

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RAISING AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: POWER AND LIMITATIONS

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Abstract

This paper discusses the use of social media in creating awareness, and advocating against domestic violence against women as well as its strength and weakness in the Pakistani backdrop. The quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, in which the survey data was gathered among 100 social media users (mainly students of universities and young adults in Multan) using a structured questionnaire, was utilized. The theory, which forms the basis of the study, is the Agenda-Setting Theory, backed by the ideas of affective publics and networked empowerment, to comprehend the influence of being exposed to the contents related to domestic violence on the development of awareness, perception of the issue, and advocacy of interventions. The results, informed by descriptive statistical analysis, suggest that respondents who were more exposed to the content of domestic violence had increased chances of reporting more awareness of the problem and viewing it as a social issue as opposed to an individual one. On the same note, the more the exposure, the more the support was given to the legal, preventive as well as social interventions. The respondents also appreciated the power of the social media as a channel of awareness and advocacy, but they also outlined its weaknesses, such as misinformation, narratives of victim-blame, and the inability to translate the online action into the real world. The research is valuable to the emerging body of literature in the area of digital media and social issues, as it offers context-specific information on the relationship between social media and domestic violence awareness and advocacy in Pakistan. The results are however associative and not causal, as the descriptive analysis has been used and the sample size is small. The paper identifies the necessity of incorporating digital advocacy with institutional and policy-level issues to make it more effective in solving domestic violence.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against women is one of the longest and the most common social problems in the world since it is experienced by women

regardless of their culture, classes and geography. It encompasses both physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse, which usually take place in intimate or domestic relationships (World Health Organization, 2013). Amid its

high prevalence, domestic violence remains largely underreported because of social stigma and fear of punishment, cultural norms and inadequate institutional mechanisms of support (Walby, 2009; UN Women, 2021). Violence against women is often accepted or a family issue, not a societal issue, in patriarchal societies, which denies the possibility of intervention and justice (Heise et al., 2002; Gill, 2016).

Over the past few years, the fast-growing digital technologies have changed the communication environment, and social media turned out to be an effective tool of influencing the population in the discussion of social problems. Social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok allow individuals to create, distribute, and amplify content at a fast pace, empowering the voices of the marginalized and supporting mass interaction (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; van Dijck, 2013). Digital activism has come to rely on these platforms, enabling individuals and communities to organize around a set of issues, including gender-based violence, to effect social change (Castells, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2013). Social media can be an effective attempt to break the silence and undermine the dominant narrative and focus on the lived experience of survivors, which has been proven by movements like #MeToo (Mendes et al., 2018; Banet-Weiser, 2018).

The role of social media in affecting public awareness and perception can be described as Agenda-Setting Theory that states that the salience of issues in the mind of the population is determined by media exposure (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 2004). By continually exposing people to content about domestic violence, social media can help shift the perception of the problem as a personal or personal issue to a social one that needs to be addressed by the whole society. Moreover, the idea of networked empowerment suggests the decentralization of participative and collective action through the use of digital platforms and the empowerment of individuals to disrupt the dominance of power structures (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 2010). Equally, the concept of affective publics clarifies how such

feelings like empathy, anger, and solidarity spread in social media and promote engagement and social action (Papacharissi, 2015; Papacharissi, 2016; Ahmed, 2004). All these theoretical lenses hint at the fact that social media can impact awareness, attitude, and intention to act when it comes to domestic violence against women.

Yet, even with its transformative promise, there are also torments of social media. The authors have pointed to the issue of misinformation, bullying over the Internet, the idea of victim-blaming, and the virtual phenomenon of slacktivism, when Internet actions do not always result in a real-life change (Jane, 2014; Fuchs, 2017; Tufekci, 2017). In addition, sustained exposure to uncomfortable material may lead to emotional burnout and decreased sustained interest in advocacy activities (Gill and Orgad, 2018; Papacharissi, 2015). The online space can also replicate existing disparities, restricting the applicability of social media to any long-term social change (Fraser, 1990; Plan International, 2020). These issues underscore the importance of having a balanced perspective of both the enabling and limiting effects of social media in dealing with domestic violence.

