GSA Research Association Student Report

School: Batley Girls' High School

Research Title: Does gender inequality still exist in the media in the 21st century?

Your Names:

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Section 1: Introduction

Over the last six months, our research group has been investigating whether gender inequality is still a major problem in modern media. According to global research by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), women make up about half of the world's population, yet they only account for 26% of news representation. Shockingly, this number has only risen by 1% since 2020 and just 9% over the last thirty years. Prompted by these striking findings, our team decided to examine different forms of media to see how gender stereotypes operate in practice. We also wanted to find out whether Year 7 students at Batley Girls' High School perceive the media in the same way global studies suggest.

Section 2: Literature Review

When reading published reports, we discovered clear evidence that unfair treatment based on gender happens across many media industries:

- Underrepresentation on Screen: Research shows women only make up about 24% -26% of news subjects and sources globally (European Economic and Social Committee, 2024). When experts are interviewed, men are chosen 80% of the time, while women are usually interviewed as eyewitnesses or victims. Male characters also get far more speaking roles in movies and TV, making male views seem like the default.
- Stereotyping and Representation: Media channels often push old-fashioned gender ideas. In adverts, games, and social media, female figures are frequently objectified for profit. Ageism is also a massive issue in broadcasting: female presenters face career decline after forty, whereas older men keep leading roles as trusted experts.
- Behind-the-Scenes Disparities: Women hold fewer than 25% -31% of directing and writing roles in film and TV because major production companies tend to rely on established male networks (Variety Australia, 2024). In newsrooms, women hold merely 27% of top editor roles globally and are frequently assigned to "soft news" like lifestyle rather than major "hard news" stories.
- Digital Media and Social Platforms: Online apps let people start movements like #MeToo easily, but high-profile women face awful online abuse affecting up to 73% of women in public media roles (Musicians' Census, 2026), alongside algorithms pushing fake beauty standards.

Studying these worldwide trends gave us a great starting point to compare global statistics directly against our own survey results from our Year 7 pupils.

Section 3: Methodology

Our group gathered both qualitative insights and quantitative data for this project. We surveyed all 229 students in Year 7 (aged 11–12). Following consultations with Achievement Leaders, we distributed anonymous Google Forms during tutor time so everyone felt comfortable providing honest answers. In total, 193 students completed our survey.

Qualitative research included:

- Research Groups- Year 7
- Open Ended Google Form Questionnaire
- Closed Google Form Questionnaire
- Journals
- Feedback /Observation

Quantitative research included:

- Wide sampling of Year 7 cohort at BGHS
- Statistics
- Research

Section 4: Data Analysis

All the responses from our Year 7 peers were collated into a master spreadsheet.

Fahteha structured the data into tally charts and pie charts to help us identify key trends, as shown in Appendix 1.

Comparing our survey results with global studies revealed several notable conclusions:

- Leadership & Roles: Most students (80.3%) felt leaders can be any gender, while 14.5% picked female and just 5.2% picked male. Also, 82.4% expected TV presenters to be either gender. This shows young people have equal views, even though women actually hold under 30% of real-world executive boss roles.
- Industry Award Perceptions: In music and film, over half of students (53.4% and 63.2%) believed awards were won equally. But in sports, almost half (49.7%) thought men won the most awards compared to only 5.7% choosing women, matching global facts about female sports receiving much less funding and representation.
- On-Screen Representation & Heroes: While 67.4% chose 'Both' for movie heroes, 26.4% expected a male hero while only 6.2% expected a female hero. This proves how watching typical movies subtly trains people to expect heroes to be male.

Section 5: Evaluation

Our research methodology proved effective, giving us clear insights into student perspectives. Weekly team catch-ups enabled us to seamlessly integrate our school survey findings with professional literature.

One interesting challenge was seeing how official studies show unfair conditions for women, whereas younger students strongly believe in equal chances for everyone.

