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## ***Voices Unfiltered: Gender Gaps in Digital Media Participation A Content Analysis Study***

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### **Abstract:**

This study fits current research on the revolutionary changes defining the communication terrain, especially with the emergence of digital media contributors. It investigates the complex interactions between Gender and the function of communicators in group digital media platforms by applying a gender-oriented framework. The work aims to depict the forms of this evolving phenomenon through a broad spectrum of theoretical, analytical, and methodological perspectives. The research analyzed a dataset consisting of one thousand eighty-six entries gathered from the five most frequently visited global platforms: (a) TMZ, (b) Huffington Post, (c) Mashable, (d) Business Insider, and (e) Gizmodo. The results provide valuable insights into gender representation in digital media, specifically examining the relationship between the gender identification of writers and producers, the content they contribute, and the connection between message format and the target audience. The findings offer essential insights into gender communication within contemporary media contexts.

**Keywords:** *digital media contributors, gender, gender gatekeeper theory.*

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## Introduction

Gender studies or gender theory in media and communication sciences have received significant attention from researchers, and it is no exaggeration to say that it has always been one of the main approaches in preliminary studies of media phenomena. This interest in the gender approach in media studies comes perhaps from a firm belief that there is an excellent difference between gender (male, female) in the use of various media and that each has its perspective and method of exposure to media materials. However, the transformation that the reality of practicing the media profession has witnessed - for some time - especially in the form of the medium and the methods of employing it, dealing with it and dedicating it to serving specific media goals, depending on the entity supervising it, whether individual or governmental, and other considerations related primarily to its content and message, where the manifestations of the apparent change in the concepts and frameworks in which communication and media operations are practiced imposed the necessity of returning to reviving the heritage of media studies, and analyzing the phenomena that were formed in Light of those technological developments and what is happening in knowledge societies, to be added to the series of studies that were conducted in the past to diagnose the nature of influence, role, gender, they are today more worthy of being enriched and their research balance enhanced, and establishing ways to benefit from them in an attempt to learn more about what the rapid developments in the forms and patterns of the activities of the communicator conceal, where the central question of the problem of our study was formulated: What are the most prominent representations of the relationship between the gender of the communicator “ contributor “ and his activities within the framework of the network gatekeeper theory? To encompass the various coordinates of our problem, several sub-questions were included within the main question, the answer to which is necessary. The most important of these questions are as follows:

-Is there a relationship between the communicator's gender and the content he publishes?

-Is there a relationship between the gender of the communicator and the form of what he publishes?

-Is there a relationship between the communicator's gender and his audience?

This study, therefore, attempts to combine two research approaches in the field of media and communication, namely, the communicator and gender studies. It also combines the literature of research and its concepts in traditional media and the images of the presence of these concepts in new media. However, our research is important because it has re-initiated the establishment of the communicator and the gatekeeper concept in a communication climate different from its predecessor and thus has raised an important research aspect in media and communication sciences related to research on the new communicator. The study also seeks, through its methodological, theoretical, and field frameworks, to achieve a set of additional scientific objectives, perhaps the most important of which is an attempt to diagnose the communication process in the medium of collective digital media platforms and then reach knowledge of the underlying causes and the implicit relationship of the gender of the communicator to his media tasks and functions.

At the same time, it assumes that the gender of the communicator controls, in principle - as in the previous reality of traditional media - the demand for the same medium (digital media platforms), as males use it more than females, and the content of what they publish, its form and the target audience differ according to the difference in the gender of the communicator.

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## ***2-The communicator - the contributor.***

The concepts and terms that the initiating element carries in the communication process are many, as the name of the communicator takes on many meanings and connotations to express the person or crowd that stands behind a specific media outlet, starting from collecting information to publishing and following it up; News editors and news presenters are all included in the comprehensive concept of the communicator. In communication theories, the term “sender” is used to identify the source of the media message, and both can be inanimate - radio or broadcasting channel - or living - humans. The term also takes the name “addresser” in communication models such as Roman Jakobson’s model in the sixties to indicate that communication is interactive and two-way. The sender is generally known as the creator of the text of the media, whether it is television programs or advertisements (Danesi, 2013, p. 574).

