

Insults Against Women in Telegram

(Empirical Study based on the Theory of Neutralization Techniques)

Ehsan Salimi^{a*}, Aylar Mohammadi^b, Neda Shiri^c

^a Assistant Professor, dept. of Humanities, University of Maragheh, Maragheh, Iran, e.salimi@maragheh.ac.ir

^b Bachelor of Law, dept. of Humanities, University of Maragheh, Maragheh, Iran; aylarmohammadi2030@gmail.com^b, neda.sh421@gmail.com^c

ABSTRACT

Among the common crimes and deviations in virtual social networks, the crime of verbal abuse (insult) against women is the most prevalent and common. Some characteristics of social networks, such as the remoteness of communication, being virtual and intangible, the possibility of anonymity, are effective in explaining the high number of these crimes. These features give criminals the opportunity to excuse their actions with ease and lessen the twinge in their conscience. However, the main source of women's victimization should be found in the human interactions of cyber space and not its structure. Criminals sometimes justify their behavior by denying responsibility or denying injury and sometimes with the thought that the victim deserves the crime. This article tries to reveal the cause and manner of verbal abuse against women in Telegram social network. For this purpose, the analysis has been built upon the methods of a criminological theory known as the theory of "neutralization techniques". The data was collected through observation and indirect interview and the method used to analyze this data is descriptive-analytical. The findings of this research indicate that in the case of the slightest unusual behavior of a female user, she faces more and more severe reactions than in the same case for a man. Regarding their abusive behavior, they consider the virtual and intangible nature of the injuries or the guilt of the victim to be enough to neutralize their conscience.

Keywords—Neutralization techniques, Cyberbullying, Female victim, Telegram.

1. Introduction

In today's era, the emergence and unprecedented growth of new information and communication technologies have brought tremendous changes and great achievements in the direction of advancing human society towards the pinnacles of social progress. Undoubtedly, the main reason for the formation of the cyber world was to get rid of this terrestrial world, limitations and obstacles of that prevented mankind from achieving their ideal, which is a world without borders. However, this commendable achievement, along with its unique privileges, has also provided an endless range of deviant and criminal opportunities. This unguarded and abandoned space, which is increasing every moment, gives the perpetrators a very good opportunity to hide crimes which threats are many times higher compared to the real Phenomenological environment. studies of cyber victimization show that women are among the "most vulnerable groups" in cyberspace. Research show that, contrary to the insignificant participation of women in cybercrime, they have been allocated the largest share of "victimization". According to the comprehensive statistics published by the "Talash institute for the Prevention of Online Abuse" in 2000, "87%" in 2001, "79.3%" in 2002, "71%" in 2003, "70%" in 2004, "69%" were women. "This unequal ratio between men and women victims continued until 2010, so that in this year "73%" of victims were women and "27%" were men [1]". The consistently high proportion of female victims over the past ten years proves that women remain the most vulnerable targets of cybercrime. Based on

the findings of criminology, women commit crimes less than men; however, women's victimization accounts for a large percentage of the total victimization. The neglected component in the calculation of women's victimization is the dark figure of crime against women, which means the number of crimes that are unreported or undiscovered. Studies show that the dark figure of these crimes is much higher than the crime rate for male victims. The relationship between the offender and the victim, the preservation of honor and dignity, the fear of the offender's revenge, the fear of the criminal justice system and society's view of the criminal event are among the reasons that can be listed for the high number of dark figures.

In addition to the role of the dark figure in the rate of women's victimization, the vulnerability of women based on gender criteria should also be considered effective in this victimization. In other words, according to the available statistics, in addition to the fact that women are victimized more than men and the dark figure of female victimization is also much higher, the vulnerability of the female gender is greater than that of men. "From a psychological point of view, the "online tolerance threshold" is much lower in female victims than in male victims [2]". Victimization may overwhelm a woman with feelings of shame and self-loathing and lead her to take unpleasant actions. What adds to the severity of women's victimization is the "social reflection of victimization". "From another point of view, judgment and prejudice is one of the important elements of Iranian society

¹⁰ <u>http://dx.doi.org/10.22133/ijwr.2024.410754.1173</u>

Citation E. Salimi, A. Mohammadi, N. Shiri, "Insults Against Women in Telegram (Empirical Study based on the Theory of Neutralization Techniques)," International Journal of Web Research, vol.6, no.1, pp.69-75, 2023, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.22133/ijwr.2024.410754.1173.

