

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

Summary

This research explores the relationship between gender equality and women's digital literacy in the context of global sustainable development, using data from the Global Gender Gap Report 2024. While progress has been made in narrowing the gender gap, full parity is projected to take over a century. Women's limited access to technology, underrepresentation in STEM fields, and slower advancement to leadership roles contribute to persistent inequalities. Digital literacy emerges as a key driver for economic independence, educational access, civic participation, and social inclusion. It enables women to overcome traditional gender roles, engage in high-growth sectors, and influence political and social agendas. The study emphasizes that improving digital literacy requires not only technical skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability—particularly relevant in contexts where women face heightened professional challenges

Gender equality, which involves the empowerment of women and girls, is one of the key goals of sustainable development. Gender equality is not only about eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the economic, political and cultural spheres, ensuring full and real participation of women and equal opportunities for them to lead at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and social life. Gender equality also includes more active use of highly effective technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, to promote the expansion of women's rights and opportunities (Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) Gender equality contributes to economic development and social stability, improves the quality of decision-making through participation

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different points of view, strengthens human rights and creates an equal and harmonious society.

Modern society is undergoing dynamic changes in all spheres of life, including the sphere of gender equality. Since 2006, the World Economic Bank has been examining progress in achieving gender equality through the analysis of the Gender Gap Index. Over the course of its eighteen editions, the Gender Gap Index has offered a stable metric for assessing changes in gender parity. Using a revised methodology since 2006, the index focuses on comparing parity between women and men at the global, regional and economic levels based on the latest available data. The gender gap is measured by the following main criteria: economic participation and opportunities (including labor force participation rate, wage gap for equal work, access to leadership



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positions), education, political participation (share of women in legislative bodies, representation in top government positions), health and safety (access to health services, maternal mortality rate). The level of progress towards gender parity (parity score) for each indicator is calculated as the ratio of the value of each indicator for women to the value for men. A parity score of 1 means full parity. The gender gap is the distance from full parity. Despite the positive dynamics of the gradual reduction of the gender gap (for example, Ukraine ranks 63rd in 2024, improving its previous position in the ranking by 3 points), it can be predicted that it will take 134 years (approximately five generations) to achieve full parity in the global dimension. (Global Gender Gap Report 2024, p.5)

An important feature of the modern high-tech information society is the level of digital literacy of the population. Women's digital literacy is a key tool for achieving gender equality in modern society, as it provides equal opportunities for access to information, education, employment, and social participation. Women in many countries face limited access to technology and digital education due to social, economic, and cultural barriers. According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), women are 17% less likely to use the Internet than men, increasing their vulnerability to digital exclusion. Gender gaps skew the technology transition: According to LinkedIn data, women's representation in both science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and non-STEM workforces has increased since 2016, yet women remain underrepresented in STEM roles, making up only 28.2% of the STEM workforce compared to 47.3% in non-STEM sectors. The "drop to the top" from entry-level to C-suite positions is more pronounced in STEM occupations than in non-STEM roles. Women make up over half of the workforce base in non-STEM roles, compared to only a third in STEM.

In turn, they make up one-fourth of non-STEM leaders, and only over one-tenth in STEM. This gives women a double disadvantage with regard to technological and workforce transitions, as they continue to occupy the lower-growth, lower-paying jobs that are likely to be negatively affected in the short term (Global Gender Gap Report 2024, p. 8).

The impact of digital literacy on gender equality can be viewed through several important aspects. For example, through economic independence, which is achieved through the development of digital skills and gives women access to remote work, in particular in the fields of IT, freelancing, e-commerce, etc. This leads to a reduction in the gender gap in employment and wages. Women's educational opportunities also directly depend on their level of digital literacy. Digital literacy helps to overcome barriers to learning, especially in remote regions, and makes it possible to access online courses, webinars, and platforms that allow women to improve their professional skills. Digital technologies allow women to participate in civic initiatives, create support networks and influence political decisions, and social media help raise awareness of gender issues, thereby increasing women's social and political activism. The use of digital tools increases the transparency and accessibility of social services, protecting women's rights and promoting equal representation of women in the media and public spaces. As we can see, women's access to technology reduces their dependence on traditional gender roles that limit their influence in society and ensures their integration into the information society.

To summarize, digital literacy helps to open up new opportunities for women: from developing entrepreneurship, engaging in technology professions that are often highly paid, to increasing social and political activism (social media campaigns such as #MeToo have demonstrated how digital literacy contributes to the protection of women's rights). The development of digital skills allows women not only to integrate into the modern labor market, but also to reduce the wage gap between men and women. We can observe the growing role of international organizations (UN, UNESCO) in developing programs to improve digital literacy for women. In Ukraine, the problem is becoming more acute in the context of martial law, when many women are forced to look for new ways of professional fulfillment. It is important to emphasize that the problem of digital literacy concerns not only technical skills, but also the development of critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to adapt to new conditions. Women who have access to digital education become more active participants in social



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processes, which contributes to the overall strengthening of social inclusion and the formation of a more inclusive and progressive society.

References

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