

Evidence Brief

Gendered Experiences in **Ghana's Creative Economy**



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Executive Summary



This brief synthesizes findings from a study conducted on gender-based inequities within Ghana's creative economy. Data was drawn from among young female creatives aged 18 to 35 across multiple creative sub-sectors. Despite substantial human capital investments, respondents encounter systematic gender-based discrimination. The findings reveal, despite systemic obstacles, creatives demonstrate strong professional commitment and derive fulfilment from their work. This is an indication that Ghana's creative sector can transform into an equitable and sustainable economic driver that fully leverages young women's creative capacities.

Key Messages



These compounding barriers compromise the creative economy's innovation capacity, workforce stability, and competitive positioning. Addressing these structural inequities requires coordinated multi-stakeholder action from the government, industry associations, creative enterprises, development partners, civil society and educational institutions.

Harassment is pervasive and severe.

Nearly half (46.3%) of young female creatives have experienced workplace harassment, including unwanted physical contact, sexual coercion, and quid pro quo arrangements where opportunities are tied to personal favours.



Pay inequality is widespread and personally felt.

Over 42% of respondents personally experienced pay disparities, and many others avoided career opportunities due to discrimination, harassment concerns, or simply being young women.



Domestic and care burdens disproportionately fall on women.

Over 80% reported pregnancy-related workplace limitations and 50% limited roles or opportunities due to caregiving duties, with no institutional support in place.



Structural barriers are limiting the sector's potential.

Despite 83% aspiring to long-term creative careers, only 67% are satisfied with their progression, a structural gap costing Ghana vital talent, innovation, and economic growth.



Young female creatives are resilient and committed.

Despite systemic obstacles, 86.5% describe their work as dignifying and 83.6% as fulfilling, demonstrating the sector's transformative potential when barriers are removed.



Coordinated, multi-stakeholder action is urgently needed.

Parliament, industry associations, creative enterprises, civil society, and development partners must act together to legislate protections, enforce gender-responsive standards, close the pay gap, and establish a Creative Sector Gender Equity Fund.

Introduction



The creative sector in Ghana is an increasingly vibrant contributor to youth employment, cultural innovation, and economic growth. For instance, Ghana's film industry currently generates approximately \$4 million annually and is projected to reach \$500 million by 2030 (Citi newsroom, 2025). In 2024, it was estimated that the arts and culture sector contributed around 2.5 % of Ghana's GDP.¹ To further strengthen the gains, the Ghana National Film Authority (NFA) has launched a \$25 million Presidential Film Pitch Series and Black Star Films to revive and professionalize the local industry (National Film Authority Presidential Film Pitch Series. (n.d.). Women, and especially young people aged 18 to 35, play vibrant roles across sub-sectors of the creative arts, including fashion design, comedy, film, photography, music, visual arts, digital content creation, and performance. Despite this growing participation, the industry remains marked by substantial gendered risks, unequal power relations, and persistent barriers that restrict women's full and safe engagement.²

This brief highlights key evidence from a recent interdisciplinary study conducted by the University of Cape Coast in collaboration with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. This study assessed the nature, implications, and limitations of gender-based disparities among young women creatives aged 18 to 35 years. The study participants were sampled from across diverse fields, including performing arts, visual arts, cultural sites, traditional cultural expressions, publishing and print media, audio-visuals, advertising and marketing, design (interior, graphic, and fashion), creative services, new media, and others. The brief aims to provoke thought and inspire action in a broad audience.

¹ Ghanaian Times. (2025, December 9). Government to reposition creative arts industry. <https://ghanaianimes.com.gh/govt-to-reposition-creative-arts-industry-2/>

² Adzei, S. E. (2025). Gendered trajectories in graphic design and animation: Reassessing the role and representation of women in the creative industry in Ghana. *Journal of African Arts and Culture*, 8(3), 80- 89.

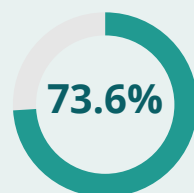
2.5 %

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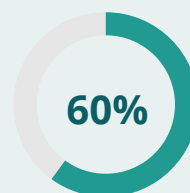
Characteristics of Interviewed Women and Young Creatives



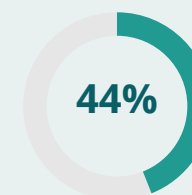
Most of the participants were aged between **25-30 years:**



of the respondents were single or never married, 22.9% were married or cohabiting, and 3.5% were formerly married



60% have had professional training in creative work.



