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**GENDER FACTOR IN INTERNET COMMUNICATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

**The relevance of this topic** is weighty and timely, as it pertains to a social issue that is increasingly causing concern, namely, gender discrimination. With the rapid advancement of technology and the Internet's general use, communication has become an integral part of everyday life. The forms in which people interact and communicate online have significant implications for social and cultural norms, particularly regarding gender. The subject of gender equality and women's empowerment has earned increased awareness in recent years, and understanding the role of gender in internet communication is essential to address these concerns. The Internet provides a unique platform for individuals to express themselves and engage in various forms of communication, including social media, instant messaging, and online forums. However, these platforms may also perpetuate gender-based stereotypes and discrimination.

An analytical review of the scientific literature shows the importance of studying the role of gender stereotypes in online communication. The following studies were analysed in this paper:

Susan Herring, Christine Paolillo, Inna Kouper, Elijah Wright, and Sharon Stoerger (2007) "Gender and Genre Variations in Weblogs." In this study, the authors examined the connection between gender and genre in weblogs. They found that weblogs belonging to "female" genres are more likely to include issues related to relationships, health, and emotions. Weblogs belonging to the "male" genres mainly contain news and information about technology [33].

Jesse Fox and Wai Yen Tang (2014) "Sexism, Misogyny, and Online Hate Speech: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analytic Review". In this study, the authors investigate the prevalence and impact of online hate speech on women. They found that women face more online hate than men, which can negatively impact their well-being and health [22].

Caroline Tagg (2012) "From Courtship to Kinky: The Place of the Internet in Intimate Relationships." In this study, the author explores how the Internet affects the process of forming intimate relationships. She found out that the Internet can help in the formation of new types of relationships, but it can also reinforce gender stereotypes [54].

Another critical aspect of the gender factor in Internet communication is the issue of cyberbullying. In their study, Hinduja and Patchin (2018) explored the relationship between cyberbullying and gender, finding that females are more likely to experience cyberbullying than males. They also discovered that females are more likely to experience emotional distress due to cyberbullying. This study underscores the necessity for further research and preventative measures to address the gender-based nature of cyberbullying [34].

Finally, the role of gender in online identity construction has also been explored in the literature. For example, in their study, Döring and Pöschl (2019) examined how gender is performed in online self-presentation. They found that traditional gender stereotypes still influence online self-presentation but also noted that online platforms offer opportunities for subverting gender norms. This study highlights the need to consider the complex interplay between gender, technology, and social norms in online identity construction [19].

The literature on the gender factor in Internet communication highlights the need to consider the ways in which gender influences online communication, from language use to cyberbullying to online identity construction. The studies discussed here suggest that gender-based differences in online communication are prevalent and worthy of further investigation.

**This study aims** to examine the role of gender in Internet communication and its impact on the formation of gender consciousness. The study aims to explore the ways in which gender stereotypes and norms are perpetuated or challenged in the online space, as well as to investigate the influence of internet marketing and advertising on the development of gender identities and consumer behaviour. By examining these issues, the study seeks to contribute to a more in-depth understanding

of the gender aspect of Internet communication and provide insights for developing more equitable and inclusive online environments.

The **main objectives of the research** are:

1. To explore the gender aspect of internet communication and its impact on social stereotypes.
2. To analyse the role of gender in the formation of the internet communication space and the perpetuation of harmful gender norms.
3. To investigate the problem of gender inequality on the Internet and its influence on the development of online norms, values, and practices.
4. To examine the role of women in internet activism and their contribution to the development of the Internet.
5. To study the gender aspect of advertising and marketing on the Internet and its impact on consumer behaviour and perceptions.
6. To identify how internet marketing can be used as a tool for challenging and changing gender stereotypes.

**The object of the research** is the gender aspect of interaction on the Internet, which includes the role of gender stereotypes in the formation of the Internet communication space, the influence of social networks on the construction of gender consciousness, and the issue of gender inequality on the Internet.

The following **methods and techniques** were applied in this research:

- Descriptive-comparative analysis - defines distinctions and compares genders that prevail in the internet environment.
- Discourse analysis is the distinction between how genders use language in social media, particularly Tweets, and how they are portrayed in discourse.
- Open-source analysis - an analysis of scientific articles, research, and other publications on the gender factor in internet communication was conducted.
- Pragmatic analysis - an analysis of texts for a deeper understanding of language use, the writer's intentions, and hidden meanings.

- Content analysis - the content of various internet resources (social networks, forums, blogs, videos, advertisements etc.) was analysed to identify gender stereotypes in internet communication.
- Qualitative analysis - an analysis of behaviour in open social media space.
- Historical analysis - an analysis of the history of the development of the Internet and its impact on gender equality, including the study of the role of women in Internet development and their contribution to shaping gender consciousness in the Internet community.

**The subject of the research** is the identification of various gender peculiarities, stereotypes and differences presented in internet communications.

**The research material** comprises 13 Twitter publications of various origins, including 20,055 comments.

**The novelty of the obtained results** lies in the contribution to understanding the complex interplay between gender and online communication. Specifically, the study sheds light on previously unexplored aspects of gendered online behaviour. It provides new insights into how gender norms and expectations are reflected in online interactions.

**The practical significance of the research** outcomes is to identify the specific features of communication between men and women in the online environment and to increase awareness and understanding of the problems associated with gender inequality in this context. The findings can be used to develop policies regarding gender stereotypes and discrimination in the online environment and improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies aimed at different groups of consumers depending on their gender. Also, the findings can be helpful in the development of new technologies and tools that would reduce gender discrimination in the online environment and provide more significant opportunities for gender equality.

**The work structure** includes an introduction, three chapters with three subchapters, conclusions, a summary and a list of references.

# 1. GENDER ASPECT OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION

## 1.1 The concept of gender and its impact on social stereotypes

Gender refers to the social and cultural expectations and roles individuals assign based on sex. It is a crucial topic to examine because gender significantly shapes individuals' experiences, opportunities, and outcomes in society. Gender influences everything from career choices and earning potential to social interactions and personal relationships. Gender stereotypes also contribute to inequality and discrimination, making examining and challenging these stereotypes essential to promote fairness and equality in society.

"Society artificially endows men and women with different positions, status, and rules, and also produces opposing social expectations reflected in human worldview and represented in language [6; 8;].

In scientific research, especially in anthropology and ethnography, social and cultural differences in the behaviour, habits, and socialisation of men and women are occasionally recorded. However, the idea of distinguishing biological sex (sexus) from the social (gender) concept only appeared during the postmodernism period [7]."

It is known that biological differences between men and women are subordinate to social factors. Depending on the explanation of the role of biological and social factors in gender differentiation, there are several approaches:

- The sex-role approach reduces gender to one of its socio-psychological manifestations - gender stereotypes (schemas of perception). This explanation corresponds to the historical understanding of gender as a social superstructure over biological sex.

- The social-constructivist approach explains the relationship between men and women as socially and culturally constructed, emphasising the dominance of men, while biological differences are secondary. Gender relations, in this case, are organised on the principles of domination and subordination, parity and inequality, intragroup favouritism and intergroup discrimination. They create a balance of social perspectives

between men and women, power asymmetry, which is reinforced by differences in gender-specific communication models. Recognizing gender differences as an "objective reality" of biological sex and masking their social nature masks discrimination.

Indeed, biological, ethnocentric, and theological gender models are often invoked to justify societal superstitions and injustices. Gender differences should not be used to justify gender inequality. And disproving the fact that these differences exist or that they are not being studied could have negative consequences for society [6].

Gender has different meanings depending on the perspective from which it is viewed:

1. From a biological point of view, it refers to the division of living organisms into males and females (men and women);
2. From a sociological perspective, it is the interpretation by the society of physiological and gender differences;
3. From a psychological perspective, it is how an individual defines their gender. In this case, the gender role stereotype of a person does not always match their biological sex - this is referred to as gender inversion;
4. From a linguistic perspective, it is the grammatical gender of a noun or pronoun, which can be masculine, feminine, neutral, or common [7].

Social stereotypes are preconceived ideas and beliefs about individuals or groups based on their social identities, such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality. These stereotypes are often perpetuated by the media, popular culture, and social institutions and can profoundly impact society.

Overall, social stereotypes can significantly impact society by perpetuating inequality, limiting potential, creating divisions, and impeding progress. Challenging and overcoming these stereotypes is essential to promote fairness, equality, and inclusivity in society.

Social stereotypes are formed and reinforced through a variety of factors, including socialisation, media, and social institutions:

- **Socialisation:** Socialisation is the process by which individuals learn and internalise their society's norms, values, and beliefs. Stereotypes are often discovered through socialisation and are passed down through generations. For example, parents may reinforce gender stereotypes by giving their children gender-specific toys or clothing.
- **Media:** The media plays an influential role in shaping and reinforcing social stereotypes. Television, movies, advertising, and social media depict individuals and groups in stereotypical ways, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.
- **Social institutions:** Social institutions, such as education, government, and religion, also play a role in forming and reinforcing social stereotypes. For example, schools may reinforce academic stereotypes by tracking students into different levels based on their perceived abilities [8].

