



Challenges Faced by Women Sports Journalists in Covering Sporting Events

الصعوبات التي تواجه المرأة الإعلامية الرياضية أثناء تغطية الأحداث الرياضية

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify and examine the key challenges encountered by women sports journalists at Beur TV in social, institutional, and fieldwork contexts. It further seeks to explore the obstacles hindering the transmission of information about sporting events from the perspective of female sports journalists working in the channel's sports department. The study was conducted on all 14 female sports journalists employed at Beur TV. This research sheds light on the difficulties faced by women sports journalists in their professional duties and reveals the conditions under which they cover sporting events. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the journalists, addressing various dimensions of social, institutional, and fieldwork-related challenges. The key findings of the study include the following: First, Multiple professional challenges arise both within and outside the institution, particularly in accessing information about sporting events. Second, several obstacles have hindered the professional advancement of female sports journalists, with social, institutional, and fieldwork challenges being the most prominent. Third, Inequality in treatment persists, alongside various professional constraints, such as difficulties in conducting interviews with officials from sports federations and club presidents, workplace harassment and intimidation, as well as low salaries, incentives, and rewards.

Keywords: Challenges; Women Journalists; Social Challenges; Institutional Challenges; Fieldwork Challenges; Sporting Events.

Introduction

Sports journalism is a specialized branch of general journalism, focusing exclusively on the realm of sports. As a social institution, it operates through various media channels and responds to the environment in which it functions due to its dynamic interaction with society. A comprehensive understanding of sports journalism requires an awareness of the societal context in which it operates to ensure that the messages it conveys align with the prevailing values and traditions. Despite the numerous challenges and obstacles faced by sports journalism and its practitioners, both male and female, it continues to evolve and develop.

Women sports journalists hold a significant position in this field, both in terms of their numbers and their contributions. However, their professional experience often differs from that of their male counterparts. Due to the difficulties and constraints they encounter in the field, women sports journalists frequently face challenges that limit their full engagement in the profession.

1. Research Problem

The 20th century has been referred to as the "century of women" due to the significant strides they have made in various fields. Historically, women were primarily engaged in agricultural work, household responsibilities, and domestic tasks. As mothers, they bore the responsibility of raising future generations, while as wives, they managed households and family economies. Their role in shaping society has always been indispensable (Mansour, 2011, p. 240). However, the economic and social transformations brought about by the two World Wars positioned women as active contributors to society. They gained recognition in various professional domains, including medicine, education, accounting, and journalism.

The field of journalism, in particular, has provided women with a platform to express their perspectives and address societal issues, despite facing resistance due to differing cultural norms and traditions. Women have played a crucial role in media, using their voices to advocate for important causes and contribute to public discourse. Their role in journalism extends beyond mere participation; it encompasses educating society, especially women, by providing insightful and informative content. Women's success in journalism, including sports journalism, is largely dependent on their strong personalities, commitment to truth, and adherence to professional ethics in reporting (Mansour, 2011, p. 241).

To succeed in the field of sports journalism, women journalists must continuously develop their skills to keep pace with the rapid changes in the global sports industry. Their success relies on several fundamental principles, including talent, confidence in their abilities, and proper training, which equips them with the necessary knowledge, expertise, and sense of responsibility in the sports sector. However, the current state of sports journalism faces numerous challenges, including structural issues within media organizations and daily obstacles encountered in covering sporting events (Ghamid, 1993, p. 58).

Women remain a minority in sports journalism, both in terms of representation and performance. They encounter numerous difficulties and barriers in the field, often facing greater challenges than their male counterparts across various levels. These challenges frequently hinder their ability to practice their profession fully, particularly in terms of accessing information about sporting events.

2. Research Question

To explore this issue, the present study seeks to answer the following central question:

What are the main challenges faced by women sports journalists in different media institutions while covering sporting events from their own perspective?

This overarching research question is further divided into the following sub-questions:

- What are the social challenges faced by women sports journalists when covering sporting events?
- What are the institutional challenges faced by women sports journalists when covering sporting events?
- What are the fieldwork challenges faced by women sports journalists when covering sporting events?

3. Research Hypothesis

3.1. General Hypothesis: Social, institutional, and fieldwork challenges are among the most significant obstacles faced by women sports journalists in covering sporting events.

