

Female Journalists: Dwindling Interest Among College Students

Prima Virginia¹, Adwin Agung Kurniawan², Nessa Aulia³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Pamulang

Email: dosen03091@unpam.ac.id, dosen03315@unpam.ac.id, nessalia017@gmail.com

*Corresponding author: dosen03091@unpam.ac.id

Received June 15, 2026; Revised July 1, 2026; Accepted July 8, 2026

Abstract

This study aims to identify the factors influencing the low number of female students in the first cohort of the Communication Studies program at Pamulang University who chose journalism as their major and a career in journalism, despite female students dominating in numbers at over 50 per cent. Using a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative and qualitative methods—and supported by a constructivist paradigm and Standpoint theory, this study analyzed the data holistically. The quantitative analysis involved 49 female students, whilst the qualitative sample comprised five female students. The results of the quantitative data analysis show that respondents did not choose their major based on an interest in specific subjects or lecturers, but rather targeted specific professions aligned with their chosen major, dominated by Corporate Communication and Broadcasting. Every female student already has a career goal in mind, which is why they choose a major that aligns with it. Unfortunately, less than 20 percent of female students are interested in journalism. Based on observations, interviews, and a literature review, female students are largely influenced by the perspective and belief of how difficult being a journalist—a field dominated by men—can be. The small number of female journalists is seen as scarce and prestigious, but not enough to persuade many female students to choose a career, which is ingrained in their minds as a high-risk profession. Even female students interested in journalism are reluctant to pursue specific fields that could put them in danger. They prefer to become media workers instead of journalists to meet the demands of digital and online media era.

Keywords: College Students, Female, Journalist, Journalism, Interest.

INTRODUCTION

Several issues plaguing journalists in Indonesia, are assumed converted into a lack of interest amongst university students to major in journalism and pursue a career in journalism. For example, at Pamulang University in South Tangerang, Banten, the university did not provide a journalism major because out of 613 first-batch Communication Studies students, fewer than 20 students were interested in the journalism major – insufficient to meet the quota for opening a single journalism class. In 2024, The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) research report in Indonesia found most respondents stated a decline in student interest in journalism degree programs over the past decade. Consequently, universities have reduced the number of courses offered and even closed programs (Danayanti et al., 2024). Similarly, the Communication Studies program at Pamulang University has been affected, despite the number of enrolled students increasing every year. Most of the respondents, who are lecturers at various universities in Indonesia, believe the decline of the print media industry due to the rise of online media is one of the factors contributing to students' reluctance to choose journalism as a major, as job opportunities in the field are becoming increasingly scarce.

Although the interest and number applicants to Communication Studies continue to rise, this trend is not matched by research journals, which have produced very little research on the reasons why the number of Communication Studies students choosing to major in journalism continues to decline. Moreover, research involving female students rarely exists. This situation represents a research gap that prompted this study, which focuses on female Communication Studies students as the research subjects. The research subjects in this study are fifth-semester students from the first batch of the Communication Studies Program at Pamulang University. The first batch of Communication Studies program at Pamulang University had 349 female students, out of a total of 631 first batch students. It is assumed that female students are the most significant contributors to the lack of interest in journalistic majors and journalist professions.

In 2023, research in the Communication Studies program at the University of Muhammadiyah North Sumatra only took a qualitative sample of 10 male and female students as respondents to gauge interest in the journalism profession. Only 4 of the 10 respondents admitted to being interested in the journalism profession (Ndruru et al., 2023). But this study did not specify the gender of the respondents. A significant study on the interest of female journalism students in pursuing careers as journalists was conducted by Remotivi in collaboration with the University of Indonesia and Diponegoro University in 2021. This research concluded that the high interest shown by 229 female students at four universities in Indonesia in choosing journalism as their major does not necessarily mean that their interest in becoming journalists is equally high, as respondents viewed the profession as unfriendly to women and full of risks—factors that ultimately lead women to choose careers or gender roles within the domestic sphere (Heychael et al., 2021). Similar research also took place in other countries, such as India, where female students' high interest in pursuing journalism training and majors does not necessarily lead to careers as journalists, because media organizations still discriminate against women, causing female

journalists' careers to stall midway (Bamezai et al., 2020). Interestingly, a study of high school students in Australia and New Zealand found that journalism is not seen as a "blokey" career, viewing female journalists as intelligent, serious, assertive, and highly curious (Pearson, 2009).