In the communication model of the American political scientist Harold Laswell, the question “Who?” represents the motive or source in communication theory. In mass communication, this motive is a group of senders working within a specific media institution, whether television or advertising (Galician, 2002, p. 11). In a different scientific field, Jakobson views the communicator under another name, “Le destination” - when studying the relationship between language and poetry - as a person who sends a message to a recipient, consisting of a group of signs that are usually common among the communicators, where the communicator performs a function called expressive that encourages the recipient to listen and interact. It is also an intentional function; it focuses on the desires and goals of the speaker through carrying out that communication process, on the one hand, and what the listener-receiver can share in terms of goals and desires that that process meets, on the other hand (Verhaegen, 2010, p. 23)

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In this context, the term Communicator denotes the one who initiates the act of sending, derived from the word Communication itself. In the Christian religion, a communicator means a missionary or someone who calls for the Christian religion. In addition to many known communication models, the Christian communication model was developed at Santo Tomas University in Manila. This model arose from the teachings of Augustine, as it places the message at the heart of the communication process. For Christians to communicate, the message remains central, which is the word of God or Christ, and he, the communicator, is the only one who sends this word. He not only carries out the sending process but lives the message reflected in him. This does not depend on technical means as much as it depends on the spirituality of the communicating Christian (Baugh, 2006, p. 197). The use of the word -communicator, sender- in the Christian religion in this sense may differ from what it is in the Islamic religion, as long as the process of sending or communicating religious content - the call - remains common among Muslims. They are even commanded to do so as stated in the hadith of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, “Convey from me even if it is a verse” (Al-Bukhari, 2002, p. 875).

However, the role of the communicator in the Islamic religion is not just about conveying the message, but also about embodying the message and living it, which is a key difference from the Christian perspective. This is not considered a condition that stops the communication process in and of itself. Some consider communicators to be the fourth element of mass communication, in addition to the audience, message, and the means of communication or media. In this context, communicators represent the last element of the mass communication components.

Communicators are divided into two types according to the extent and nature of communication. The first is mass communicators, i.e., professionals who work in the field of media or advertising or various mass media, and personal communicators, i.e., people who

contribute to delivering the media message and influencing the audience through personal communication - instead of relying on mass media - and who are considered opinion leaders in various societies at the national and local levels. Opinion leaders are individuals who are influential in their social circles and are often early adopters of new ideas or products. They represent advocates of change in society towards new ideas (Hussein, 1993, p. 153). These communicators, or the person who appears on the screen or other traditional and modern communication channels, embody the characteristics of their audiences. The most important challenges facing them in this regard are producing and presenting programs and messages to diverse segments and audiences in terms of their references and mentalities, and identifying the identity of the communicator can provide insight into the possible motives behind their contribution to the media process. "Communicators effectively use the tension resulting from the triangular relationship between them, the content of their message, and then the audiences they deal with.

The communicator must balance the tension that connects his experience and capabilities on the one hand and the audience's needs, and he works to bring and ensure the continuity of his work and production (Silverblatt, Ferry, & Finan, 2009, p. 26). Thus, the state of transmission in this complex process is not an easy task or function because it requires much effort to make it successful, not on a personal level or what is used from controllable means, but by exceeding the limits of what cannot be controlled in many cases, which is the receiving party.

The communicator in the media, especially the press, may not be much different from he is in advertising or public relations, as the message is considered legitimate only when the communicator agrees to publish it, and this is one of the similarities between these forms of communication. However, these editorial templates or press releases are often interpreted as "ghostwriting" or "ghostwritten," as Tom Bivins calls it, which represents several ethical pitfalls because they do not express or represent the truth of the identity of the communicator,

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meaning that they lack one of the standards of accuracy required by the communication process in its various previous forms. In this context, Richard Johannesen proposed a series of guiding elements that can eliminate some possible ethical errors in this process:

Understanding the communicator's intention and the recipient's awareness is not just important, it's crucial. This understanding not only engages the audience but also prompts them to think critically about the message they are receiving, making them feel actively involved in the communication process.

- Does the communicator use this type of writing to project or acquire personal qualities that they may not naturally possess? This question is not just a question, it's an invitation for the audience to reflect on the role of authenticity in communication.

- What the circumstances surrounding the communicator's work require him to resort to this type of writing?

To what extent does the communicator participate in editing their message? And crucially, Does the communicator accept responsibility for the messages they present? This question is not just a question, it's a call for the audience to consider the need for accountability in communication (Bivins, 2009, p. 119).

The first step in deconstructing and analyzing the message and understanding the communication process is identifying the communicator. Identifying the latter seems very difficult, unlike personal face-to-face communication, where the communicator and the recipient meet directly, unlike mass communication, where there is a temporal and spatial separation between them and anonymity to the recipients. For example, the film *The Message* was produced decades ago by someone we do not hear much about today. However, we assume the person behind the camera or microphone is responsible for what is said. However, he only repeated what he received from the scriptwriter or the editing department and what he was asked to say. Therefore, defining the general framework of this process or identifying the identity of

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the hidden person behind this activity gives valuable dimensions to the content, expectations and prospects for the media product. (Silverblatt et al., 2014, p. 21).