If we did this again, we would run group discussions to gather more detailed opinions and ask students from other schools as well in Year 7.

Section 6: Interpretation, Discussion & Conclusion

Gender Inequality in Leadership: Sanaa Shaukat

- Unfair leadership opportunities remain a major problem worldwide. Even though top companies raised female leadership by 7% since 2021, progress is very slow. In fact, studies predict equal numbers in government won't happen until 2063.
- Economic Benefits: Companies with balanced male and female bosses are up to 25% more likely to earn higher profits.
- Current Underrepresentation: Worldwide, women hold around 38% of senior leadership jobs, 29% to 31% of highest ranking senior executives roles and under 9% of Fortune 500 CEO spots. In politics, only two nations (Iceland and Trinidad & Tobago) currently have female heads of state and government together. However, female MPs in the UK Parliament reached a record 41% recently.

Key Obstacles: The biggest obstacle is the "broken rung", the initial step up to management, where only 86 women get promoted for every 100 men. Female leaders also face double standards and unfair penalties when having children.

Do Men Dominate the Television Industry? *(Sarah Waheed)*

Men still hold most technical, creative, and top jobs in TV. Industry habits and informal networks keep this imbalance going.

- Leadership & Behind-the-Scenes Roles: Men occupy about 58% of producer and show creator roles in reality TV. Globally, 73.7% of reality TV creators across the US, UK, Brazil, and France are male.
- Key Barriers: Women face hurdles, holding only 24 -31% of director jobs and far fewer senior writing roles.

Gender Inequality in the Music Industry *(Aania Bhamji)*

The music business shows severe inequality through lower pay, shorter careers, and unfair obstacles for women.

- Discrimination & Safety: Over half of female musicians face gender bias or bullying in male-dominated work environments. Cyberbullying is a major threat, affecting up to 73% of women in high-profile jobs.
- Pay & Career Longevity: Female artists earn less and face ageism earlier. For instance, Ed Sheeran's net worth (£370M) is much higher than Adele (£170M), and The Beatles (£2.215B) far exceeds The Spice Girls (£500M).

Gender Inequality in Newspaper Journalism *(Faseeha Ali)*

Female reporters face a "glass newsroom" barrier that stops them reaching top editing roles.

- News Topics: Women are regularly assigned "soft news" (lifestyle and arts), while men cover main "hard news" stories.
- Senior Leadership: Despite huge numbers of female journalism graduates, women hold only 27% of top editor roles globally.

Detailed Discussion of Survey Findings *(Fahteha Hekim)*

Analysing responses from our 193 Year 7 peers highlighted key insights into how young people view gender representation across different media:

1. Sports Media Inequality: Sports showed the clearest male bias; 49.7% said men win most awards. This matches facts showing women's sports receive only 12% of media coverage.
2. Social Media Expectations & Pressure: Written comments showed double standards: female creators feel pressure to look perfect online, while male creators get more freedom to act relaxed.

Synthesis and Final Recommendations

In conclusion, while media industries still favour men in leadership and behind-the-scenes roles, students strongly expect fairness.

To fix this, we recommend:

- More coverage for women in sport
- Creating better support and training pathways for women aiming for technical media careers
- Teaching more media literacy in secondary schools so pupils can spot gender bias quickly.

Section 7: References

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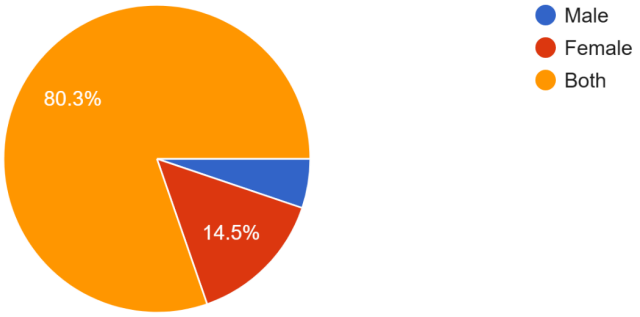
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Quantitative Data: Closed Questions Included on Google Form