Once stereotypes are formed, they can be reinforced through confirmation bias. Confirmation bias occurs when individuals seek information confirming their preconceived beliefs while disregarding information that contradicts them. This reinforces stereotypes and makes them more difficult to challenge and overcome.

To challenge and crush social stereotypes, it is essential to raise awareness of their harmful effects, promote diversity and inclusivity, and actively challenge and confront stereotypes when they arise. This can include exposing oneself to diverse perspectives and experiences, seeking information that contradicts stereotypes, and calling out and challenging stereotypes when they occur in conversations or media [8].

Gender stereotypes can have a significant influence on individuals' behaviour and choices. Here are a few examples:

- **Career choices:** Gender stereotypes often dictate which careers are considered "appropriate" for men and women. Men are often encouraged to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), while females are encouraged to pursue careers in education, healthcare, and social work. These stereotypes can influence individuals' career choices, even if they do not align with their interests or strengths [64].

- Parenting roles: Gender stereotypes can also impact parenting roles. Women are often envisioned as the primary caregivers for children, while men are expected to be the breadwinners. These stereotypes can influence individuals' decisions around parenting, such as whether to take time off work to care for children or how much they are involved in their children's lives.
- Appearance: Gender stereotypes can also influence individuals' appearance and body image. Women are often expected to be thin and attractive, while men are expected to be muscular and tall. These stereotypes can lead individuals to engage in harmful behaviours, such as restrictive eating or excessive exercise, to meet these expectations.
- Communication style: Gender stereotypes can also influence individuals' communication styles. Women are often expected to be more emotional and nurturing, while men are expected to be more assertive and competitive. These stereotypes can impact individuals' communication with others, including in the workplace and in personal relationships [61].

Gender stereotypes can contribute to inequality and discrimination in several ways:

- Hiring and promotion practices: Stereotypes about gender can influence hiring and promotion practices, leading to discrimination against women and non-binary individuals. For example, if a hiring manager believes women are less capable in technical fields, they may be less likely to hire women for engineering or computer science positions.
- Wage gap: Gender stereotypes can also contribute to the wage gap, where women earn less than men for performing the same work. Stereotypes about women's capabilities or priorities, such as the opinion that women are more likely to prioritise family over work, can lead to lower salaries and fewer opportunities for advancement [62].
- Lack of representation: Stereotypes about gender can also lead to a lack of representation in specific fields or positions. For example, if women are

stereotyped as emotional and irrational, they may be less likely to be represented in leadership positions or fields like politics.

- **Violence and harassment:** Gender stereotypes can also contribute to violence and harassment, particularly against women and marginalised groups. Stereotypes about men being dominant and aggressive can lead to violence, while stereotypes about women being submissive and sexual objects can lead to harassment.
- **Social norms:** Stereotypes can also contribute to social norms and expectations around gender roles, leading to prejudice against individuals who do not fit these norms. For example, non-binary individuals may face discrimination and exclusion due to stereotypes about gender and the binary nature of gender roles [62].

In conclusion, the concept of gender is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that significantly impacts social stereotypes. While biologically determined sex differences exist, it is essential to recognize that gender is a socially constructed identity that is shaped by cultural and societal factors. Gender stereotypes can limit individuals' opportunities and perpetuate inequality and discrimination based on gender. By challenging and dismantling these stereotypes, we can promote greater equality and fairness in society, creating a more comprehensive and accepting environment for all individuals, regardless of gender identity.

## **1.2. Specificity of female and male Internet communication**

The development of the Internet has revolutionised the way people communicate and interact with each other. With the widespread use of social media platforms and messaging apps, online communication has become integral to our daily lives. Gender plays a significant role in how individuals communicate online. Men and women tend to have different communication styles, which can influence their interactions and relationships with others on the Internet. In this context, exploring the specificity of female and male internet communication becomes essential to better understand the

impact of gender on online interactions. This topic is particularly relevant in the contemporary digital era, where online communication increasingly shapes social interactions and behaviours.

Internet communication is the process of exchanging information between people using the Internet. It can be any type of communication: email, text messages, chats, forums, social networks, video conferencing, etc [12].

The main components of Internet communication are:

1. Users - people who exchange information via the Internet.
2. Communication channels - services and platforms that allow users to interact with each other, such as email, chat rooms, social networks, etc.
3. Content - information that users exchange with each other, such as text, photos, video, and audio.
4. Communication processes - ways in which users exchange information, such as discussions, debates, conversations, etc [12].

Features of Internet communication include:

- **Unlimited access to information:** One of the features of Internet communication is that users have unlimited access to information. This means they can quickly find any information they seek and even communicate with experts in their field [17].
- **Anonymity:** People can communicate anonymously on the Internet by using pseudonyms or nicknames. This allows users to feel more comfortable when interacting with other people.
- **Multilingualism:** Different languages can be spoken online, allowing users from different countries and cultures to interact with each other [17].
- **Tracking:** Many online services collect user information, such as location and interests. This allows for creating personalised content and advertising but can also raise questions about privacy and data security.
- **Instantaneous:** Online communication makes it possible to receive responses to your messages almost instantly, which makes communication easier.

A literature review on Internet communication provides insight into the main concepts and approaches to studying this issue. Below are some of the key works and authors who have studied this topic:

1. Daniella Boyd researches social networks and communication among teenagers on the Internet. In her book "It's Complicated," the author studies social interaction online, particularly understanding how social networks impact people's interactions [9].
2. Zizi Papacharissi studies the relationship between the Internet and a person's identity. In her book "A Networked Self," she concentrates on understanding how social networks influence identity and culture [50].
3. Joseph Walther researches human interactions on the Internet. In his work "Computer-Mediated Communication," he examines various forms of online communication, particularly the differences between Internet communication and real-life communication [59].
4. Keith Hampton and Barry Wellman research the interactions between people on the Internet and their impact on social capital and community. In their article "Neighbouring in Netville," they explore how the Internet can help shape and develop online and offline communities and social capital [30].
5. Susan Kiesler, John Siegel, and Terry McGuire research the social-psychological aspects of communication on the Internet. In their work "Social Psychological Aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication," they investigate the impact of the Internet on human communication, examining various aspects of online interaction, including anonymity, distancing, and the heightened closeness effect [39].
6. Sherry Turkle researches human interactions with technology and its impact on social relationships. In her book "Alone Together," she focuses on how technology affects communication and interaction between people, examining various aspects of this issue, including the effects of virtual reality and increased intimacy [56].

Several theories explain the difference in communication between men and women online. Here are some of them:

1. Social role theory. This theory explains that their social roles determine how men and women communicate online. For example, women may believe that their social role is to be more emotionally expressed and caring, while men may feel that their social role is to be more aggressive and dominant. This theory may explain why women use more emojis and less aggressive language online while men use fewer emojis and more aggressive language [19].

2. Cultural context theory. This theory explains that cultural context can influence the way men and women communicate online. For example, some cultures may differ in the roles they assign to women and men and their expectations of gender communication. This may explain why how men and women communicate varies from country to country [19].

3. Theory of speech distinction. This theory explains that different speech features determine the way men and women communicate online. For example, according to this theory, women use more words that describe emotions and relationships, while men use more words that describe actions and objects. This theory may explain why women are more likely to use emojis and other symbols to express emotions online [35].

4. The theory of common themes. This theory explains that how men and women communicate online is determined by the common themes that unite them. For example, men and women may have different interests in different topics, which may influence how they communicate online [35].

These theories can help understand why the way men and women communicate may differ online and help identify which communication aspects may be more important to each gender. It should be noted, however, that these theories are not universal and may not reflect all aspects of gender communication online.

Online communication affects people's social lives and can also reflect their psychological characteristics. Below are some of the features that may affect the way men and women communicate online:

1. Self-esteem. Men and women with different levels of self-esteem may have different online communication styles. For example, people with high self-esteem may use more self-expression and be more active in their communication. In contrast, people with low self-esteem may be more passive and cautious in communication [32].

2. Emotional stability. People with high levels of emotional stability may be more confident and calm in their online communication. In contrast, people with low levels of emotional stability may be more sensitive and prone to emotional reactions.

3. Extraversion. People with high levels of extraversion may be more likely to engage in active social interaction online, while people with low levels of extraversion may be more likely to engage in passive social interaction [32].

4. Interests. Men and women may have different interests that influence how they communicate online. For example, men may be more interested in the technical aspects of the Internet, while women may be more interested in social networking and discussing topics related to human relationships.

5. Stress. People with high-stress levels may have difficulty communicating online, as they may be more prone to conflict and adverse emotional reactions [43].

6. Attitudes towards the Internet. People with different attitudes toward the Internet may have different communication styles. For example, people who consider the Internet the primary source of information and communication may be more active and open in their online communication, while people who believe the Internet less critical may be less active and genuine in their online communication.

7. Cultural differences. Different cultures may have different standards and expectations regarding online communication. For example, some cultures may have more significant restrictions on what topics can be discussed online or what communication style is acceptable [43].

In general, the psychological characteristics of men and women influence the way they communicate online, including communication style, activity level and emotional reactivity. Considering these characteristics can be helpful when researching online communication between men and women.