Domestic violence in the context of Pakistan is a highly societal problem that is affected by socio-cultural factors, legal barriers and ineffective reporting systems (Khan and Awan, 2011; Niaz, 2013). As more people have access to the internet and use social media sites, awareness, advocacy and engagement of the people have been made available. Nevertheless, there is not much empirical research on the impact of social media on the perceptions, awareness and support of the intervention against domestic violence among the Pakistani people (UN Women, 2020). This gap is what requires a systematic research into the influence of social media in the formation of the societal reaction against violence against women.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of social media in the fight against domestic violence against women through the lens of its impact on changing the perception, awareness, and advocacy. The study will aim to offer empirical data on the contribution of exposure to domestic-

violence-related content on social media to frame the issue as a societal concern and identify the challenges that could impede its usefulness as an effective tool to promote constructive social change by applying a quantitative research approach.

Problem statement

Domestic violence against women remains a widespread but under-represented social problem, especially in the societies where cultural norms, stigmatization, and fear of retaliation inhibit the victims to report (Walby, 2009; UN Women, 2021). Violence is usually presented as a domestic or personal issue and not a societal one in most of the contexts that restricts the discourse on the subject and undermines the effectiveness of the institutional response and solidifies silence on the issue (Heise et al., 2002; Gill, 2016). Consequently, the lack of awareness, social toleration of harmful norms, and insufficient advocacy continues to restrict the attempts to tackle the problem of domestic violence.

Social media platforms are now powerful tools of awareness creation, voice amplification, and social interaction on gender-based violence issues due to the emergence of digital media (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Castells, 2015). Advocacy campaigns, emotionally-charged stories, and the sheer fast dissemination of user created content have helped social media rebrand domestic violence as a societal problem as opposed to a personal issue (Mendes et al., 2018; Banet-Weiser, 2018). Theoretically, this shift is optional in terms of agenda-setting processes, as repeated media exposure makes audiences think an issue becomes more important (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 2004), and in terms of the dynamics of affective publics, where emotional involvement triggers the participation and the collective awareness (Papacharissi, 2015; Ahmed, 2004).

Nevertheless, regardless of such developments, there is a large gap in the knowledge about the practical effects of social media exposure on the community perceptions and reactions towards domestic violence. Although digital platforms can contribute to awareness and advocacy, there is a

gap in evidence as to whether exposure to information related to domestic violence can make any difference in how people understand the problem, define it as a social one, and other strategies to preventive or legal intervention (Tufekci, 2017; Fuchs, 2017). Besides, social media can be ineffective in promoting social change due to challenges like misinformation, narratives of victim-blaming and superficial engagement (Jane, 2014; Gill and Orgad, 2018).

With domestic violence being deeply ingrained in the socio-cultural framework of Pakistan and mostly underreported, the contributions of social media are especially important (Khan and Awan, 2011; Niaz, 2013). Despite the growing use of digital platforms to raise awareness and advocate, the existing empirical studies on how exposure to social media affects awareness, framing the issue by the public, and intervention support are still scarce (UN Women, 2020).

Hence, the key issue that will be tackled in the paper is to investigate how exposure to social-media-based content on domestic violence influences awareness, how societal framing of the problem as a societal concern, and how supportive of preventive and legal intervention among social-media users. The study aims to address the gap between digital discourse and its possible social impact by concentrating on this relationship.

Rationale

This research is informed by the recent scholarly concern with the need to comprehend the effects of digital media spaces on citizen attitudes towards social problems, especially gender-based violence. Although the role of social media in activism and engagement with the audience has been discussed in the existing body of literature, the literature has lacked incorporation of other theories like agenda-setting and affective publics in analyzing the discourse of domestic violence in the online sphere (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Papacharissi, 2015). The combination of these theoretical considerations with empirical analysis allows one to,

Objectives

1. To investigate how social media can be used to create awareness on domestic violence against women.
2. To evaluate the effect of being exposed to domestic-violence-related content on social media on how people perceive the problem.
3. To examine the correlation between social media exposure and support of legal, preventive and social interventions against domestic violence.
4. To assess the advantages and the weakness of the use of social media as an advocacy tool against domestic violence against women.

Literature review**1. Domestic Violence Against Women as a Social and Communication Issue**

Domestic violence of women is a well-known human rights concern worldwide that is rooted in the patriarchal social organization, which legitimizes gender inequality and silences victims (Walby, 2009; World Health Organization, 2013). According to scholars, this kind of violence has not just a personal aspect but a systemic problem that has been supported with cultural beliefs, gaps in the institution and social mindsets (Heise et al., 2002; McPhail, 2009). Feminist viewpoints also emphasize the way in which power relations and gendered hierarchies determine the incidence of violence and the ways the society reacts to it (Gill, 2016; Fraser, 1990). Communicatively, another form of influence on domestic violence is the discussion and/or lack of discussion of the same in the context of the general discourse. In the past, underreporting contributed to the stigmatization of the issue, its low visibility, and as a result, its marginalization (Niaz, 2013; UN Women, 2021). Lack of open dialogue upholds silence, and the prevailing narratives tend to blame the victims, deterring reporting and seeking assistance practices (Jane, 2014; Kelly, 1988). Therefore, domestic violence is not merely a social issue but also a communication problem that is influenced by discourse, representation and visibility.