3.2. Sub-Hypotheses

- ❖ Women sports journalists face social challenges while covering sporting events.
- ❖ Women sports journalists encounter institutional challenges while covering sporting events.
- ❖ Women sports journalists experience fieldwork challenges while covering sporting events.

4. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

- ✓ Identify the key challenges faced by women sports journalists in various media institutions while covering sporting events from their own perspective.
- ✓ Examine the social challenges encountered by women sports journalists during sports event coverage.
- ✓ Investigate the institutional barriers that hinder women sports journalists in their professional duties.
- ✓ Explore the fieldwork difficulties that women sports journalists face while reporting on sporting events.

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in the growing role of women in contemporary society. This study is particularly valuable as it examines the realities of women's participation in sports journalism and their contribution to the media industry. Furthermore, it highlights the obstacles women sports journalists encounter in transmitting information while covering sporting events, as well as the considerable efforts they exert despite these challenges. The findings of this research could serve as a foundation for future studies and benefit professionals involved in sports journalism and gender studies in media.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research Approach

A research method is a systematic approach to discovering truth in scientific inquiry through a set of principles that guide reasoning and operational processes. Given that the objective of this study is to identify the challenges faced by women sports journalists while covering sporting events, the nature of the topic necessitates the collection of extensive information and data. Consequently, the most appropriate methodology for this study is the descriptive approach, as it is best suited to achieving the research objectives.

The descriptive approach is defined as "a set of research procedures that work together to describe a phenomenon or subject by gathering facts and data, classifying, processing, and analyzing them thoroughly and accurately, in order to extract their significance and reach conclusions" (Bashir Saleh Al-Rashdi, 2000, p. 59). This approach not only describes the phenomenon but also analyzes it and uncovers relationships between its different dimensions to interpret it and draw conclusions that contribute to improving and developing reality.

6.2. Exploratory Study

The exploratory study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the different aspects of the problem addressed in this research. A field visit was conducted to the headquarters of Beur TV, allowing for a clearer view of the sports department through direct engagement with women journalists and an assessment of the working conditions in sports journalism, particularly concerning the transmission of information on sporting events. The key findings from this exploratory study are as follows:

- The channel lacks a structured framework that organizes the different units responsible for fieldwork, particularly in covering sporting events.
- There is a shortage of technical resources and equipment necessary for comprehensive sports event coverage.
- Women journalists do not receive the appropriate professional recognition and appreciation from the channel's management.

6.3. Research Population and Sample Selection

The research population consists of Algerian women sports journalists. Given the large size and diversity of this population, a purposive sampling technique was adopted. The study sample specifically includes women sports journalists working in the sports department of Beur TV, with a total of 14 journalists.

6.4. Research Instrument

In line with the research objectives and nature, and to test the research hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed and administered to women sports journalists at Beur TV.

The questionnaire comprised three main dimensions :

1. Social challenges faced by women sports journalists during sports event coverage.
2. Institutional challenges encountered in the workplace.
3. Field-related challenges that arise during sports reporting.

6.5. Statistical Methods Used

Appropriate statistical techniques were employed, primarily based on the type of data analyzed. The key methods used include:

- Frequencies
- Percentages

7. Theoretical Framework

7.1. Definition of Key Terms :

7.1.1. Women Journalists

7.1.1.1. Conceptual Definition: A woman journalist is a professional working in various branches of media, including print journalism, radio, television, and digital platforms (Abu Zaid, 2010, p. 45). She plays a key role in news gathering, report writing, program management, and content production (Al-Ali, 2015, p. 112). Women journalists significantly contribute to highlighting social issues, particularly women's concerns, thereby shaping public opinion and raising societal awareness (UNESCO, 2018, p. 2).

7.1.1.2. Operational Definition: In this study, a woman journalist refers specifically to a female sports journalist working in the sports department of Beur TV, Algeria. She is responsible for collecting and reporting sports news and information as a full-time professional activity and primary source of income.

7.1.2. Sports Events

7.1.2.1. Conceptual Definition: Sports events refer to organized competitions or tournaments that take place periodically or at scheduled times and locations under the supervision of sports federations or governing bodies (Habib Ali Al-Rubaian, 2007, p. 1).