Both similarities and differences exist in the online communication of men and women, which are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Differences and similarities between men and women in online communication [32]

Similarities	Differences
Use of social media: both men and women actively use social media to communicate with friends and family, share news and videos, and to meet new people and expand their social networks.	Communication style: women are more likely to use more emotionally coloured language and express their emotions, while men may use more direct and objective forms of speech.
Communication goals: both men and women use the Internet to achieve various communication goals, such as discussing common interests, maintaining social connections, finding romantic partners, etc.	Conversation topics: women are more likely to discuss topics related to personal relationships, emotional issues and other social topics, while men are more likely to discuss technical issues, sports, politics and other topics.
Use of language: men and women may use different languages to express their thoughts and emotions, but they may also use common language tools such as emoticons and emojis.	Communication purposes: Women use the Internet more often to maintain social connections and relationships.

It is important to note that these differences are not absolute and may depend on many factors, such as age, culture, education, etc. It is also worth remembering that there is a great deal of diversity among men and women; each individual is unique and may have particular preferences in online communication.

Consequently, there are differences in how men and women communicate online. These differences can be seen in the types of communication purposes, language use, and social and online behaviours exhibited by each gender. Women tend to use the Internet more for social purposes, such as maintaining relationships and

seeking support, while men are more likely to use it for specific tasks, such as gaming or work. In addition, women tend to use more expressive and emotional language, while men tend to use more assertive and competitive language. These gender differences in online communication are essential to consider in order to better understand and improve communication in the online space.

### **1.3. The role of gender stereotypes in the formation of the Internet communication space**

Gender stereotypes have long been an influential force in shaping societal norms and values, influencing everything from workplace dynamics to media representation. With the advent of the Internet and the rise of online communication, these gender stereotypes have extended their reach into the virtual world. In the online realm, gender stereotypes manifest in unique ways, shaping how individuals communicate, the content they consume, and the spaces they occupy. As such, understanding the role of gender stereotypes in forming the internet communication space is critical in unpacking the broader implications of these stereotypes and their impact on our digital lives.

Gender stereotypes play a significant role in shaping the space of online communication. They influence how people perceive and interpret information posted on the Internet and how they communicate with each other in this space. They can affect the choice of topics for discussion, and the way messages are formulated, and the use of language, in other words, all aspects of online communication. This can be reflected in a shift in focus on specific topics, as well as in the uneven representation of genders in online communication [31].

Stereotypical perceptions of female and male behaviour can influence the way social media users present themselves and interact with other users. Women may be portrayed as emotional, weak and dependent, while men may be represented as strong, rational and aggressive. This can lead to stereotypical perceptions of online messages and gender-based discrimination.

Women may be less represented in topics that are considered "masculine," such as technology, science and sports. On the other hand, men may be less defined in topics considered "feminine," such as beauty, fashion and homemaking. This can lead to a sense of isolation and inequality in the distribution of influence on decisions and the shaping of society [31].

Gender stereotypes can influence the way users interact on social media and other platforms. Men may tend to be more aggressive and dominate discussions, while women may be less confident in their opinions and exaggerate their shortcomings. This can lead to the exclusion of certain groups of people from discussions and unequal distribution of decision-making power.

Gender stereotypes can affect language and how we communicate online on several levels. For example, they can be reflected in the choice of words and phrases used in communication, as well as in writing style and tone of voice [51].

One of the most common examples of gender stereotypes in the language is using the masculine gender as a general form of addressing people, regardless of their sex or gender identity. For example, the phrase "every man" can be used as an all-purpose term to describe a group of people, but it can cause a sense of exclusion for women and other people who do not identify as male [51].

Gender stereotypes can influence the way people express their thoughts and ideas online. For example, women and others who do not conform to gender stereotypes may use different writing styles and word choices, leading to rejection or undervaluation. Some gender stereotypes can lead to stereotypes about the roles of women and men in communication, such as the idea that men should be more direct and aggressive in communication. In contrast, women should be more conciliatory and involved in the communication process.

Social media can reflect gender stereotypes and roles in various ways, like:

- Advertising and marketing: Many advertising companies use gender stereotypes to attract the attention of their target audience. Women may be portrayed in advertisements as attractive and sexy, while men may be

described as strong and independent. This can support and reinforce stereotypes about how men and women should be in society [62].

- **Representation on social media:** There may be a social norm on social media that defines how users should behave and look. For example, women may feel pressured to look up to the beauty standards imposed on them on social media. This can lead to stereotypes about what women and men should look like online.
- **Role in communication:** Social media may have specific parts for men and women. For example, women may be more involved in communicating and maintaining relationships, while men may focus more on achievement and success. This can contribute to stereotypes about the roles of men and women in communication and online interaction [62].
- **Inequality in access to information:** Inequality between men and women in access to information and opportunities to use digital technologies. For example, stereotypes that women are less competent in technology can lead to women not receiving equal opportunities in the digital sphere. This may include fewer digital job offers for women or fewer opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge [62].

The adoption of gender stereotypes in online communication can have the following consequences:

1. **Inequality between the sexes:** Gender stereotypes can lead to unequal treatment of women and men in online communication. For example, stereotypes may indicate that men are better leaders or technical experts, while women are recognised as more suitable for the role of mother or homemaker. This can lead to unequal opportunities for women and men in the network [21].
2. **Discrimination:** Stereotypical gender behaviour can lead to discrimination, especially against women and people who do not conform to gender stereotypes. For example, women may face discrimination in the workplace due to stereotypes about their role in society, which can be so severe that they may refuse to work in specific industries.

3. Negative stereotypes: Acceptance of stereotypical gender behaviour online can contribute to negative stereotypes about the roles and behaviour of women and men in society. This can reinforce inequality between the sexes and lead to discrimination [21].
4. Restriction of freedom of choice: Stereotypes of gendered behaviour can limit people's freedom of choice about their online behaviour. For example, stereotypes may indicate that women should be cautious online, thereby limiting their ability to express their thoughts and ideas freely and without fear. It can also lead to people not expressing their views openly for fear of deviating from stereotypical gender roles. Such restrictions can harm and have a negative impact on the development of individuality and creativity of Internet users, as well as on the development of society itself. Therefore, it is essential to understand how gender stereotypes affect the freedom of choice in online behaviour and to act to reduce their impact on people.

Generally, gender stereotypes play an important role in shaping the online communication space. They define what roles and behaviours are appropriate for each gender online, which can lead to inequality and discrimination in user interaction. Social media, in turn, reflects these stereotypes through advertisements, images and other elements that can reinforce negative perceptions of the roles and behaviours of each gender. However, the Internet can also be a space for disrupting stereotypes of gender behaviour and supporting equality between the sexes. This requires understanding and conscious action to eliminate gender inequality in online communication and promote equal access to information and opportunities for users of all genders.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 1**

Through the exploration of the concept of gender and its impact on social stereotypes, the specificity of female and male Internet communication, and the role of

gender stereotypes in the formation of the Internet communication space, it is clear that gender plays an influential part in shaping our online interactions and experiences.

The concept of gender is a socially constructed phenomenon that cultural and historical factors have shaped. Gender stereotypes are deeply embedded in our social consciousness and influence our online and offline behaviour and interactions. The impact of gender stereotypes on online communication can be seen in how individuals present themselves, the language they use, and their interactions with others.

The specificity of female and male Internet communication highlights the differences in communication styles between genders. A more expressive and emotional approach characterises female communication, while male communication tends to be more assertive and competitive. These disparities in communication manners can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in online interactions between genders.

Research has shown that gender stereotypes play a significant role in the formation of communication styles in both offline and online settings. These stereotypes are often deeply ingrained in society and can influence how individuals perceive and interact with others of a different gender.

Addressing gender stereotypes in online communication is crucial for promoting equality and fairness in online spaces. By recognizing and challenging gender stereotypes, individuals can learn to communicate with each other more respectfully and inclusively. This can lead to a more favourable and effective online environment for everyone.

## 2. INTERNET COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY

### 2.1. The problem of gender inequality on the Internet

Gender inequality is a serious problem that exists in all areas of life, including the Internet. It affects not only women but also other gender minorities, such as transgender and non-binary people. While the Internet provides opportunities for communication and information exchange, it can also support and spread stereotypes about the roles of women and men in society.

Women and other gender minorities face gender discrimination online in various forms. They may be subjected to disparaging comments, criticism and judgement for their appearance or behavior and face verbal attacks, sexual violence and other forms of online bullying. Women may be underrepresented on various online platforms, such as in the tech industry, resulting in their lower representation in these areas.

Online gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence can take various forms, from sexist comments and hate speech to stalking and threats of physical violence. Here are some examples of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence on Twitter:

- Misogynistic insults and threats - Women on Twitter often face sexist and derogatory comments, including sexual harassment and threats of violence. For example, in 2014, Caroline Criado-Perez, a feminist campaigner in the UK, received a barrage of rape and death threats on Twitter after successfully campaigning to have a woman's image added to the country's banknotes [49].
- Revenge porn - Revenge porn, sharing intimate images without consent, is a form of sexual violence that disproportionately affects women. In 2019, Twitter announced it would ban non-consensual nudity, revenge porn, and deepfakes, but the problem persists [57].
- Online stalking - Online stalking, or cyberstalking, is a growing problem on Twitter, particularly for women. Stalkers may send threatening or intimidating

messages, hack accounts, or use bots to harass and intimidate their victims. In 2018, actress and activist Rose McGowan revealed that she had been stalked and harassed on Twitter by Harvey Weinstein's associates [57].

