of sexual harassment, one-way ANOVAs were run with significance between gender and VH, $F(2, 1527) = 35.03$, $p \leq .001$ and PH, $F(2, 1527) = 20.48$, $p \leq .001$. The Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that women ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 1.22$) are significantly more likely to be verbally harassed than men ($M = .56$, $SD = 1.03$). There was no significant difference for gender non-conforming people ($M = .96$, $SD = .98$). Women ($M = .47$, $SD = .89$) were also significantly more likely than men ($M = .20$, $SD = .61$) to be physically harassed. There was again no significant difference for gender non-conforming people ($M = .30$, $SD = .70$).

One-way ANOVAs were also run with significance between region and VH, $F(2, 1587) = 35.10$, $p \leq .001$ and PH, $F(2, 1565) = 47.85$, $p \leq .001$. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons for VH show significance between all the regions with Sub-Saharan Africa ($M = 1.17$, $SD = 1.28$) the highest, followed by the Arab region ($M = .85$, $SD = 1.12$), and Southeast Asia ($M = .59$, $SD = 1.04$). For PH, Sub-Saharan Africa ($M = .64$, $SD = 1.02$) was significantly higher than Southeast Asia ($M = .26$, $SD = .67$) and the Arab region ($M = .21$, $SD = .58$). There was no significant difference between Southeast Asia and the Arab Region.

To understand the impact of experienced sexual harassment on job satisfaction, several statistical analyses were run. Firstly, a simple linear regression was run for the personal job satisfaction index and VH and PH. The results show a negative significance for VH, $F(1, 1559) = 201.91$, $p \leq .001$, $R^2 = .12$. The experienced VH had a negative impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.34$, $p \leq .001$). The results show a negative significance for PH as

Table 3. Simple linear regression between personal job satisfaction index and experienced sexual harassment by country.

	Country	df	F	R2	β	SE	t
Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana	1, 31	.11	.03	.06	.242	12.37
	Kenya	1, 88	3.44	.04	-.19	.20	16.16
	Malawi	1, 87	19.05***	.18	-.42***	.18	-4.37
	Rwanda	1, 114	.96	.001	-.09	.14	-.98
	Tanzania	1, 98	8.33**	.08	-.28**	.18	-2.89
	Uganda	1, 61	.27	.01	-.07	.17	-.52
	Zambia	1, 73	3.71*	.05	-.22*	.19	-1.93
	Zimbabwe	1, 67	.09	.001	-.04	.2	-.3
Southeast Asia	Total	1, 641	27.25***	.04	-.20***	.06	-5.22
	Indonesia	1, 171	8.91***	.05	-.22***	.15	-2.99
	Malaysia	1, 39	5.08*	.12	-.34*	.19	-2.25
	Myanmar	1, 95	3.19	.03	-.18	.17	-1.79
	Philippines	1, 28	8.7**	.24	-.49**	.23	-2.95
	Vietnam	1, 140	40.21***	.22	-.47***	.13	-6.34
	Total	1, 490	51.25***	.10	-.31***	.08	-7.16
Arab Region	Egypt	1, 163	4.48*	.03	-.16*	.14	-2.11
	Jordan	1, 99	20.04***	.17	-.41***	.16	-4.48
	Lebanon	1, 116	13.84***	.11	-.33***	.16	-3.72
	Palestine	1, 52	6.29**	.11	-.33**	.29	-2.51
	Total	1, 440	42.92***	.09	-.30***	.09	-6.55

$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

well, $F(1, 1537) = 4.70$, $p \leq .05$, $R^2 = .03$. The experienced PH had a negative impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.06$, $p \leq .05$).

Next, the VH and PH sexual harassment variables were combined, and simple linear regressions were run by country. Table 3 shows the results. The countries showed a significant negative impact for the countries except for Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Myanmar.

Finally, the combined sexual harassment variables were run by region using simple linear regression. Table 3 shows that sexual harassment negatively impacted job satisfaction for all the regions.

Discussion

This 16-country and one state study ($N = 1583$) analyzed how news personnel from Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Arab region evaluated job satisfaction in relation to experienced sexual harassment. It expands current knowledge by including understudied countries, measuring the impact of sexual harassment on job satisfaction, and evaluating differences in how people evaluate newsroom gender equality. The intention was to expand how we situate sexual harassment and newsroom gender equality from “women issues” (Hardacre and Subašić 2018) to systemic problems in the news industry that everyone within the news industry should be committed to eradicating. We build on existing literature that shows there are various factors impacting job satisfaction in the news industry (Chan, Pan, and Lee 2004; Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2012; Hao and George 2012; Liu et al. 2018) and that sexual harassment is a problem in newsrooms (IWMF 2014).