44% have attained a bachelor's degree, 16.8% have a certificate or diploma, 29.5% have had secondary education

Among creatives who reported having children,

4.4%

had four



11.4%

had three



29%

had two



55.3%

had only one



As part of the care responsibilities of respondents with children,

12.8%

take their **children to work**

16.3%

leave them **with a partner**

16.4%

leave them with a **babysitter**

14.7%

leave them at the **day care centre**

25.5%

have older children or send the children to school.

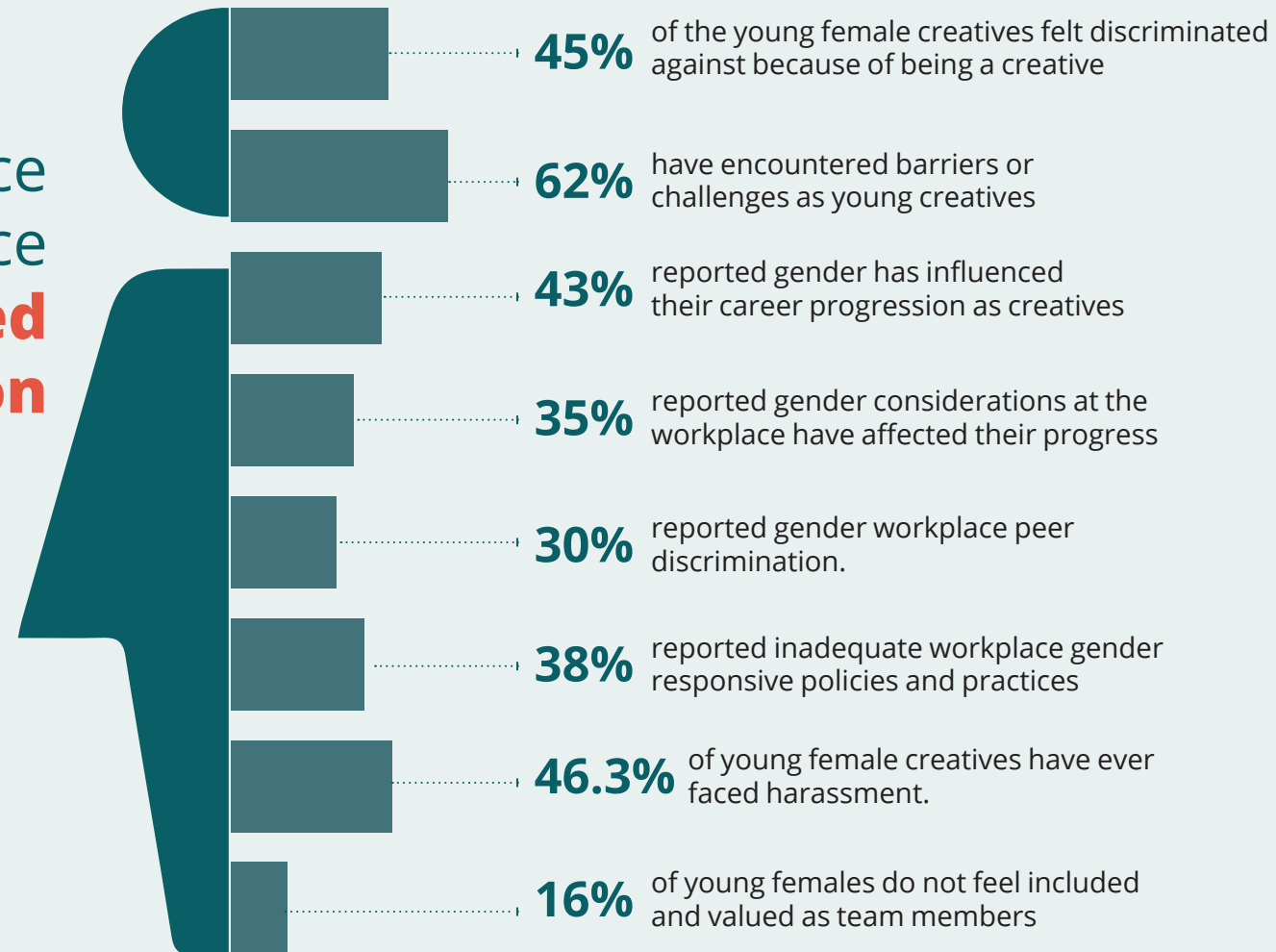


Among creatives who reported using social platforms for their work, WhatsApp was the most widely used (95.2%), followed by TikTok (79.4%), with Instagram having (77.6%), Facebook (67.9%), Telegram and X each being (66.7%).

