

# Violence and social media

## What is the relationship between violence and social media?

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**Abstract**—This paper examines about today’s current situation regarding incidence rates and the relationship between social media and violence. This review analyzes the connection between individuals and risk factors associated with cyber violence, and the context of online aggression at the macro scale. The paper ends with a framework for balancing contrasting levels of explanation and provide plan for future research that includes choosing, encouraging or improving thought about social media’s cause and effect. There is also discussion on remaining empirical inquiry and fresh directions for future study.

**Keywords**—component; violence; social media; cyber-bullying; gang;

### I. INTRODUCTION

Social medias have become a medium for youth violence in a little over a decade. There is a growing body of studies about the understanding of electronic aggression which has been described as an emerging health problem [2]. Guilty parties have started using social medias to further enhance their violent activities. For instances, street gangs and drug cartels use social media to commit act of violence such as ‘incite violence’ [3] selling drugs to the public as the internet can reach more people compared to face-to-face interaction. Not just that, terrorist groups take advantage of social media to incite violence and hatred by posting videos showing assassinations, torture and threats on public feeds or YouTube. Terrorist groups also recruit new members to join them on the social media. To add more fuel to the fire, pedophiles and sexual predators also access the internet to gain easy access to potential preys by stalking them as everything now is public and uploaded on social media.

Simultaneously, new types of aggression and violence which occur exclusively online on the internet have been introduced by social media. Studies found that cyber-bullying and harassment are widespread among youth communities which includes threatening or sexual messages delivered via social media. For instances, through Instagram private messages, Twitter direct messages or even public feeds on Facebook and many other social media platforms that are widely used by people nowadays especially youth. Despite all of that, very little research has been carried out in scientific fields regarding violent behavior such as criminology, psychology and sociology. This is because others suggest that the traditional crimes are just a new form of crimes aided by the possibilities and conditions provided by the internet.

This paper will explain to us crystal clear about what we know regarding cyber violence and outlines what we should

know about it as it is important. It aims at analyzing the existing studies on the relationship between violence and social media. In this regard, this paper will deliver a systematic review of a comparatively young yet growing studies [4], that may explain cyber violence that is happening in today’s era better. This paper also aims to study the risk associated with cyber violence at individual level and groups. Furthermore, it will outline the context of online aggression at a macro scale so that the problem which is cyber violence can be disentangled in future studies.

### II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### A. What do we know about cyber violence?

In virtual worlds, one of the most cited classifications of cyber violence includes deception/theft, pornography, abuse and cyber-trespass. This analysis focuses on violence in social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media and social networking sites.

#### B. Prevalence of cyber violence

It is hard to describe cyber violence, let alone systematically monitor it. As a consequence, rates of prevalence remain largely unknown. Despite all of that, a variety of large-scale national youth studies exploring cyber bullying and cyber dating abuse have been conducted. For instance, a study used a large national telephone survey which includes 4561 number of youth ages range from 10-17 during 2000, 2005 and 2010. The study found that the incidence of online abuse has almost doubled in a decade, from 6% in 2000 to 11% in 2010. Girls are accounted for 69% of victims. In another national survey of 1588 youth aged 10-15 in 2006, the recorded rates of cyber-bullying were even higher. A global, online survey of selected households was used in this research. Nearly 40% of the sample reported being victimized and nearly 25% of the sample reported perpetrating online harassment.

In a study based on relationship violence among 5647 youth, more than 25% of participants who were in a current or recent relationship experienced a form of cyber dating abuse with higher rates among girls. In this study, one out of ten participants reported committing cyber-dating harassment.

#### C. Overlap with traditional violence

Cyber violence can lead to levels of fear and anxiety equivalent to the violence in the real world. One significant question is whether or not cyber violence is committed by the same people who perpetrate conventional forms of aggression and violence? Does the internet become a new place for people to carry out offensive acts, or is social media attracting new

and different community of aggressors who are violent exclusively online?

Just a small amount of correlation between cyber bullying and conventional bullying was identified by a study of 400 middle schoolers. Another research of over 5000 youth found that physical, sexual, psychological and online relationship abuse is likely to occur with conventional and cyber-bullying. In addition, a recent anti-Muslim hate crime study found that there exist substantial overlaps between online and in-person victimization.

