Gender discrimination in online gaming. a review literature

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Abstract

Online gaming has become an important and enriching aspect of modern digital culture. However, it is not untouched by the socio-cultural challenges prevailing in society. This literature review examines the prevailing issue of gender discrimination in the realm of online gaming. The review synthesizes and analyses a wide range of scholarly articles, research papers, and online discussions published as of September 2022 to explore ways gender bias manifests in gaming communities, platforms, and interactions. Gender discrimination in online gaming is a topic that has received more attention in recent years, as more women participate in online games and face various forms of harassment, exclusion, and stereotyping from male-dominated gaming communities. A review of the literature on this issue reveals several aspects of the gender gap in online gaming, such as gamer characteristics, motivations, social interactions, self-presentation, skills and performance, and gaming behaviour.

Keywords – online, digital, culture, gaming and stereotyping.

Introduction

Online gaming is a popular and lucrative entertainment form attracting millions of players worldwide. However, online gaming is also an area where gender discrimination and harassment are prevalent, especially for female gamers, often marginalized and stereotyped by male-dominated gaming culture. In this introduction, I will provide a brief overview of the existing literature on gender differences in online gaming, focusing on six aspects: adoption, motivation, social interaction, self-presentation, skill, and performance, and play. Adoption refers to the factors that influence the decision to start and continue playing online games. Previous studies have found that men are more likely to adopt online gaming than women due to assorted reasons such as social norms, peer pressure, parental support, and perceived utility. However, some recent studies have shown that the gender gap in online gaming adoption is narrowing, as more women are becoming interested in online games that offer a diverse range of genres, themes, and features.

Motivation refers to the reasons and goals that drive online gaming behaviour. Previous studies have identified a variety of motivations for online gaming, such as achievement, socialization, immersion, escapism, and enjoyment. Men are more motivated by achievement and competition, while women are more motivated by socialization and immersion. However, some studies have also shown that the motivations of online gamers are not static, but rather dynamic and context dependent.

Social interaction refers to the communication and relationship building that occurs between online gamers. Previous studies have found that people have different preferences and patterns of social interaction in online games. For example, men prefer large and unknown groups, while women prefer small and intimate groups. Men also tend to use more aggressive and dominant language, while women tend to use more helpful and polite language. In addition, women often face discrimination and

harassment from male gamers, who may exclude them from certain activities, mock their skills and performance, or make sexist and gendered comments.

Self-presentation refers to the way online gamers create and manage their identity and influence in online games. Previous studies have found that people have different self-presentation preferences and strategies in online games. For example, men create avatars that match their real-life gender and appearance, while women create avatars that differ from their real-life gender and appearance. Men also emphasize their achievements and skills, while women emphasize their personalities and relationships. Furthermore, women often face dilemmas and challenges in self-presentation, such as whether to reveal or hide their real-life gender, or how to deal with unwanted attention or harassment. Skills and performance refer to the abilities and outcomes of online gaming behaviour. Previous studies have found that people have different skill and performance levels and perceptions in online games. For example, men tend to have higher levels of spatial and prioritization skills than women, which may give them an advantage in certain types of sports. Men tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy and confidence than women, which may affect their willingness to take risks and challenges in sports. However, some studies have also found that gender differences in skill and performance are not innate or fixed, but are influenced by numerous factors such as experience, feedback, training, and stereotypes.

Gaming refers to styles and patterns of online gaming behaviour. Previous studies have found that people have different preferences and play styles in online games. For example, men prefer action-oriented and competitive games, while women prefer social-oriented and cooperative games. Males also play more often and for longer periods of time than females. However, some studies have also found that gender differences in sports are not absolute or universal but are dependent on a variety of factors such as genre, theme, specialty, context, and culture.

This introduction has provided a brief overview of the existing literature on gender differences in online gaming. This revealed that there are both similarities and differences between male and female online gamers in terms of adoption, motivation, social interaction, self-presentation, skill and performance, and play. It has also highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities that female online gamers face in the male-dominated online gaming domain. The purpose of this introduction is to raise awareness and encourage further research on this important and emerging topic.

Research method-

Identify relevant literature, a systematic search was conducted in academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, and PsycINFO. The following keywords and phrases were used: "gender discrimination," "sexism," "online gaming," "video games," "gaming community," "gender stereotypes," "gender bias," and "gender inequality."

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:-

Articles were included if they were published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or books and discussed gender discrimination in the context of online gaming. Publications that were not related to the research topic or lacked empirical evidence were excluded.