*Coressponding Author

Copyright © 2022 University of Science and Culture. Published by University of Science and Culture. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/). Noncommercial uses of the work are permitted, provided the original work is properly cited.

Article History: Received: 23 May 2023; Revised: 21 June 2023; Accepted: 8 July 2023.



and Iranians quickly reach a general assessment about the person carrying those behaviors based on symbols and behaviors [3]". From the point of view of the majority of societies, men being seen as a victim is easily justified and makes the victim drown in the love and comfort of those around them, but at least in some cases, not only women are not treated like this, but society also blames the victim as much as the criminal. "According to the democratic culture ruling the society, these evaluations are more in the field of symbols and behaviors in the field of women; As a result, over time, women understand the severity and importance of negative evaluations by society and others [3]". Although many researchers have mentioned the generalization of harassing behavior against women in social networks, they have pointed out that "the most female users, especially teenagers, are unable to exploit and use virtual networks without engaging in this kind of harassment [4]". Also, "according to the available statistics, among cybercrimes, insults and cyber harassment are the most prevalent [5]". In this regard, this research tries to discuss the etiology of verbal abuse against women.

2. Research Background

The researchers conducted in Iran in the field of etiology of women's victimization in cyberspace are very few and insufficient. What justifies the necessity of research and not being limited to translation research literature in this field; First, the dynamic of cybercrime requires up-to-date research and more importantly, translation and adaptation researches are not effective due to fundamental differences with the socio-cultural foundations of our country, because cyber victimization of women, in most western societies, is less ugly than victimization in Iranian society. In this way, in the field of the present subject, few researches can be introduced as relevant background; in a field study entitled "Daily Cyber Activities"; "Experimental investigation of Internet lifestyle" was put on the agenda of victimization of users regardless of their gender. The results of this study are as follows: first; People who do not take their online lifestyle seriously are more likely to be victims of cybercrime. Secondly; the results show that some lifestyle patterns are directly related to cyber victimization. Thirdly, the results of this research show that the existence of computer security is the most important element protecting a person against cybercrimes. The same results were presented by McCode (2006), who stated that "the theory of everyday activities has important implications for the understanding and prevention of computer and other IT tools and information systems crimes." Darbandi Farahani (2013) in a research titled "victimology approach to cybercrimes", has explored the related theories of victimization and cybercrimes. The mentioned research tries to generalize the findings of criminology to cybercrimes without verifying them. This research considers various issues involved in the victimization of a user and introduces some of the causes depending on the user's performance and interactions. Aboozari (2016) in a research entitled criminology of cybercrimes, has discussed the etiology of cybercrimes through several criminological theories. All of these theories try to analyze the etiology of cybercrime from various angles. Some of these theories have studied the subject from biological, psychological, moral and social perspectives. In this research, under the topic of rational theories, a brief review of victimization theories has been made, but this research, in addition to being brief, has not evaluated the criminological approaches to victimization of Iranian users. Zarrokh (2009) in a general research entitled "cyber victimology", by proposing two theories of victimization, he tried to explain the cognitive etiology of cyber victimization and the role of the victim in the occurrence of cyber victimization.

3. Typology of violence against women in social networks

Women in social networks are victimized in different ways by abusers who can be one person or even a group of people. The type of victimization varies depending on various factors, such as ideologies, marital status, profession and professional responsibilities, permanent participation in some selected groups, language or popularity in a specific group. Indicators such as age, social class and education can play a key role in reducing or increasing the risk of cyber victimization of women [9]. Women who do not have a job spend more time in the virtual space and this purposeless presence and virtual roaming provides the basis for their victimization. These crimes can be sexual or non-sexual in nature. Specifically, gender-based cyber violence includes online hate speech, trolling, cyber harassment, cyber stalking, sharing content without consent, hacking, identity theft and impersonation, spamming, malicious threats and photo harassment and gender discriminatory posts and sexual abuse is based on the image. In fact, cyber violence in the general sense as an offense against the spiritual personality, a general term for any deliberate and deliberate action against the dignity and credibility and peace of a woman with The following are examples of the most important and common types of cyber violence against women:

3.1. Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is intentional and aggressive behavior online with the intention of harming someone who cannot easily defend themselves be random, aggression (the behavior of the attacker must be accompanied by violence), imbalance of power (the aforementioned behavior applies force unilaterally and non-confrontationally to the target {the victim}) and repetition (the behavior is performed more than once).