The point of view of the communicator in the media may be clarified in the text through some techniques such as editing decisions, hint words, images, and the challenges of defining and identifying the communicator in the media are exacerbated in the global communications space, as the vast number of reports, editors, film producers, and website developers make it impossible to identify all of his backgrounds and orientations, as well as his educational level or the educational institutions in which he studied, and there is often no sufficient information available about the party funding this institution or a television program or text, ..., and what are the tasks and objectives of this funding party and who frames it, and to identify the communicator(s) in the media, the focus is on some demographic information such as: (nationality and gender, age, income, religious orientation, race and ethnicity, educational level and other determinants (Silverblatt, 2013, p. 254). and some summarize it in three simple questions:

- Who is responsible for producing the media material?
  - What are the demographic elements of the communicator?
  - How do these characteristics affect the content and the media producer's expectations?
- (Silverblatt et al., 2014, p. 28).

The act of the mass communicator in its broad sense is the servant of the warehouses of these tools and communicative artifacts that give meaning and consistency to the society that has passed through a long period to be added to subsequent generations, and the functions performed by the mass communicator are not new, what is new, of course, are the technologies - new - that man has invented to dispatch these functions, and to enhance his control by controlling his messages and making them more abundant and smooth as well, and it will be

practical to maintain the distinction or difference between technology - the mass communication system - and the mass communicator who employs this technology as a means of distributing his products and messages (Educational Technology, 1973, p. 97). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the communicator to ensure that the unintended information - the uncontrolled message - or the information through an unintended means is not transmitted. Still, the communicator remains responsible for the meaning conveyed in this message, whether it is intended or not. He remains responsible for ensuring the content His message was not subject to potential confusion between him and the recipient. (Pillai, 2011, p. 60).

**- *Gatekeeping: the theory, and reality.***

The talk about gatekeeping began with the growth of discussion and analysis about the news values contained in the news, especially with the rise of the names of Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge after their article entitled (The Structure of Foreign News, a Discussion of the Crises of the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus in Four Newspapers) which was published in the international journal Peace Research in 1965. In short, after this article, the serious discussion moved, or instead, the current global events at that time pushed towards a circular gate for the criteria for selecting news worthy of publication according to the perception of the media where the gatekeeping process takes place (Watson, 2012, p. 109).

In addition to this argument, some support the idea of the growing reputation of the concept of gatekeeping in parallel with or as a result of the increasing news consumption and academic interest in it as a product of the media. In the mid-fifties, the term gatekeeper became more noticeable. Perhaps the most widespread model of gatekeeping in media circles is the model of David Manning (1917-1993), who explained how news waves travel through a specific channel that includes gates, where communicators or decision-makers work to influence the way news is viewed and how it is ultimately reconstructed and packaged. White emphasized the role of

the telegraph editor, or what he calls Mr. Gate, in deciding whether to accept or reject news topics as one of the most important gatekeeping activities. Later, studies showed that gatekeeping includes sources of news topics, people's ability to follow the news, the news policy of the media outlet, various influences in the media outlet, such as legal restrictions or financial needs, and as a matter of fact, news with special topics makes room for other news that are expected. To contain high news values (Fourie, 2008, p. 237).

In Light of this research reality, the concept of gatekeeper is no longer just a term that expresses a form of dealing with information but has become the theory itself that controls the communication process, as it was the subject of the theory of the specialist in sociology and psychology Kurt Lewin, entitled: *The Channel and Gatekeepers*, which he developed as a means of understanding how to bring about broad social change in society. Since then, it has been adopted and worked with in several other scientific fields, such as media and communication science and journalism. The concepts of the guarded gate or gatekeepers have been used to comprehend and understand the social system in health and technological development, while the traditional concept of gatekeeping has been used mainly in the field of media and communication, primarily to refer to the selective path that includes the media process. It also provides researchers with a framework to analyze, evaluate and understand how the communication process and news selection occur and why specific news topics are chosen. In general, it provides a framework to continue the research that Lewin had begun in social change and the study of sources of cultural diversity (Fisher et al., 2006, p. 247).

