

Social media as a platform for promoting experiences of women in science and levelling the playing field

MARTIN, E. L.¹ AND SPENCER, C. J.¹

¹ TravelingGeologist; erin@travelinggeologist.com

Whilst considerable efforts have been made to move towards gender equality in Geosciences, women continue to be under-represented in advanced academic positions. Studies have identified that a lack of female role models in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers leave women to conclude that these careers are more suited to men. In addition, the traditional beliefs that household and family work are primarily a woman's responsibility, leave women feeling as though they must choose between an academic career and a family. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is a lack of communication of experiences of women in science.

We investigate the opportunity social media has in providing access to role models for women in science, both in terms of role models in specific disciplines and in balancing academic careers and families. Our results affirm the difference in career experience between men and women in STEM and highlights the decrease in the ratio of men to women in STEM between early and late career stages. However, engagement of Geoscience outreach ventures on social media platforms reflects more closely the ratio of female to male geoscience university students and doctoral graduates. Further, the proportion of female engagement is positively correlated with age, in that there is a greater proportion of women than men engaging at advance career levels. Statistics from Geoscience outreach ventures on social media reflects more equity in the Geosciences than positions in research institutions on average, and therefore provides useful a resource for the normalization of women, and women's experiences of careers in Geoscience, and other STEM fields.