Thus, choosing journalism as a major does not necessarily guarantee pursuing a career as a journalist, even though journalism is still viewed as a prestigious profession. But, as AJI research report in 2024, current data indicates that interest in journalism continues to decline among female students. Research reveals various reasons why journalism is a less preferred specialization among female, but all the research focused on female journalists. Not aspiring female students who still studying at university. For example, the threat of discrimination and marginalization (Putri, 2025), sexual harassment (Suprihatin & Azis, 2020), a loss of ambition after marriage (Stellarosa & Silaban, 2019), gender equality to remove patriarchal understanding (Asnaura et al., 2021), dual stereotype and gender bias in the workplace (Effendi, 2026), to the difficulty of employment due to layoffs and redundancies caused by the convergence of digital and online media (Nusantara et al., 2019). In Patriarchal society, female journalists encounter complex challenges that require critical thinking although have superior natural skills and talents to men (Steiner, 2012). The authors highlight three main issues related to the reconstruction and problems faced by women working in the media, which are: women's representation in the media, the number of women in the media, and the identification of news issues (Fitriawan & Nuraeni, 2017). These issues lead many female journalists to change career paths due to imbalance between work and personal life, job insecurity, the risky nature of the profession, and low pay for journalists (Sherin, 2022). The increasingly selective job demand for multitasking journalists because of digital media convergence (Nusantara et al., 2019) might be an additional factor behind the declining interest in journalism.

The authors believe the decision-making process for female students is influenced not only by the correlation between their choice of major and career goals but also by other reasonable factors related to previous research and current situation in Indonesia. **Therefore, the authors propose the preliminary hypothesis that there is a correlation between the choice of major and the career goals of female students. Then, what factors contribute to the declining interest in journalism and journalists among female college students?** To analyze this question, the study employs feminist standpoint theory, which has previously been frequently used in research related to the profession of female journalists. The difference here is that this study adopts the standpoint of female Communication Studies students, rather than female journalists or a male perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Standpoint theory is believed capable of analyzing female perspectives from diverse backgrounds (West & Turner, 2018), arguing that differences in human lives stem from an imbalance in experiences and understanding of one's surroundings (Dainton & Zelley, 2019). This theory is known as Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) by adopting

women's perspective. Early development of Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) can be traced back to the debates among Marxist and socialist feminists from the 1960s through the 1980s, most notably when Nancy Hartsock established FST as an important epistemological tool for challenging forms of domination, including capitalist form of patriarchy (Putranto, 2022). Meanwhile, Sandra Harding believes there is no single, fixed, eternal meaning of "objectivity," and sees FST as capable identifying undetected problems, leading to its application across various social sciences (Harding, 2012).

The study focuses on female students, as they're increasingly reluctant to choose journalism, both the major and the profession. Conceptually, journalists and journalism are believed to voice the truth and earn public trust as the foundation of a democratic society (Onah et al., 2026). However, this concept is assumed to differ when applied to female journalists. This is based on several studies on female journalists that employ Feminist Standpoint Theory. The feminist standpoint epistemology is considered to have little influence or significant impact on objectivity of reconstruction and transformation in the newsrooms of mainstream media due to corporate orientations and Western journalism values, even though the media continues to increase the presence of female journalists (Souza Neuls et al., 2026), but it's in line with the key to the maximum reflection of emotions and affect (Kotišová, 2026) on journalists positionalities and related emotional experiences. Feminist Standpoint also criticized as a theory failed to explain gender in journalism (Steiner, 2012), but significantly used to communicate resistance and oppression against female journalists (Elmore, 2009). FST tends to be used to reconstruct the position of female journalists in newsrooms that are still male dominated, without providing any significant change.

The above studies demonstrate the relevance of feminist standpoint theory to female journalists. The authors assume that the standpoint of female students may differ depending on current conditions and circumstances. According to the results of a collaborative study by Remotivi, University of Indonesia (UI), and University of Diponegoro (UNDIP) in 2021, female journalism students are reluctant to become journalists due to low income, heavy workloads, unsupportive gender role expectations, and the disregard for female gender expression—such as the stereotype that women are better suited for lifestyle coverage while men are better suited for political and legal coverage (Heychael et al., 2021) —without considering the capabilities and perspectives of female journalists. Using FST and a constructivist paradigm, this study reveals the factors influencing female students' lack of interest in journalism and becoming journalists.

METHODOLOGY

We used mixed methods, adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods where a certain number of female students randomly selected voluntary survey. The research began by distributing a questionnaire amongst the first batch of male and female students on the Communication Studies program at University of Pamulang to identify the reasons behind the lack of interest in the Journalism major and the journalist profession. Each questionnaire containing 15-20 statements were created and passed on

to them randomly by paper. Based on the primary questionnaire data, the number of female students dominated the male students, when the data was separated by gender. We began this study on the assumption that there is a correlation between choosing to study journalism and future career prospects. From the breakdown of the data by gender—male and female—another hypothesis emerged: that female students dominate, with less interest in journalism.