However, it must be emphasized that the issue of selection does not only affect news. Alan Bryman and Cheryl Haslam raised the issue of media bias in presenting and displaying sociologists' research, especially with researcher Weiss in 1985, and it was discussed in the introduction to his book. This issue is of paramount importance as it affects the very fabric of sociological research representation. Many researchers also confirm that the media shows its

bias in its coverage and is thus considered a gatekeeper to the dissemination of knowledge in general. This argument was elaborated by Jane Ussher, who noted at that time that there are terms from sociology that receive greater attention and discussion than other terms from the same field of research. Therefore, the method of selection or screening affects not only the field to which the information will be reached but also the sociologists from whom the media transmits it. It presents a suspicious image of the reality of sociology, the social issues and problems it is concerned with, and other areas of life such as politics, religion, and sports. Therefore, the gatekeeping carried out by the media dramatically impacts our society.

In addition to Lewin, we find among the pioneers of research and investigation into the “social industry of news” White 1950, Gieber 1956, Breed 1960, and Donohew 1967, who advanced their research and studies to what is called gatekeeping or the journalist's gatekeeping function, journalists as individuals, the editorial staff or the organization, which were described as the leading forces in the production of news, and in 1965, researchers Galtung and Ruge had referred to the process of selecting what news is and what is not, but the news is not only selected, it is formed, and the central process can be called “news production,” and it has become clear that the news that we read and watch daily is not an objective record of lived reality, but rather a construction based on a professional base specific to journalists as well as institutional and technical factors, which are sometimes referred to as media logic (Schaap, 2009, p. 21).

News is a construction—as is theory itself—and many of the choices in this construction result from a single journalist, editor, or, increasingly, citizen journalist. More importantly, Fishman argues, the general focus of early work on gatekeeping was “news selection,” with the assumption that through this selection, the media had the power to distort reality. However, the writings of many scholars and thinkers—such as Fishman’s *Newsmaking*, Altheide’s *Creation*

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of Reality (1976), and Tuchman's *Making the News* (1978)—had contributed to a scholarly movement at the time that assumed that reality was what the media wanted it to appear. It was the assumption that news creates reality and that the job of scholars was not just to understand that process of production, but to critically analyze and deconstruct it, thereby playing to critically assess and dismantle it, so significantly influencing our comprehension of the world (Coe, 2008, pp. 56–57).

These research interests - and many others - have contributed to developing the gatekeeping theory and its dominance in the theoretical field of media and communication sciences. However, they have also revealed many gaps surrounding its construction, which renders it invalid with changing circumstances and the extension of time. What we can record in addition to that is that the theory did not die in reality but rather evolved. In line with the research efforts that had been made regarding the gatekeeping theory and what was discussed in the communication literature or what accompanied radical changes that affected many aspects of the communication process, the researcher Barzili Nahon proposed in 2004 the Network Gatekeeping Theory (NGT) which sums up multidisciplinary concepts, as it includes the media and management system, political science, and sociology. His theory provided a new definition for the concept of gatekeeper or gatekeeping by integrating traditional concepts in social networking communities, based on the study of the strength of relationships in the Internet and the media environment, as the network gatekeeping theory depicts the distribution of information and the processes of controlling information. It can also allow us to analyze the centralization in social networks that have a decentralized design and structure, as they are often viewed as equal spaces. This theory involves many results about the way we understand the process of information dissemination and the behavior of Internet users, and it consists of five basic concepts: (Fisher et al., 2006, p. 249).

1- Gateway: The entrance or exit of information is the network and its sections.

2- Gateway guarding: The process of monitoring information as it moves through the gate and various activities, including selection, addition, blocking, display, direction, manipulation, formation, repetition, auditing and timing, determining location, integration, ignoring, and deleting information.

3- Gateway guarding mechanism: Technological and methodological means to implement the gatekeeping process.

4- Network gatekeeper: It is a public entity (person, organization, government authority, ..) that has the authority and ability to practice gatekeeping through this mechanism in social networks, and it can also choose the scope in which this process is practiced.

5- The guarded: It is the entity subject to the gatekeeping of the network (recipients).

This development is also evident in the change in the term and concept with which the theory is viewed. In 2005, when Axel Bruns published his book entitled (*Gate-watching*), he assumed the use of the term gate-watching itself about the growing role of the citizen journalist and his contribution to news production. As its author says, this book was considered a regular documentation of emerging trends in news production (Bruns, 2006). The recipient is the producer of information via social networks and its source. The points of disagreement between the two theories increase when dealing with the elements of power, which in the context of gatekeeping theory, refer to the control and influence over the flow of information. These elements seem to have less impact than their counterparts in traditional media, with the growing negotiating power of the recipient (the guarded) despite the presence of more mechanisms for monitoring information in the network theory.