- Online hate groups - Twitter has been criticised for failing to remove hate groups and extremist content from its platform. Women, people of colour, and members of other marginalised groups are often the targets of these hate groups. In 2018, Twitter was accused of allowing a white supremacist group to organise and promote a rally in Washington, DC [20].
- Online trolling - Trolling is a behaviour in which individuals post inflammatory, offensive, or irrelevant comments online, often intending to provoke an emotional response from others. Women are often the targets of trolling, with many being subjected to sexist, racist, or homophobic comments. For example, comedian Leslie Jones was the target of racist and sexist trolling on Twitter in 2016, which led her to leave the platform.
- Online bullying - Online bullying is a growing problem on Twitter, particularly among young people. Women and girls are often the targets of this behaviour, with bullies using social media to spread rumours, insult, and threaten their victims. In 2019, the suicide of British teenager Molly Russell was linked to online bullying on Instagram, another popular social media platform.
- Unequal representation - Women are often underrepresented in various online platforms, from tech companies to media outlets. This lack of expression can reinforce gender stereotypes and limit opportunities for women in these industries. For example, a 2019 World Wide Web Foundation report found that women make up only 23% of the AI workforce globally, with fewer women in senior leadership roles [61].

These examples illustrate the pervasive nature of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence on Twitter and other social media platforms. It is essential to recognize these actions' impact on their victims and take concrete steps to prevent and address them. Creating a safer and more inclusive online environment ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, can participate in online communication and

interaction without fear of discrimination or harassment. Table 2.1 demonstrates the gender difference in online communication and the use of different language tools by men and women depending on the topic of discussion.

Table 2.1 Comparison of men's and women's comments on posts from different categories of sports and politics on Twitter

<b>Post</b>	<b>Female comment</b>	<b>Male comment</b>	<b>Lexical and grammatical features</b>
"I'm tired of seeing male athletes being paid more than female athletes for doing the same job."	"It's about time we start paying female athletes what they deserve. Gender pay gap is real."	"Sorry, but women's sports just don't bring in the same revenue as men's sports. It's not about gender, it's just business."	Use of gender pay gap and gender equality terminology. The use of the word "business" points at the corruptive and sexist mood of a male speaker towards a female.
"I'm so happy to see more women running for political office and breaking barriers!"	"Yes, representation matters! It's time for women to have a seat at the table and make their voices heard."	"I don't care if they're male or female, I just want the best candidate for the job."	Use of representation and gender equality terminology. The use of the phrase "it's time" empathises the importance and readiness of action.

<p>"Why do some men feel threatened by women who speak up for themselves?"</p>	<p>"It's sad that some men still can't handle strong women. We deserve to be treated with respect and equality."</p>	<p>"I don't feel threatened by anyone, male or female. But sometimes it seems like women are looking for a fight where there isn't one."</p>	<p>The use of words "equality" and "respect" points at the importance of equality and respect.</p>
<p>"As a female fan of football, I'm so tired of being asked if I understand the game."</p>	<p>"Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I don't know anything about football. Stop assuming we're all clueless."</p>	<p>"I've never assumed that a woman can't understand football. But if you don't know the rules, don't get mad when someone explains them to you."</p>	<p>Use of gender stereotypes and frustration with assumptions are described by words "clueless", and phrases "if you don't know (...), don't..." which appear personal towards the female.</p>
<p>"I'm sick of politicians using fear-mongering to divide us. We need leaders who bring us together, not tear us apart."</p>	<p>"Yes, unity and empathy are what we need right now. Let's vote for leaders who stand for unity and not hate."</p>	<p>"I don't think it's fear-mongering to be concerned about national security and protecting our borders. We need strong assertions about national security and border protection"</p>	<p>The use of the phrase "fear-mongering" to describe the tactics of politicians, and word "unity" and the phrase "stand for unity" to emphasise the</p>

			importance of togetherness.
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*Source: generated by the author[4;10;67-74].*

In the line with the post, you can see that the use of stereotypes about women and men is quite common. It can be seen that women's comments are more likely to use stereotypes about feminism, while men's comments contain stereotypes about the physical capabilities of women and men.

Gender inequality is a widespread problem online, and social media platforms such as Twitter play a significant role in perpetuating it. Examples of this problem on Twitter are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Thematic analysis of statements using stereotypes and negative evaluations

<b>Example</b>	<b>Lexical and grammatical features</b>
"She's too emotional, she can't handle the job."	Stereotypical assessment of women as emotionally unstable, using a phrase "too emotional", "can't handle".
"He's such a boss, he always knows what to do."	The use of a stereotype of men as leaders and decisive individuals, assuming all males know what to do, using the word "boss".
"Why do feminists always have to ruin everything?"	Negative attitude towards feminism and its representatives, using a combination of words "always" and "ruin".
"Women just don't have the same physical abilities as men, it's just science."	Using a stereotype about the physical capabilities of women and men by blaming "science"

"I'm so tired of this PC culture, can't even make a joke anymore without offending someone."	Negative attitude towards political correctness and its impact on freedom of speech, using a combination of “so tired” and “ can’t even”, and showing a straightforward statement by using “offending”
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*Source: generated by the author[15;25;75;76].*

Language and use of emoticons and memes: Men and women often use different terminology, grammar, and even emoticons and memes on Twitter, which can reinforce gender stereotypes and contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality. For example, women may be more likely to use emoticons and exclamation points in their tweets, which can reinforce gender stereotypes about women being more emotional or expressive. The use of emoticons and memes can also perpetuate gender stereotypes and discrimination. For example, using the "laughing while crying" emoji to mock women for being emotional or "overreacting" can reinforce harmful gender stereotypes.

Comments that promote discrimination/harassment against women: Twitter is often used as a platform for promoting hate speech and harassment against women, with some users using derogatory language, threats, and insults to target women online. Women receive more critical and negative comments than men on social media platforms like Twitter. These comments often focus on women's appearance, intelligence, and opinions rather than the content of their posts or contributions. This can significantly impact women's mental health and well-being, as well as their ability to participate fully in online discourse.

In addition to individual comments and behaviours, social media platforms' algorithms and content moderation policies can also contribute to gender inequality online. For example, algorithms that prioritise engagement and popularity may favour sensational or controversial content, which can lead to the spread of hateful or discriminatory content. Content moderation policies prioritising free speech over users' safety and well-being can also contribute to the spread of hate speech and harassment.

Gender inequality on social media platforms like Twitter is a complex issue that involves individual behaviour, cultural attitudes, and platform policies and practices. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, awareness-raising, policy change, and platform design and moderation.

Some several initiatives and strategies have been developed to combat gender inequality on the Internet:

1. Promoting digital literacy: One approach is to provide education and training to increase digital literacy, especially among women and girls who may face barriers to accessing technology. This includes teaching digital skills such as coding, online safety, and digital citizenship [14].
2. Promoting diversity and inclusion: Efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in tech and media industries can help to address the underrepresentation of women and other marginalised groups. This includes increasing the number of women in leadership positions, promoting inclusive hiring practices, and developing diverse and representative content.
3. Developing tools and technologies: Tools and technologies such as digital security tools, online harassment reporting mechanisms, and online content moderation tools can help to address the specific challenges faced by women and other marginalised groups on the Internet [14].
4. Advocacy and awareness-raising: Advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns can help draw attention to gender inequality on the Internet and encourage action. This includes initiatives such as the United Nations' HeForShe campaign, which encourages men to take action to support gender equality.
5. Legal and policy frameworks: Legal and policy frameworks can play a role in addressing gender inequality on the Internet. This includes efforts to strengthen laws and procedures related to online harassment, data protection, and online privacy, among other issues.

Overall, these initiatives and strategies are essential in addressing the issue of gender inequality on the Internet and promoting greater inclusivity and equality in the digital sphere.

In conclusion, the gender factor in internet communication plays a significant role in perpetuating gender inequality on the Internet. The prevalence of gender stereotypes, harassment, and unequal representation of genders in various online spaces reflects the broader societal issues of gender inequality. However, multiple initiatives and strategies are aimed at combating gender inequality on the Internet, such as education, policy changes, and technological advancements. It is crucial to continue addressing the issue of gender inequality on the Internet and work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive online space for all genders.

## **2.2. Influence of social networks on the formation of gender consciousness**

Social networks have become an essential component of our daily lives in recent years. These platforms have drastically changed how we communicate, share information, and perceive the world. However, social networks are not just neutral tools that we utilise to link with each other. They also significantly impact our attitudes, beliefs, and values, including those related to gender. The impact of social webs on the construction of gender consciousness has become a subject of increasing interest among researchers and scholars. In this context, it is crucial to investigate the complex dynamics between social media and gender and examine the implications of these dynamics for individuals and society.

Social networks play an influential part in shaping attitudes and beliefs toward gender and gender roles. With the widespread usage of social media platforms, individuals have greater access to information and communication than ever before. This increased exposure to different perspectives and opinions can either reinforce or challenge existing gender norms and stereotypes [38].

