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## **The Role of Tiktok in Portuguese Young Adults' Perspective on Gender Identity**

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### **Abstract**

Gender identity exploration among young adults has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in relation to digital platforms such as TikTok. This study examines how TikTok influences Portuguese young adults' perceptions of gender identity.

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative algorithm analysis using three newly created, unused TikTok accounts with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and a focus group involving Portuguese participants aged 18 to 25 who actively use the platform.

Preliminary results suggest that TikTok often reinforces users' existing perspectives on gender identity and the trans and non-binary community. Participants who already support gender identity rights are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their views, while those who are more skeptical tend to receive content presenting both supportive and critical perspectives. However, despite this exposure, the predominantly anti-trans and anti-non-binary discourse found in comment sections appears to reinforce existing biases, creating a filter bubble effect. Moreover, TikTok is perceived by many trans and non-binary individuals as a validating and educational space. These findings highlight the platform's dual role in shaping not only perceptions of gender identity, but also, for trans and non-binary individuals, the lived experience and expression of their own gender identity. Lastly, they underscore the importance of media literacy education in navigating digital content.

**Keywords:** gender identity, Tik Tok, portuguese young adults, trans and non-binary and media influence