### ***Methodology:***

Given the nature of the problem, the research field to which it belongs, and the limited capabilities available to the researcher, we relied on the content analysis tool in our descriptive-

analytical study (descriptive method). The research community is all the content and media materials - such as texts, images, videos, etc. - in digital media platforms that rely on the WordPress platform as a work base (editing and publishing), as it is the most popular digital media contribution platform for (journalists, blogger, content editors, ..) whether individuals or companies, according to Alexa statistics and taking into account many scientific and technical reasons and controls that are summarized in the services it provides to both the contributors and the researcher as well as to content editors in general, as these sites contain many services that facilitate this mediatic activities provided by the platform in terms of returning to the archive of entries and posts. Due to the massive size of this content on the one hand and the multiplicity of it in this framework on the other hand, we relied on the most important international classifications of the most prevalent collective platforms. We used the annual classification prepared by Alexa, which specializes in tracking and providing global statistics on the status of various websites, and EBIZ and Quantcast, which specialize in statistics and web audience measurements, as well as providing advice to companies and governments in this field. Given the difficulty of analyzing the contents of these posts together, we relied on a deliberate sample; we carefully chose the first five (05) platforms with the highest visit rates to analyze their content because they are more representative of what we are looking for than others due to the high number of visits and thus the richness of the communication process in them.

**Table No. (01) shows the analytical study sample**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>platforms</b>	<b>Average number of monthly visits (in millions)</b>
01	Huffington Post	<b>110</b>
02	TMZ	<b>30</b>
03	Business insider	<b>25</b>
04	Mashable	<b>24</b>
05	Gizmodo	<b>23</b>

Many statistical analysis programs were used, as well as the application of many statistical transactions that are considered necessary in studying and analyzing new media phenomena that are characterized by their depth and complexity, requiring a lot of time and effort, in the hope of obtaining more accurate information that leads us to honest research results. The most important of these methods and programs are:

- (a) Frequencies and percentages.
- (b) Central tendency measures and dispersion metrics.
- (c) Statistical analysis program (SPSS version 20).

Results:

We focused on presenting the results of the relationship between gender variables and specific digital media contributors' activities operating under the principles of the network

gatekeeper theory. We selected the most significant information that addressed some of the study's questions and directly related to the study's problem.

**Category of features:**

**- Gender:**

**Table No. (02) indicates the gender of the message source (digital content).**

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Male Contributors</b>	<b>Female Contributors</b>	<b>Common Contributors</b>	<b>Unspecified Gender Contributors</b>
<b>Huffington Post</b>	42 (3.86%)	66 (6.07%)	4 (0.36%)	11 (1.01%)
<b>TMZ</b>	39 (3.59%)	53 (4.88%)	-	181 (16.66%)
<b>Business Insider</b>	33 (3.03%)	51 (4.69%)	-	-
<b>Mashable</b>	196 (18.04%)	161 (14.82%)	-	153 (14.08%)
<b>Gizmodo</b>	39 (3.59%)	54 (4.97%)	-	3 (0.27%)
<b>Total</b>	349 (32.11%)	385 (35.34%)	4 (0.36%)	348 (32.02%)

**Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion**

<b>Mean</b>	69.8	77	-	69.6
<b>Median</b>	39	54	-	11
<b>Variance (<math>\sigma^2</math>)</b>	4987.7	2239.5	-	8019.8

A proper reading of the table data shows the following:

The title reflects two variables: the first is independent; the platforms of the research sample, and the second is dependent, which is the gender of the contributors of the message content; is

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male or female or was it formed by two contributors, or may not be specified by their gender; additionally, it shows the size of the variations between the five platforms of the research sample.

The units of analysis used are the frequencies and percentages of the study community, which translate the size of the content in the digital media platforms and its distribution according to the gender variable, and the extent of the latter's association with contributing behaviors, except the null value in the subcategory (subscriber) in each of the platform TMZ, Business Insider, Mashable and Gizmodo, which indicates the absence of contributors who did not specify their gender, concerning that apparent convergence between the percentage of males and females and undetermined gender, with overall figures showing a modest rise in the proportion of female relative to their male counterparts.

The overall disparity reached its maximum, from about (03.03%) or (33) posts produced (edited) by males in the Business Insider to (18.04%) or (196) posts in the Mashable. In comparison, this disparity reached its maximum from about (4.69%) or (51) posts in the Business Insider, edited by females, to (14.82%) or (161) content pieces in the Mashable. In contrast, the disparity reached its maximum, about the percentage of (unspecified) contributors who do not indicate their gender, from (0.27%) or (03) females in the Gizmodo to (16.66%) or (181) posts in the TMZ. From the variation in proportions and according to the classification indicators, we record the density of the female contribution community, which indicates a great interest in this category in using this medium.