Influencers on social media have a powerful effect on shaping gender attitudes and beliefs, especially among young people. Influencers are individuals who have a considerable number of devotees on social media platforms and are often seen as trendsetters or role models. They have the power to influence the views and behaviour of their followers, including their attitudes toward gender roles and stereotypes. Online

communities and groups can also significantly impact shaping gender attitudes and beliefs. Depending on the group's norms and values, they can reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes. For example, some online groups may promote traditional gender roles and reinforce stereotypes, while others may challenge these stereotypes and promote gender equality [38].

Many social media influencers promote products or lifestyles associated with traditional gender roles, such as make-up and fashion for women or sports and fitness for men. This can perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce the idea that certain activities or interests are only suitable for one gender.

There are also influencers who use their platforms to challenge gender stereotypes and foster gender equality. They can share their own experiences and views or promote brands and products that support diversity and inclusion.

The impact of social media influencers on shaping gender attitudes and beliefs depends on the individual influencers, their content, and the attitudes and beliefs of their followers. It is clear, however, that social media influencers have the potential to play a substantial part in shaping societal attitudes toward gender [7].

One way in which social networks influence gender consciousness is through the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and biases. For example, women may be portrayed in a sexualized or objectified manner, while men are often depicted as aggressive and dominant. These depictions can reinforce harmful gender stereotypes and contribute to the marginalisation of particular gender identities.

On the other hand, social networks can also provide a platform for marginalised communities to share their experiences and challenge societal norms. For example, the #MeToo movement gained momentum through social media, giving a voice to survivors of sexual harassment and assault and raising awareness about the prevalence of such issues. Social networks can also provide a space for individuals to research and express their gender uniqueness, which can be particularly empowering for those who may not have access to such aids in their offline communities.

Table 2.3 allows us to analyse popular social networks in terms of gender stereotypes that are supported in the content posted by users.

Table 2.3 Gender Stereotypes in Popular Social Media Platforms [55]

<b>Social Network</b>	<b>Total Users</b>	<b>Gender breakdown</b>	<b>Popular Content Type</b>	<b>Gender Stereotypes</b>	<b>Opportunities for Positive Change</b>
Facebook	2.8 billion	Male: 53%, Female: 47%	Photos, videos, text posts	Reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes through ads and suggested content	Encourage diverse representation in ads and feature stories, implement policies to reduce hate speech and online harassment
Instagram	1.2 billion	Male: 28%, Female: 72%	Photos, short videos, stories	Promotes unrealistic beauty standards and reinforces traditional gender roles through sponsored content	Encourage diversity in sponsored content and feature influencers with diverse body types and gender expressions, implement policies to reduce hate speech and online harassment
Twitter	330 million	Male: 60%, Female: 40%	Text-based posts,	Has been used to amplify marginalised	Implement stronger policies to reduce hate speech and

			news articles	voices and challenge gender stereotypes, but also prone to harassment and misogyny	online harassment, amplify diverse voices through features such as Twitter Moments
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TikTok	1.2 billion	Male: 39%, Female: 61%	Short videos, challenges	Promotes youth culture and challenges gender stereotypes through diverse content creators	Encourage diverse representation in sponsored content and challenges, feature content creators with diverse gender expressions and identities
LinkedIn	756 million	Male: 57%, Female: 43%	Professional profiles, articles	Can perpetuate gender biases in the workplace through algorithms and lack of diversity in leadership positions	Encourage diversity in leadership positions and highlight successful women in male-dominated fields, promote gender-neutral job postings and inclusive language in profiles

All social networks offer a variety of content types, with photos and videos being the most popular. Gender stereotypes are prevalent on all social networks, with traditional gender roles and beauty standards being reinforced through content. There

are opportunities for positive change in gender stereotypes on social media through conscious efforts to diversify content and challenge traditional norms. For example, some Instagram accounts promote body positivity and inclusivity, while others challenge gender stereotypes through humour and satire.

Social media has become omnipresent in our day-to-day lives, influencing how we interact with others and shaping our attitudes and beliefs. However, social media use is not gender-neutral, and it has been found that men and women use social media differently, which can reinforce gender stereotypes and biases [13].

Social media algorithms can further exacerbate gender stereotypes by curating content based on users' interests and behaviour. This means that if a user frequently interacts with content that reinforces gender stereotypes, they will be more likely to notice similar content in their feeds, which can reinforce these biases [13].

Social media has been found to contribute to the objectification and sexualization of women, with women being more likely to be targeted with sexually explicit content and messages. This can contribute to normalising harmful attitudes toward women and perpetuating a culture of gender-based violence.

Social media plays a substantial role in shaping our attitudes and beliefs about gender, and its gendered nature and algorithmic curation can perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and biases.

In conclusion, social networks significantly influence the formation of gender consciousness. They perpetuate and reinforce gender stereotypes through their algorithms, content, and the behaviour of their users. Social media influencers play a vital part in shaping gender attitudes and beliefs among their followers. Online communities and groups have the potential to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes, depending on their content and the behaviour of their members. To promote positive change in gender attitudes and beliefs, it is essential to raise awareness of the role of social networks in shaping gender consciousness and to actively challenge harmful gender stereotypes online.

### **2.3. The role of women in Internet activism and their contribution to the development of the Internet**

The Internet has become an essential tool for activism and social change, providing a platform for individuals and groups to raise awareness about important issues and mobilise support for various causes. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the role of women in internet activism and their significant contributions to the development of the Internet. Women have been at the forefront of numerous social and political movements online, using their voices and expertise to advocate for gender equality and other social justice issues.

Internet activism, also known as online activism or digital activism, refers to the use of the Internet and digital media to promote and facilitate social and political change. It encompasses a range of activities, from social media campaigns and online petitions to hacktivism and cyber-attacks, all aimed at achieving social justice and addressing issues of inequality [11].

The usage of the Internet as a mechanism for activism has grown significantly in recent years, as the widespread adoption of social media and other digital technologies has enabled people to connect and organise more efficiently than ever before. This has led to new forms of activism that are more decentralised, dynamic, and inclusive than traditional forms of activism.

Women's contributions to Internet activism have helped to raise awareness of critical social and political issues and have been instrumental in driving positive social change. Women in Internet activism face both challenges and opportunities in their efforts to bring about social change. On the one hand, the Internet delivers a platform for women to raise awareness about issues that affect them, connect with like-minded individuals, and organise movements that can have a global impact. Women have used the Internet to highlight topics such as gender-based violence, the wage gap, reproductive rights, and discrimination in the workplace, among others.

Women in online activism use a variety of strategies to draw attention to their initiatives and ensure their success. Some of these strategies may include:

1. Creating viral content: women can create videos, images and other types of content that can go viral and help spread their initiative quickly and effectively.
2. Using social media: women can use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to draw attention to their initiatives and find new supporters and backers [11].
3. Organising petitions and actions: Women can create petitions and motions online that allow them to collect signatures and show support for their initiatives.
4. Involving other activists: women can involve other activists and organisations in their initiative, which helps to increase its effectiveness and spread the message.
5. Use of online resources: Women can use various online resources such as blogs, websites and forums to spread their ideas and ensure they are visible to the public [11].

The success of the strategies depends on many factors, such as the cultural and political situation in the country where the activism is taking place, as well as the resources and connections that activists have.

Table 2.4 provides examples of successful online campaigns led by women from different fields and backgrounds. These campaigns have effectively raised awareness of important issues, mobilised support and brought about change.

Table 2.4 Examples of successful online campaigns led by women [20]

<b>Campaign</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Impact/Outcome</b>
#MeToo	2017-ongoing	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram	Created a global movement against sexual harassment and assault, leading to policy changes in various industries

Black Lives Matter	2013-ongoing	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram	Raised awareness about police brutality and systemic racism against Black people, leading to policy changes and increased accountability
Time's Up	2018-ongoing	Twitter, Instagram, website	Aims to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, providing legal resources and support to survivors
Girls Not Brides	2011-ongoing	Website, social media	A global partnership to end child marriage, resulting in policy changes and increased awareness
Malala Fund	2013-ongoing	Website, social media	Supports girls' education and advocacy for women's rights, funding education projects and empowering young women to become leaders
#EndSARS	2020	Twitter, Instagram, Facebook	A social media campaign against police brutality in Nigeria, leading to the disbandment of the controversial police unit and increased calls for police reform
#NiUnaMenos	2015-ongoing	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram	A campaign against gender-based violence in Latin America, resulting in policy changes and increased awareness
#SheInspiresMe	2020	Instagram	A campaign to support women-owned small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, raising over £55,000 for charity

#PeriodPoverty	2019-ongoing	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram	A campaign to end the stigma and lack of access to menstrual products, leading to policy changes and increased awareness
#NotYourAsianSidekick	2013-ongoing	Twitter	A campaign to raise awareness about Asian American and Pacific Islander women's experiences with racism and discrimination

One of the most significant contributions of women to the development of the Internet has been their role in creating and shaping online communities. Women have created spaces to connect, share information, and mobilise for change. These communities have provided a platform for women to share their experiences, advocate for their rights, and help each other in the face of oppression and discrimination.