Selection Process:-

The initial search yielded a considerable number of articles. After examining the titles and abstracts, irrelevant or duplicate papers were removed. The remaining articles were read in full to assess their relevance to the research question. Finally, a pool of selected articles was used for analysis.

Aspects of gaming behaviour-

After a careful review of the articles, we identified four areas where significant gender differences were reported in the gaming context: social interaction, self-presentation, skill and performance, gaming behaviour, and sexism.

Social interaction-

"Female gaming is a relatively under-researched area, and female gamers often report experiencing harassment while playing online. The current study explored female experiences of social support while playing online video games, as previous research suggests that women often experience harassment and negative interactions while playing games. (McLean & Griffiths, 2019) "Gaming worlds are social communities for people to seek and form friendships and romantic relationships, but they can also be places where gamers experience sexual harassment and discrimination because of their gender. We'll look at how female gamers, characters, and developers are represented in the gaming industry, and the impact this has on mental health and well-being. (Intenta, 2021) "Sexism in video gaming is prejudicial treatment or discrimination based on sex or gender, as experienced by the people who play and create video games, primarily women. This can manifest in the form of sexual harassment, or the way genders are represented in games, such as when characters are presented according to gender-related tropes and stereotypes. (Wikipedia, n.d.) "According to a recent female gamer survey by market research firm Brighter, abuse or discrimination online continues. Although both men and women experience abuse, female gamers are more likely to be sexually harassed and kicked out of the game. (Yokoi, 2021)

self-presentation-

One of the topics that has received considerable attention in online gaming research is how gamers present themselves and how they experience gender discrimination in this context. Self-presentation is the process of creating and managing one's identity and impression in social situations (Goffman, 1959). Online gaming provides a unique opportunity for self-presentation, as gamers can choose their avatars, names, voices, and mannerisms to express themselves and interact with others. However, self-presentation can also be influenced by the expectations and stereotypes of the gaming community, which is often dominated by male gamers and male-oriented norms (Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination in Gaming - INTENTA, n.d.). Challenges and barriers that female gamers may face in online gaming, such as harassment, toxicity, gatekeeping, protection and judgment from male gamers (Female gamers' experiences of online harassment and social support in online gaming: a qualitative study - Springer, 2018). These negative experiences can affect their mental health, well-being and motivation to play online games (Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination in Gaming - INTENTA, n.d.). Therefore, it is important to understand how female gamers face gender discrimination and how they create and receive social support in online gaming.

Skill and performance-

One of the topics that has received attention in the literature on online gaming is the role of gender in influencing the gaming experience, particularly in terms of skill and performance. Some studies have

suggested that female gamers face discrimination, harassment, and stereotyping from male gamers, which can affect their confidence, motivation, and enjoyment of gaming (Das, 2021; Darwin et al., 2020). Other studies have examined the differences and similarities between male and female gamers in terms of their gaming preferences, motives, behaviours, and outcomes (Veltri et al., 2016). In this paragraph, we will review some relevant research on skill and performance in gender discrimination in online gaming. Skill and performance are important aspects of online gaming, as they reflect players' ability and ability to achieve their goals, overcome challenges, and compete with others. However, skill and performance are also subject to gender bias and stereotypes, as some sports are considered more appropriate or attractive for people or require more masculine or feminine qualities or skills. For example, Veltri et al. (2016) found that men prefer action, sports, strategy, and role-playing games, while women prefer puzzle, logic, and card games. They also found that men were more likely to play for achievement, competition, and challenge, while women were more likely to play for social interaction, relaxation, and escape. These differences can create expectations and assumptions about the skill and performance of male and female gamers, which can lead to discrimination or harassment.

One form of discrimination that female gamers may face is gatekeeping, which is the act of questioning or challenging the legitimacy or authenticity of one's identity or membership in a group or community. For example, female gamers may be asked to prove their gaming skills or knowledge by answering trivia questions, performing specific tasks, or showing their game collections (Das, 2021). Gatekeeping can also include excluding or isolating female gamers from certain games, genres, or platforms, or denying them access to resources, information, or opportunities. Gatekeeping may be motivated by a desire to protect the status quo, assert dominance or superiority, or preserve a sense of belonging or identity among male gamers.

Another form of discrimination that female gamers may face is harassment, which is the act of causing discomfort, distress, or harm to someone through unwanted or aggressive behaviour. Harassment can include verbal abuse, insults, threats, jokes, teasing, sexual comments or advances, stalking, doxing, or hacking (Das, 2021). Harassment may be motivated by a desire to intimidate, humiliate, humiliate, or punish female gamers for violating gender norms or expectations, or simply for existing in a male-dominated space. Harassment can also be fuelled by the anonymity, taboo, and lack of accountability that online gaming environments can provide.