Population and Sample of Quantitative Method

The population of respondents in this quantitative questionnaire consisted of 613 fifth-semester (first-batch) students on the Communication Studies programme at Pamulang University, comprising 264 male students and 349 female students. Meanwhile, the sample is a portion of the population whose characteristics can be considered representative of the entire population. Using the Slovin formula, 86 male and female students were selected to complete the primary questionnaire data.

$$\text{Slovin Formula: } n = \frac{600}{1 + 600 (0,1)^2} = 85,71 \rightarrow \text{equal to } \mathbf{86 \text{ Sample}}$$

Notes:

n: required sample size

N: Population size (total number of students rounded to 600)

E: margin of error (tolerance level – 10%)

From these 86 respondents, the data was separated based on gender, with **49 female students selected** from 20 classes in the Corporate Communication and Broadcasting specialisations. This separation of data was necessary to compare the main sample (86 respondents) with the specific sample of female student respondents (49 respondents). Condensing the data specifically for female student respondents formed the basis for the questions posed to female student respondents for further data.

Data Collection of Quantitative Method

Data collection is central to any research (Bryman, 2012), whereas quantitative research uses questionnaires as the primary instrument for collecting primary data (Lindawati et al., 2022). The questionnaire is the primary data source for the quantitative data in this study, designed based on the simplest Likert scale to calculate the frequency and percentage of respondents' responses, with three levels of agreement for each statement (Bryman, 2012), such as: Agree, Undecided, and Disagree. This simplest form of the Likert scale indicates the level of agreement, serving as both a measurement tool and an indicator of respondents' attitudes and the intensity of their feelings through frequency and percentage. Frequency determines how many respondents selected each level of agreement, whilst the percentage calculates the proportion of respondents' chosen answers. Both frequency and percentage are used to observe how the data changes when

the sample of respondents is taken as a whole, and when female respondents are specifically separated. Data collection through questionnaires from 86 respondents were taken during February 2026. However, the quantitative data—presented through numbers and text (Creswell, 2009)—cannot fully explain why female students seem less interested in journalism. The quantitative method, in the form of numbers, left various questions unanswered and provided results deemed insufficiently in-depth by the researcher for further discussion. Therefore, we require additional research methods to complement this study.

Qualitative Method

To provide comprehensive research results, this study is supplemented with an interpretative qualitative method, as it employs textual interpretation to achieve a holistic understanding (Mulyana et al., 2008). Qualitative data will complement the quantitative data in a comprehensive (holistic) manner, thereby yielding insights from the interpretation and analysis of the data.

For qualitative samples, five female students were selected randomly based on their provision of complete, detailed responses representing diverse backgrounds. Qualitative data collection was obtained from interviews, observations, documents and textual analysis (Mulyana et al., 2008). Observations and document review aimed to understand the respondents' background, whilst in-depth interview (face-to-face) explored standpoint of female students' on representation of women in the media, the number of women in the media, and the identification of news issues; all of which were then used for textual analysis to provide depth to the numerical data from the quantitative data collection techniques. Interviews and qualitative data collection of five respondents took place between 1 and 5 June 2026.

All five respondents came from diverse backgrounds, aged 20 to 21—only 1–2 years apart from the respondents in the quantitative data. The respondents were second-batch students in their fourth semester on the Communication Studies programme at Pamulang University, who were preparing to choose a specialisation or major in their fifth semester. Interpretative data from these five respondents was required to determine the potential interest of female students' specialisations or majors in the following semester, particularly in relation to this study, specifically Journalism and the profession of journalism. The following are the profiles of the five female respondents:

No	Initial	Age	Background
1	V	20 years	Youngest, 2 Older Sisters, 1 Older Brother
2	M	20 years	Middle, 2 Sisters
3	At	21 years	Eldest, 2 Younger Sisters, 1 Youngere Brother
4	An	20 years	Eldest, 1 Younger Sister, 1 Younger Brother
5	I	20 years	Middle, 1 Brother, 1 Sister

Table 1. Female Respondents' Profiles

The differences of birth order (which child) amongst the female student respondents are important for understanding how gender roles, family expectations and parenting styles shape experiences in life, considering that birth order can create unique psychological dynamics and social responsibilities (especially for women), including influencing decision-making regarding future study programs and careers.

Data Analysis

The main purpose of employing mixed-method, to obtain a holistic, comprehensive, valid, and in-depth understanding of the reasons for female students' low interest in journalism, arose from a belief that a quantitative approach—with its reliance on numerical data—requires the depth of meaning provided by a qualitative approach. Furthermore, the triangulation and validation of findings from this mixed-method approach can reduce bias and enhance targeted exploration. In mixed-methods research, triangulation is used by collecting quantitative and qualitative data and then comparing them. This approach helps determine whether there are similarities, differences, or a combination of both (Creswell, 2009), and it also serves to validate the research findings. This study used sequential explanatory strategy to elaborate all the methods. It begins with data collection and analysis of quantitative data and continue with analysis of qualitative data that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative data provides numbers on the level of interest among female students in journalism and journalists, whilst the qualitative data provides in-depth interviews describing respondents' personal experiences, thereby enriching and provides a comprehensive data, and a holistic explanation involving current related situation from previous research to describe the reasons behind female students' lack of interest in journalism and journalists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the preliminary hypothesis of this study, there is a correlation and relationship between academic majors chosen by students with their career preferences after graduation. The quantitative results of this study reveal that students' interest in the Journalism major program does not align with their interest in the journalist profession. The respondents' interest in and enthusiasm for the courses and lecturers in the Journalism programme did not influence their preference for choosing the Journalism degree programme. The low number of applicants for the Journalism programme is consistent with the respondents' low interest in the journalism profession. The figures and frequency decrease significantly when the questionnaire data is separated specifically for female students.