In the review of the cyber sexual offender literature [5], they conclude that there are four types of people who consume child pornography on the internet which is those using images to fill sexual desires, impulsive users, people who disseminate images for non-sexual reasons and those who also sexually offend in real life. There is also 19% to 38% of people who use child pornography who also commit sexual offenses against children offline. Examining pedophiles in cyberspace, they mention that a would-be member had to own at least ten thousand pictures of children in order to join the pedophile group and be prepared to share them with all other members of the pedophile groups. The fact that photographs were checked to confirm that they were not 'recycled' from other already available sources from the internet suggests that online members had to be an active offline (in real life) criminal. Overall, the degree to which cyber violence and in-person violence intersect or are entirely separate phenomena is very little known to us.

#### *D. In-person perpetrators using social media*

Street gang have started using social media for their own reasons such as interacting efficiently. Members of the gang also post videos, announce events, display guns and firearms on public at the social media platform. Not just that, gang members also promote one's gang membership, reporting involvement in crime and sharing data through social media. Most of the gang members do not commit cyber-crime, but instead they use social media and social networking platforms to encourage the abuse and violence of the gang's daily routine.

In addition to the use of social media by gang members, increased attention has been paid to the way social media is used by terrorist organizations, hate groups and terror groups. To promote and in some cases, organize foreign acts of violence, they use this public social media site. In addition, they use social media for recruiting new members across the globe by sending Twitter and YouTube messages to spread disinformation and collect data for their strategic needs. Like-minded violent radicals have also been brought together by social media around online training manuals and video materials. In order to, combat terrorist recruitment through social media, cyber security has been actively developing social media campaigns.

As discussed above, sex predators use social media to harass victims and network anonymously with other pedophiles while remaining undetected by the authority. For those who commit offline offences, social media is a method to help connect on a wider scale with other similar criminals.

#### *E. New forms of aggression and violence*

New and sometimes anonymous ways of attack and abuse that take place online have also been implemented by social media. According to [6], cyber-bullying has been defined as the use of electronic communication technology as a means to deliberately threaten, harm, embarrass or socially exclude another person. To date, cyber-bullying either excluding someone from an online group, posting or sending cruel gossip to intentionally damage a person's reputation, logging into someone else's social networking account, harassment, cyberstalking, making fake profiles, has generated most research and studies.

In addition, trolling is also another form of online violence which involves disruptive and misleading actions that for no apparent reason disrupts the space on the internet [7]. Sadly, there is little data on criminals who commit these relatively modern types of cyber abuse. Unverifiable descriptions, with no reference to causes or effects, are what present in the literature right now. Therefore, analysis must also strive to comprehend its theoretical and practical consequences.

#### *F. Individual explanations of cyber violence*

##### *1) Low self-control or impulsivity*

The theory of self-control suggests that people with poor self-control will find crime attractive. In the online context, people with low self-control can become the risk factors for either piracy offending and 'hacking victims' [8]. A study survey of approximately 500 undergraduate students found that online misbehavior was projected by low self-control, namely harassing or threatening posts and illegal hacking [9]. An additional analysis of more than 25000 youths aged 9-16 in 25 different nations found ties between online and offline bullying and low self-control, but with greater direct effects on cyberbullying.

##### *2) Psychopathic and Machiavellian traits*

Psychopathic traits that we can see in criminals and perpetrators are (i.e., cynical, emotionally detached, manipulative [10]). A few studies have started to investigate whether these psychopathic or Machiavellian traits are also indicators for cyber aggressors. In a study, they investigated the association between trolling and psychopathic or Machiavellian traits. A research gathered online data from 418 U.S. residents, 5.6% of them reported enjoying online trolling. On all tests, these 5.6% percent of individuals scored substantially higher compared to others on all measures of sadism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism.

##### *3) Internalizing traits*

People with lack of empathy have more tendency to engage in offline violence. But, people with internalizing traits have more tendency to involve in online violence. The participation in cyber-bullying predicted signs of depression and suicidal ideation in a survey of nearly 400 youths in Canada in grades 8-10. Beyond that, the association between problematic internet usage and narcissism, shyness, depression, violence, self-perception was explored by a study of over 400 university students in Turkey [11].

