Social Media and Domestic Violence

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Abstract

Domestic violence is the most brutal manifestation of inequality existing in our society. The victims of this phenomenon are women for the simple fact that their aggressors do not recognize their minimum rights of freedom, respect and decision-making. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the UN acknowledged that violence against women is an obstacle to achieving equality, development and peace and that it violates and violates human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UN defines the phenomenon as a manifestation of power relations between women and men that, as history shows us, have always been unequal.

Social media, it comes in a variety of forms from the most popular like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to things like blogs, business networks and forums. Those who are active online within these social media platforms each and every month reach into billions of users. Accessibility is also becoming easier, as everyone can now connect via a mobile device.

The reason behind social media, why do people share? First, many want to share the content they find, because it is entertaining or the information has value. Social media helps connect people, as well as helping to grow businesses. Another reason includes people using social media for causes and charities, sharing these because they feel strongly about a certain issue.

This brings us to how social media can have an impact on the community and general society. Many of the problems in the world today have more exposure, therefore bringing increased awareness of issues. This is definitely a positive side to social media, but is there also a downside?

Key words: social media, domestic violence.

Résumé

La violence domestique est la manifestation la plus brutale des inégalités dans notre société. Les victimes de ce phénomène sont les femmes pour le simple fait que leurs agresseurs ne reconnaissent pas leurs droits minimaux de liberté, de respect et de prise de décision. Lors de la quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes en 1995, les Nations Unies ont reconnu que la violence à l'égard des femmes était un obstacle

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à la réalisation de l'égalité, du développement et de la paix et qu'elle violait et violait les droits de l'homme et les libertés fondamentales. L'ONU définit le phénomène comme une manifestation de rapports de force entre hommes et femmes qui, comme l'histoire nous le montre, ont toujours été inégaux.

Les médias sociaux se présentent sous différentes formes, des plus populaires comme Facebook, Twitter, Instagram à des blogs, des réseaux d'affaires et des forums. Ceux qui sont actifs en ligne sur ces plateformes de médias sociaux atteignent chaque mois des milliards d'utilisateurs. L'accessibilité devient également plus facile, car tout le monde peut désormais se connecter via un appareil mobile.

La raison derrière les médias sociaux, pourquoi les gens partagent? Premièrement, beaucoup veulent partager le contenu qu'ils trouvent, parce que c'est divertissant ou que l'information a une valeur. Les médias sociaux aident à connecter les gens et à développer les entreprises. Une autre raison inclut les personnes qui utilisent les médias sociaux pour des causes et des organismes de bienfaisance et les partagent parce qu'elles sont profondément préoccupées par un problème donné.

Cela nous amène à la façon dont les médias sociaux peuvent avoir un impact sur la communauté et la société en général. De nombreux problèmes dans le monde d'aujourd'hui sont plus exposés, ce qui entraîne une prise de conscience accrue de ces problèmes. C'est certainement un côté positif des médias sociaux, mais y a-t-il aussi un inconvénient?

Les médias sociaux sont devenus une lueur d'espoir et un moyen pour les défenseurs de la violence domestique de prendre la parole et de rompre leur silence.

Si les médias sociaux jouent un rôle important en permettant aux agresseurs de contrôler, d'intimider et de traquer leurs victimes, ils servent également un objectif tout aussi sombre en perpétuant, voire en amplifiant, une culture de sexisme, de misogynie et d'agression masculine. Dans l'anonymat grisant du monde virtuel, un langage libre, des images et des comportements ont émergé, et ces éléments plus sombres de la nature humaine ont été laissés libres.

Sans contrôle de la responsabilité sociale, des influences modulantes de la honte, de la désapprobation et des punitions qui agissent si efficacement pour réguler les comportements dans le monde réel, toute l'agression des instincts humains les plus primitifs fleurit non seulement mais est validée et encouragée.

Ces communications oppressives, sexistes et souvent violentes rencontrent des éclats de rire et, souvent, de nouvelles incitations. Comme Heath & Potter (2012) l'ont montré, les réseaux de médias sociaux facilitent le développement de communautés de discours agressivement misogynes où l'objectivation sexuelle des femmes et les menaces de violence physique et sexuelle à leur encontre sont devenues la norme.

Mots-clés: médias sociaux, violence domestique.