Women have also been instrumental in advocating for policies and regulations that promote gender equality online. They have pushed for measures to combat online harassment, facilitate digital skills and education access, and guarantee that the Internet is a secure and inclusive space for all. Through their advocacy, women have helped to shape the Internet as a space that reflects their values and priorities [20].

Women's contributions to the Internet's development have helped challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. By creating and participating in online communities, women have challenged the notion that the Internet is a male-dominated space. They have demonstrated that women can be powerful agents of change online and have helped to break down barriers to women's participation in the digital world.

However, women in Internet activism also face numerous challenges. These include online harassment and threats of violence, lack of access to resources and funding, and marginalisation within the tech industry. Women who speak out on social media or other online platforms often face vitriolic and threatening responses, which can deter them from continuing to engage in activism. Additionally, women may need

access to the same resources and funding opportunities as their male counterparts, limiting their ability to make a significant impact.

In conclusion, women have played an important role in Internet activism and have made significant contributions to the development of the Internet. Through online campaigns, women have been able to raise awareness about various social issues and promote gender equality. Women have also used the Internet to create networks and communities that empower and support each other. However, women still face many challenges in Internet activism, including online harassment and discrimination. It is essential to continue supporting and amplifying women's voices in Internet activism and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable online space. Overall, women have shown that their contributions to the Internet are invaluable and have the power to create positive change in society.

## **Conclusions to Chapter 2**

The study of Internet communication in the context of gender equality revealed several essential conclusions. First, it became clear that online gender inequality is a pervasive problem that affects all aspects of online communication, from online harassment and cyberbullying to unequal representation and opportunity in the tech industry.

Second, it became clear that social networks play a significant role in the formation of gender consciousness and the strengthening of gender stereotypes and prejudices. While social media can potentially be a platform for women's empowerment, it can also be a space where gender inequality is reinforced and exacerbated. This highlights the importance of developing critical media literacy skills and promoting positive representation of women and diverse gender identities in online spaces.

The role of women in Internet activism is a powerful force for transformation and improvement in the development of the Internet. Women-led initiatives have fostered more inclusive and diverse online communities, challenged traditional gender

roles and stereotypes, and advocated for policies and practices that promote gender equality and social justice.

Overall, there is a need for continued research, advocacy, and action to address gender disparities in online communication. By fostering inclusive and equitable online spaces and empowering women to participate fully in the development of the Internet, we can work towards a fairer and more equal online and offline society.

### **3. GENDER ASPECT OF ADVERTISING AND MARKETING ON THE INTERNET**

#### **3.1. Gender role identification in marketing strategies**

Understanding gender roles in marketing strategies is essential for a successful advertising campaign. Consumers have different perceptions of gender roles, which can affect their perception of advertising and product choice. In marketing, correctly identified gender roles can be a powerful tool for attracting and retaining target audiences. However, misperceptions of gender roles can offend some consumers and negatively impact brand reputation.

There are several tools that marketers can use to identify gender roles in their marketing strategies:

1. **Social media analysis:** Marketers can study which audience groups use different social media platforms, what types of content they post, and what gender role stereotypes they support.
2. **Focus groups and surveys:** Marketers can use focus groups and surveys to learn about consumers' thoughts and feelings about gender roles and how they affect their product choices [41].
3. **Market analysis:** Marketers can research which gender roles are famous in the market and which products or brands most often use these roles for marketing purposes.
4. **Competitor research:** marketers can study which gender roles their competitors use in their marketing strategies and how they work for them.
5. **Analysing statistical data:** Marketers can study consumer statistics to find out what products and services are most often purchased by men and women and what gender role stereotypes may be associated with those products or services [41].

These tools allow marketers to create more targeted marketing that meets the needs and expectations of consumers of different gender groups. For example, Nike's

marketing campaign targeting women in sports was noted for its use of empathy and reflection on the other sports played by women. In its advertising, Nike has created a positive image of female athletes who excel in their activities while looking strong and confident [29].

Such approaches allow companies to attract new customers and retain loyal fans of the brand who perceive it as a social and cultural brand. By considering gender roles in marketing strategies, companies can reduce the risk of creating ads that cause adverse reactions from consumers and can damage the brand's reputation.

An advertising campaign is a process in which marketers use various tools and strategies to attract consumers' attention and persuade them to purchase a particular product or service. One of the key elements of advertising is the choice of colours, design, and product descriptions, which can influence consumers' perception of the message conveyed by the advertisement. Gender roles can also control these elements of an advertising campaign, so let's take a closer look at some of them.

Colours can be a crucial element of an advertising campaign. The choice of colours can reflect and reinforce gender stereotypes or be used to change them. For example, pink, white, and purple are often used in advertisements for women's products, while advertisements for men's products use darker and brighter colours, such as black, navy, and red [27].

The choice of colours can also be altered to overcome gender stereotypes. For example, hygiene product advertisements can use bright colours that are labelled as feminine (e.g., pink), but can also use darker colours, such as blue or green, which can be perceived as more unisex [27].

Design is another essential element of an advertising campaign that can be used to reflect gender roles. For example, advertisements for women's products often use round shapes, pink-tinted shades, and soft lines to convey femininity and tenderness. On the other hand, advertisements for men's products typically use sharp angles, straight lines, and bright and saturated colours, which convey strength, energy, and masculinity. Design can influence the perception of a product by both men and women. For example, studies have shown that women are more likely to prefer products with

rounded shapes and soft shades, while men are more interested in products with straight lines and bright colours.

As for the product description, gender stereotypes can also be used here. For example, a product description for women may use words associated with female beauty, such as "attractiveness," "tenderness," and "grace." In contrast, a product description for men may use words associated with strength, such as "strong," "sturdy," and "determined" [31].

However, it is worth remembering that the use of gender stereotypes in product design and description can have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, conformity to stereotypes can contribute to a more direct perception of the product and its successful marketing. If stereotypes go too far, it can lead to insults to women and men, leading to a loss of consumer confidence and a negative impact on brand reputation [31].

Using different gender roles can help create specific associations with a brand or product that can positively influence consumer perceptions. Table 3.1 provides examples of how different gender roles can be used to develop particular associations with a brand or product.

Table 3.1 Gender roles and associated characteristics in advertising campaigns

<b>Gender Role</b>	<b>Associated Characteristics</b>	<b>Examples in Advertising</b>
Masculine	Strength, Power, Authority, Competitiveness	Ads for sports equipment, luxury cars, business services
Feminine	Beauty, Nurturing, Sensitivity, Empathy	Ads for cosmetics, healthcare products, children's toys
Androgynous	Creativity, Open-Mindedness, Nonconformity	Ads for technology products, fashion brands, music streaming services
Gender-Neutral	Simplicity, Practicality, Unisex Appeal	Ads for household appliances, eco-friendly products, clothing brands with unisex styles

*Source: generated by the author [28].*

It's important to note that these associations can vary depending on cultural and societal norms, and they should be used thoughtfully and responsibly in advertising.

Gender roles can differ depending on cultural norms and expectations, affecting which products and services are marketed and how they are advertised. Understanding gender roles in different cultures can help marketers create effective marketing strategies that meet cultural norms and consumer expectations. Table 3.2 demonstrates the differences in gender roles across cultures and how they affect marketing strategies.

Table 3.2 Differences in gender roles in different cultures and their impact on marketing strategies

<b>Culture</b>	<b>Gender Roles</b>	<b>Examples of Advertising Strategies</b>
Western Culture	Traditional role of women as homemaker, role of men as head of household and provider and practicality	Advertising household products with a focus on savings
Asian Culture	Women often associated with softness, playfulness, beauty; men with strength and decisiveness and skin lightening	Advertising beauty products with a focus on skincare and skin lightening
African Culture	Women often associated with dedication, assistance; men with strength, masculinity and household help	Advertising home goods with a focus on communal work and household help
Islamic Culture	Strict division of roles between genders	Advertising women's clothing with a focus on covering body parts and highlighting facial beauty

*Source: generated by the author [2].*

It's important to note that cultural norms and gender roles are not fixed and can change over time, so constant research and adaptation are essential to keep marketing strategies relevant and effective.

Marketers have a significant role to play in promoting gender equality and combating harmful gender stereotypes. Here are some ways that marketers can do this:

1. Educate themselves: Marketers should first educate themselves on gender equality issues and understand the impact of harmful gender stereotypes in marketing. This can be accomplished by reading up on the latest research, attending workshops, and seeking guidance from experts in the field.
2. Use inclusive language and images: Marketers should avoid using language or images that reinforce gender stereotypes or exclude certain groups. Instead, they should use inclusive language and ideas that represent a diverse range of people and experiences. Using gender-neutral terms and images allows marketers to appeal to a broader audience and promote a more inclusive and diverse message in their marketing materials; examples are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Examples of Gender-Neutral Terms and Images in Marketing [1]

<b>Gender-Neutral Terms</b>	<b>Gender-Neutral Images</b>
"People" or "Individuals" instead of "Men" or "Women"	Images featuring a diverse range of people, including different races, ages, and gender identities
"Partner" instead of "Husband" or "Wife"	Images of couples or families that include a mix of gender identities and same-sex couples
"Parental leave" instead of "Maternity leave"	Images of both parents caring for their child or spending time with their family

"Mx." or "Misc." instead of "Mr." or "Ms."	Images that don't rely on traditional gender roles or stereotypes, such as a man cooking in the kitchen or a woman working in a traditionally male-dominated field
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These examples show how marketers can use inclusive language and imagery that doesn't rely on traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

1. Challenge stereotypes: Marketers should challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive representations of both men and women in their advertising campaigns. This includes avoiding gender-specific products and roles, such as only targeting women with cleaning products or only showing men in leadership positions [55].
2. Collaborate with diverse groups: Marketers should collaborate with various groups, including women's organisations and gender equality advocates, to ensure their advertising campaigns are inclusive and promote gender equality.
3. Monitor and evaluate: Marketers should monitor and evaluate their advertising campaigns to ensure that they are promoting gender equality and not perpetuating harmful stereotypes. This includes conducting surveys and focus groups to gather feedback and making changes based on that feedback [55].