3.2. Cyber stalking

Cyber stalking refers to a situation where a female user is secretly stalked in all the groups she has joined and her friends' pages are constantly monitored in hopes of seeing her posts, her personal writings and her online activity. Harmful stalking involves threatening the victim with dishonor and creates deep fear in the victim.

3.3. Indirect threat

Indirect threat is a form of cyber bullying that is also related to cyber stalking and is a threatening online communication based on the imminence of physical harm. Unlike cyberstalking, indirect threats involve a single threat of physical harm that is indirectly disseminated in the online public domain.

3.4. Written cyberbullying

Written cyberbullying is the repeated sending of insulting messages to the victim. Compared to verbal bullying,



cyberbullying has a deeper and longer impact on the victim. The perpetrators are usually related to aspects that the person cannot change. (Such as skin color, physical appearance, religion and ethnicity) attack the victim.

A type of harassment is sexual harassment, which is defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission as "any unwanted sexual behavior that causes a person to feel insulted, humiliated or intimidated". This phenomenon is increasing strongly in recent years. According to research conducted by the Pew Research Center, 25 percent of American women between the ages of 18 and 24 have been the target of online sexual harassment at some point in time. The study also shows that about 28 percent of the time, victims of online harassment find the experience very distressing.

3.5. Slander

Slander may include making an unpleasant comment about the victim to others. This behavior occurs in several ways; the said behavior may be done through the use of words or the publication of a sexual or non-sexual image unpleasant to the victim's significant other.

3.6. Humiliating beating

Humiliating assault consists of filming a physical attack on the victim and then publishing it for the public humiliation of the victim. It is actually a combination of crime and violence in which the victim is first attacked and then the attack was filmed with a mobile phone camera. Attackers often share videos with mutual friends.

3.7. Blocking

Blocking is the deliberate denial of the victim from entering online sections such as a specific chat room or a discussion group by the members of those online domains, in other words, in a group or population that requires permission. It is made for people to express their personal opinions and generally in a group or population where they often have something in common in terms of gender, religion, belief, etc., the members of the group may ban a certain person by banning him because of his opinions or status. Especially if they make a victim.

3.8. Sneaky information dump

Cunning information dumping is a set of actions that lead the victim to disclose information so that it can be published later by the perpetrator in order to humiliate the victim. It is seen that first in the form of friendship and intimacy, his secrets fall into the hands of the perpetrator and then these secrets are abused.

3.9. Defamatory impersonation

Another type of violence is defamatory impersonation; in which the perpetrator often enters the victim's page on the social network by hacking encryption systems instead of the victim.

4. Criminological analysis of online social networks

The occurrence of criminal behavior in cyberspace and especially in social networks by people who do not show