7.1.2.2. Operational Definition: In this study, sports events encompass all sporting competitions and activities covered by women sports journalists, including local, national, and international events.

7.1.3. Social Challenges

7.1.3.1. Conceptual Definition: Social challenges refer to difficulties or obstacles encountered by individuals or groups in their interactions with society or their surrounding environment (Al-Khawalda, 2018, p. 67).

7.1.3.2. Operational Definition: In this study, social challenges denote the barriers faced by women sports journalists in their interaction within and outside media institutions. These include societal norms, family obligations, mobility constraints, and other social limitations that hinder their professional activities.

7.1.4. Institutional Challenges

7.1.4.1. Conceptual Definition: Institutional challenges refer to the difficulties employees face within an organization that hinder their job performance or limit their ability to achieve work-related goals efficiently (Al-Khalifa, 2018, p. 45).

7.1.4.2. Operational Definition: In this study, institutional challenges refer to the obstacles faced by women sports journalists within media institutions, which impede their ability to accomplish their objectives or perform their tasks effectively. These include lack of training and professional development, poor working conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities.

7.1.5. Fieldwork Challenges

7.1.5.1. Conceptual Definition: Fieldwork challenges are difficulties employees encounter while performing their duties outside the organization's headquarters, whether in fieldwork locations or during interactions with clients or stakeholders (Al-Ghamdi, 2017, p. 89).

7.1.5.2. Operational Definition: In this study, fieldwork challenges refer to the difficulties women sports journalists face while working in external environments, such as difficulties in conducting interviews with officials, harassment, and other obstacles encountered during sports event coverage.

8. Review of Previous Studies

Upon reviewing relevant literature on the challenges faced by female journalists in the media field, several studies were found to be closely related to this research:

8.1. Manal Fadel Bazadouq's Study (2013): *The Role of Jordanian Women Journalists in the Sports Sector: Problems and Solutions*

The study employed the descriptive research method and used stratified random sampling, selecting 45% of the total population (resulting in a sample of 268 female journalists registered with the Jordanian Press Association and the Jordanian Sports Media Union). A questionnaire was used to collect field data. The key findings of this study are:

- Male journalists were preferred over female journalists in covering and attending sports events.
- Media institutions played a role in developing the skills and capabilities of female journalists.
- Jordanian female journalists faced several challenges in the sports sector, with many expressing reluctances to participate in fieldwork and attend sporting events.

8.2. Study by Ezzat Hegab and Mahmoud Shalabi (1999): *Women Professionals in Jordanian Media*

The study used the survey method, selecting a sample of 50 female journalists. A research questionnaire consisting of 14 thematic sections and 23 elements was distributed to the sample. The main finding of the study is that 54% of female journalists reported experiencing various levels of discrimination in terms of employment, promotion, training, and participation in external assignments.

8.3. Hernandez's Study (1996): *The Challenges Faced by Women Journalists*

The study was conducted among female journalists covering the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, representing 40 different countries. The survey research method was employed, and data was collected using a structured questionnaire. This study revealed these results:

- Women journalists faced more challenges in the media field than their male counterparts.
- There were fewer opportunities for professional growth and career advancement for female journalists.
- 93% of the surveyed female journalists reported daily experiences of discrimination and difficulties in accessing information.

8.4. Wilson's Study (1990): This study aimed to examine the gender gap in the media field and the essential results of such a study are the following:

- Women in media lack access to policy-making, financial resources, and professional advancement, primarily because the media remains a male-dominated domain.
- Female journalists face challenges that their male counterparts do not encounter.

- Women have limited opportunities to attain leadership positions in the media sector.

8.5. Abdelaziz Bousfat's Study (2005): *Women Journalists in Algeria: Presence and Performance*

To assess the roles and positions of female journalists in Algerian print media institutions. The results gained from this study are:

- There is a dominance of men in senior leadership positions within the Algerian journalism sector.
- Women journalists hold a marginal percentage of decision-making roles, estimated at only 6.81%.
- A field survey of 27 national daily newspapers showed that women occupy only 27.16% of total positions in print journalism.

The study concluded that women's presence in journalism is largely constrained by male-dominated structures, as over 70% of managerial and executive roles are controlled by men.