Returning to the statistical data and proportions included in the table, we can distinguish between two things; the first is related to the large percentage of contributors who do not specify their gender in their publications compared to the total of the male and female categories, as it

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then constitutes approximately the same percentage of males, and has a large percentage of the total posts as a whole, while the second thing is; the lack of a “subscriber” percentage or the sending activity in which both males and females participate.

In any case, this may be due to many reasons, perhaps the most important of which is Indifference to specifying gender and considering it a secondary matter or the presence of a tendency towards the love of concealment and not disclosing the personality, primarily if it is related to some topics that the contributors do not want to appear through, however, not specifying gender may hinder many opportunities for communication between the two sexes as a whole or each other, and may at the same time express backgrounds and sensitivities (cultural, social, ..) behind the initiative to mention and specify the gender on the pages of digital media platforms.

On average, we find that the number of contributors (males) in the study sample is (69.8) and (77) (females) in addition to (69.9) in the unspecified category. According to the value of the median, half of the total number of male communicators is less than (39) contributors, and the other half is more than that value, while half of the number of them (females) is less than (54) while the other half is more than that value.

On the other hand, the variance results show a high degree of dispersion in the distribution of gender-unspecified vocabulary compared to female and male, which means less homogeneity.

- *The relationship between gender and the intended content.*

Table No. (03) demonstrates the correlation between the gender of contributors and the message content.

Platform	Male Contributors	Female Contributors	Common Contributors	Unspecified Gender Contributors	Technology Topics
Huffington Post	42 (3.86%)	66 (6.07%)	24 (2.20%)	11 (1.01%)	12
TMZ	39 (3.59%)	53 (4.88%)	-	181 (16.66%)	-
Business Insider	33 (3.03%)	51 (4.69%)	-	-	33
Mashable	196 (18.04%)	161 (14.82%)	-	153 (14.08%)	249
Gizmodo	39 (3.59%)	54 (4.97%)	-	3 (0.27%)	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>349 (32.11%)</b>	<b>385 (35.34%)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>348 (32.02%)</b>	<b>387</b>

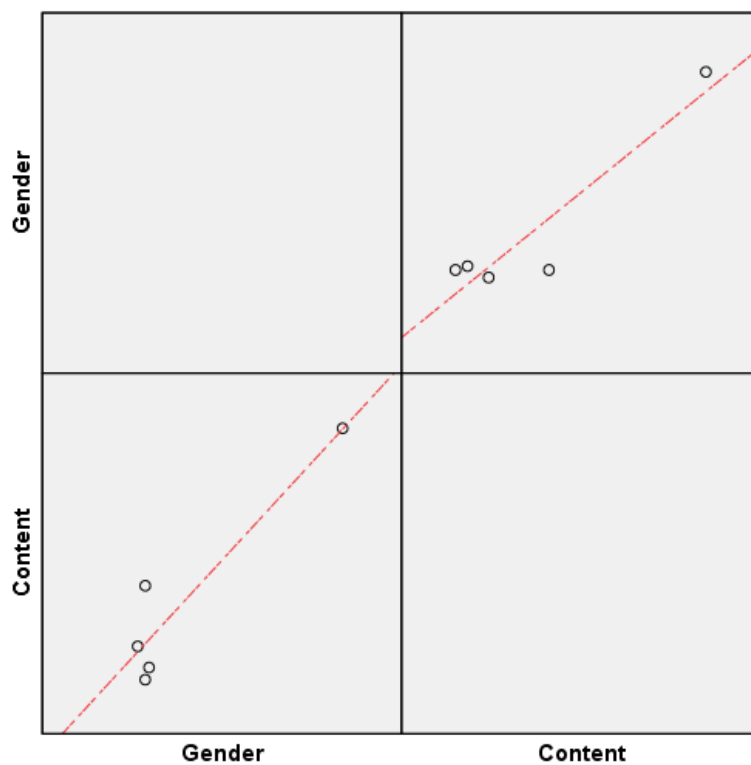
#### Statistical Analysis Framework:

- **Sample Size:**  $n-1=3$
- **Significance Level:**  $\alpha=0.05$
- **P-Value:**  $p=0.05$
- **Pearson correlation coefficient:**  $r 0.94$

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) for the relationship between gender variables and message content in the digital media platforms of the study sample indicates a strong association; this implies that both gender variables and message content exhibit a concurrent increase and decrease. The positive sign of ( $r$ ) signifies that as the contributors are male, the technological

sophistication of the message content in the communication process also increases, and vice versa. Given that the probability value (sig) equals 0.05 for the relationship between the two variables, we accept the alternative hypothesis, asserting a significant relationship between gender and message content, while rejecting the null hypothesis, indicating that the relationship is not attributable to chance.