Similarly, qualitative research data indicates that respondents' views on the journalism profession do not align with their interest in pursuing a major in journalism. Various reasons emerged from the qualitative data gathered through interviews with female students who would be choosing their major specialisation in the coming semester. Interest in and understanding of the journalism profession do not align with decisions

regarding the choice of major and profession, which are underpinned by various reasons and perspectives.

The results and discussion of this study are divided into three sections, describe female students' standpoint on Journalism as a major, standpoint toward Journalists, and the issues related to female journalists. The correlation between three sections and literature review from previous research revealed comprehensive and holistic analysis to identify the reasons why female students' interest in Journalism is low.

Female Students' Standpoint on Journalism Major

Based on the questionnaire data, student interest in majoring in journalism is quite low. However, if we break this down by lecturer, course and grades, nothing particularly stands out as a clear reason for this low level of interest in the journalism major. The lack of interest in journalism is not due to the subjects, lecturers, or peer influence. Respondents choose majors based on personal preference and the career goals they aim to pursue after graduating. The reasons are logical, as many fifth-semester respondents already have off-campus jobs.

Statement	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
I chose this major because of the subjects	63/73%	14/16%	9/10%
I chose this major because of the lecturers	24/28%	33/38%	29/34%
I chose my major because of my friends' influence	13/15%	12/14%	61/71%
I chose this major because of personal preference	82/95%	4/4%	0/0%
I chose this major because of the facilities provided	52/60%	23 / 27%	11/13%
I chose this major because of the job and career opportunities.	74/86%	10/11%	2/2%

Figure 1. Statement of 86 Respondents

Figure 1 shows that more than 50 per cent of the 86 respondents chose their major based on course modules, personal preference, facilities, opportunities for jobs and careers. The survey results demonstrate that respondents were not influenced by external factors such as peers or family when choosing their major but were instead considering their goals and career prospects after graduation. In fact, these data are in line with the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the choice of major and the profession targeted, although the survey figures indicate low interest in journalism and journalists. The same pattern was observed in the sample of 49 female students. The results differ slightly when analyzed separately for female student respondents.

Statement	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
I am interested in journalism subjects	18/21%	31/36%	37/34%
I am satisfied with Journalism lecturers	36 / 42%	23 / 27%	27 / 31%
I often get good grades in journalism courses	71/83%	9/10%	6/7%

Figure 2. Statement of 49 Female Respondents

Figure 2 shows that 83 per cent of female student respondents achieved good marks in journalism-related subjects. Good marks, however, do not necessarily mean that respondents are interested in the course or wish to study journalism further, as 34 per cent of respondents disagreed with the journalism course, whilst 36 per cent were undecided on this statement. Meanwhile, regarding journalism lecturers, 42 per cent of respondents were satisfied, meaning that they had no issues with the lecturers. However, it should be noted that 31 per cent of respondents stated being dissatisfied with the teaching methods of the journalism lecturers.

Quantitative data shows that female student respondents have a significant influence when deciding the best major. Female student respondents rarely chose journalism as their major because most of them already work in sectors outside the journalism profession, such as office administration and production houses. Consequently, most respondents chose a major in line with the field of work they were currently engaged in whilst studying. These numerical findings still raise questions, as 36 per cent of respondents were undecided (unable to state whether they agreed or disagreed) regarding the statement “interested in journalism courses”. The respondents were unable to explain their reasons in detail. This is why this research continued with a qualitative approach, involving in-depth interviews with five female student respondents.

Based on the interview results, five respondents acknowledged journalists, especially women, are seen as cool and prestigious. The respondents acknowledged choosing their majors based on an interest in specific professions. Those who did not choose journalism admitted they were not interested in the profession for various reasons. Only one respondent confirmed she was interested in journalism because of her desire to work as a journalist. One respondent was still uncertain about her choice of major because, though interested in journalism, her high school background and internship experience seemed to better align with a major in corporate communication.

Respondent	Statement
V	<i>Personally, I'm not particularly interested in going into journalism because I'm not yet capable of running around looking for news. So, I'm not up to the task yet</i>
M	I'm interested. Between corporate communications and journalism, journalism is the one I'm considering.

At	<i>Personally, I'm not really interested, to be honest. Because I'm actually interested in a different major.</i>
An	<i>I'm really interested! Because, in my opinion, personally, I feel that my field is</i>
I	<i>I'm avoiding the Journalism course because I feel I don't have the capacity yet; it requires a lot of skills and in-depth analysis, as well as observation.</i>

Figure 3. Question: Are you interested in journalistic studies?