Emerging evidence



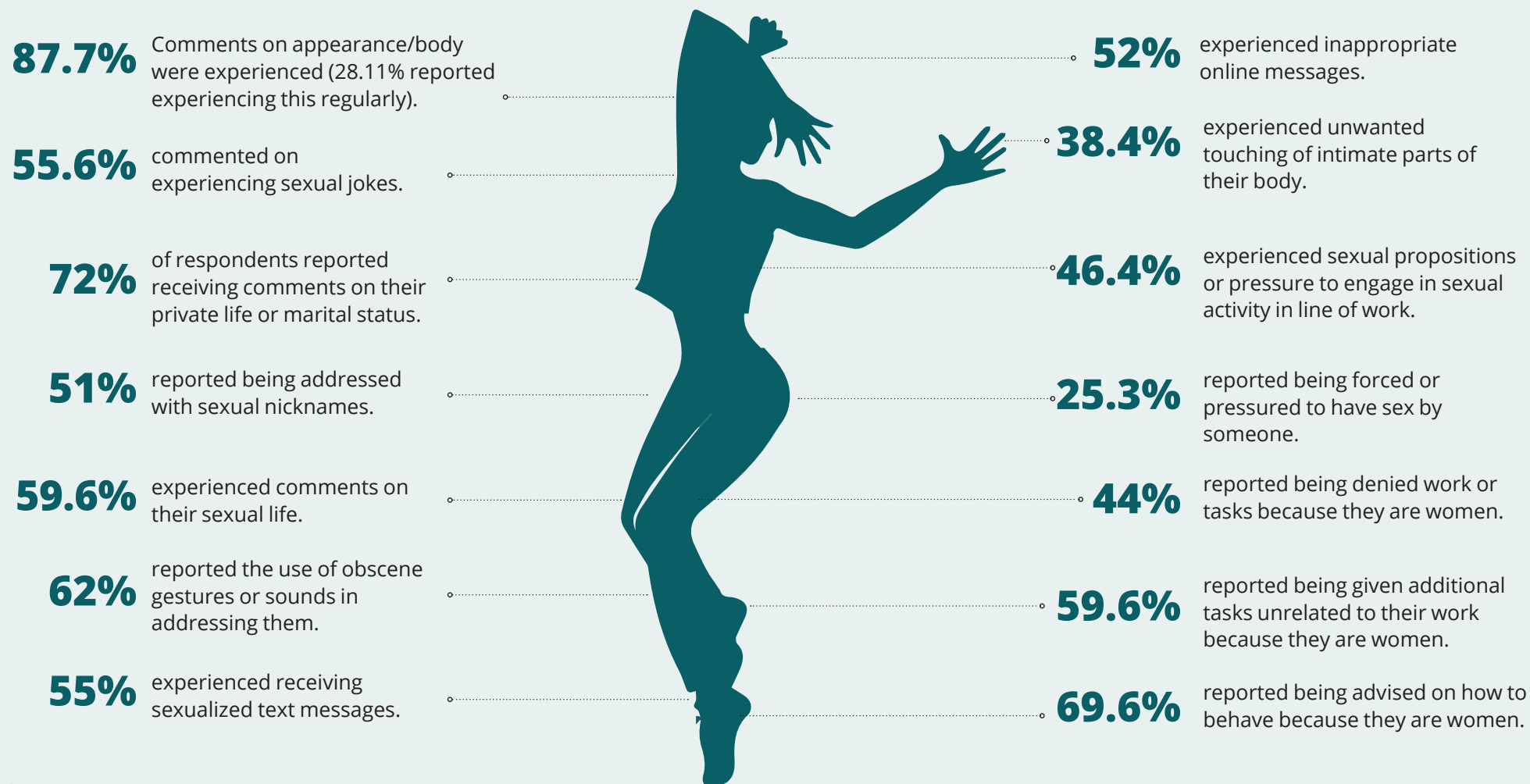
Experience of Workplace **Gender-Based Discrimination**