8.6. Belfodil Nassira and Laïdi Abdelkarim's Study (2018): *Women Journalists in Algeria: History of Media Work and Working Conditions*

To provide a comprehensive description of female journalists' professional experiences in Algeria and compile key data on their status in the field. A descriptive field study conducted on a purposive sample of 190 female journalists. The study covered 55 daily newspapers over the period 2015–2017. A survey questionnaire with 80 open and closed-ended questions was used for data collection. The most important findings reached out of this study are as follows:

- Female journalists face two main types of challenges:
 1. Workplace-related obstacles, such as limited career opportunities and biased recruitment policies.
 2. Societal pressures, including gender discrimination and cultural barriers.
- Women journalists are disadvantaged in several aspects of professional life, including:
 - Hiring processes (preference given to male candidates).
 - Opportunities for foreign assignments (men are prioritized for international reporting).
 - Publication privileges (fewer chances for women to publish major articles).
 - Appointment to administrative positions (men dominate managerial roles).
- The study highlighted the social constraints and pressures that further hinder women's professional advancement in Algerian journalism.

9. Analysis and Discussion of the Questionnaire Results

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The first hypothesis stated: "*Female sports journalists at Beur TV face social difficulties while covering sporting events.*" Following statistical analysis, the obtained result is as follows:

Table (01): Presents the key social difficulties encountered by female sports journalists during sports event coverage.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Working late hours	12	85.7%	1
Traveling to distant locations	6	42.9%	2
Difficulty of certain issues	6	42.9%	2
Low societal appreciation	5	35.7%	3
Multiple family commitments	5	35.7%	3
Discouraging traditions and customs	5	35.7%	3
High cost of living	4	28.6%	4
Low cultural awareness	4	28.6%	4
Harassment	3	21.4%	5
Shyness	3	21.4%	5
Family conservatism and lack of support	2	14.3%	6
Psychological distress	1	7.1%	7
Gender mixing	0	0%	8

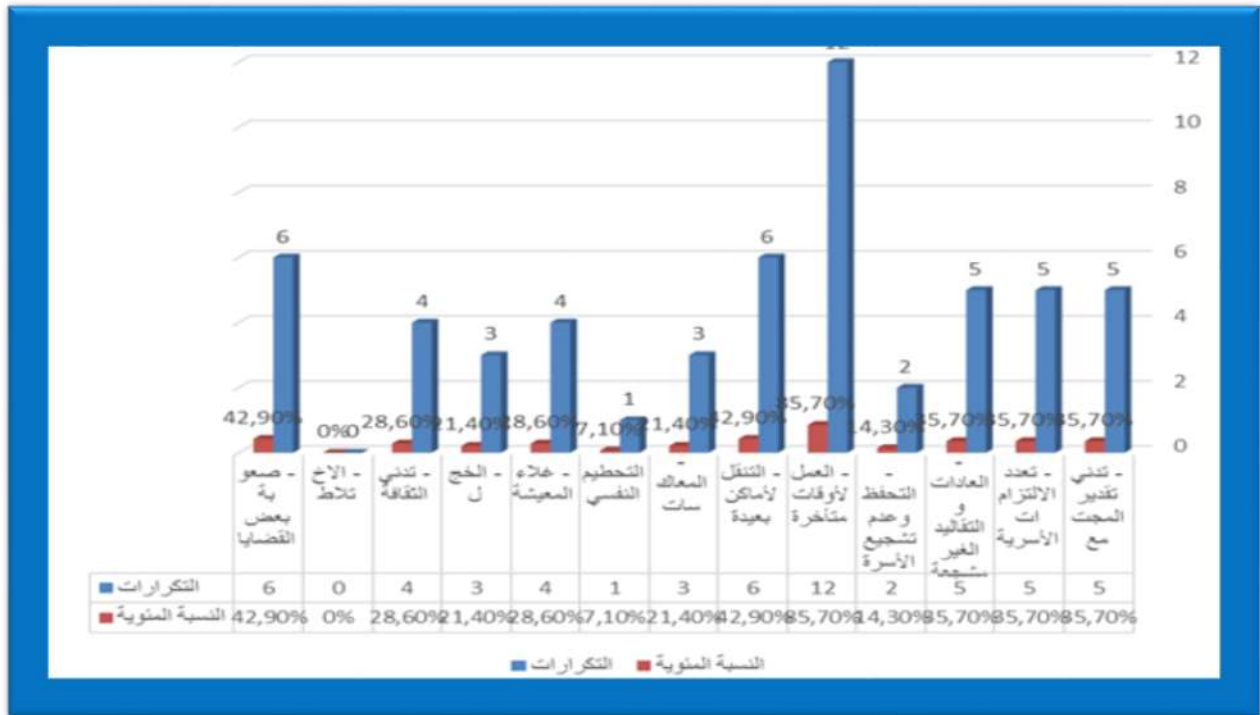
Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

