

EXAMINING GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

The research study examined how women and men perceive and experience web professional positions in a media technology company and how those similarities and differences reflect or challenge liberal, radical and/or cultural feminisms. These questions were observed through a qualitative study of anonymous semi-structured interviews. Males and females web professionals from five different media technology companies were interviewed. This resulted in eight interviews total. All participants work with the same mix of technologies on a day-to-day basis.

Three prominent themes emerged from the research collected to support the literature review: 1) the media technology industry as male centered, 2) the hurdles and barriers in the industry, and 3) gender diversity as it may or may not affect content. These themes illustrate how gender norms are reinforced in the industry. This was evident in all the participants' belief that facing subtle gender discrimination in the workplace was not seen as a barrier created by the patriarchal structure. A cultural feminist framework was reflected in female participant's stance on education, in the response about the inclusion of women in the industry leading to better content, and the respect feminine traits can offer in the work environment. A liberal feminist framework was reflected in the notion that women must shed their feminine identity to become respected in the industry. A radical feminist framework was neither challenged nor reflected in this research study.

This study expands literature on gender and technology by looking at both male and female perspectives. From the analysis, it can be seen that there are conflicting arguments between genders when discussing the reasons for which the industry is male dominated. However, there are also many similarities in arguments between genders. For example, all participants described some sort of barrier or hurdle they have faced in the industry (although some first identified not having any barriers), but they do not see these as structural issues to be overcome. Both of these findings are insightful and descriptive of areas in which the industry has developed and where the industry still needs improvement in relation to gender equality.