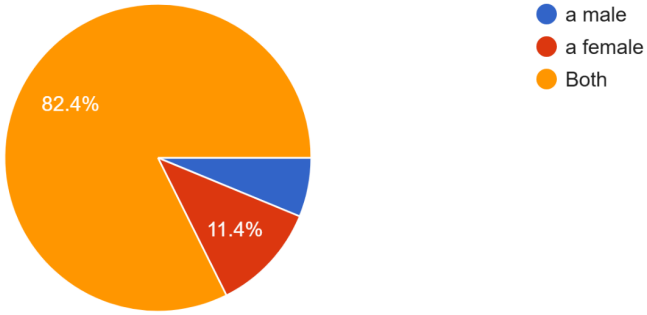
Q1: Is a leader male, female or both?

193 responses



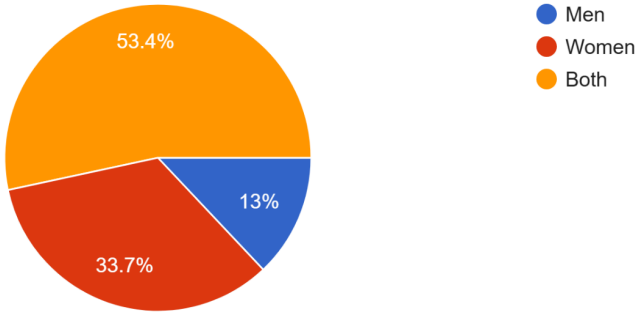
Q2: Who would you expect to be a presenter on television?

193 responses



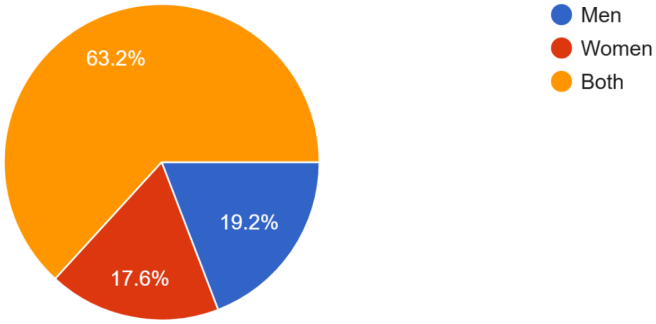
Q3: Who do you think wins the most awards in the music industry?

193 responses



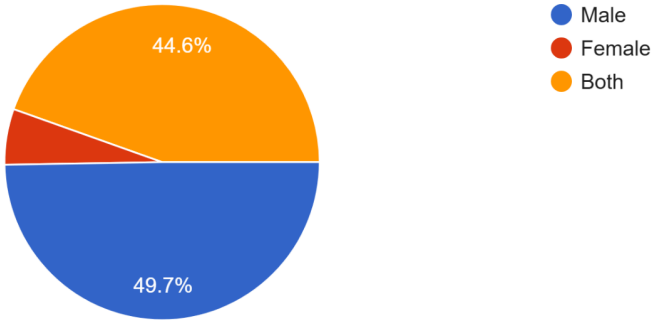
Q4: Who do you think wins the most awards in the film industry?

193 responses



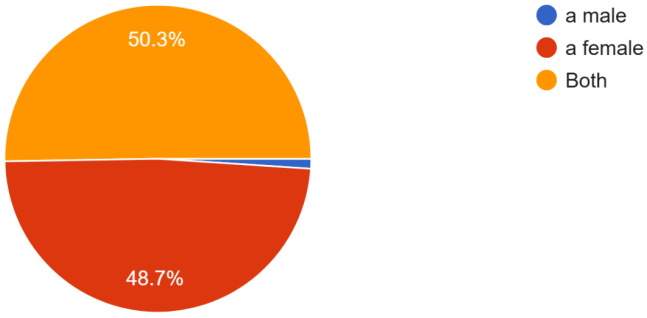
Q5: Who do you think wins the most awards in sports?

