

Chapter 11

Digital Feminism: A Systematic Review of Feminist Activism in Online Spaces (2020–2024)

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ABSTRACT

Feminism, as a “an interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality as understood through social theories and political activism,” (Eastern Kentucky University, 2024) has experienced a shift, when feminist activities transferred to the online environment. With mentioned shift, the women’s right defences were extrapolated to online environment. The primary aim of this research is to perform systematic review with an analyse of already conducted research on the topic of digital feminism from January 2020 and September 2024 in databases like Scopus, SpringerLink, SAGE, JSTOR, Wiley Online Library, Emerald, Taylor & Francis online, ScienceDirect, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses and DOAJ. We extrapolated and examined 19 articles, which addressed digital feminism. This research is one of the first to conduct systematic analysis on the topic of digital feminism, so the research is expected to contribute to the literature, used by researchers.

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INTRODUCTION

“Globally, in 2021, the female share of the global population was just under 50%.” (Ritchie & Roser, 2019) Despite mentioned fact, “in every step, all over the world; women face inequality, subordination, and secondary class status. Often, they are victim of the oppression, marginalization and exploitation in the patriarchal societies.” (Kumar Mohajan, 2022) “Feminism became a global movement in the 20th century, although the end of the 19th century marked the beginning of the spreading of feminism as a movement worldwide. The first international congress to use the word feminist in its title took place in Paris in 1892. From its outset, feminism was more a Western phenomenon, and the links between feminists in Europe and North America were crucial for its diffusion. Feminism is defined in several dictionaries as a doctrine that aims to improve the position of women.” (Cova, 2012)

With the evolution of technology, we could see evolution of feminism, which shifted from physical environment to online environment. We could see emergence of digital feminism, which had gain importance with the emergence of social media platforms and can be perceived as relatively new phenomenon. Which we cannot state for feminism, which “is one of the oldest movements in global history.” (Human Rights Careers, 2024) This research presents a systematic review of multidisciplinary research on digital feminism from the years 2020 to 2024, encompassing a total of 14,723 articles retrieved from the different databases, mentioned above, as of September 25, 2024. We extrapolated and examined 19 articles, which addressed digital feminism. This research was conducted as a reflection to identified gap in systematic research perspective of the topic of digital feminism, as we have managed to find only one similar research, a Bibliometric analysis of digital feminism research, which was conducted by the Soner Taslak and Nazli Ersoy in year 2022, which analysed 53 articles between the years 1975-2021, dealing with the subject of “digital feminism” in the Web of Science and Scopus databases.

Theoretical framework

Throughout most of Western history, women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, to study, or to participate in public life. At the end of the 19th century in France, they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and, in parts of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Even as late as the early 20th century, women could neither vote nor hold elective office in Europe and in most of the United States (where several territories and states granted women’s suffrage long before the federal government did so). Women were prevented from conducting business without a male representative, be it father, brother, husband,

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