Rezumat

Violența domestică este cea mai brutală manifestare a inegalității existente în societatea noastră. Victimele acestui fenomen sunt femei pentru simplul fapt că agresorii lor nu își recunosc drepturile minime de libertate, respect și luare a deciziilor. La cea de-a patra Conferință mondială privind femeile din 1995, ONU a recunoscut că violența împotriva femeilor reprezintă un obstacol în calea realizării

egalității, dezvoltării și păcii și că încalcă și încalcă drepturile omului și libertățile fundamentale. ONU definește fenomenul ca o manifestare a relațiilor de putere între femei și bărbați care, după cum ne arată istoria, au fost întotdeauna inegale.

Social media vine într-o varietate de forme din cele mai populare cum ar fi Facebook, Twitter, Instagram la lucruri precum bloguri, rețele de afaceri și forumuri. Cei care sunt activi online în cadrul acestor platforme sociale media lunar ajung în miliarde de utilizatori. Accesibilitatea devine și mai ușoară, deoarece toată lumea se poate conecta acum printr-un dispozitiv mobil.

Motivul din spatele social media, de ce oamenii împărtășesc? În primul rând, mulți vor să împărtășească conținutul pe care îl găsesc, deoarece este distractiv sau informațiile au valoare. Social media ajută la conectarea oamenilor, precum și la creșterea afacerilor. Un alt motiv include persoanele care folosesc social media pentru cauze și caritate, împărtășind aceste informații, deoarece se simt puternic în legătură cu o anumită problemă.

Acest lucru ne duce la modul în care mediile sociale pot avea un impact asupra comunității și asupra societății generale. Multe dintre problemele din lumea de astăzi au o expunere mai mare, prin urmare, creșterea gradului de conștientizare a problemelor. Aceasta este cu siguranță o latură pozitivă pentru social media, dar există și un dezavantaj?

Social media a devenit un far de speranță și un punct de plecare pentru susținătorii violenței domestice de a vorbi și de a-și rupe tăcerea.

Dacă mass-media socială joacă un rol semnificativ în a permite abuzatorilor să controleze, să intimideze și să-și lovească victimele, el servește și un scop la fel de întunecat în perpetuarea – și, într-adevăr, în amplificarea – culturii sexismului, misoginiei și agresiunii masculine. În anonimatul încurajat al lumii virtuale, a apărut o limbă, imagini și comportamente libere pentru toate, iar elementele întunecate ale naturii umane au fost eliberate.

Fără controlul responsabilității sociale, influențele modulative ale rușinii, dezaprobării și pedepsei care funcționează atât de eficient în reglementarea comportamentului în lumea reală, toată agresiunea instinctelor umane cele mai primitive nu numai că înflorește, dar sunt validate și încurajate.

Aceste comunicări opresive, sexiste și frecvent violente sunt întâmpinate cu râs și, adesea, cu alte incitări. După cum au arătat Heath & Potter (2012), rețelele de social media facilitează dezvoltarea comunităților de discurs agresiv misoginist, în care obiectivitatea sexuală a femeilor și amenințările de violență fizică și sexuală împotriva lor au devenit atât norma acestui trend.

Cuvinte cheie: social media, violența domestică.

1. Introduction

It can take on various forms, more or less visible, such as physical, psychological, sexual, economic and social violence. Violent individuals display a number of repetitive aggressive behaviors (rarely violence is manifested through a single incident), in the form of combinations of coercive and attacking acts of several types.

Family violence has characteristics that make it different from other types of violence incidentally or in other contexts, and a dynamic or cycle of manifestation based on the type of relationship that exists between the victim and the aggressor (Bearson &Ferron, 2002).

It is a serious phenomenon, a community, social, and public health problem that mainly affects women (95% of all victims of domestic violence are women). Globally, between 40% and 70% of the women killed are victims of domestic violence (Guide to Information and Good Practices in the Field of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, p. 51, Partnering Center for Equality, 2004. Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce, 1991).

As a form of behavior, domestic violence has:

a) instrumental (the aggressor controls the victim and the behaviors become functional and persist if they have the expected result);

b) intentional character (it is produced with the intention of control and domination, the preservation of power, intention which the perpetrator does not recognize but which can be identified by the results it produces);

c) acquired character (violence is not inborn but taught by imitation).

Specialists have identified a cycle of domestic violence:

a) the tension build-up phase, during which the victim acts with caution and tries strategies to avoid a violent incident;

b) the acute phase, the moment when the abuser acts, during a period of two to twenty-four hours (sometimes even within a week or more);

c) the relaxation phase, a period of calm, in which the aggressor manifests gentleness and love towards the victim. This phase is only a vague truce in a war of threats and blows. The cycles are spiraling: tense phases become longer, violence becomes more and more threatening and gentle phases become shorter or disappear everything (Pilger, 2002).