193 responses



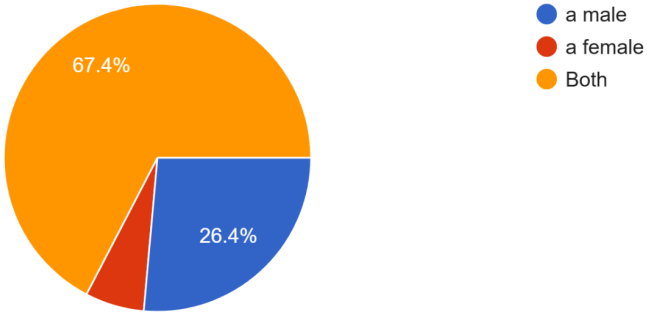
Q6: Who would you expect to be an influencer on social media?

193 responses



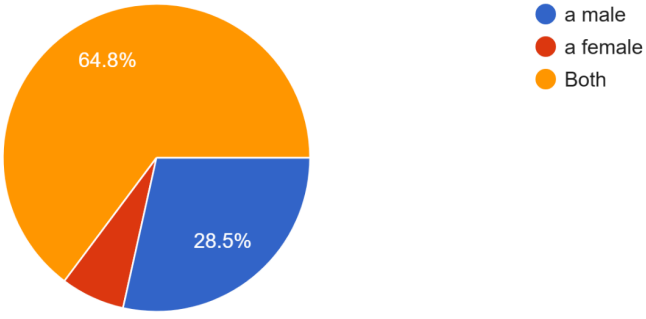
Q7: Who would you expect to be a hero in a TV Programme or a Film?

193 responses



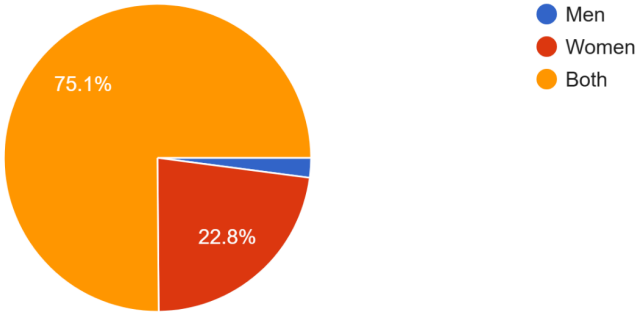
Q8: Who would you expect to be a villain in a TV Programme or a Film?

193 responses



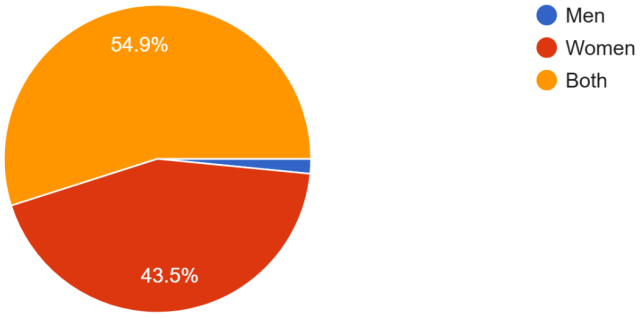
Q9: Who do you think is the best at acting?

193 responses



Q10: Who do you think is the best at singing?

193 responses



Quantitative Data: Open Questions Included on Google Form

Q11: How do you expect a female to act/look when filming a post on social media? Why?

Personal Freedom and Authenticity: Many responses emphasise that females on social media should act and look however they want, expressing their true personalities and making their own choices without feeling forced to conform to strict standards.
Appearance and Presentation Expectations: A lot of respondents pointed out expectations for females to wear makeup, look neat and pretty, and stay well-presented to gain followers or avoid getting hate comments.
Behavioural Expectations: Some responses suggest that females should act politely, professionally, kindly, and appropriately, while others note tendencies toward high energy, performing trends, or feeling pressure to maintain a certain image.