A Women's Harassment Experiences in Creative Workplaces

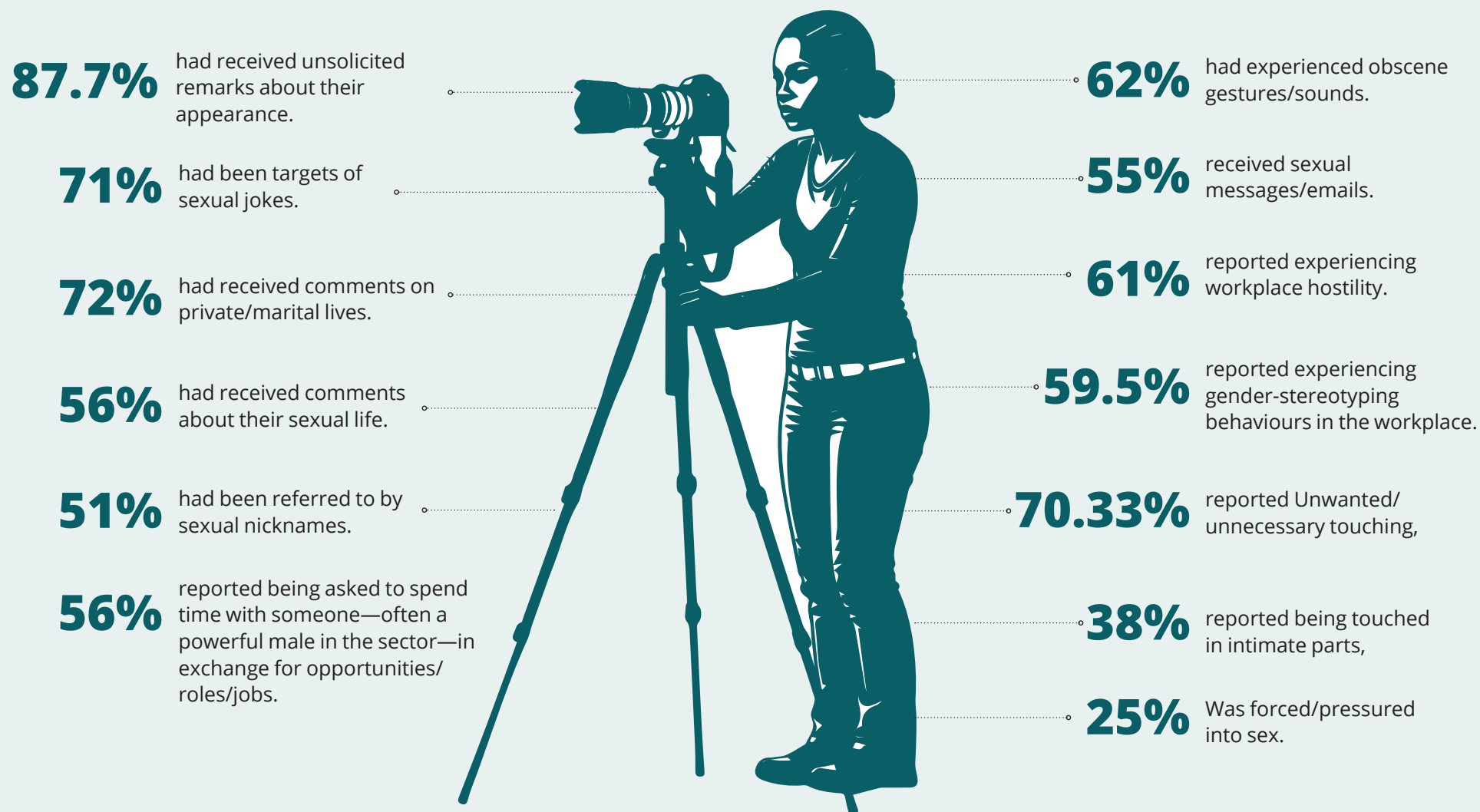
About 46.3% of young female creatives reported having ever faced harassment at the workplace.