There were a few notable differences between countries within the regions sampled; nevertheless, the comparisons between regions were consistent with Southeast Asia

having the highest job satisfaction, highest perceptions of newsroom gender equality, and lowest average of experienced sexual harassment. Sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest job satisfaction, lowest perceptions of newsroom gender equality, and highest average of experienced sexual harassment. The Arab region was in the middle of the other regions. Notably, experienced sexual harassment had a significantly negative impact on job satisfaction for all regions. Overall, men had higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived newsroom gender equality than women and gender non-conforming people.

An important implication of the findings challenges how we situate different types of sexual harassment. A misconception about sexual harassment is that there are only few “real” instances of it and the remaining experiences are merely miscommunications (Cohen 2005; Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald 1999; Weiss 2009). Our research acknowledges that there are varying degrees of verbal and physical sexual harassment, but that all are wrong, and all should be eliminated. The findings support that by showing both verbal and physical sexual harassment have negative consequences to victims. Verbal sexual harassment is commonly experienced by the participants in this study, and that has a significantly negative impact on job satisfaction. If we eliminate the myth that verbal sexual harassment is just a flirtation gone wrong, and rather situate it as an act of power aimed to humiliate, hurt, or dominate another person, then news organizations could start to take adequate action to eliminate it from newsrooms. Physical sexual harassment is meant to be taken more seriously given its ramifications; however, it also continues to be common, particularly for women. Both are underreported, showing an atmosphere in newsrooms that silence and disempower victims and allow sexual harassment to thrive.

Another notable finding is the gender differences in personal job satisfaction and newsroom gender equality perceptions. As men dominate the top-leadership positions and enjoy higher wages, more empowering work environments, and easier access to the field (Melki and Mallat 2016; Romare 2016), it is not surprising that they reported higher levels of job satisfaction and perceptions of newsroom gender equality compared to women. The findings differ from previous studies that showed there weren't gender differences in job satisfaction (Ileri 2017; Lucht 2016). Our findings include a large sample of countries from various geographic locations. Furthermore, we included the dimension of safety, which may be overlooked in other job satisfaction measures.

Practical Implications

This study highlights the need for news organizations to change gendered hierarchies common in newsrooms wherein men dominate key decision-making positions (North 2014). The findings show most participants indicated their supervisor was a man. If men continue to hold dominant positions in newsrooms while simultaneously assuming their organizations have already achieved gender equality, then little change is likely to occur.

Structural and organizational changes are needed to combat inequalities that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual harassment. For instance, only 10.4% of participants answered they were aware of an anti-sexual harassment policy at their organization

and had received training on it. Organizations must implement policies that address all types of sexual harassment and enact ethical charters to define gender discrimination in its different forms. Training is also necessary for staff that includes highlighting the many negative effects of sexual harassment such as decreased job satisfaction.

By addressing gender inequalities that lead to women's lower job satisfaction, news organizations can also counter women's early exit from the news industry. Literature suggests women leave the profession at an earlier age and faster rate than their male counterparts (Elmore 2009; Reinardy 2009a; Song and Jung 2022; Weaver, Willnat, and Wilhoit 2019). While some women quit the newsroom to become freelancers, many exit the news industry altogether (Elmore 2009; Massey and Elmore 2011; Smith 2015). This turnover of women in newsrooms is often linked to the sexism that is pervasive in the industry (North 2016a). Ultimately, many female reporters exit their jobs prematurely out of frustration with structural inequalities in the news industry, gendered norms within society that conflict with journalistic work norms, concerns about safety, and the daunting task of managing professional and domestic responsibilities (authors; Rao and Rodney-Gumede 2020).

Limitations and Future Research

A wide range of understudied countries were included in this study, which offers insight into newsroom patterns across several Global South contexts. Part of the challenge of collecting data for this study was accessing participants. Future research is needed on how to support researchers accessing harder to reach areas to expand the research further. Qualitative research is also needed as survey research is limited in the depth of answers of participants.

There is also the need for cross-country comparisons to examine how legal and institutional gender equality laws and policies are put into practice by different media organizations to highlight successful experiences and propose ways for incorporating them in other countries. Special attention should be paid to investigating the influence of media ownership and business models, as well as the role of various social actors including journalists' syndicates, unions, and activists.

Although we included a category for gender non-conforming, the sample size was small and not fully administered in the Arab region. Furthermore, other LGBT + identities were not included in this study. Race and ethnicity should also be included in future research, and religion where applicable. Examining the intersection of different identities would also help further understanding of workplace safety and equality and its impact on job satisfaction.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

Funding received by WAN-IFRA Women in News.

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