2. Media and Agenda-Setting of Gender Violence

The mass media has always been playing a vital role in the formation of social awareness and perception of the social problems in the process of agenda setting. The agenda setting theory explains that the riseness of issues covered by media and the number of times such coverage occurs determine the significance that the audiences put on particular issues (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 2004). Traditional media have traditionally covered gender-based violence in limited and in many cases problematic ways, even strengthening stereotypes or minimizing abuse (Gill, 2016). Nevertheless, it is also possible to use the media to recontextualize domestic violence as a social and political issue by putting it in the context of the larger social and political structure. The notion of the public sphere states that the media discourse can be used in the collective debate and awareness but access to the public sphere is not even (Fraser, 1990). Emotional narratives and storytelling have recently come to the forefront of audience response to such issues, which also fits the concept of affective publics since emotions are increasingly important in the formation of the public (Papacharissi, 2015; Ahmed, 2004). Therefore, media not only educates, but also shapes and predisposes the popular perception of domestic violence.

3. Social Media and Digital Activism

The advent of social media has altered the nature of communication by facilitating decentralized, participatory and networked communication (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; van Dijck, 2013). In contrast to traditional media, social media enable people to produce, distribute, and broadcast content, thus transforming power relations in public speech (Castells, 2010). Digital activism, especially in the case of the #MeToo movement, shows how social media can support masses action and disrupt the mainstream discourse on gender-based violence (Mendes et al., 2018). Connective action is the concept used to describe how sharing of personalized content facilitates the mobilization at the large scale without the

need to have formal organizational structures (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012). Correspondingly, media content has the benefit of spreadability, which increases its reach and influence, which means that a message can spread quickly through networks (Jenkins et al., 2013). These trends imply that social media can give sister voices, create awareness, and recast domestic violence as a social problem. The degree to which this kind of digital interaction can be translated into any kind of attitudinal or behavioral change is controversial, however.

4. Opportunities and Limitations of Social Media Advocacy

As much as social media has provided new avenues in terms of awareness and advocacy, there are major limitations that are associated with it. On the one hand, online channels allow them to be seen, become united, and spread information faster, which leads to the creation of affective publics and mobilization around common emotions and experiences (Papacharissi, 2016; Banet-Weiser, 2018). Antiviolence against women campaigns have shown how social media can positively impact the conversation and break the silence. However, other dangerous narratives, such as victim-blaming, online harassment, and misinformation, can be reinforced on the same platforms (Jane, 2014; Gill and Orgad, 2018). It is reported that online abuse is often encountered by women and this can potentially deter engagement and the potential of digital advocacy (Plan International, 2020). Additionally, the online form of engagement is performative in nature, which can be characterized as shallow or symbolic, which is why it is difficult to state whether awareness causes any change in social or institutional aspects (Fuchs, 2017; Tufekci, 2017).

Therefore, the social media is a two-sided arena because it allows advocacy but at the same time it recreates the status quo of power disparities and discursive threats.

5. Research Gap in Pakistan

Domestic violence is a highly entrenched problem in Pakistan that is affected by socio-

cultural beliefs, legal constraints, and social silence (Khan and Awan, 2011; Niaz, 2013). Although the availability of digital technologies and the use of social media to create awareness campaigns are on the rise, there is a lack of research studies that analyze the intersection of social media and domestic violence discourse. The current literature mostly addresses the commonality of violence or legal provisions, and not much is done regarding the influence of digital media concerning perceptions and attitudes of the citizens (UN Women, 2020). Moreover, empirical studies that have incorporated communication theories like the agenda-setting and affective publics in Pakistani context are lacking. This gap suggests that a specific research on how exposure to the content related to domestic violence on social media impacts on awareness, social framing, and the support of interventions is warranted. Not only will filling this divide aid in the academic discourse but also offer policy-specific information that can be utilized by media practitioners, policymakers, and advocacy communities.

Theoretical framework

The primary theoretical foundation of this research is the Agenda-Setting Theory, which is backed by the affective publics and networked-empowerment concepts, to understand how exposure to domestic-violence-related materials on social media result in the growth of awareness, public framing, and support of interventions.

