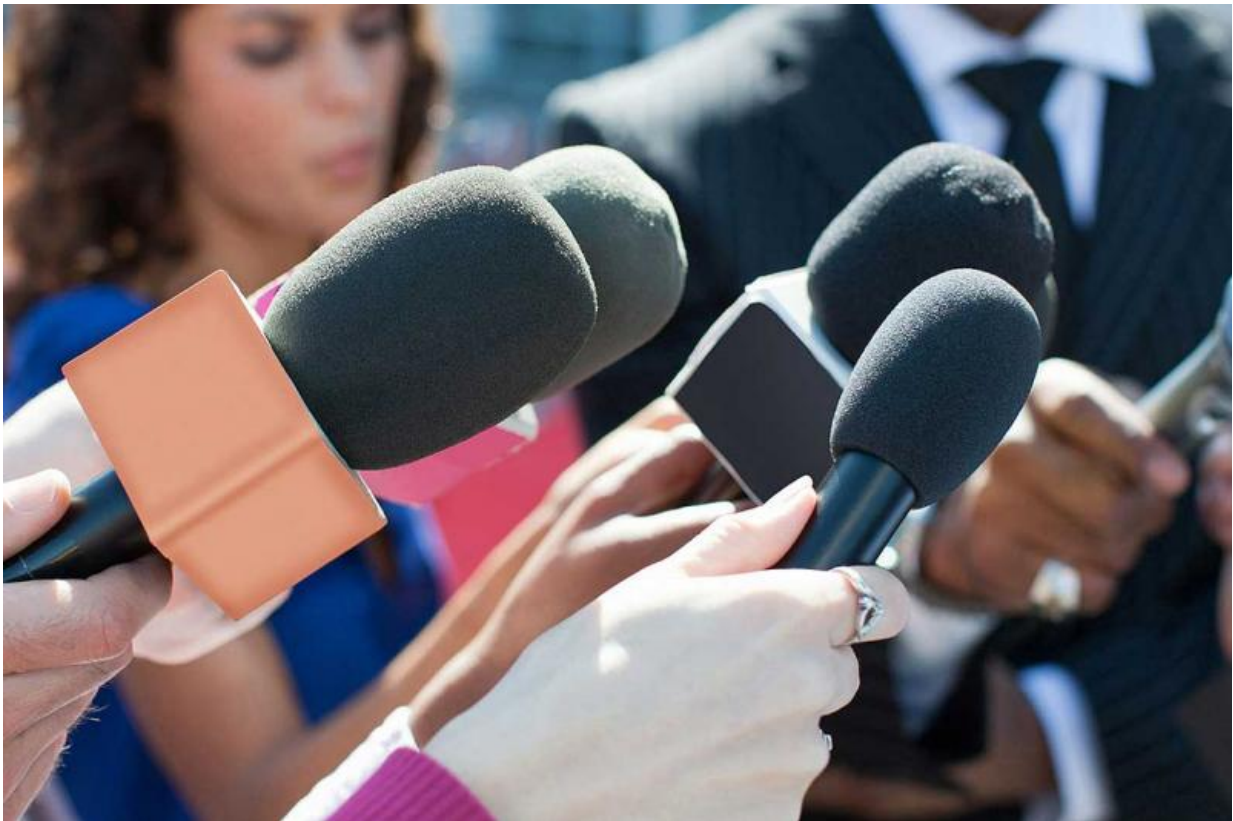


New study finds female journalists paid 26 per cent less

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The Worlds of Journalism Study found the median after-tax salary of female journalists in New Zealand was 26 percent lower than that of men of equivalent rank and experience. Credit: Massey University

A survey of New Zealand journalists shows female journalists, despite

outnumbering men in the profession, are significantly disadvantaged in terms of promotion and income.

The survey, part of the 2016 Worlds of Journalism Study, was led by Dr James Hollings, head of journalism at Massey University, and will be published today in *Pacific Journalism Review*. It shows for the first time that women journalists are paid less than men, despite making up the bulk of the workforce.

The average before tax income of all journalists was \$69,400 (in 2015 dollars) but the median after-tax salary of women was 26 percent lower than that of men of equivalent rank and experience. Women were also disadvantaged in terms of promotion; while only half of men work in non-management roles, two-thirds of women hold non-management roles.

The survey also found New Zealand journalists are working longer hours, and feeling more pressure, both ethically and resource-wise, than they were only two years ago. The dramatic changes in news brought about by the switch to digital dissemination and the rise of [social media](#) are reflected in journalists' perceptions of change in their industry.

The survey asked respondents to rate 23 elements that may have altered over the past five years in New Zealand, with one being "weakened a lot" and five being "strengthened a lot".

'Social media, such as Facebook or Twitter' strengthened the most, with a mean rating of 4.8, followed by 'the use of search engines' (4.63), 'user-generated content, such as blogs' (4.4), 'profit-making pressures' (4.35), 'advertising pressures' (4.07) and 'working hours' (4.03).

Journalists are feeling the impact of increasing

commercial pressures

There are significant shifts from a previous survey in 2013 – while the ranking of the top three elements is the same, the amount of perceived change has strengthened. Advertising pressures and working hours have now entered the top five, replacing 'the importance of technical skills' (4.0) and 'audience feedback' (also 4.0).

The increasing commercial pressures on journalists were also highlighted by those elements identified as having weakened the most. These were 'time available for researching stories' (1.76), 'the credibility of journalism' (2.25), 'ethical standards' (2.4), and 'journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions' (2.69).



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"It is concerning that journalists feel these changes have affected news quality, with a perception that the credibility of journalism, ethical standards and freedom to make editorial decisions have all fallen," Dr Hollings says.

"Another concern is that, despite evidence of some improvement, Māori, Pasifika, and Asian reporters remain under-represented in newsrooms. Māori make up only 7.9 per cent of the journalism workforce, despite making up 15 per cent of the general population."

On the positive side, journalists are better educated than they have ever been, and overall adherence to ethical standards remains high, Dr Hollings says.

Almost all respondents (96 per cent) agreed with the statement 'Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context'.

Job satisfaction also remains high. Almost four in five (78.6 per cent) stated they were 'somewhat' or 'very satisfied' with their job, compared with 82.1 per cent in 2013.

"It is clear that New Zealand journalists, despite these pressures, continue to take their role as guardians of democracy very seriously," Dr Hollings says. "The large number of independent operators captured in this survey suggests that the digital revolution is opening new opportunities for journalists to start their own smaller outlets, a challenge that appears to have been taken up especially by older journalists."

About the study

The research team was made up of Dr James Hollings from Massey University; Dr Folker Hanusch of the University of Vienna, Austria; Dr Ravi Balasubramanian, also of Massey; and Dr Geoff Lealand of Waikato University.

The reserachers interviewed 539 New Zealand professional journalists in December 2015 and January 2016. As part of the Worlds of Journalism Study, the [survey](#) was the same as others conducted in 67 countries with more than 27,000 [journalists](#) interviewed. Comparative country data is available and results from the next Worlds of Journalism Study will be available in 2020.

More information: Read the full report at: [ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journali ... view/article/view/29](https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journali...view/article/view/29)

Provided by Massey University

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