### G. Group and environmental explanations of cyber violence

Some community and environmental variables can also cause cyber violence to occur in addition to individual-level characteristics.

#### 1) *Social control and social learning theories*

Parents and friends play an important role in the development of common aggression and violence. Poor relational connections with parents and a lack of parental monitoring shows that it can trigger the cyber violence to occur. A study examined 4400 number of students age ranged from 6-12 found that the perceived risk of being penalized by adults was linked to cyber bullying.

#### 2) *Routine activities*

Technologies nowadays make people vulnerable to online violence. A study looked at the correlation between youth online addiction and the possibility of being abuse, threatened and sexually exploited. They found that online criminals are more likely to approach those who spend more time on the internet. Overall, the more youth are online, the greater the risk of becoming a victim of cyber-bullying. Social media and social networking sites offer a modern criminal interaction order for terrorists and pedophiles to find their victims through the Internet that can results in violence and abuse.

#### 3) *Anonymity and conformity*

As there is no one watching or monitoring users on social media, anonymity can lead to online aggression. Users typically become less responsible because of this anonymity, since no one knows them on the web. This phenomenon will inspire other users to make bad comments about other users. Conformity, which is modifying one's behavior due to overt or indirect community pressure on social media, is another significant social process. In this case, it is the youth as youth usually will change their behavior just to feel fit in the online group on social media. Social networking can extend children's networks of connections on the web, introducing them to new online communities. By expanding peer networks that normalize aggressive and violent online behavior, social media can contribute to cyber violence.

### III. FUTURE DIRECTION

We may highlight what we do not know and where the study needs to go from here. As a relatively new area of study, cyber violence research is facing the same degree of issue of clarification. Although as can be shown, consistency and coherence are lacking in literature about this topic. This research requires future direction in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the causes and correlates of online violence, which is the aim of this section.

#### A. *Learning from the gang literature*

One of the most proven findings in the area of criminology is gang members that engage in violent offences. But why? There are three explanations which is selection. Facilitation and enhancement. A recent review of 179 empirical studies found that the relationship between gang membership and offending is better interpreted by the enhancement model, not by pure selection or facilitation perspectives.

##### 1) *Selection*

Youth with individual deficits such as self-control, tend to be more likely to engage in cyber violence, whereby gangs have no causal impact on criminal behavior. The internet, in this view, is not the primary cause of everything. Instead, the correlation between social media and violence is explained by criminal tendency and other individual-level risk factors.

##### 2) *Facilitation*

The paradigm of social facilitation indicates that cyber violence is solely the product of social media control. In this model, there is a causal impact of social media on violence. the causal effect of social media extends beyond mere opportunity or lack of guardianship arising from social media features themselves, such as anonymity or conformity with group standards.

##### 3) *Enhancement*

The model of improvement is a model that combines the effects of selection and facilitation and is supported when there is evidence of a selection effect and an effect of facilitation. With that, anti-social media attracts people with tendencies to violence while social media related group processes generate higher crime rates.

From this paper, they presented three different explanations based on the observation that violence can sometimes be related with social media use such as:

- a) *Violent people use social media*
- b) *Social media facilitates violence*
- c) *Selection and facilitation work interactively*

These are testable theories that they hope will promote further research on cyber violence.

### IV. CONCLUSION

In the existing field of studies on cyber aggression and abuse, there are still several unanswered questions and they feel that future study should explore cyber violence through the lens of selection, facilitation and enhancement. There are currently studies on the psychological characteristics of cyber aggressors and sociological studies that concentrate more on group processes. This article, shows that cyber crime takes many forms, including terrorism, gangs and sexual predators. This leads to gaps in literature where there is traditionally no correlation between these areas. This paper has shown that the link between social media and violence can be understood in many respects, just like the connection between gangs and crime.

Developing successful cyber violence prevention and intervention strategies must include how selection, facilitation and enhancement are established over the course. Future studies of adolescents and delinquent youth in particular, must incorporate the measures of cyber abuse in order to accomplish this objective. They also conclude that we have to consider the fact that violence is constant but technology is ever-changing, so it must be taken from range of theories and analysis to understand this topic about the relationship between violence and social media.

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