such behavior in the outside world is a strange issue and without a doubt, the clue to this problem should be found in the environment where the behavior occurs, in the structure of virtual space and not in the users of these networks because the users of virtual space are the same people in real environments and the only variable in this equation is the environment in which the behavior occurs. Some researchers [6] have introduced the interactivity of virtual space, the digital nature of this space and the non-centrality of that as the causes of abnormalities in virtual space. According to them, being interactive and involved in two-way relationships makes it possible for the user to be more easily influenced by the other person and therefore, it is easier to be on the path of different behaviors. The digital nature of relationships in cyberspace has provided the possibility of copying and distorting data in the best way possible. This feature has also made it possible for immoral and obscene content to be easily reproduced. "In addition to these cases, the decentralization of virtual space can partially or completely neutralize the role of traditional controllers [6]". In addition to these general characteristics of cyberspace, in particular, social networks also have characteristics and coordinates that are effective in forming a platform for harassment and crime. The density of like-minded people in groups and communities of social networks is unique. Counting and observing the effort of this dense population that uploads content around the topic of the group increases the activity of a user who has shown interest in that topic by joining the group. If the group is active around criminal activities or harassment, the support of each user will encourage them to show more criminal behavior. In social networks, groups of people with whom a person has connected with each of them through a specific aspect introduced to his other friends. In this way, each person's friends can get to know each other's friends. This situation causes that sometimes a person's friends observe behaviors from him that they did not know from him before, in this way, the regulation of the level of the relationship is out of the person's hands, so Inevitably, gradually his intimacy and closeness with all his friends reaches almost the same level and this situation sometimes leads to unwanted intimacy, which results in the victimization of a user. The distinctive structural feature of these networks compared to other environments in the virtual space is the possibility of connection and maintaining a relationship and interaction even though the other contact is not satisfied; something that is not possible in chat rooms or websites, because in chat rooms the contact changes continuously and due to his unwillingness to continue communication, no fixed address is available for the next communication from him and on websites, communication is one-way, but in social networks, having a person's ID or his phone number makes it possible to communicate repeatedly; even after being blocked by contact, you can reconnect him with another ID. Meanwhile, the communication components of social networks should not be underestimated in the event of norm-breaking, harassment and crime. These components are better defined by comparing the differences between people's relationships and interactions with each other in the social network environment and the real environment. Relationships on social networks are face-to-face and tangible and therefore the possibility of anonymity or identity change is very low and only possible with tools such as masks, make-up, distortions in identity documents, etc. On social networks, the



principle is facelessness and anonymity of the identity of the contact, unless the user has prior knowledge of the identity of the contact. "The anonymity and cover that the space provides to some users makes intruders and threats feel that they are completely safe and insist on continuing their criminal behavior [7]". An interesting point is that, unlike the relationships between people in real space, where a person expresses his inner behaviors and states and leaves it to the contactor to judge him, in virtual relationships on social networks, the same person portrays the other person. In this way, self-imagery can be done using a manipulated photo, writing a biography and listing important interests and concerns. This is why the possibility of creating a false personality in virtual space is much higher than in real space. Also, relationships in cyberspace are hidden in zeros and ones and therefore the possibility of revealing a relationship to significant others such as parents, spouses, etc. are much lower. There are very few limits to a relationship in social networks, a person can press the key to build a relationship with a contact that is not of the same age and gender at any time and in almost any place, while in the real world, the possibility of interaction, especially with an unknown person, is much more limited. Also, the age and gender of the contacts are considered as limiting factors in a relationship. People, due to their anonymity on social networks and in order to find similar sympathizers, reveal their innermost statses quickly and as much as possible. As far as possible, by analyzing the content that a person uploads into the group, the conscious and unconscious minds of that person can be psychoanalyzed. Due to this self-disclosure, the process and speed of development of a relationship on social networks can be described as explosive compared to the real world. Table 1 compass the differences between relationships in real space and relationships in social networks.

 Table 1. Comparing the difference between relationships in real space and social network

Relations in social networks	Relations in real space	Comparing the difference between relationships in real space and social network
Online and remote	Face to face and tangible	Relationship distance
High	Low	Possibility of anonymity
High	Low	Possibility of false personification
Low	High	Possibility of revealing the relations to significant others
Low limitation	Limitation in time and place/limitation in the gender and age of the contact	Relationship limitations
High	Low	Self-disclosure
Fast and dynamic	Gradual, steady and low fluctuation	Speed of change transform (intimacy or hatred)
Often short-lived	Often long-lasting	Relationship continuity