Q12: How do you expect a male to act/look when filming a post on social media? Why?

Personal Autonomy and Authentic Expression: Many respondents expressed that males on social media should act and dress however they want, valuing free choice and personal style over rigid rules.
Masculine and Strong Persona: Several participants noted expectations for boys to act tough, strong, loud, or confident online, connecting this to social expectations and getting views.
Presentation and Appropriateness: A good number of answers highlighted looking presentable and groomed, while staying respectful to avoid online hate.
Casual and Normal Appearance: A lot of respondents simply expect boys to look casual in regular everyday clothes, noting that guys often don't stress as much about their online appearance.

Q13: In the news, which jobs do you see men doing most often?

- Sports and Athletics: Frequently mentioned roles include playing football, working as sports pundits or commentators, and general athletic professions.
- Manual Labour and Construction: Commonly observed jobs feature builders, construction workers, engineers, electricians, mechanics, and plumbers.
- Emergency and Public Services: Frequent roles noted are police officers, firefighters, and medical professionals such as doctors.
- Media and Broadcasting: Commonly cited positions include news reporters, weather presenters, producers, and individuals conducting interviews.
- Leadership and Business: Frequently mentioned roles involve politicians, prime ministers, business executives, and owners.
- Sports and Athletics: Footballers, sports pundits, and commentators.
- Manual Labor and Construction: Builders, construction workers, engineers, electricians, mechanics, and plumbers.
- Emergency and Public Services: Police officers, firefighters, and doctors.
- Media and Broadcasting: News reporters, weather presenters, producers, and interviewers.

Leadership and Business: Politicians, prime ministers, and business executives.

Q14: In the news, which jobs do you see women doing most often?

- News Presentation and Reporting: Frequently observed working as news reporters, anchors, weather presenters, and talk show hosts, alongside general commentary and interviewing roles.
- Education and Healthcare: Commonly identified in teaching positions, ranging from primary to subject-specific education, as well as in nursing, medicine, pharmacy, and healthcare support roles.
- Entertainment and Media Creation: Frequently associated with roles in singing, acting, dancing, social media influencing, content creation, and beauty-related artistry.

- News Presentation and Reporting: News anchors, reporters, weather presenters, and talk show hosts.
- Education and Healthcare: Teachers, nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and healthcare assistants.
- Entertainment and Media Creation: Singers, actresses, dancers, content creators, and influencers.

Service and Beauty Industry: Hair Stylists, makeup artists, nail technicians, cooks, and shop assistants.

Q15: Do you think the media puts more pressure on girls or boys to look a certain way? Why?

- Greater Pressure on Girls: Girls face heavier scrutiny and higher expectations regarding appearance, body image, clothing, and behaviour, often being judged for not meeting specific beauty standards or traditional gender roles.
- Pressure on Both Genders: Both boys and girls experience societal expectations and media pressure, with girls expected to look pretty and act modestly while boys face pressure to be strong, suppress emotions, and avoid non-traditional behaviours.
- Media Motives and Negative Influences: Pressure is driven by a desire for popularity, views, and commercial influence, resulting in harmful behaviours like cyberbullying, hate comments, and insecurity-inducing comparisons.
- No Pressure or Neutral View: Some respondents believe the media does not pressure anyone, noting that individuals can dress and act as they choose, or stated they were unsure.

Greater Pressure on Girls: Girls deal with much heavier scrutiny regarding appearance, body image, and fashion standards.

- Pressure on Both Genders: Both boys and girls face media expectations: girls to look pretty and act modest; boys to be strong, muscular, and hide emotions.
- Media Motives and Negative Influences: Pressure is driven by views, trends, and commercial gain, leading to cyberbullying and insecurities.

No Pressure or Neutral View: Some respondents feel media pressure doesn't affect everyone, stating people can choose how to dress and act.