Gender Equality in the Digital Age

Abstract

Today, gender inequality remains one of the biggest barriers to global progress and development. This unsettling reality points to the urgency of developing innovative solutions that eliminate unjust gender stereotypes around the world. Within the past decade, there has been a significant migration towards social media as a novel driving factor behind social change. Thus, this study sought to identify the efficacy of social media in influencing perceptions of gender equality, specifically among young adults, and thereby mobilize the future generation to achieve a gender-equitable society. 118 students from six high schools across Arizona were surveyed anonymously. The survey aimed to capture both traditional and novel driving factors behind individuals' gender perceptions, and then correlated the effect of those findings with the results of three analytical metrics: a word association analysis, a scenario analysis, and an awareness analysis. Data from each test were weighted along an ordinal scale and then statistically analyzed for significance via the Mann-Whitney U test for two independent, non-parametric samples. In analyzing the effect of traditional driving factors such as digital media and news consumption on the experimental group, there was no statistically significant data to reveal any influence on promoting equitable gender perceptions. Rather, the data significantly pointed to the power of novel driving factors like social media in establishing a platform of empowerment for transcending unjust stereotypes. Thus, by effectively harnessing social media, society has the potential to experience an unprecedented efficacy in influencing gender-equal perceptions and thereby promote an age of widespread progress