From figure 3, Three respondents seemed to doubt their capability to pursue journalism due to factors such as family background and the “comfort zone” created by patriarchal norms. V, the youngest child who felt secure within the family environment, believed high-mobility jobs required both mental and physical readiness, and she is not ready to face that situation. Meanwhile, At, as the eldest child, felt obliged to consider her younger siblings and avoid high-risk occupations. Vulnerability and high risk were particular concerns for I, the middle child, who, like V, was not yet mentally or physically ready to pursue Journalism as a profession. The respondents’ views reflect the perspective of women who perceive the journalism profession as shaped by a patriarchal mindset and environment, characterised by male dominance, which they doubt women can control. Their experiences and family backgrounds influence women’s decisions to choose careers deemed appropriate for their gender, which in turn shapes their aspirations and interests. The respondents seem uninterested in professions that empower women as equals to men. The other two respondents (M and An) showed a keen interest in journalism simply because they enjoyed the profession; in particular, the high level of mobility and the varied working locations, times and schedules. These two respondents support the quantitative data revealing respondents’ tendency to choose a major in line with their career goals after graduation.

From research conducted by the media study and monitoring institute Remotivi, UI & UNDIP (2021), learning experiences related to courses, assignments, and lecturers’ teaching methods are important factors that influence female students’ career decisions. At Unpam, female students selecting a major is not due to courses, lecturers, or campus facilities, but because of the need for learning experiences that will add career points in the future. This refers to the fact that more than 50 percent of fifth-semester students are already working, either part-time or full-time, so they need to study in a major (included courses, lectures, and facilities follows) that supports their current jobs that are related to corporate communications and broadcasting, not journalism. As respondents who are less interested in changing career path to become journalists, female students have their own standpoint on journalists.

Female Students’ Standpoint on Journalists

The small number of students interested in the journalism major is reflected in the respondents’ low interest in pursuing a career as a journalist. Only 18 out of 86 respondents

(20%) stated that they were interested in working as journalists. In addition, only 9 out of 86 respondents (10%) agreed to try an internship in journalism.

Statement	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
I am interested in journalist profession	18/21%	31/36%	37/34%
I am interested to become a broadcaster	36 / 42%	23 / 27%	27 / 31%
I am interested with Corporate Communication as a career	71/83%	9/10%	6/7%

Figure 4. 86 respondents' statements of interest in subject specialisation

Figure 4 shows the highest level of interest was in professions related to Corporate Communication, with 83 percent of respondents agreeing. Second place was taken by the broadcaster at 42 percent. In terms of economic background, respondents typically paid for their own tuition by working part-time or full-time, adjusting their work schedules accordingly. Students' jobs were predominantly in offices and companies across various sectors, or in broadcasting-related fields such as production houses. It was rarely found that students took internships or worked as journalists in media.

This figure is even lower among female students, with only 9 out of 49 respondents (18.36%) stating that they were interested in working as journalists. The data on the lack of interest among female students increased to 20 out of 49 respondents (40.81%). When the data was narrowed down specifically to the 49 female student respondents, only 5 respondents (57.14%) agreed to try an internship in journalism.

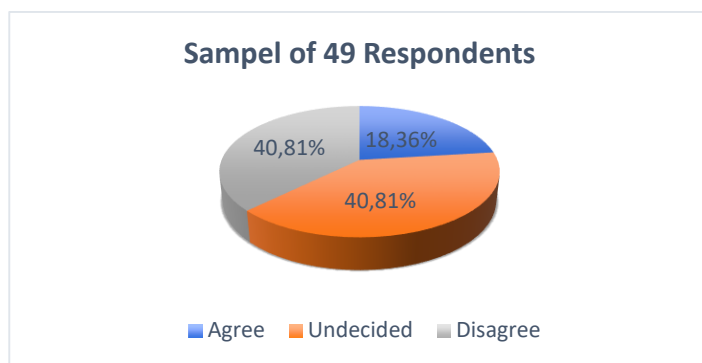


Figure 5. Statement: I am interested in journalist

Figures 4 and 5 not only support and complement the data in Figures 1 to 3, but also confirm the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the choice of a preferred major and the target profession. However, the number of majors and target professions is relatively limited, particularly among female students—who made up the majority of respondents and dominated the Communication Studies program.

The low level of interest in selecting journalism as a major directly correlates with the low level of interest among students in pursuing a career as a journalist because of female respondents standpoint. From the interview results, five female respondents admitted that journalism is a cool, brilliant profession, that requires excellent skills. Two female respondents said journalism appeals to them because of high mobility and the chance to meet lots of people, although they are aware of the risks.