The Agenda-Setting Theory is a theory that was first introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and refined by McCombs (2004) and states that media does not instruct people on what to think but what to think about. According to the theory, the more the issues are repeated the more salient they become in the mind of the audience. Considering the framework of this paper, social media platforms can be identified as agenda-setting agents since they present content on domestic violence against women repeatedly. The effect of such recurrent exposure helps raise the awareness and change the conception of domestic violence as a personal problem to a wider social

one. Therefore, the impact of exposure on domestic-violence-related content (independent variable) on the processes of agenda-setting is anticipated to affect awareness and public framing (dependent cognitive outcomes).

Nevertheless, in contrast to the conventional media, social media is participatory and interactive in its nature so that not only passive receivers but active providers of the content circulation are the users. The idea of affective publics, according to which emotions like empathy, anger, solidarity, and others are expressed and shared online, influencing the collective engagement, can be applied to understand this dynamic better (Papacharissi, 2015; Ahmed, 2004). Affective publics, in this study, contribute to the explanation of how emotionally evoking content associated with domestic violence may stimulate the users to interact with the content, share it, and comment on it, which make the awareness stronger and shapes the attitude towards the problem. Emotional involvement is therefore a tool that enhances agenda-setting influence of social media.

Moreover, the notion of networked empowerment gives an extra bit of understanding of how social media makes it easy to take action and advocate together. Castells (2010) and Bennett and Segerberg (2012) believe that the use of digital platforms facilitates decentralized communication networks that enable people to mobilize, share information and engage in social causes without organizational structures. Networked communication can be used in the situation of domestic violence whereby the survivors, activists and the general population will be involved in advocacy and creating awareness. Nevertheless, such networked action can increase visibility and discourse, but does not imply an institutional or structural change, as was emphasized in literature about digital activism (Tufekci, 2017; Fuchs, 2017).

The combination of these views leads the study to suggest that the salience of the issue (agenda-setting), emotion engagement (affective publics), and networked interaction (networked empowerment) are enhanced by exposure to

content on social media that is related to domestic violence. But the degree to which these processes can be reduced into a significant support of preventive and legal interventions is a question of empirics.

Thus, this theoretical framework frames the connection in the following way exposure to a domestic-violence-associated content on social media can have an impact on awareness and public framing mediated by agenda-setting processes, whereas emotional response and networked communication can support the latter and condition users to support the intervention. It is through this combined method that a systematic framework of studying the role of digital talk in the empowerment and constriction of social media in responding to domestic violence of women can be studied.

Research Questions

According to the aims of the research, and according to the theoretical framework that will be applied, the following research questions will be derived to investigate how social media can influence awareness, perception, and support towards domestic violence against women:

1. **What is the effect of social-media exposure to the content related to domestic violence on awareness of the fact among users?**
2. **What is the impact of social media exposure on influencing the way society views domestic violence as a social issue and not a personal one?**
3. **How do social media exposure, and support of preventive and legal measures against domestic violence differ between users?**
4. **What do social media users feel are the strengths and weaknesses of using social media as a means of advocacy against domestic violence?**

Hypotheses

H1: The level of awareness about domestic violence among social media users is positively correlated with exposure to content related to domestic violence.

H2: The exposure to social media has a positive effect on the perception of domestic violence as a social issue versus a personal issue.

H3: Exposure to social-media-based domestic-violence-related content has a positive relationship with the support of legal, preventive, and social interventions to domestic violence.

H4: There is a greater user engagement and sensitivity to the issue with increased exposure to emotionally engaging content related to domestic violence.

H5: The users feel that social media is an efficient tool of creating awareness and advocacy in combating domestic violence.

H6: The users experience social media as a limited tool that includes the falsehoods, victim-blaming, and no real-life effect when it comes to tackling domestic violence.

Methodology

The research design used in this study is quantitative, cross-sectional survey study to investigate how social media can influence awareness, perception and support of interventions on domestic violence against women. Quantitative approach best suits identifying patterns, measures of responses, description of relationships among variables in a given population.

Research Design

The research is based on the cross-sectional research design, in accordance with which the data of respondents was gathered at one point in time. This is an appropriate design in order to study perceptions, attitudes, and levels of awareness among social media users about domestic violence especially in a restricted time and resource context.

Target and Accessible Population

The study population is active social media users because they are the ones who will be directly exposed to online information about domestic violence and the online advocacy. The population that can be used is university students and young people in Pakistan, with a high population living in Multan, who use social networks, including Facebook, Instagram,

Twitter, and Tik Tok. This population is chosen because of its significant rates of online interactions and being exposed to online discussions (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; van Dijck, 2013).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This study was chosen by selecting 100 respondents.