Overall, marketers have a responsibility to promote gender equality and reject harmful stereotypes in their marketing strategies. By taking these steps, they can help create a more inclusive and equitable society.

In conclusion, gender role identification in marketing strategies is crucial for marketers to consider. The way in which gender is depicted in advertising and marketing can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour and attitudes toward gender roles. Through various marketing techniques, such as gender-neutral language and inclusive advertising, marketers can promote more positive and inclusive messages about gender roles. It is vital for marketers to recognize the harmful effects of gender stereotypes and to take steps toward promoting gender equality and inclusivity in their marketing strategies. By doing so, they can not only appeal to a broader audience but also positively contribute towards building a more equitable and just society.

### **3.2. The use of gender stereotypes in advertising and their impact on consumers**

Advertising and media are an integral part of the modern world. In English-speaking countries such as the UK, the US and Canada, advertising campaigns and media content are part of the lives of millions of people. In these countries, advertising typically portrays women and men in stereotypical roles; for example, women are portrayed as young, beautiful, and full of energy, while men are often described as leaders and experts in their fields [30].

Gender themes in advertising and media have a significant impact on the perception and behaviour of the audience. In English-speaking countries, particularly in the United States, there is an active discussion about the gender composition of advertising and its impact on society. For example, research shows that most advertising campaigns portray women in traditionally female roles, such as housewives, mothers, or objects of the male gaze. At the same time, men are portrayed as heroes, leaders, and representatives of power [20].

One example of the use of gender stereotypes in advertising is the Always brand's commercial titled "Like a Girl." This video shows how teenagers of different ages understand the concepts of "run like a girl" or "fight like a boy." The ad shows that children imitate stereotypical actions when told to "run like a girl," but when children choose to run or fight, they do so with the same strength and energy regardless of gender. The advertisement tries to change the gender stereotypes associated with the words "girl" and "boy." [23]

Some companies, such as Nike, emphasise gender equality and female emancipation in their advertising campaigns. For example, Nike's "Dream Crazier" commercial appeals to female athletes and encourages them to transcend stereotypes and limitations [24].

There is also a problem of gender imbalance in the media. For example, in the news, women are usually presented as objects of the male gaze or women of low social significance. Research also shows that female journalists tend to cover topics

considered feminine, such as fashion and beauty. In contrast, male journalists cover politics, economics, and other "serious" topics [27].

For example, the "Dove Real Beauty" advertising campaign in the United States shows women of different ages, ethnicities and body shapes, emphasising that every woman is gorgeous just the way she is. This campaign tries to counteract stereotypical beauty standards imposed on women in society [19].

Unfortunately, however, such examples are not the norm. Many advertising campaigns and media content in English-speaking countries continue to refrain from equal and non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men.

In advertising and media, gender stereotypes can be expressed through the use of certain words, phrases and images associated with roles and expectations. For example, in many product advertisements for women, you can find words such as "beauty," "care," "girl," and "motherhood," while in advertisements for men, you can find words such as "strength," "adrenaline," "adventure," and "victory."

Below are tables illustrating gender stereotypes in English-language advertising.

Table 3.4 Examples of words related to gender roles in English-language advertising [23]

<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Beauty	Strength	Motherhood	Victory
Care	Adventure	Domesticity	Courage
Girl	Power	Sensitivity	Assertiveness
Soft	Dominant	Emotional	Competitive
Fragile	Aggressive	Supportive	Independent
Homemaker	head of household	Nurturing	Ambitious

Table 3.5 Examples of stereotypical images in English-language advertising [23]

<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Homemaker	Father figure
Beautiful woman	Muscular man
Submissive woman	Strong man
Woman as mother	Man as protector
Woman as sexual object	Man as embodiment of strength

These tables demonstrate which words and images are most often associated with gender roles in advertising and media and how these stereotypes can influence the perception of advertising and products.

Gender plays a significant role in how different audiences perceive advertising and media. People can interpret certain words and images differently depending on their gender, ultimately affecting how they respond to advertising and media [33].

For example, using the word "bossy" to describe a woman in an advertisement can be perceived as unfavourable and reinforce gender stereotypes. On the other hand, using the word "assertive" to describe the same woman may have a more positive connotation.

A review of advertising and media in English-speaking countries shows that gender is an essential component in the creation and perception of advertising. Gender stereotypes can be both positive and negative. For example, many advertising campaigns targeted at women use stereotypical images of women as gentle, weak, and helpless, which can lead to discrimination and limit their opportunities.

The impact of gender on advertising and media can vary. For example, using stereotypical images can attract the audience's attention, but it can also cause resentment and negative reactions. On the other hand, gender-neutral advertising can have a wider audience and a positive impact on brand perception [31].

Studies have shown that in most cases, advertising and media portray women as housewives, childcare and house cleaning, while men are portrayed as the head of the

family and the leader. This leads to stereotypes and limited opportunities for women and men in society.

It is important to note that, according to experts, it is necessary to pay attention to stereotypes used in advertising and media, as they can worsen people's attitudes towards different groups, including women and men.

It is also worth paying attention to the language used in advertising and media, as it can reflect gender inequality and stereotypes. For example, the use of masculine pronouns in texts can lead to the omission of women and a reduction of their role in society.

Thus, the impact of gender on the perception of advertising and media by the audience should not be underestimated. It is necessary to pay attention to the stereotypes and language used in these media, as well as to conduct research to identify and eliminate gender inequalities.

### **3.3. The role of Internet marketing in the formation of gender consciousness**

The Internet's widespread use has transformed how people communicate, interact and consume data. With the advancement of digital commerce, businesses have access to an unprecedented level of personal data, allowing them to target their advertising messages more effectively. However, this increased level of advertising also raises concerns about the potential impact of Internet marketing on gender consciousness. The use of gender stereotypes and gender-specific messaging in digital marketing campaigns can have a significant effect on the way people perceive gender roles and identities. As such, it is essential to explore the role of internet marketing in shaping gender consciousness and the potential consequences of this influence.

Internet marketing is an effective tool in the business sphere that influences the social behaviour of consumers and can affect the formation of gender awareness in online communities. One of the ways to achieve this is to use advertisements aimed at a specific group of users who gender stereotypes may influence. This is possible by collecting and analysing data on user activity on the Internet, such as search queries,

information about age, location, occupation, etc. Based on this data, online marketers can create customised and contextualised ads that aim to capture users' attention and convert them into customers.

It is important to note that this method can also contribute to the spread of gender stereotypes in online communities. Online marketers can use stereotypical perceptions of a particular user group to create ads promoting stereotypical gender roles. For example, advertisements may portray women as the weaker and more vulnerable sex, which can be perceived as a negative stereotype and lead to gender-based discrimination [34].

To reduce the impact of gender stereotypes in online marketing, it is necessary to use special programs to analyse and filter data so that the application of gender analytics in online marketing can provide a more objective perception of gender roles and privileges in society. Such programs can collect data about users from various sources, such as social networks, browser histories, applications, and others, and use algorithms to determine gender equality indicators. In order to raise gender awareness, online marketers can use positive examples of equality and gender equality in their campaigns and advertising materials.

Internet marketing has a significant impact on the formation of gender awareness in online communities. This influence can be both positive if gender-sensitive approaches and positive examples are used and negative if gender stereotypes are used and gender is turned into a sales tool. Therefore, it is important to ensure a more objective perception of gender roles and privileges in society, reduce the influence of gender stereotypes in marketing campaigns and products, and raise gender awareness among marketers and consumers online [34].

The use of gender stereotypes in Internet marketing raises several ethical concerns:

1. It reinforces and perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes that can lead to discrimination, prejudice, and inequality. It can also contribute to the objectification and sexualization of individuals, particularly women, in

marketing materials. Additionally, it can lead to the marginalisation and exclusion of individuals who do not fit into traditional gender norms [45].

2. The use of gender stereotypes can harm the mental health and self-esteem of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles or who are negatively portrayed in marketing materials. It can create an environment where individuals feel pressure to conform to gender norms, leading to feelings of shame, insecurity, and alienation [45].
3. The use of gender stereotypes in marketing can be seen as a form of deception or manipulation, as it relies on the exploitation of societal biases and reinforces harmful attitudes towards individuals based on their gender.