5. Theoretical basis, theory of neutralization techniques

The theoretical basis of the current research is a theory called neutralization techniques that Matza and Sykes postulated in 1957. In expanding his theory, Matza says that the criminal is a normal person in society and is not very different from other people. "He points out that criminals usually conform to certain traditions and special values of society and avoid some of them [8]". Wisdom-based theories include the theory of neutralization techniques, the theory of social relations and the theory of rational choice. In the knowledge of criminology, the theory of neutralization techniques is placed under wisdom-oriented theories. These theories have their own foundations. In wisdom-oriented theories, the criminal is a selector, calculating, social and active person. "In the view of supporters of rational theories, the criminal is not a victim of economic or social determinism; on the contrary, he is an agent or subject who chooses a strategy [9]". With this interpretation, the criminal follows the similar rules to those of conventional social behavior. The criminal knows why he commits a certain act and how he should do it. Having chosen to commit a crime and changing his strategy based on possible obstacles, he accepts a criminal identity for himself. This approach is contrary to most criminological theories, which introduce the criminal as a different entity from society and emphasize to how criminals are distinguished from the rest of the noncriminal population in response to the mentioned situations. In the meantime, people like Matza and Sykes propose a theory against the prevailing trend with the theory of "neutralization techniques".

Some of the foundations and components of this view include the following: criminals are ordinary people; criminals also have a conscience and an inner feeling of remorse; and criminals believe in the sanctity of some values. "A person can violate social norms while believing in them [10]". Almost, "most of the people engage in criminal, antisocial, or deviant behavior at some point in their lives [11]". "Adults occasionally take on delinquent roles but do not become permanent lawbreakers. They move in and out of delinquency but don't take it as a permanent role [8]". Learning delinquency is associated with learning ways to neutralize internal and external social controls. What Matza means by neutralization, is neutralization of rationality or neutralization of conscience. Matza's theory is applicable to various crimes and the adaptation of this theory to the process of committing cybercrimes against women is completely applicable.

Most of the presuppositions of this theory regarding crimes against women on social networks have also been achieved and it is clear that there is a capacity to apply this theory to cybercrimes. For example, parameters such as Based on the neutralization techniques proposed by Matza and Sykes (1957), it is possible to identify characteristics of the online environment that are available to people engage in deviant behaviors while maintaining their positive appearance. The characteristics of the online environment, such as remoteness, anonymity, facelessness, intangibility of the damage and unrepentant criminals, make it acceptable and easy to adapt Matza's theory of neutralization techniques to cybercrimes against women. For more explanation, the features of cyberspace help the criminal in using neutralization techniques, as it can be claimed that the



cybercriminal can take steps in persuading his conscience and neutralizing his reasoning power much more easily and it is more possible for him to use some of these techniques. Matza emphasizes several main methods, such as "denial of responsibility", "denial of injury" and "denial of the victim" to neutralize the conscience. "Whenever the delinquent can introduce himself as an irresponsible person for deviant actions, the effectiveness of social disapproval as a deterrent to deviant behavior is greatly reduced [10]". "In order to deny responsibility, the criminal tells himself that he had to commit the crime [9]". "He convinces himself that his action was not intentional and he did not intend to achieve this result [8]". The second main method of neutralization focuses on the harm caused by the offender's act. The wrongdoing and guilt of the offender may begin with the question of whether someone has been harmed by his wrongdoing or not. Also, the denial of damage or harm may occur by distorting the truth of the committed act; for example, car theft considered as a loan with the intention of restitution. In this theory, the victim's denial can be done in two ways by the offender [10], sometimes the offender talks about the "deservingness of the victim" and sometimes he defends the "being victimless" of his action. When the criminal considers the victim deserved the crime with sentences like "He deserves such action!" or "He has forgotten his limits! I will fix him!" He tries to convince himself. When the perpetrator denies the existence of a victim, he says "my work does not hurt anyone! no one is a victim of this action! This is not a criminal act and there will be no victims!"

"Normality of the criminal", "generality of the crime", "entry and exit of ordinary people into crimes" and "committing crimes while believing in norms and values" can be observed in the case of cybercrime and criminals; In this way, a cybercriminal is not an anti-social person in any way; on the contrary, most cybercriminals are reasonable and intelligent members of society. Many of those who commit crimes against women do it recreationally and do not have a criminal record. Many criminals who commit cybercrimes against women are aware that their actions are wrong.