The research adopts non-probability convenience sampling method since the respondents were chosen on the basis of availability and readiness to engage. Even though probability sampling is more robust in terms of generalizability, convenience sampling is more generally applied in exploratory and descriptive research where the sampling frame is constrained.

Sample Characteristics

The target population of the study is the young adult social media users, whose age is between 18-30 years, which is a digitally active group in society. Male and female respondents were involved in order to gain a wide range of views on domestic violence awareness and advocacy.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to gather the data, which was based on the study objectives, research questions and theoretical framework.

The questionnaire was divided into the following parts:

- Demographic Information (Age, gender, education level, social media use).
- Social Media Exposure (Frequency and type of exposure to domestic-violence-related content) Measurement Level: Awareness (Knowledge about domestic violence as a social problem)
- Perception and Framing (Perceptions on whether domestic violence is a personal or social problem)
- Interventions (Attitudes toward legal, preventive, and social actions) Support.

- Perceived Strengths and weaknesses (Effectiveness and challenges of social media advocacy)

The scale of attitudes and perceptions was mostly determined by the Likert scale (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Operational Definitions of Key Variables

- **Social Media Exposure:** How often they experience domestic-violence-related material on social media
- **Awareness:** Level of awareness of domestic violence as a social problem
- **Public Perception:** The question of whether domestic violence is perceived by the respondents as a personal or a social issue.
- **Support for Interventions:** Readiness to back legal, preventative and social measures.
- **Perceived Effectiveness:** How the respondents rate the use of social media as an advocacy tool.

Pilot Testing and Reliability

To verify the clarity, relevance and consistency of the questionnaire items, a pilot test was done on a small sample of the respondents. Internal consistency was measured (e.g., Cronbach Alpha), in order to make sure that results of the instrument were stable and consistent.

Data Analysis Technique

The data collected was analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics. This analysis aimed to find trends and relationships as opposed to finding causation.

Ethical Considerations

The research followed the ethical standards of research:

- The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents.
- This was done anonymously and confidentially.
- Sensitive nature of the topic (domestic violence) was addressed sensitively.
- These considerations are especially essential when dealing with gender-based violence (UN Women, 2020).

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to the study:

- Use of convenience sampling limits generalizability
- The sample size (n=100) is quite small
- The results were founded on self-reported findings. Descriptive analysis: Utilization of descriptive analysis undermines causal interpretation.
- Research is restricted to a particular geographic and demographic area

Methodological Justification

The methodology selected is appropriate to conduct the study, which is exploratory, and the study aims to understand the relationship between social media exposure and awareness, perception, and advocacy patterns. Although the study lacks the use of inferential statistical test, it gives important descriptive information on the role and constraints of using social media in combating domestic violence in Pakistani context.

Table and analysis**Table 4.1**

Comparison of Low and High Exposure Groups on Awareness, Perception, Support, and Perceived Role of Social Media

Variable	Low Exposure (%)	High Exposure (%)
Awareness of Domestic Violence as a Social Issue	58%	82%
Perception of Domestic Violence as a Societal Problem	52%	79%
Support for Legal and Preventive Interventions	60%	85%
Perceived Responsibility of Institutions (Media/Government/NGOs)	55%	76%
Perceived Strengths of Social Media (Awareness & Advocacy)	62%	88%
Perceived Limitations of Social Media (Misinformation, Superficial Engagement)	48%	71%

Low exposure means those respondents who were frequent users of social media and had rare or occasional exposure to domestic-violence-related content.

High exposure is that of the respondents who indicated that they were exposed to such content frequently or regularly. The table provides a comparison of low and high exposure of the respondents to the content related to domestic violence on social media on the major variables.

The findings indicate that respondents with higher exposure were more likely to report greater awareness about domestic violence as a societal problem (82% as opposed to lowly exposed respondents (58%). Likewise, a greater percentage of the people in the high-exposure group felt domestic violence to be a societal issue, and not an individual issue (79) than the people in the low-exposure group (52). Regarding the level of support of interventions, respondents who were more exposed were more likely to support legal and preventive interventions (85% versus 60%). This indicates that the higher the exposure, the higher the backing towards taking action against domestic violence.

On the perceived responsibility, the institutions that respondents in the high-exposure group found to be accountable (76 percent) when those in the low-exposure group did not (55 percent).