**Figure No. (01) illustrates the connection between the contributor's gender and the message content**<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: Prepared by the author, based on SPSS (Scatterplot) software.

- *The correlation between gender and message format.*

Table No. (04) illustrates the correlation between the gender of contributors and the format of their messages.

Platform	Text Posts	Picture Posts	Voice Posts	Link Posts	Video Posts (Gender Breakdown)
Huffington Post	50 (4.60%)	49 (4.51%)	-	-	24 (2.20%) Male: 42; Female: 66
TMZ	123 (11.32%)	123 (11.32%)	-	-	27 (2.48%) Male: 39; Female: 53
Business Insider	38 (3.49%)	37 (3.40%)	-	-	9 (0.82%) Male: 33; Female: 51
Mashable	240 (22.09%)	240 (22.09%)	-	-	30 (2.76%) Male: 196; Female: 161
Gizmodo	35 (3.22%)	35 (3.22%)	-	-	26 (2.39%) Male: 39; Female: 54
<b>Total</b>	486 (44.72%)	484 (44.54%)	-	-	116 (10.65%) Male: 349; Female: 385

**Statistical Analysis Framework :**

**Pearson Correlation Coefficient:**  $r= 0.91$  indicating a very strong positive linear relationship between the variables under study.

(a) **Adjusted Sample Size:** degrees of freedom  $(n-1) = 3$ .

(b) **Significance Level:**  $\alpha = 0.05$

(c) **Observed P-Value:**  $p=0.02$ , confirming statistical significance at the 5% level.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) reveals a robust relationship between the gender variables and the message format in the digital media platform's communication process. This relationship is direct and positive, indicating that both variables move in a single direction, either increasing or decreasing. In other words, the more male the communicator “the contributor”, the more textual the message, and vice versa. Since the probability value **sig** is less than 0.05 for the relationship between the two variables, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant significance for the relationship between the gender of male and the nature of the textual message in the communication process, and therefore it is not a result of chance.

*- The relationship between gender and the target audience.*

**Table No. (05) illustrates the correlation between the Contributor's gender and the target audience <sup>2</sup>.**

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Male (RSA%)</b>	<b>Female (RSA%)</b>	<b>Common (RSA%)</b>	<b>Unspecified (RSA%)</b>	<b>Total Contributions</b>
Huffington Post	42 (3.86%)	66 (6.07%)	24 (2.2%)	11 (1.01%)	143 (13.14%)
TMZ	39 (3.59%)	53 (4.88%)	-	181 (16.66%)	273 (25.13%)
Business Insider	33 (3.03%)	51 (4.69%)	-	-	84 (7.72%)
Mashable	196 (18.04%)	161 (14.82%)	-	153 (14.08%)	510 (46.94%)
Gizmodo	39 (3.59%)	54 (4.97%)	-	3 (0.27%)	96 (8.83%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>349 (32.11%)</b>	<b>385 (35.34%)</b>	<b>24 (2.2%)</b>	<b>348 (32.02%)</b>	<b>1,106 (100%)</b>

<sup>2</sup> RSA refers to Repetition of Sample Appearance.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) reveals a robust relationship between the gender variables and the target audience in the digital platform communication process. This relationship is direct and positive, indicating that both variables move in a single direction, either increasing or decreasing. In other words, the more female the communicator, the more diverse the target audience is, and vice versa. Since the probability value **sig** is less than 0.01 for the relationship between the two variables, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between gender of female and the nature of the target audience in the communication process, and therefore it is not a result of chance.

## **Discussion**

This study helped us discover the major axes and coordinates of the relationship between contributor gender and communication processes, set within the network gatekeeper theory, particularly using digital media platforms, with the most important as follows:

### ***Gender Dynamics in Digital Content***

According to the results, producing digital material is a common communication activity appealing to both men and women, much as audience interaction with conventional media. Still, the findings expose a clear gender pattern in digital content activities. Comprising 35.34% of the sample, female contributors show a more active participation in this activity, therefore highlighting their importance in this field relative to male contributors. Furthermore, the gender of the contributors is very correlated with the target audience and the kind of material. Male contributors show a notable correlation with text-based communications; female contributors show a stronger association with the audience they aim at. These results fit other studies on gendered media preferences, in which women lean toward series and musicals while men tend toward action-oriented fare like war movies and cowboys (Chandler, 1997, p. 9).