6. Research Method

Since the topic of this research is related to the discussion of crime and criminality, it was feared that if questionnaires or direct interviews were used, the respondents would give untrue answers due to the fear of legal prosecution or the shame of making the wrong statement and etc., so the credibility of the collected data would be compromised. For this reason, this research relies on "participant observation" to collect data in order to obtain real information about the subject. "In this method, the researcher becomes a part of the group or statistical population and participates in the activities of the group in order to obtain the purest information [12]". In the participant observation method researcher join to the statistical population, because there are many communication links, the researcher can sift and select the data. Although this method is known as participant observation, its technique is not limited to observation and the researcher can use other methods during the research such as taking notes and asking direct and indirect questions. "They believe that this method is the best method to obtain information and data from deviant subcultures, complex organizations and unknown social movements [13]". In any

case, this method cannot fully guarantee that the obtained information is free of defects or concealing the truth, but it is a step in the direction of more validity and reliability of the research.

In this research, a group with 956member on Telegram social network with fun and entertainment content was analyzed for 28 days, by observing disturbing behaviors, the necessary data was extracted and studied. The reason for choosing a hobby group was that, unlike other groups that are formed around a specific goal or topic such as work or education, hobby groups are formed mostly to communicate and interact with each other and people spend more time socializing with others.

In the data collection method with the indirect interview, there was an implicit discussion about the issue with the people who had committed the verbal abuse of a woman and the contact's point of view was received during the discussion.

7. Research Findings

Only in the public environment of this group, about 112 cases of insults occurred with the fulfillment of all the conditions and elements of the crime. 81 cases of that were against female users and in 75 cases, the gender of the perpetrators of verbal abuse was male. Also, every message published by the women in this group was answered by an average of seven people, but for the messages published by men, this figure was reduced to 2 responses on average, which shows that users pay more attention and focus to the messages and contents published by women. In this regard, it was interesting to note that by publishing a similar news message once by a male user and republishing it by a female user, the number of responses to the message published in the second stage was about four times more than the first. Also, the publication of inconsistent content with the group's philosophy and topic by women and men was met with a different amount of reaction from other members and the number of reactions to women was about three times higher than the reactions to men. Also, in cases where a female user did an unconventional behavior, stronger reactions were shown against her; for example, when a female user wrote the phrase "Tonight we have Haleem", she was met with the sharpest reactions and sometimes insults by other members in the group. To measure and compare the reactions towards a male user on the 13th day of study, the author published the phrase "tonight we have eggplant curd" among the group members conversation, which only received a positive reaction with the phrase "bon appetit".

In many cases where the reason for being aggressive or insulting toward female users was questioned, the criminals denied their responsibility. The distance of communication in the online social networks and the criminal's invisibility make the criminal's justifications for denying responsibility much easier. The lack of prior knowledge between the contacts helps the criminal claim that the crime was not committed intentionally. A user wrote mockingly under a photo of a teenage girl, "It is another girl. You shouldn't expect more than that from girls!". When he was faced with the question of whether such a mistake could happen to a boy or even to himself, he replied, "I don't even know that woman; how could it be possible to insult her?" My word was just for fun!