From the table above, we can identify the most significant social difficulties faced by female sports journalists in covering sporting events as follows:

- Ranked first: *Working late hours* was the most pressing challenge, with a frequency of 12 occurrences, representing 85.7%.
- Ranked second: *Traveling to distant locations* and *difficulty of certain issues* both recorded a frequency of 6, accounting for 42.9%.
- Ranked third: The challenges of *low societal appreciation*, *multiple family commitments*, and *discouraging traditions and customs* each had a frequency of 5, representing 35.7%.
- Ranked fourth: *High cost of living* and *low cultural awareness* were reported 4 times each, with a percentage of 28.6%.
- Ranked fifth: *Harassment* and *shyness* both had a frequency of 3, accounting for 21.4%.
- Ranked sixth: *Family conservatism and lack of support* appeared 2 times, representing 14.3%.
- Ranked seventh: *Psychological distress* was noted once, with a percentage of 7.1%.
- Ranked last: *Gender mixing* was not reported as a challenge, with a frequency of 0 and a percentage of 0%.

Accordingly, we conclude that the most significant social difficulties faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage include *working late hours* and *traveling to distant locations*. These are followed by *low societal appreciation*, *multiple family commitments*, and *discouraging traditions and customs*. Meanwhile, *gender mixing* does not pose any difficulty for the study sample, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure (01): The key social difficulties faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

9.1. Presentation and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis Results

The second hypothesis stated: *"Female sports journalists at Beur TV face institutional difficulties while covering sporting events."* Following statistical analysis, the obtained result is as follows:

Table (02): The key institutional difficulties faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Low salaries, incentives, and rewards	9	64.3%	1
Lack of technical equipment	8	57.1%	2
Low recognition and encouragement from media management	5	35.7%	3

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Unequal opportunities for promotion and career advancement	4	28.6%	4
Marginalization by male colleagues	3	21.4%	5
Limited access to training programs and international events	3	21.4%	5
Lack of health insurance for female journalists	2	14.3%	6

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

From the table above, we observe that the most significant institutional challenges faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage are as follows:

- Ranked first: *Low salaries, incentives, and rewards* emerged as the most pressing issue, with a frequency of 9, representing 64.3%.
- Ranked second: *Lack of technical equipment* was reported 8 times, accounting for 57.1%.
- Ranked third: *Low recognition and encouragement from media management* had a frequency of 5, representing 35.7%.
- Ranked fourth: *Unequal opportunities for promotion and career advancement* appeared 4 times, with a percentage of 28.6%.
- Ranked fifth: *Limited access to training programs and international events* was reported 3 times, representing 21.4%.
- Ranked sixth and last: *Lack of health insurance for female journalists* had a frequency of 2, accounting for 14.3%.