Gaming behaviour-

One of the topics receiving increasing attention in the field of online gaming is the role of gender and how it affects players' gaming behaviour and experiences. Online gaming is a popular form of entertainment that involves interacting with other players through digital platforms such as consoles, computers, or mobile devices. However, online gaming can also be a source of harassment and discrimination for some players, especially women, who may face sexism, misogyny, and violence from other gamers. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the literature on gender discrimination in online gaming and its implications for gaming behaviour. According to a survey by Reach3 Insights (2021), 77% of female gamers in the US, China, and Germany reported experiencing gender-specific harassment during online gaming, such as name-calling, insults, sexual messages, gatekeeping, Patronizing comments, and judgments about their skills. Furthermore, 59% of female gamers admitted to using a non-gendered or male identity to avoid conflict and harassment, and 44% received unsolicited questions about their relationship status while gaming (INTENTA, n.d.). These

findings suggest that female gamers often face hostility and toxicity from male gamers who may perceive them as intruders or inferior in a male-dominated gaming culture.

Gender discrimination in online gaming may also affect the gaming behaviour of female players. McLean and Griffiths (2019) conducted a qualitative study with 271 female gamers who participated in an online discussion forum. They found that female gamers often lacked social support and experienced anxiety and loneliness due to harassment and negative interactions during gameplay. As a result, many female gamers adopted strategies such as playing alone, playing anonymously, and regularly hanging out in groups to avoid harassment. Furthermore, female gamers felt less confident and competent in their gaming skills than male gamers.

Gender discrimination in online gaming is not limited to female players, but also female characters, developers and critics. Female characters in video games are often portrayed in sexist or misogynistic ways that reinforce gender stereotypes and objectification (Dill et al., 2008). Women developers in the gaming industry face challenges such as underrepresentation, marginalization, and harassment by their male coworkers and customers (Prescott & Bogue, 2014). Female critics who have challenged misogyny in gaming have received death threats, rape threats, and online sexual harassment (Adidin, 2014; Jansen & De Castell, 2013).

Sexism-

Gender discrimination in online gaming is a genuine issue affecting many female gamers who must face sexism, harassment, and stereotyping from their male counterparts. According to a survey by Reach3 Insights (2021), 77% of female gamers in the US, China, and Germany experienced gender-specific harassment during online gaming, such as name-calling, sexual messages, patronizing comments, and their skills decide about. , Many female gamers hide their gender identity or resort to male avatars to avoid conflict and harassment (Das, 2021). Female characters in video games are also often portrayed in sexualized or misogynistic ways, reinforcing gender stereotypes and inequality (Burgess et al., 2007). Furthermore, female professionals in the gaming industry, such as eSports athletes, journalists, developers, and reviewers, face hostility, violence, and threats from male gamers, who call into question their integrity, competence, and legitimacy (Gardner, 2021; Eddin, 2014; Jensen) and De Castell, 2013). Gender discrimination in online gaming is a form of cyber-violence that can negatively affect the mental health and well-being of female gamers, as well as limit their opportunities and participation in the gaming culture and community.

Discussion-

Gender discrimination in online gaming is a serious and widespread issue that affects the experiences and well-being of many players, particularly women and gender minorities. According to a study by Kuznekoff and Rose (2013), female players who use voice chat in online games receive more negative comments, harassment, and threats than male players or players who do not use voice chat. The authors suggest that this is due to perceived violations of gender norms and expectations in a male-dominated space. Another study by Fox and Tang (2017) found that female players who find themselves in online games face more sexism, objectification, and stereotyping than male players or players who hide their gender identity. The authors argue that this is because of the sexualization and marginalization of women in gaming culture and the media. These studies suggest that gender discrimination in online

gaming is not only a matter of individual behaviour but also a reflection of wider social and cultural factors shaping the gaming environment.

Conclusion- Findings on Gender Discrimination in Online Gaming -

Gender discrimination in online gaming is a serious and critical issue that affects the experiences and well-being of many players, especially women and gender minorities. Online gaming should be a safe and inclusive place for everyone, regardless of their gender identity or expression. Tackle gender discrimination in online gaming, we need to raise awareness, educate ourselves and others, challenge stereotypes and prejudices, report and intervene in abusive situations, and support victims and allies of this problem. By doing so, we can create a more positive and respectful online gaming culture that values diversity and equality.

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