The findings also reveal variations in the perceptions of respondents towards social media as a platform of advocacy. More of the high-exposure respondents identified the strong features of social media in increasing awareness and advocacy (88%), than the low-exposure respondents (62%).

Meanwhile, more exposed respondents also admitted to the social media limitations such as misinformation and superficial interaction (71%), in comparison with less exposed respondents (48%). Comprehensively, the results indicate that individuals who are more exposed to domestic-violence-related content on social media are more likely to report high awareness, their understanding of the problem as a societal issue, and support interventions, and also become aware of both the advantages and the disadvantages of social media as an advocacy instrument.

Results

The research report demonstrates descriptive statistics utilizing feedback of 100 social media users on their experience receiving domestic-violence-related information and pertinent beliefs. The findings suggest that the more the respondents were exposed to content related to domestic-violence, the more they were likely to report having more awareness about the issue as a social problem. The fact that a larger percentage

of these respondents viewed domestic violence, as a societal, not a personal issue also reflects this. Regarding behavioral orientation, more exposed respondents would state their support of legal and preventive and social intervention against domestic violence. Also, this group exhibited a better intention to identify the role of institutions, including media, government, and non-governmental organizations in solving the problem. The results also indicate that the respondents by and large recognized the advantages of social media as a platform of awareness and advocacy. Nevertheless, restrictions, such as misinformation, victim-blaming narratives, and the absence of real-life effects were also reported by many respondents. In general, the findings indicate that there are some noticeable differences in the level of awareness, perception, and support between low-exposure and high-exposure groups.

Discussion

The results of the research could be explained by the Agenda-Setting Theory that supposes that the repetition of the exposure to certain issues enhances their salience in the audiences (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 2004). Respondents who had increased exposure to material on domestic-violence-related content were more likely to report an increased awareness level and viewed the problem as a societal issue in this study, which bodes well to the applicability of agenda-setting processes in digitized media contexts.

The findings are also related to the idea of affective publics, or emotionally appealing content stimulating the participation and the engagement (Papacharissi, 2015; Ahmed, 2004). The increased awareness and sensitivity among respondents in the higher exposure group can be attributed to the emotional involvement with the content that is communicated in the social media platforms.

Furthermore, the findings reflect aspects of networked empowerment, where social media In addition, the results are indicative of networked empowerment, in which the social media helps in raising awareness and advocacy by decentralized

communication (Castells, 2010; Bennett and Segerberg, 2012). The respondents acknowledged the impact of social media in helping the voices to be heard and the awareness campaigns. Nonetheless, in line with other studies, the research also identifies the constraints of social media advocacy such as misinformation, superficial involvement, and the disconnect between feelings of awareness in the online world and actions in the real one (Fuchs, 2017; Tufekci, 2017; Jane, 2014). This solidifies the notion that as much as social media helps bring awareness, its capacity to alter or bring structural or institutional change is also weak. Notably, the findings cannot be understood as causal but as associative because the research is based on descriptive statistics analysis.

Conclusion

This paper discussed how social media exposure can influence awareness, perception, and approval of interventions involving domestic violence of women. The results show that the more a respondent was exposed to material related to domestic violence the more likely they were to show greater awareness, the more the problem was seen as a societal issue and the more the respondent supported preventive and legal intervention. Concurrently, the respondents recognized the advantages and drawbacks of social media as an advocacy instrument.

The research adds to the knowledge of the impact of digital media spaces on social issue participation by people. It points out that as much as social media has a significant role to play regarding the creation of awareness, its effect on long-term behavioral and institutional change is doubtful. Social media offers a valuable yet flawed means of awareness and advocacy in the Pakistani context where domestic violence has frequently been underreported and has been a socially delicate topic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Awareness Campaigns

The media houses and advocacy organizations ought to come up with specific digital campaigns to increase awareness on domestic violence, using catchy culturally aware content.

2. Promoting Responsible Content

There should also be efforts to alleviate misinformation and victim-blaming stories through encouragement of ethical content standards in social media.

3. Integrating Online and Offline Action

The advocacy activities should be aimed at addressing the disconnect between online and real-life action, such as legal awareness and support services.

4. Institutional Collaboration

The media, NGOs, and government agencies must join hands in formulating coordinated communication efforts in dealing with domestic violence.

5. Digital Literacy Programs

Supportive programs on critical media literacy, to empower users to recognize false information and act responsibly, should be implemented.

6. Future Research

Inferential statistical methods and larger and more diverse samples should be used in future research to test causal relationships and increase the generalizability.

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