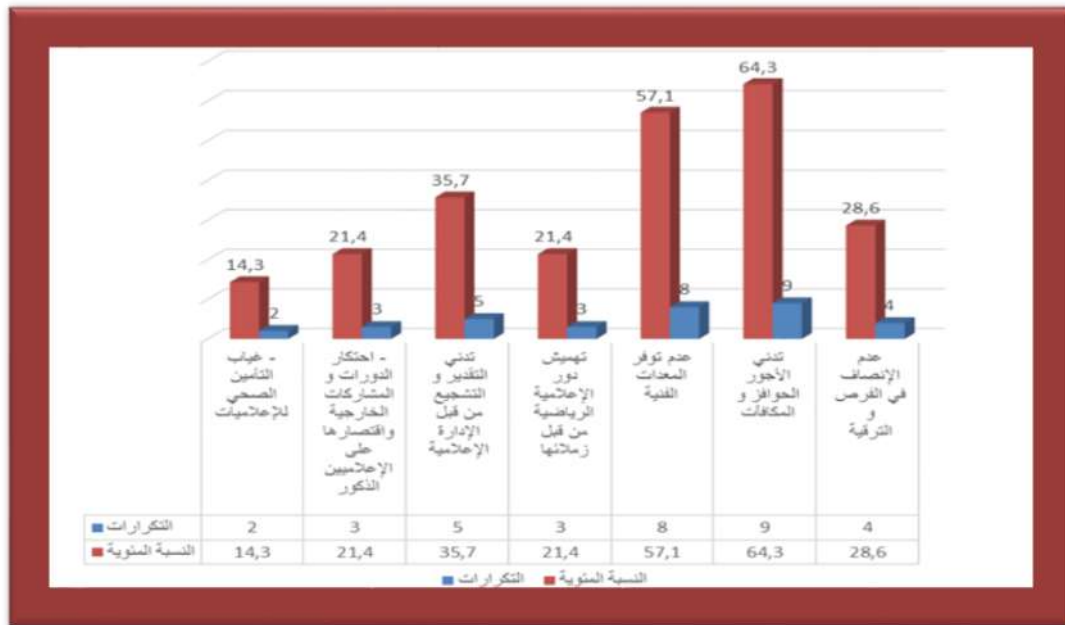
These findings align with Peters' (2001, p. 33) study, which highlights *the lack of wage equality, insufficient institutional support, and workplace isolation policies*. Similarly, Hernández (1996, p. 95) emphasizes that *female journalists experience discrimination and limited opportunities for career advancement*.

The study conducted by Ezzat Higab and Mahmoud Shalabi found that 54% of female journalists reported experiencing varying degrees of discrimination in employment, promotion, training, and participation in international assignments (Higab & Shalabi, 1999, p. 84). Accordingly, we conclude that the most significant institutional challenges faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage include:

1. Low salaries, incentives, and rewards
2. Lack of technical equipment
3. Low recognition and encouragement from media management
4. Unequal opportunities for promotion and career advancement

This is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure (02): Key Institutional Challenges Faced by Female Sports Journalists During Sports Event Coverage.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

9.2. Presentation and Discussion of the Third Hypothesis Results

The third hypothesis states: "*Female sports journalists face field-related challenges during sports event coverage.*" After statistical analysis, we obtained the following results:

Table (03): Key Field-Related Challenges Faced by Female Sports Journalists During Sports Event Coverage.

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Lack of responsiveness from sources in the sports environment	3	21.4%	3
Harassment and misconduct	6	42.9%	2
Inability to cover events in distant locations	6	42.9%	2
Limited references and difficulty accessing data	2	14.3%	4
Difficulty conducting interviews with sports federation officials and club presidents	8	57.1%	1
Lack of adherence to scheduled appointments	2	14.3%	4
Exploitation of female journalists and publication of their work without compensation	6	42.9%	2

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Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

We observe from Table (03) above that: The key field-related challenges faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage are as follows:

- Ranked first: Difficulty conducting interviews with sports federation officials and club presidents, with a total frequency of (08) and a percentage of 57.1%.
- Ranked second: Harassment and misconduct, inability to cover events in distant locations, and exploitation of female journalists by publishing their work without compensation, each with a frequency of (06) and a percentage of 42.9%.
- Ranked third: Lack of responsiveness from sources in the sports environment, with a frequency of (03) and a percentage of 21.4%.
- Ranked fourth: Limited references and difficulty accessing data, as well as lack of adherence to scheduled appointments, each with a frequency of (02) and a percentage of 14.3%.