To address these ethical concerns, there are several steps online marketers can take:

- They can work to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes from their advertising and instead promote more diverse and inclusive representations of gender. This can include working with different creative teams to ensure that different perspectives are represented, and incorporating feedback from various groups into the development and testing of marketing campaigns. Targeted advertising can be used to promote gender equality by intentionally reaching out to audiences that may be underrepresented or marginalised. For example, a cosmetics company could create targeted ads that feature both men and women, challenging traditional gender roles related to beauty and self-care. Similarly, a company that sells cleaning products can create targeted ads with men doing household chores, challenging the stereotype that cleaning is a purely female task [23].
- Online marketers can be transparent about the data they collect and how it is used, giving users more power over their private data and guaranteeing that it is employed in an ethical and trustworthy manner. This may involve implementing a clear privacy policy and providing users with the ability to opt out of data collection or targeted advertising. Companies should include the ability to opt out of data collection and use in their products and services, and provide users with information about what data is gathered, how it is

employed, and what criteria are used to select ads. Online marketers must comply with the rules and standards of the laws governing the collection, storage and use of users' personal information. This may include compliance with various regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States [23].

- Online marketers can contribute to greater gender equality and social justice in society more broadly. This can include supporting organisations that work to promote gender equality, using marketing campaigns to raise awareness of gender discrimination and violence, and actively working to promote diversity and inclusion within their own organisations. Companies can use their online platforms to educate and raise awareness about gender issues. This can include sharing resources and information on gender equality, sharing stories about people who have overcome gender barriers, and providing training and resources for their own employees to promote gender equality in the workplace.

By taking these steps, online marketers can promote a more ethical and responsible use of gender in advertising and contribute to a more just and equal society.

It is necessary to recall that respect for human rights is a top priority in marketing campaigns. Marketers should avoid creating advertising campaigns that may offend or discriminate against any group of people based on their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or other personal characteristics [22].

In conclusion, Internet marketing significantly shapes gender consciousness by reinforcing existing gender stereotypes and creating new ones. The use of gender stereotypes in advertising can have negative effects on individuals and society, perpetuating harmful and limiting ideas about gender. However, with a conscious effort to use ethical and responsible marketing strategies, it is possible for Internet marketers to promote gender equality and combat gender stereotypes. By creating diverse and inclusive campaigns, providing transparent data collection and usage policies, and

engaging in open dialogue with audiences, marketers can contribute to a more positive and progressive gender consciousness in society.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 3**

Gender plays a critical role in advertising and marketing on the Internet. Companies use gender role identification in marketing strategies and often rely on gender stereotypes to attract specific audiences. These stereotypes can negatively impact consumers, perpetuating harmful gender norms and reinforcing inequality.

The role of internet marketing in the formation of gender consciousness is significant, as it can expose individuals to a variety of gender representations and messages. It is essential for marketers to be aware of the impact of their strategies on gender and to take measures to mitigate any harmful consequences. This can include avoiding the use of gender stereotypes in advertising and promoting more diverse and inclusive representations of gender. Additionally, transparency and accountability in collecting and using consumer data can also help promote more ethical and responsible marketing practices.

In conclusion, the gender aspect of advertising and marketing on the Internet is a critical area of study that requires ongoing attention and examination. By addressing these issues and promoting more ethical and responsible marketing practices, it is possible to form a more inclusive and equitable society that reflects the diversity and complexity of human experiences.

## CONCLUSIONS

The gender factor in Internet communication is a complex issue involving various social, cultural, and economic aspects. The study of the gender factor in internet communication has provided a deep insight into the impact of gender on social stereotypes and the communication patterns of both males and females. Gender identity shapes online interactions and the formation of digital communities, as it reproduces offline gender roles and norms.

The analysis of the specificity of female and male internet communication has revealed significant differences in terms of the topics discussed, language, and communication style. Women tend to use the Internet for socialising and self-expression, while men often prioritise information gathering and competitive activities. Gender stereotypes and the culture of masculinity and femininity affect the expression of emotions and the perception of authority and credibility online.

The role of gender stereotypes in the formation of the internet communication space is significant, as they influence the development of online norms, values, and practices, perpetuating gender inequalities and reproducing harmful gender norms. Stereotypical representations of gender in media and advertising considerably influence the formation of the Internet communication space. The Internet reinforces the dominant gender binary by creating separate spaces for men and women where they can replicate traditional gender roles and norms.

Gender inequality remains a significant issue in internet communication, as women are subject to various forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence. Social media platforms and online communities often reproduce offline gender biases and prejudices, creating hostile environments for women and other marginalised groups.

The effect of social networks on the formation of gender consciousness is significant, as they provide a platform for self-representation and the exchange of ideas and experiences. Social media can be both empowering and limiting for women, as it allows them to challenge gender stereotypes and contribute to the development of

feminist discourses but also exposes them to the risks of online violence and harassment.

The role of women in internet activism and their contribution to the expansion of the Internet is significant, as they have been instrumental in advocating for gender equality and challenging patriarchal structures online. Women's activism online has played a crucial role in raising awareness about gender issues, promoting women's rights, and creating networks of support and solidarity.

Gender plays a significant role in consumer behaviour and the creation of marketing strategies in internet advertising and marketing. Marketers use gender as a tool to target specific consumer groups and reinforce gender stereotypes. The widespread use of gender stereotypes in advertising influences consumer perceptions and behaviour by creating unrealistic and harmful images of gender roles and norms.

Internet marketing is an influential factor in the formation of gender consciousness. It can serve as a tool for reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes. Gender role identification is crucial in marketing strategies, and the use of gender stereotypes in advertising significantly impacts consumers' attitudes and behaviours.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made for practical application. Firstly, it is necessary to raise awareness of the gender prejudices and stereotypes that exist in online communication and to promote a more inclusive and respectful digital environment. This can be achieved through education and training programs for Internet users, as well as through the development of policies and regulations that promote gender equality and diversity online.

Secondly, social media platforms and online communities should take more active measures to address gender-based harassment and discrimination, such as implementing reporting mechanisms and sanctions for perpetrators. This can help produce a securer and more welcoming environment for all Internet users.

Thirdly, advertisers and marketers should prioritise promoting gender equality and diversity in their campaigns, challenging gender stereotypes and promoting more inclusive representations of gender roles. This can be accomplished through the use of more diverse models and spokespersons, as well as through the development of

marketing strategies that embrace and celebrate differences rather than homogenising and simplifying them.

In conclusion, the gender factor in Internet communication is a complicated and multifaceted problem that needs a nuanced and intersectional approach. By recognizing the impact of gender on online communication, we can operate towards building a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable digital space for all.

## SUMMARY

The research on the gender factor in internet communication has highlighted the significance of studying the role of gender in online interactions. The literature review and analysis of various studies have revealed that gender stereotypes and discrimination persist in internet communication, perpetuating harmful norms and inequalities. The research objectives have focused on exploring the gender aspect of internet communication, analysing the perpetuation of harmful gender norms, investigating gender inequality on the Internet, examining women's role in internet activism, studying the impact of gender in internet advertising and marketing, and identifying ways to challenge and change gender stereotypes through internet marketing.

The **object** of the study is the gender aspect of interaction on the Internet, which includes the role of gender stereotypes in the formation of the Internet communication space, the influence of social networks on the construction of gender consciousness, and the issue of gender inequality on the Internet.

The **subject** of the research is the identification of various gender peculiarities, stereotypes, and differences presented in internet communications. The research has employed descriptive-comparative analysis, discourse analysis, open-source analysis, pragmatic analysis, content analysis, qualitative analysis and historical analysis to gain insights into the complex interplay between gender and online communication.

**The research material** comprises 13 Twitter publications including 20,055 comments.

The **novelty** of the obtained results lies in shedding light on previously unexplored aspects of gendered online behaviour and providing new insights into the reflection of gender norms in online interactions.

The **practical significance** of the research results lies in identifying the specific features of communication between men and women in the online environment, raising awareness about gender inequality, and developing policies to address gender

stereotypes and discrimination online. The findings can be utilized to shape policies pertaining to gender stereotypes and discrimination in the online sphere and enhance the efficacy of marketing approaches targeting diverse consumer groups based on their gender. Moreover, the findings can contribute to the advancement of marketing strategies by advocating for gender equality, enhancing consumer perceptions, and devising technologies and tools that mitigate gender discrimination in the online realm.

Special and general **methods** and techniques were applied in this work for the complete list and systematisation of the analysed material:

- Descriptive-comparative analysis;
- Discourse analysis;
- Open-source analysis;
- Pragmatic analysis;
- Content analysis;
- Qualitative analysis;
- Historical analysis.

The research emphasises that the gender factor significantly influences internet communication. Gender stereotypes and norms shape online interactions, perpetuate inequalities, and impact social and cultural norms. The study emphasises the necessity for a more inclusive and equitable digital environment. It suggests practical recommendations such as raising awareness, addressing gender-based harassment, promoting diversity in advertising, and embracing differences in marketing strategies. By acknowledging and addressing the gender factor in internet communication, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equal online space.

Keywords: *Gender discrimination, Internet communication, Social media, Gender stereotypes, Gender norms, Gender equality*

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