2. The economic and social impact of domestic violence

Violence against women hinders healthcare systems: studies in Nicaragua, the US and Zimbabwe indicate that women who have been the victims of physical abuse or sexually seek out medical services more often than those who have not experienced such an experience.

Violence against women is a factor that negatively affects the productive labor force: a nationwide study done in Canada about violence against women indicates that 30% of women who are beaten by their husbands have had to give up their usual activities the cause of abuse and 50% of women were forced to take sick leave due to injuries (Pilger, 2002).

Violence against women results in very high costs at the level of national spending on medical care, legal action and police actions, as well as losses in educational and productivity gains. In the US, violence from the intimate partner is estimated at a cost of $ 12.6 billion a year. A study in India shows that every act

of violence causes women to lose about 7 days of work. A survey of women victims of abuse in Managua and Nicaragua shows that such women earn 46% less than women who have not experienced similar experience, even after analyzing other factors that could influence earnings (Best *et al.*, 2014).

3. The purpose of social media campaigns on domestic violence

Awareness of the population on violence against women for: prevent and stop this phenomenon.

Improving the quality of life of women in particular and of the whole society through various actions of information, education, counseling, intervention, change and active participation (Bock, 2012).

4. The objectives of social media campaigns on domestic violence

Transmitting to the population a message stating that violence against women (in the family or in the couple relationship) is an undesirable, anomalous and deviant behaviour (Patton *et al.*, 2013).

Informing young people about the negative (medium and long term) effects of violence against women.

Informing young people and women about institutions and organizations providing services and counseling on violence against women.

Promote appropriate legislation and legislation to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and trafficking.

Awareness of society on the subject of human rights, domestic violence and democratic politics.

Educating the entire society by promoting affirmative and non-discriminatory policies for increasing the quality of life of women.

Active involvement of young people in their actions in order to prevent and combat the phenomenon.

5. The positive role social media plays in domestic violence

As I have mentioned, social media brings awareness. What would have remained in the dark can be brought into the light. Women have taken action to develop campaigns against domestic violence. Exposing the truth that this type of violence is not an isolated issue, but many have to deal with it every day. Social media can help those who are suffering realise they are not alone. There is also information where they can get help.

In some areas and in the minds of certain individuals, domestic violence is considered normal and many accept it as so. This is especially true for violence against women and children, due to gender inequality. Social media can in a way help to educate and expose the issue, to try and help people understand that

domestic violence is not okay. Getting the message out to the broader community, which will hopefully inspire change.

Social media also offers those in need, access to help, information, and a connection to other victims and survivors of domestic violence. There are even apps that have been developed, which attempt to help those in need (Florea, 2013).

On the flip side, can social media aggravate the issue of domestic violence?

6. The negative role social media plays in domestic violence

Social media has made it easier for everyone to share their ideas, make friends and connect. But it has also provided a platform for those seeking to cause harm. Social media can be turned into a place where they can easily harass their victims, making it more public. Victims are now not safe anywhere, as technology allows the abuser to track and have even more control over their victims. It is easy to embarrass somebody online, a place where friends, family and many others can see (Görzig & Frumkin, 2013).

On many occasions, women might want to get out of the domestic violence situation. Seeking refuge at a shelter or elsewhere their abuser cannot find them. Their position can be compromised, especially on Facebook, if they are tagged in photos. There could also be the sharing of explicit photos and other personal information (Van Laer, 2014).

Many using social media show their support by liking and maybe sharing certain campaigns and causes but fail to take real action. Those who are given the opportunity to interact privately with an organisation have been shown to provide more support through actual donations or voluntary help. Those on Social media display a type of inaction, their job is done once they have liked and shared (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

7. Conclusions

As we have seen there are both positive and negative issues when it comes to the role of social media in domestic violence. Since social media is here to stay and will most probably keep growing, it can be used, if done properly, as a tool to help those in need.

Besides, the content incorporating violence does not only produce negative effects on the users but also makes them somewhat dysfunctional.

Nevertheless, unconscious or uncontrolled use of the power of social media may lead to the spread of hate speech, infringement of personal rights, psychological attacks, symbolic violence, broadcasting private visions without the consent of the interested parties, deceiving people with fake accounts, spreading negative discourses intending to abuse, in addition to mobbing, harassment and insult along with the circulation of malevolent views and information on the Internet (Pilger, 2002).