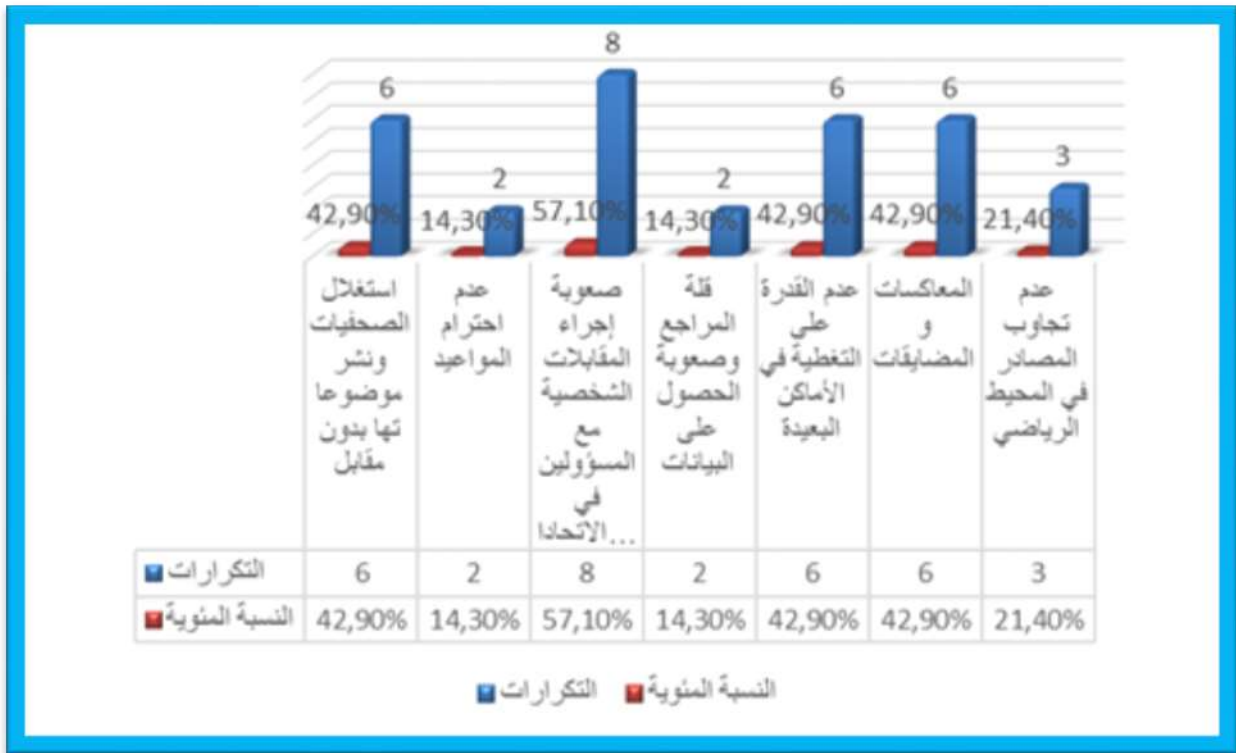
This aligns with the findings of Hernandez (1996, p. 45), which highlight the difficulty female journalists face in accessing information and instances of sexual harassment. Additionally, Manal Fadel (2013, p. 55) confirmed through her study that female journalists often prefer not to be present in sports fields and arenas.

Against this background, it could be stated that the most significant field-related challenges faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage include:

1. Difficulty in conducting interviews with sports federation officials and club presidents.
2. Harassment and misconduct.
3. Inability to cover events in distant locations.
4. Exploitation of female journalists by publishing their work without compensation.

As illustrated in the following figure:

Figure (03): The key field-related challenges faced by female sports journalists during sports event coverage.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS

Conclusion

The challenges faced by female sports journalists in covering sports events, mainly the case of sports journalists from Beur TV in Algeria, highlight the multiple obstacles and difficulties they encounter in fulfilling their professional duties. However, despite these challenges, Algerian female sports journalists have demonstrated resilience and determination in pursuing their ambitions within the field of sports media. Their presence in various events and competitions, both inside and outside stadiums, reflects their passion, strength, and courage in overcoming barriers.

Journalism, as a profession, demands patience, boldness, and perseverance, and female journalists today are an integral part of the media landscape. Nevertheless, they continue to operate within a society where traditional customs and norms often constrain their professional performance. In addition to these societal restrictions, their social responsibilities further influence their professional engagement. Thus, female sports journalists in Algeria still require significant improvements and greater institutional support, despite the progress they have made in the field. Looking ahead, we aspire to see even greater contributions from Algerian women in sports media, with increased presence, impact, and effectiveness in the industry.

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