THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING WOMEN'S SELF-PERCEPTION AND EMPOWERMENT: A REVIEW OF IDENTITY, BODY IMAGE, AND DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest ways to communicate with people around the world these days is through social media. An internet platform called social media encourages networking and information sharing among diverse communities. Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Tumblr are a few examples of well-known social networking sites. They are all online social networks that allow users to share private information. The body of research on women's use of social media and its impact is growing daily. Women seek support from private media groups, indicating that these networks are pro-gender equality. Research on female gamers has begun to emerge, despite the fact that gaming has traditionally been more popular among men. Studies conducted in the twenty-first century have brought attention to the significance of women in technology, and one of the expanding issues that has not gotten enough attention is the problem of female gamers becoming addicted. Playing video games can help women develop their social, cognitive, and physical abilities. However, they are not as encouraged to play video games due to negative gender-based beliefs or negative gaming experiences. It seems that female gamers need coping mechanisms to deal with cyberbullying. Nonetheless, this sophistication will have both positive and bad impacts on the ladies. Using a qualitative methodology, the study collects secondary data from reliable sources like books, scholarly journals, government documents, and online sources. Examining the effects of social media on women's personality

development, behaviour, usage of media today, addiction to gaming, gender representation of body image, and identity formation is the goal. This study highlights the complex effects of social media on women's life and stresses the value of creating inclusive environments, a diversity of representations, and encouraging networks.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Gender Equality, Female Gaming, Women, Gaming Addiction.

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "social media" refers to a category of computer-based technology that makes it easier for people to share concepts, ideas, and knowledge through online groups and networks. Social media users can quickly share anything on the internet, including sensitive information, documents, movies, and images. Internet apps or software are used by consumers to interact with social media on tablets, PCs, and smartphones. Technology is considered to be the king, and in order to manage the kingdom, one must be aware about it. Technology has been successful in infiltrating human emotions, human bodies, and human blood. Women must be able to use social media to advance both their professional and personal growth. The goal of the study is to better understand how social media affects women by examining issues such as identity formation, gender depiction, gender use, and gaming addiction.

DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA AND WOMEN

A collection of websites known as "social media" enable users to engage in social interactions with each other and their communities by means of rating, comments, and content sharing. Individuals utilise social media to keep in contact with their loved ones and to stay informed about local activities.

According to Tuten and Solomon (2015), Social networking sites are "online methods for collaboration, transportation, and nurturing among the interdependent and interrelated networks of people, communities, and organisations boosted by technical capabilities."

A woman is a human lady of adulthood. A female child or teenager is referred to as a girl until they reach maturity. A "woman" can be any female person in general or, more specifically, a female human adult rather than a girl.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a qualitative approach and gathers secondary data from a variety of trustworthy sources, such as books, government publications, academic journals, and internet resources. The research is to investigate "Understanding the Influence of Social Media in Women: Navigating Current Social Media Use, Gaming Addiction, Gender Portrayal, Body Image, and Identity Formation."

WOMEN'S SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GROWTH AND ADVOCACY

Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and WhatsApp are being used by more and more women for both personal and professional reasons. These platforms allow women to hold virtual conversations with friends, relatives, and coworkers, with Facebook group creators having administrator privileges. Women use Facebook support groups more frequently than men, and they are more likely to raise questions about sensitive topics in private or closed groups. These female-focused online forums offer coping mechanisms for past obstacles and navigating detours to career and non-career growth, such as gender discrimination. Studying how these groups break down gender barriers is crucial as women form communities with those who have gone through similar situations.

Online networks have led to the creation of conferences devoted solely to assisting women, with a wider population listening in on issues. Women have started using online networks to advocate for gender equity and conduct research on gender parity. Virtual interactions have also left a mark on advocacy, with grassroots initiatives aimed at improving representation of women at conferences.