It might be inferred that there is an attempt to raise consciousness toward the potential threat that unconscious and uncontrolled use of social media may bring about. Thus, regarding the news coverage pertaining to violence and social media, the respective issues seem to be held quite objectively to draw the attention of the public to the potential threats that the abuse of social networks may cause as well as to raise consciousness for media literacy instead of merely vilifying social media. In this respect, preventive and protective measures against the offensive content as well as reasonable and proper use of social media are highlighted (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

In terms of good practices, the social media campaigns in order to be effective, several considerations must be taken into account in the planning and implementation of the campaign.

These include the concepts of:
• Actionable engagement: People need a reason to do something;
• Output(s) that require virality: Successful social media campaigns require virality. Virality means that people HAVE to engage others as part of the campaign – going 'viral' refers to the way content spreads from person-to-person through social media channels;
• Reward, recognition, influence: What do people gain?

Effective social media campaigns use social media platforms and combine them with:
• Reputation, reward and influence based contests or challenges;
• Offline components for gathering and engaging youth around the campaign;
• Rewarding people, both those who contribute and those who benefit;
• Partnering on the ground in target areas;
• Clearly communicating the campaign's tangible results to all parties involved;
• Do not merely disseminate information: Be clear on the results – people want to make a difference and be rewarded and recognized for it;
• Require and build in virality.

Overall, social media can play a role in affecting critical changes for domestic violence prevention:
• Social media can play a role in mobilizing communities and individuals;
• Exposing, engaging and promoting action;
• Contributing toward:
  o Awareness, attitudinal and behaviour change;
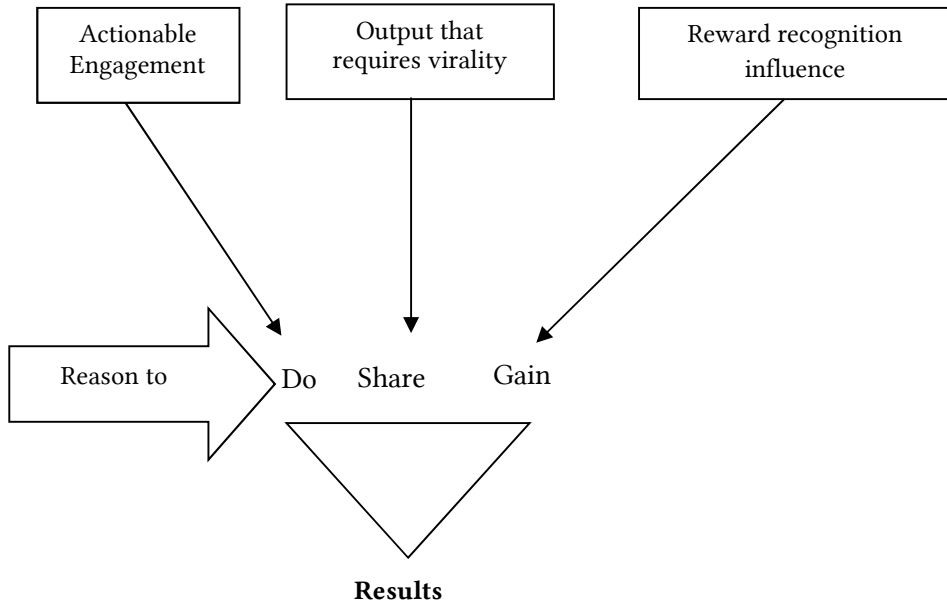 o Social norm change.

Fig. 1. Points to consider when planning a social meida campaign
to prevent domestic violence (Bock, 2012)

Social media became a beacon of hope and an outlet for domestic violence advocates to speak up and break their silence.

If social media plays a significant role in enabling abusers to control, intimidate, and stalk their victims, it also serves an equally dark purpose in perpetuating – and, indeed, magnifying – a culture of sexism, misogyny, and male aggression. In the heady anonymity of the virtual world, a free-for-all of language, images, and behaviors has emerged, and those darker elements of human nature have been given free rein.

Without the check of social accountability, the modulating influences of shame, disapproval, and punishment that operate so effectively in regulating behavior in the real world, all of the aggression of the most primitive human instincts not only flourish but are validated and encouraged.

These oppressive, sexist, and frequently violent communications are met with laughter and, often, further incitement. As Heath& Potter (2012) have shown, social media networks facilitate the development of aggressively misogynistic discourse communities where the sexual objectification of women and threats of physical and sexual violence against them have become both the norm of this.

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