Among the creatives reporting ever experiencing workplace gender-based harassment, there have been the following:



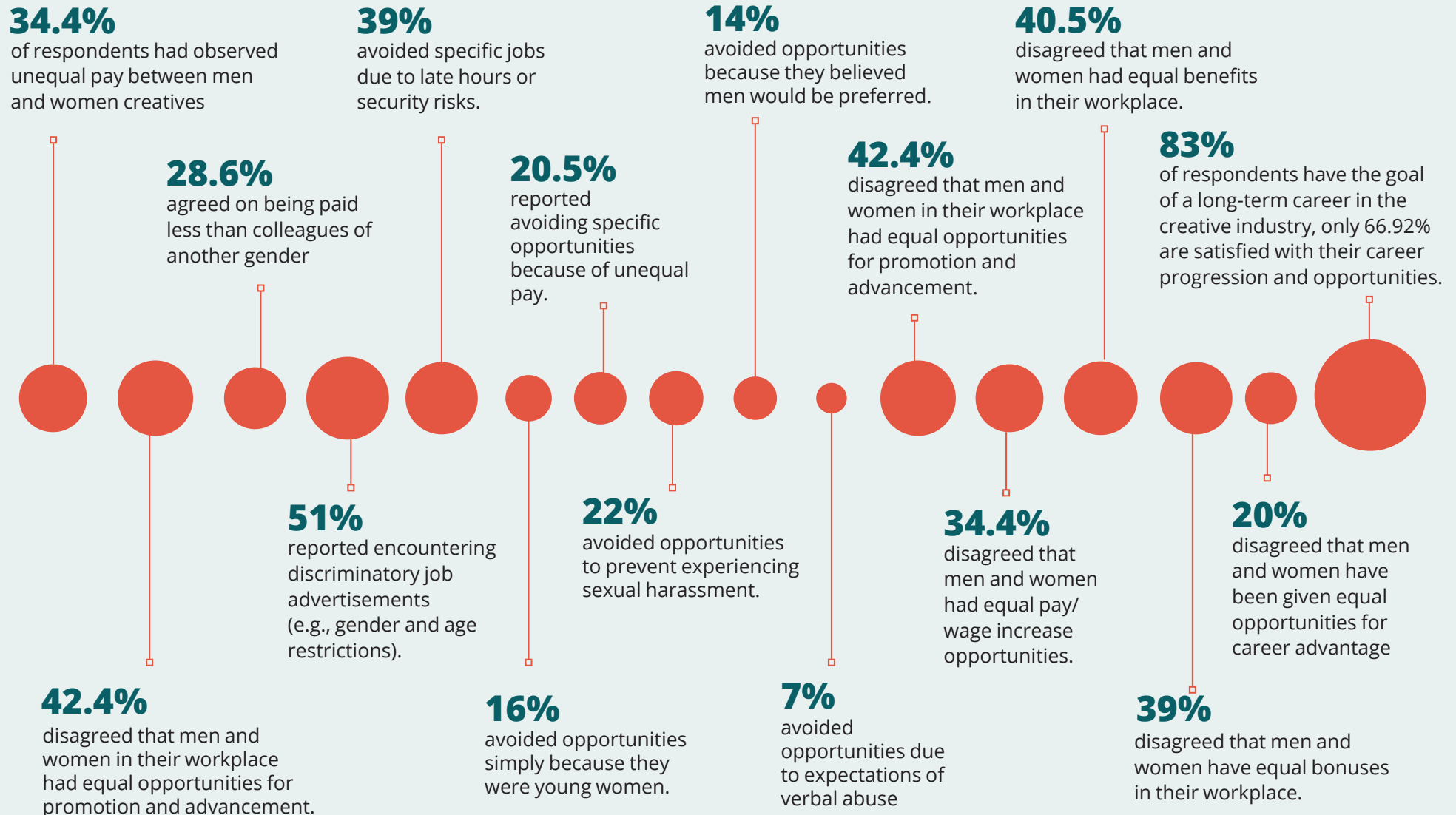
B Workplace harassment (<12 months before the survey -Feb 2025)

Among the creatives reporting ever experiencing workplace gender-based harassment, there have been the following:



C Experiences of Workplace Gender Equity, **Pay Gap, and other Challenges**

Among the creatives reporting ever experiencing workplace gender-based harassment, there have been the following:



D Domestic and Care Work **Pressures**

Among the reports by creatives, respondents faced significant challenges balancing domestic and care work responsibilities, with women being disproportionately assigned traditional household tasks like cooking, cleaning, and childcare even during professional creative work. These gendered expectations, combined with societal assumptions about women's caregiving roles and partners' restrictions on certain creative activities, often forced female creatives to pause or abandon their careers entirely, particularly after marriage or childbearing. The following are their views on their ways of balancing domestic and care work responsibilities:

12.8%

reported having to take their children to work because no one was available to care for them.