and I should not be questioned so much because of this!", the ease of committing cybercrimes reduces the criminal's responsibility and helps him in the application of neutralization techniques. Due to the high ease of committing a crime, the temptation of a criminal to commit a crime increases and as a result of a highly motivated criminal's desire to commit a crime, the justifications before committing a crime become more unreasonable. In other words, when the criminal intends to commit a crime and uses any excuse to avoid responsibility, it should not be expected that the criminal's justifications are as acceptable as in other crimes. For example, a user who uploaded nude pictures of women on Telegram groups, he had claimed that his situation at the time of committing the crime was such that he felt forced to do that work. The intangibility of online crime damages is more effective in the occurrence of these crimes than is thought, "because of the intangible nature of the damage, in many cases of this type of crime, the criminal not only does not feel remorse but is also proud of his intelligence and ability to commit these criminal acts and It somehow gives him a sense of ability [2]"1. "In some cases of cyberbullying where the victim was a woman, the crime that happened caused the victim to commit suicide due to excessive pressure [14]". Interestingly, even the perpetrator of these crimes may not be aware of the extent of the damage or may not have the power to imagine the extent of the crime. Rationalizations like "It's just a word!" and "I didn't hurt anyone!", "No matter what the virtual speech is, it doesn't upset anyone!". Linguistic neutralization techniques are almost a byproduct of the intangible nature of the Internet. "The virtuality and intangible nature of cyberspace create the impression that the relationships do not follow real moral rules [13]". In this theory, the victim's denial can be done in two ways by the offender, sometimes the offender talks about the "deservingness of the victim" and sometimes he defends the "being victimless" of his action. Perpetrators of cybercrimes, especially in online social networks where the relationships are live and dynamic between users, with justifications such as: "A feminist deserves every trouble that comes to her!" "Women who do not respect themselves should not expect anyone to respect them!", "I'll fix her!" deal with neutralization techniques. "Such people react to the group of women with some kind of hostile gender mental prejudices. Verbal abuse by a group of cyber bullies to express hatred against women is also another type of cyber harassment; this type of harassment has been described as mob-like cyberattack [15]". When the perpetrator tries to convince himself by justifying the innocentness of his act, he implicitly accepts the responsibility, damage and undeservingness of the victim, but he does not want to accept that his act will be directed at a specific person. The victim's distance and intangibility from the perpetrator made him claim that "I didn't insult a particular person; I just said it!" and "Don't take it to yourself; I said it in general!" "No one gets hurt!", "They're not really here!", "These things aren't real!" makes him bolder to the extent that the perpetrator ignores the whole existence of the victim for such reasons.

8. Concluding Remarks

In addition to the common criminals, many people who are bound by social etiquettes try to harass others in the dynamic virtual environment. The findings of this research show that criminals and people who engage in harassing behaviors in the cyber space are teenage boys or digital natives who clearly pay attention to the gender of the victim and in cases where the victim is a woman, it is much more May be abused.

The findings of this research show that the three elements of "avoidance of responsibility", "projection" and "appeal to ideals" are largely related to the causes of delinquency among digital natives, especially boys, in the Telegram social network. Avoidance of responsibility is a characteristic of digital natives. The frequent use of these users in the virtual space and their lesser presence in the real space has caused the socialization and acceptance of norms among this generation of the network to not be firmly established. The intangible nature of the damage and damages of crimes on the line helps these criminals to avoid responsibility more than it is thought. In online communication, a perpetrator may be bold as a result of not being open to his feelings, because expressing hurtful comments using a keyboard requires less energy and courage compared to using one's voice. The perpetrator, who is protected from the visual or audio response of the victim due to the presence of the screen, is less likely to feel sympathy for the victim. As Albert Bandura points out, "it is relatively easier to hurt others when their suffering is not visible and with behaviors that are far from their results in terms of time and place". In situations where the suffering of the crime victim is seen or heard, distress and self-restraint by seeing or hearing the suffering of the victim act as self-care agents. However, the material distance between a virtual criminal and a victim creates a context in which criminal behavior can be considered insignificant and creates an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. It is because of the intangible nature of the damages that in many cases these juvenile delinquents not only do not feel remorse, but on the contrary, they are proud of their intelligence and ability to commit these criminal acts and it gives them a sense of ability. The characteristic of the victim being far away from the perpetrator makes him bolder in making these claims that no one is harmed, to the point where the perpetrator completely ignores the existence of the audience for these behaviors with such logics. In some cases, when the juvenile delinquent acknowledges the existence of damage and the victim, in order to neutralize his conscience, he tries to project himself and avoids thinking about his own actions to focus on the actions of others and in this way makes his actions insignificant or unimportant. It has shown that it should not be taken into consideration by government and judicial officials. In some cases, even boys who have not recognized childish games from masculine behaviors consider some boyish ideals as an acceptable reason for committing disturbing behaviors. In general, evasion of responsibility is known to be a distinctive feature of the digital natives that either the foundations of responsibility have not yet been formed in them, or it is easy for them to hide it and commit crimes, because apparently, the network generation has a different understanding of responsibility, which is not very consistent with reality.

The conclusion and theory of this article are that, in line with women's immunity from crime, putting differential criminal reactions on the agenda when women are the victims of crime and informing women about how to interact with criminals will play an important role in preventing or minimizing the effects of these crimes.