Furthermore, affecting the substance and style of communications sent on digital media are the

contributor's gender and family situation. This dynamic is clear in how writers craft their messages to fit the expectations of their readers. Though digital platforms provide a variety of formats, including text and visuals, the communicative method maintains conventional gender roles and implies the continuation of social norms inside virtual environments.

### ***Characteristics and Variability of Digital Communication***

The study emphasizes even more important traits of digital information as a communication tool. With 80.91% of messages aimed at broad categories, most digital material aims at a general audience. With 44.72% and 44.52% respectively, text and graphics rule the message forms. Especially images are the most often utilized kind of visual on digital pages at a rate of 46.38%. They occupy a significant area. This focus on graphic material captures the increasing relevance of images in networked communication systems. Another interesting tendency is openness among contributors: 74.09% of individuals reveal their actual names, titles, and personal images, therefore showing an attitude toward authenticity in online interactions. With these developments, the study draws focus on differences, especially in gender representation among viewers and contributors across platforms, suggesting inherent inequalities in digital engagement. These results support the perspective that digital media platforms are changing interaction structures, therefore promoting efficiency and accessibility (Geriş & Özdener, 2021). Particularly for professional users, the reliance on tools including email, instant messaging, and video conferences has simplified communication, so saving time and money (Ram et al., 2023). Yet, difficulties abound including ethical questions, possible misinterpretation caused by nonverbal cue absence, and digital divides resulting from unequal access to technology (Yusoff et al., 2022). Clearly visible in many different fields, the variety of digital media platforms points to its vast potential as well as the need of inclusive methods and continuous research for optimizing its use

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### ***Gender and Digital Media Participation***

The analysis of this study reveals a nuanced deviation from earlier findings on the relationship between gender and digital media platforms, particularly blogging as a type of digital media contribution. Contrary to the Pew Research Center's (2005) report that 57% of blog creators are male, our findings highlight that over one-third of the content pieces analyzed were authored by females. This divergence may stem from factors such as the perceived irrelevance of specifying gender or a preference for anonymity, particularly when discussing sensitive or personal topics. Concealing gender may hinder potential communication opportunities between contributors, reflecting cultural and societal sensitivities that discourage explicit gender identification on these platforms. Driven by different reasons and experiences, females and non-binary people often participate more actively on digital media platforms than men, according to Bokase (2023), whose increasing patterns of digital participation line with these observations. These differences show the complex connection between gender and digital media, where use patterns vary not only by activity type but also by the more general societal consequences of these interactions. In addition significant in digital environments is Daniel Chandler's (1997) finding that mass media regularly supports traditional gender preferences—that is, men leaning toward action genres and women toward series. This contradiction reflects the stratified yet dynamic nature of digital media participation, in which new possibilities for involvement socialize with previous interests.

### ***Gendered Patterns in Digital Media Platforms***

The gender and societal roles of contributors directly impact digital media messages, therefore influencing their content, audience targeting, and message forms. Mostly expressed through books and multimedia, these concepts reveal variations depending on the context. Female contributors especially exhibit more involvement in publication than male ones since their work

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is less text-centric, more multimedia-oriented, and usually directed toward public audiences. This represents many societies tastes and roles impacting digital media environments.

The dynamics of gender presence in digital media may expose a contrast of vulnerability and empowerment. For instance, Wilhelm (2020) notes that whereas digital platforms provide visibility and means for expression, they also expose women to hazards like harassment, therefore compromising their representation. Likewise, Nazir's (2012) sociolinguistic study of online platform use emphasizes different language habits between sexes, therefore underlining more general societal norms and expectations represented in digital interactions.

These trends show the changing terrain of digital communication, where participation and content creation are shaped by societal conventions and platform affordances taken together. Notwithstanding differences, the linked character of digital platforms emphasizes continuous changes in how people interact with and support digital ecosystems, so promoting a transforming transformation in interpersonal communication.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals that gender significantly impacts digital media contributions and communication dynamics, with increased female participation in content creation. This reflects established societal roles and norms. The interconnected nature of digital platforms encourages varied communication practices, but differences in representation persist. These findings highlight the changing nature of digital interaction and the transformative future of communication influenced by evolving societal contexts and technological progress.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The main focus of this study on particular digital platforms limits it and might only partially depict more general contexts. Furthermore, restricting causal conclusions is the dependence on correlational data. while the increasing application of artificial intelligence in the production of

digital content brings fresh complexity in comprehending the roles and motives of contributors. Future studies should investigate several populations, use longitudinal techniques, and evaluate how gender dynamics and content creation are affected by artificial intelligence integration. Analyzing interacting elements including age, socioeconomic level, and technological access will help us to better grasp digital communication environments.

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