Respondent	Statement
V	<i>If being a reporter and journalist is my last choice... but if I have other options, I'd prefer those instead.</i>
M	<i>I'm the sort of person who likes getting out into the field, reporting live, so I like journalism. I'm naturally curious, I know a lot, I want to know about lots of things, I like exploring. (Despite the risks) Losing time for family and myself because of the demands of the job.</i>
At	<i>Perhaps there is a bit of interest, but it needs more thought. The job is quite risky. So, for example, if I had to work as a journalist, and there are fewer women than men, there would certainly be a lot of social inequality.")</i>
An	<i>Seeing that journalists don't get any days off? That's fine, I like it. It's cool to be on TV. The risks of being a journalist are actually quite high, though. But if we're spreading valid information, where else would the audience get their news if not from journalists? I'm still interested in becoming a journalist.</i>
I	<i>I'd say it's fifty-fifty. Firstly, the job of a journalist is quite risky. Especially when we're in the position of being women, it'll be even more vulnerable. But on the other hand, it's challenging and exciting, so I'm not actually sure about the answer.</i>

Figure 6. Question: What If you were offered an opportunity to become a journalist?

Figure 6 shows that only one respondent (An) remains consistently interested in journalism, although she is aware of the various risks involved. Meanwhile, M, who is still undecided between the majors of Corporate Communication or Journalism, admits to being interested in a job offer as a journalist, even though M realises she will lose a lot of time with family but enjoys working in the field. At and I are still undecided whether to take the job opportunity or not because their fear of confronting the various risks of a journalist's work. Only respondent V has confirmed that she will not take the opportunity, and making it as her last option.

There was a unique finding from the interviews with respondents At and An. Both are eldest children whose mothers are stay-at-home moms. But they made different choices. At firmly refused to major in journalism because he didn't want to be a journalist who works on the go and has no set hours. At believes that women working indoors—such as in an office with fixed working hours—face fewer risks than journalists do. Meanwhile, for An, working in the field, in different locations, and meeting different people is a challenging experience worth trying. An enjoys challenges and new experiences, even if they're considered risky. Both of their plans have the support of their families, especially their mothers.

The journalists' standpoint ingrained in the minds of the female students respondent as a risky profession that requires careful reconsideration before pursuing it. Simply trying it out might be acceptable as a way to gain work experience, but when it comes to actually pursuing a career as a journalist, the majority of the female students respondent still doubt their own abilities and gender conditions in the workplace. Similar to previous research, a study by Remotivi about female students (Heychael et al., 2021), and even female journalists (Stellarosa & Silaban, 2019), being surrounded by stereotype of journalism as men's profession, as though pressures lead women to change career paths for domestic issues (Sherin, 2022). For female students like An, their interest in journalists makes them unconcerned about inadequate salaries and working hours. A sense of curiosity and the desire to be free to go outside the home and office, became the main reason of two respondent was determined to choose journalism and become a journalist.

From two subheadings above, the sequential explanatory strategy explains the proof of the initial hypothesis that there is a correlation between the choice of major and the career path. The research results also depict the low interest in journalism in line with the low interest of female students in becoming journalists. The next question that this research must reveal is whether this ongoing decline in interest in journalists is caused by issues of gender bias and stereotypes, or whether there are new conditions such as digital media convergence? The explanation is discussed in the following section.

Dwindling Interest among Female Students in Becoming Journalists

This research was written in June 2026, when the mass media was already led by several remarkable women, such as Rosianna Silalahi at Kompas TV, Najwa Shihab at Narasi, Retno Pinasti at Liputan 6 SCTV, and Titin Rosmasari at CNN Indonesia. This proves that in Indonesia several female journalists have succeeded in reaching top management, unlike in western journalism (Souza Neuls et al., 2026), which has tried to increase the number of female journalists but still has minimal achievement at the top management level of media companies. This implies that an institutional structural transformation has occurred in Indonesia, evidenced by the presence of female journalists in the top management levels of media companies. But these achievements have not yet resulted in an increased in the number of female journalists in Indonesia.

Based on the Alliance of Independent Journalists' data, composition of female and male journalists in Jakarta reaching 40 to 60 (Heychael et al., 2021). However, the disparity number of female and male journalists is quite apparent outside Jakarta, even in a big city like Surabaya, East Java, female journalists are only 30 per cent of the total (Tripalupi et al., 2024). It means that women's representation in the media has not yet reached 50%. Especially in top leadership positions. Obviously, the number of female journalists also influences the female students' standpoint outside Jakarta such as this research respondent from University of Pamulang. Female journalists are seen as 'rare' and cool, particularly when achieving top management positions and popularity. The scarcity of female journalists (Fitriawan & Nuraeni, 2017) reinforces respondents' perspective that journalist is a profession considered challenging and threatening for women. Mental and

physical unpreparedness are cited as the primary reasons. Although doubts did arise when female students received opportunities for a career in the media.