16.3%

reported leaving their children with their spouses or partners when going to work

16%

reported leaving their children with a babysitter when going to work

14.7%

reported leaving their children at a daycare centre when going to work

Over 80%

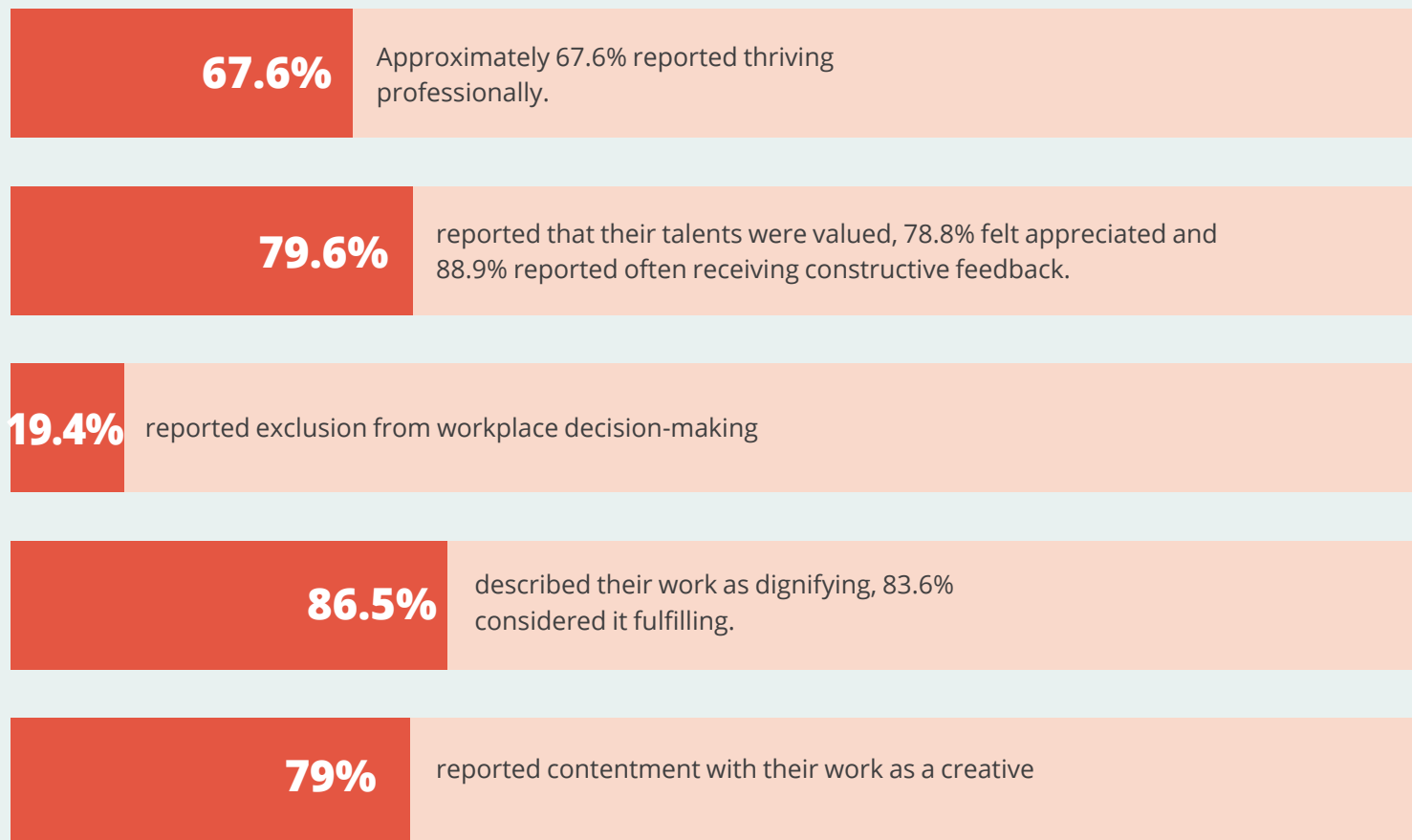
reported that pregnancy-related limitations at the workplace were common.

