

# Chapter 5

## Reflections on Toxicity and Gender Stereotyping in “Female Gamer's Experience” YouTube Video Interactions

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### **ABSTRACT**

*YouTube videos are now a vital part of people's lives, and it is possible to access various content, interact with others, share ideas, and discuss those videos. The innate need for individuals to play has evolved into digital gaming and has been a part of YouTube for many years. The research focused on “The Female Gamer's Experience” videos, which are montages of the toxic and gender stereotyping women often face when playing online multiplayer games. It aims to provide a perspective on YouTube users' perceptions and opinions about these videos and their content. Using content analysis, the study analyzed 1082 comments from the three most viewed videos, which were selected to represent a wide range of perspectives and experiences. Four main categories and 17 subcategories were identified. The videos raised viewers' awareness and understanding of female gamers' experiences and instilled solidarity, encouragement, and comfort.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the world of the 21st century, only two things are needed to access unlimited information and ideas: the internet, and a technological device to connect to it. As a social animal, it has been a while since humans started to fulfill most of their socializing needs through these new media that know no time or place. Communicating with people one knows or does not know using modern technological opportunities, participating in groups and communities that suit your interests, or forming one of them have become ordinary, everyday practices for today's generation. These so-called Online Social Networks (OSNs) have become an undeniable part of our lives. According to DataReportal, Meltwater, and We Are Social (2025), as of February 2025, there are 5.56 billion internet users worldwide today, of which 5.24 billion (equivalent to 63.9% of the world's population) are social media users. These numbers show that a large proportion of people with the necessary technological means are now using these options to connect with others. Although many social media platforms allow users to share text, visuals, audio and video content with the world, one stands out as perhaps the one that created and transformed the internet and our understanding of video content: YouTube. YouTube has the highest number of active participants worldwide after Facebook and has more than 2.70 billion monthly active users, according to February 2025 data (GMI, 2025). Based on the numbers above, it is possible to state that studies that will examine the sociocultural practices of individuals who spend time and pro-consume on this platform are of great importance in terms of understanding the presence of today's people in the digital world accurately and reflecting on the effects of these platforms on people.

The study aims to examine the judgments and expressions by analyzing the comments left by the users who watched these videos on YouTube, which has become an indispensable part of our daily lives and is arguably one of the most used video platforms on the “negative experiences of female gamers in games”. The study's objectives also include evaluating these comments on the topics of gender stereotyping and toxicity, which are crucial in understanding and addressing issues in both gaming culture and social media. Studying and analyzing the comments under these YouTube videos is envisioned to assist in understanding how YouTube users perceive these situations described in videos that focus on negative experiences and the general judgments and thoughts about female gamers. This research has the potential to significantly impact our understanding of online interactions and online behavior. In this context, the anonymity effect that the YouTube platform provides to its users brings along another element that needs to be considered in our research.

This study fills the gap in the literature as there is no similar research in both digital media and game studies. By analyzing and interpreting the comments on these videos, we reveal the significant prejudice and stereotyping practices against

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