There is a difference in the portrayal of women working in the media and women as journalists. Women in the media are portrayed on screen as beautiful, neat, polite, and articulate presenters. Even female presenters (usually in infotainment programs) often wear clothing with low necklines that reveal their figures. Indeed, women appear to dominate the screen when it comes to these on-screen roles. But when we talk about female journalists, the image is portrayed as tough women capable of competing with men in the newsroom, able to break through to exclusive and difficult sources, and even facing the risks of reporting from disaster zones and war. These profiles are what cause female students to back down and abandon their intention to become journalists. However, working in the media remains a consideration for them. This was revealed in interviews, where female students interested in journalism and the media tend to avoid issues related to politics and the law. Respondents prefer to focus on social and cultural issues.

Respondent	Statement
V	<i>As for politics that's already so heavy, where it's like, 'Ah, the outcome will be the same anyway,' I won't really pay much attention to that news either.</i>
M	<i>The most fundamental thing is clearly the economy. Just the economy and the political situation of our own country for now, not foreign affairs. And I'm also most interested in culture.</i>
At	<i>Politics and social issues, really. Because, I mean, with politics, we wouldn't know, would we? If... if journalists didn't report on political matters—like the government and all that—we wouldn't know what's actually going on in this country. So, thanks to journalists, we can find out.</i>
An	<i>Because politics is a hassle. Politics is like, well, you know, the impact is huge. Especially with those in high places, the people at the top, you know. Their opponents are also high-ranking figures, so. So it's like that, the impact is also like, you might end up facing terror.</i>
I	<i>Specifically, it's social issues, social issues really, not socio-political ones, hmm. Because social issues are more about feeling relatable to the public, really.</i>

Figure 7. Question: What Issue do you Find more Interesting?

The respondents' standpoint shows that enthusiasts of journalism and journalists consider political issues to be a fundamental area of knowledge that must be acquired when working as a journalist. In the respondents' mindset, political issue is a serious and risky matter because related to confidential and national security. It could endanger one's safety if an investigation is conducted. Meanwhile, social and cultural issues (including culinary matters) represent a comfort zone for respondents when deciding whether to accept a career opportunity as a journalist. Thus, the respondents' mindsets are embedded with the standpoint that the small number of female journalists represents a rare and prestigious social position, not merely appearing on screen but also understanding a range of issues—particularly political topics—that threaten safety or lead to discrimination. This

evidence in line with previous research of Remotivi in 2021, which explain the stereotype of political issues coverage as 'men's work' rather than female journalist worth to try.

Ironically, the students' standpoint on journalism and journalists as controversial issues on women has long been established, through mass media and digital platforms that they frequently view on their gadgets and mobile phones. Irregular working hours, few days off, the ability to gain access to sources, travelling to remote locations, and the risk of discrimination and intimidation against women, to stereotype of gender issues coverage, still cast a shadow over the respondents' standpoint. Finally, the digital era has caused media convergence, resulting in numerous media companies have collapsed and layoffs of journalists (Nusantara et al., 2019). Digital media convergence has created new job opportunities, as well as additional tasks for journalist to be multitasking and engaged with technology and AI. Digital disruption has caused female students to view journalism as increasingly complex. Even if there are opportunities, respondents prefer working in media, not specifically as journalists.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the preliminary hypothesis that students choose their majors because they have a specific profession in mind after graduation. Regarding the low number of female students choosing journalism and becoming journalists, several reasons were identified that correlate with their standpoints based on personal experience and knowledge of the profession, in line with the additional assumptions of this study. Economic and family background do not exert a direct or significant influence on female students' interests.

Instead, there are long-standing perceptions and experiences that affect their interest. The small number of women in the profession, the mobility of the workplace, irregular working hours, discrimination, and threats against journalists, also diversity issues – particularly those related to politics, dangerous zone, and investigative – are the reasons why many female students avoid career as journalists. All these factors subconsciously contribute to the dwindling interest in journalism among female students.

Nevertheless, low compensation and journalists' layoffs do not constitute the primary reasons for this disinterest. Conversely, the digital disruption has generated new employment opportunities within emerging digital and online media companies. Respondents indirectly perceive this digital transition as offering more achievable career paths compared to traditional journalism. Consequently, the inclination of female students of work in the media industry remains high; however, they do not specifically indicate a preference for journalists.