50%

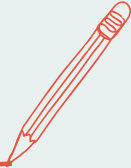
limited roles or opportunities because of caregiving and household duties.

E Dignifying and Fulfilling Work

Among the reports by creatives, respondents found their work fulfilling when it aligned with their personal identity, values, and creative interests, bringing them joy and excitement beyond financial rewards. Work was considered dignified when it commanded social respect, offered fair compensation that recognized the time and effort invested, and was legally and socially approved. the following are their views on their work satisfaction and perception:



Conclusion



This brief synthesizes and transmits data from the study on Ghanaian young female creatives in various subsectors. The results show widespread gender-based disparities in respondents' career paths, despite most having professional training and many holding higher degrees. Widespread discriminatory behaviours, such as gender-based workplace discrimination that hinders career advancement, exclusion from decision-making, and gender-related barriers to advancement, were mentioned by respondents. Inadequate workplace gender-responsive policies and practices exacerbated experiences of gender-based harassment, which included unwanted physical contact, coercive demands for time in exchange for opportunities, sexualized jokes, and unsolicited remarks about looks. Pay discrepancies were widespread; more than 42% of people personally experienced unequal pay, and many others avoided opportunities because of harassment concerns, discrimination, or just being young women. Additional limitations of childcare and care obligations further hamper participation in the labour force. Despite these institutional obstacles, many participants still viewed their work as rewarding and dignified. This highlights

Policy Recommendations



The creative sector in Ghana holds immense promise for economic growth and youth employment. Yet persistent gender inequities threaten to undermine its full potential. When nearly half of young women creatives face harassment, over 42% experience pay disparities, and significant numbers avoid opportunities due to discrimination or safety concerns. This causes the sector to lose vital talent, innovation, and competitive advantage. These barriers not only harm individual women but also constrain Ghana's ability to capitalize on the projected growth of its creative industries fully. The prevalence of workplace hostility, inadequate gender-responsive policies, and the burden of unpaid care work create a pipeline problem that limits women's sustained participation and advancement. To unlock the sector's transformative potential and ensure equitable growth, stakeholders across Ghana's creative ecosystem must take deliberate, coordinated action.

Key recommendations include:

#	Recommendation	Duty-Bearer	Evidence Base (BtS Study)
1	Enact comprehensive anti-harassment legislation specific to the creative sector, with enforceable penalties, accessible complaint mechanisms, and whistleblower protections.	Parliament of Ghana	46.3% of young female creatives experienced workplace harassment; 25% were forced or pressured into sex.
2	Mandate and enforce gender-responsive workplace standards across all registered creative enterprises, including maternity leave, breastfeeding provisions, and protections for care responsibilities.	Creative Arts Council of Ghana; Ministry of Gender and Social protection	Over 80% reported pregnancy-related limitations at work; 50% limited roles due to caregiving duties.
3	Develop and enforce binding ethical codes prohibiting quid pro quo arrangements, sexual coercion, and gender-based discrimination, backed by independent, confidential reporting channels.	Creative Arts Council of Ghana; Ghana Actors Guild; GIFPA	56% were asked to exchange time with powerful individuals for work opportunities; 62% experienced obscene gestures.
4	Require equal pay audits across creative enterprises and publish sector-wide salary benchmarks by creative role and subsector, with a commitment to close identified gaps.	Ghana Employers Association; Creative Arts Council of Ghana	42.4% personally experienced pay disparities; 34.4% observed unequal pay between male and female colleagues.
5	Legislate and operationalise a Creative Sector Gender Equity Fund to support women-led enterprises, emergency relief for harassment survivors, and mentorship programmes, with clear eligibility criteria and oversight.	Parliament of Ghana; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture	83% aspire to long-term careers in the sector, yet only 66.9% are satisfied with progression, pointing to a structural support gap.

Consulted Work:

Ghana Primary BtS report (ICRW Africa)

Citinewsroom. (2025, June 30). *Why Ghana's creative industry needs bold investment – and how*

Fidelity Bank is stepping in. <https://citinewsroom.com/2025/06/why-ghanas-creative-industry-needs-bold-investment-and-how-fidelity-bank-is-stepping-in/>

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