Research-related or important educational messages are disseminated using social media platforms. Women connect with each other through various methods and create loosely connected online groups, using hashtags like # Independent Women and #ILook Like A Strong Women.

ADDICTION IN GAMING

Over the past 20 years, women have become more prevalent in the gaming community, accounting for half of all gamers. However, research on female gaming has not received enough attention due to unfavourable assumptions based on gender and bad gaming experiences. Video games' potential may be limited by their frequently sexualised material

and association with stereotypically masculine characteristics. When it comes to playing video games, women have obstacles as well.

Several studies have examined the potential advantages of video game play for women, including cognitive and social learning, game-play-based methods, and therapeutic or environmental interventions. Clinical procedures have shown that the talents or health of participants in these experiments improved. However, research has demonstrated the health benefits of video games, such as promoting physical activity in adults with reduced mobility due to aging or medical conditions and reducing pain by providing cognitive diversion to fibromyalgia patients. It has also been demonstrated that video games are suitable psychotherapy resources to aid in the rehabilitation of adolescents' mental health.

According to research, even at a young age, girls may learn strategy and performance abilities from video games just as well as boys. Prosocial gaming exposure to well-known online video games was found to have a substantial correlation with perspective taking and sympathy, indicating less severe acceptance of violence, in a cross-country research of 145 teenage girls who played video games online. During in-person co-playing, a subsample of girls demonstrated greater prosocial behaviour and a closer emotional connection with their parents.

Adult female gamers have greater brain plasticity than female non-gamers, which boosts their ability to elicit response behaviours since they are more accustomed to the movements required for gaming. These brain patterns, however, diverge from those of previous research that examined reactions from men, indicating that the ways in which the male and female brains react to solving problems in video games are different.

Gender Imagery, Body Ideals, And Identity

The portrayal of women on social media platforms is characterized by the prominent use of gender, the promotion of thinness as a desirable quality, and the portrayal of women as glamorous or sexual figures. Posts that challenge preconceived notions of glamour contrast with images of slender, idealized, and sexualized bodies that adhere to what is generally deemed attractive. Images of women are often sexually suggestive or include hermaphrodite or hybrid sexes.

On social media platforms, pictures of women are glamorized and sexualized, with examples including glamorously dressed women in social situations or women in lacy underwear lying on a bed. However, only one breast and very little nudity are seen in these pictures, likely due to regulations to remove potentially offensive content.

Mocking glitz is also present in photos, with women dressed in manly attire or with torn or soiled underpants. The data collection contains messages of belonging, with hashtags referring to mental health issues and counterculture references. Some responses suggest a sense of common connection, linking self-harm to eating disorders or other experiences. Many posters include discussion topics or queries in the captions, suggesting that connecting with people who might have gone through similar experiences is one of the purposes.

CONCLUSION

This research explores the complex dynamics of contemporary social media usage, gaming addiction, gender depiction, body image, and identity development in order to understand the enormous influence that social media has on women. Social media has changed throughout time, giving women new forums to express their issues, receive support, and create groups. Women use a variety of social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to network and seek assistance. They also create closed groups to discuss delicate subjects and use these platforms to discuss sensitive subjects. These virtual exchanges translate into in-person relationships, strengthening bonds and promoting gender parity. Despite its importance, the emergence of women in gaming is hampered by cyberbullying, gender stereotypes, and a dearth of inclusive game designs. Despite these difficulties, research shows that gaming has positive social and cognitive effects on women, highlighting its potential as a tool for mental health and education. Social media gender representation is still a complicated topic; it frequently promotes glamorized and stereotyped body ideals while also highlighting the difficulties that women experience. Talks about subcultures, mental health, and body image find a forum, offering a means of support and a way to exchange experiences.

In summary, this study highlights the complex effects of social media on women's life and highlights the necessity for welcoming environments, a range of representations, and encouraging networks. Comprehending these factors can facilitate the creation of social media platforms that are more inclusive and empowering for women.

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