REFERENCES

- Asnaura, Zahrani, N., & Alifia Suryadi, S. (2021). Women, Journalism, and Discrimination in Indonesia Digital Media. *J-KIs: Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 2(2), 81–94. <https://doi.org/10.53429/j-kis.v2i2.304>
- Bamezai, G., Roy, A., Roy, A., & Chhetri, S. (2020). Gender mainstreaming as an essential part of journalism education in India. *World of Media*, (3), 5–33. <https://doi.org/10.30547/worldofmedia.3.2020.1>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Third Edit). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2019). *Applying communication theory for professional life: A practical introduction* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Danayanti, E., Wardhana, B., Marsiela, A., & Galuh, F. (2024). *Laporan Penelitian Menilai Penerapan Jurnalisme Data dan Investigasi Berbasis Data di Indonesia*. https://aji.or.id/system/files/2024-07/laporanmenilaipenerapanjurnalismedatadaninvestigasi8_4.pdf
- Effendi, A. Y. (2026). PEREMPUAN PROFESIONAL: RESISTENSI JURNALIS, GURU, DAN PEGAWAI TERHADAP BIAS GENDER DI TEMPAT KERJA. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama (JISA)*, 9(1), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.30829/jisa.v9i1.28006>
- Elmore, C. (2009). Turning Points and Turnover among Female Journalists: Communicating Resistance and Repression. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 32(2), 232–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2009.10162388>
- Fitriawan, R. A., & Nuraeni, R. (2017). *Jurnalistik Media*. Deepublish.
- Harding, S. (2012). Feminist Standpoints. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (2nd ed., p. 46). SAGE Publications Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n3>
- Heychael, M., Eriyanto, Rahmaji, L. R., Hasfi, N., Saputra, S. J., Amabel, W., Utomo, W. P., Wafi, R. N., & B., S. P. (2021). *Mengapa Ada Banyak Mahasiswi Jurnalistik Tetapi Sedikit Jurnalis Perempuan?* (p. 108). Remotivi. <https://admin.remotivi.or.id/storage/pdf/1625890032.Studi>

mengenai persepsi dan ketertarikan mahasiswa dan mahasiswi jurnalistik untuk bekerja di industri pers.pdf

- Kotiřová, J. (2026). Journalism and Embodied Knowledge: Conceptualizing Affective Epistemology and Epistemic Affordances of Emotions and Affect Across News Beats. *Journalism Studies*, 27(5), 633–650.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2025.2495726>
- Lindawati, S., Lubis, D. P., & Fatchiya, A. (2022). The Influence of Vocational High School Students Communication with Parents, Teachers, and Peers on the Career Maturity. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan*, 20(02), 140–154.
<https://doi.org/10.46937/20202240696>
- Mulyana, D., Shaw, A., Wahl-Jorgensen, K., McCullough, P., Ball, D. W., Edgley, C., Turnenr, R. E., Jones, R. S., Scmid, T. J., & Kuswarno, E. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi: Contoh-Contoh Penelitian Kualitatif dengan Pendekatan Praktis* (D. Mulyana & Solatun, Eds.). Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Ndruru, Y., Junaidi, J., & Batoebar, M. U. (2023). Minat Mahasiswa Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi Dalam Memilih Profesi Sebagai Jurnalis. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Network Media*, 6(2), 59–71.
<https://doi.org/10.46576/jnm.v6i2.3538>
- Nusantara, S. B., Haryanto, I., & Prestianta, A. M. (2019). After Digital Disruption: Jobless Experience of Indonesian Young Journalists. *Ultimacomm: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 11(1), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.31937/ultimacomm.v11i1.1113>
- Onah, K. I., Santas, T., & Inobemhe, K. (2026). Dynamics of Job Security of Journalists in the Political Economy of Nigeria and the Future of Journalism Practice. *Ultimacomm: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 17(2), 137–163.
<https://doi.org/10.31937/ultimacomm.v17i2.4412>
- Pearson, M. (2009). A comparison of teenage views on journalism as a career in Australia and New Zealand. *Pacific Journalism Review*, 15(2).
<https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v15i2.991>
- Putranto, H. (2022). Criticizing Female Genital Mutilation Practice from Feminist Standpoint Theory: A View from Communication Science Perspective. *Jurnal Humaniora*, 34(2), 95. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.68097>

- Putri, F. S. (2025). Diskriminasi dan Peminggiran Jurnalis Perempuan dalam Industri Media di Indonesia. *Warta ISKI*, 8(2), 247–257. <https://doi.org/10.25008/wartaiski.v8i2.449>
- Sherin, C. A. (2022). *Career Path Choices of Female Journalism Students and Female Journalists: The Causes Why Women Stay Put and Leave Newsroom* (Number March). St Teresa's College.
- Souza Neuls, G., Battocchio, A. F., & da Silva, M. P. (2026). Learning from Indigenous Journalism: A Case for Standpoint Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 27(4), 439–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2025.2593450>
- Steiner, L. (2012). Failed Theories: Explaining Gender Difference in Journalism. *Review of Communication*, 12(3), 201–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2012.666559>
- Stellarosa, Y., & Silaban, M. W. (2019). Perempuan, Media dan Profesi Jurnalis. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 7(1), 97–109. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v7i1.18844>
- Suprihatin, S., & Azis, A. M. (2020). Pelecehan Seksual Pada Jurnalis Perempuan di Indonesia. *PALASTREN: Jurnal Studi Gender*, 13(2), 413–434. <https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v13i2.8709>
- Tripalupi, M. F., Kusnadi, H. F. N., & Irawan, R. E. (2024). Examining women journalists in Surabaya: a critical ethnographic media portrait study. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 8(2), 373–380. <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v8i2.7808>
- West, R. L., & Turner, L. H. (2018). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application* (Sixth). McGraw-Hill Education.