Insults Against Women in Telegram (Empirical Study based on the Theory of Neutralization Techniques)

Declarations

Funding

This research did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

Authors' contributions

E.S: Data collection, analysis, manuscript drafting

A.M: Return the article to English

N.Sh: Data collection, article editing

Conflict of interest

The authors declear that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- D. Halder, and J. Karuppannan, "Cybercrime and Victimization of Women; Laws, Rights and Regulations", Pennsylvania: IGI Global, 2012. DOI:10.4018/978-1-60960-830-9.
- [2] M. Hajidehabadi, and E. Salimi, "The Etiology of Women's Victimization in Social Networks", Quarterly Journal of Woman and Society, vol. 9, no. 35, pp. 117-142, 2018. <u>https://doi.org/20.1001.1.20088566.1397.9.35.6.4</u>
- [3] M. Sheidaeian, R. Dehghani, S. M. Mirkhalili, and S. Darabi, "Criminological Explanation of Women Victimization in Social Networks; with Emphasis on objectification Theory", Criminal Law and Criminology Modares, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 67-95, 2021. <u>http://clcm.modares.ac.ir/article-44-57014-en.html</u>.
- [4] M. Hajidehabadi, and E. Salimi, "Delinquency and Victimization of Digital Natives; from Etiology to Response in the Restorative Justice Paradigm", Criminal law and Criminology Studies, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 41-63, 2019. https://doi.org/10.22059/jqclcs.2019.73346.
- [5] M. Williams, "Virtually Criminal: Crime, Deviance and Regulation Online", London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
- [6] S. R. Ameli, "A two-space approach to damages, crimes, laws and policies of 2cyberspace", Tehran: Amirkabir Publications, 2011.
- [7] S. Sadeqi, M. Foroutan, and S. Ebrahimi, "The Criminology Approach to Online Threats to Girls", *Criminal Law Doctrines*, vol. 17, no. 20, pp. 215-234, 2021 .https://doi.org/10.30513/CLD.2021.1601.1261.
- [8] G. Melville, K. Morgan, G. Nooris, Z. Walkington, "Theories of Crime", London: Routledge, 2006. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203030516.
- [9] A. H. Najafi Ebrandabadi, and H. Hashembeigi, "Encyclopedia of Criminology", Tehran: Ganj-e Danesh Publications, 2018.
- [10] G. M. Sykes, and D. Metza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency", American Sociological Review, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 664-670, 1957. <u>https://doi.org/10.2307/2089195</u>.
- [11] R. White and F. Haynes, "Crime and Criminology", Oxford: Oxford University Press ANZ, 2017.M. Williams, "Virtually Criminal: Crime, Deviance and Regulation Online", London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
- [12] J. B. Snipes, T. J. Bernard, and A. L. Gerould, "Vold's Theoretical Criminology", Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- [13] S. R. Ameli, "Two-dimensional studies computer games; Value local approach to games", Tehran: Amirkabir Publications, 2015.
- [14] A. Sourander, A. Brunstein Klomek, M. Ikonen, J. Lindroos, T. Luntamo, M. Koskelainen, T. Ristkari, and H. Helenius, "Psychosocial Risk Factors Associated With Cyberbullying among Adolescents: a population-based study", Arch Gen Psychiatry, vol. 67, no. 7, pp. 720-728, 2010. <u>https://doi.org/10-1001/archgenpsychiatry.2010.79</u>.
- [15] D. K. Citron, "Civil Rights in the Cyber World", JD Alumni Magazine, Iss. 1, Article 10, pp. 32-33, 2009. https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/jd/vol2009/iss1/10.



Ehsan Salimi is an Assistant Professor at University of Maragheh. His field of study is criminal law and criminology, and he is interested in interdisciplinary studies, especially in the field of cyberspace. His researches are focused on the knowledge of different types of cybercrimes and the prevention of cybercrimes.

Aylar Mohammadi is a law graduate from Maragheh University. She is a dedicated researcher who is passionate about exploring the intersection of law and technology.



Neda Shiri is a law graduate from Maragheh University. Hes interest is more in the field of delinquency and victimization of children and teenagers and she has published a scientific research article in this regard.