

**A Feminist Intersectional Approach to Online Media as it Relates to Harassment**

**By**

**Malcolm Gordon**

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**Griffith College Dublin**

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**Declaration**

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Media Communications, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: Malcolm Gordon

Dated: 29/7/2020

## **Abstract**

Online media is growing as a mass institution, and the long-term implications of its usage is widely understudied and misunderstood primarily because it is a new phenomenon.

Harassment is a serious issue of concern as it relates to individuals' safety and well-being. Its patterns are also more widely understood and better known in an effort to minimize online harassment and its impact. An elaborate Literature Review is included featuring topics like feminism, social norms, racism and harassment as they may relate to online media.

Historical and contemporary sources are utilized to gain a more informed perspective. A mixed methodological approach is used to study the phenomenon both quantitative and qualitatively through means of collective case study

This dissertation investigates and analyzes online media harassment as it relates to demography. It consists of an original questionnaire/survey research which analyzes the current state of online media as it relates to harassment and affected populations. The results are analyzed as an individual and they are also compared to institutional case studies.

Institutional data is also used to increase validity, reliability, and to make comparative analysis possible when making deductive conclusions. Based on demographic factors, duration spent online, and the form of online media participants interact with, online experiences with harassment vary significantly across the board.

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>DECLARATION</b>  | 2  |
| <b>ADBSTRACT</b>  | 3  |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>                                    | 4  |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>                                     | 8  |
| <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>                              | 9  |
| 1.1 Overview  | 9  |
| 1.2 Structure of Dissertation                               | 10 |
| 1.3 Research Aims and Questions                             | 12 |
| <b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>                         | 13 |
| 2.1 Introduction  | 13 |
| 2.1.1 Procedure   | 13 |
| 2.2 Analysis of Relevant Literature                         | 15 |
| 2.2.1 Feminism in Relation to Media as a Social Institution | 15 |
| 2.2.2 Impact of Feminist Activism in Media                  | 19 |
| 2.2.3 Gender as an Ideology                                 | 20 |
| 2.2.4 Media in Relation to Social Norms                     | 22 |
| 2.2.5 Race Studies/ Intersectionality                       | 25 |
| 2.2.6 Harassment  | 26 |
| 2.2.7 Harassment in the Digital Age                         | 29 |

|       |                                       |           |
|-------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2.3   | Conclusion                            | 31        |
|       | <b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>         | <b>32</b> |
| 3.1   | Introduction                          | 32        |
| 3.1.1 | Overview                              | 32        |
| 3.1.2 | Research Questions                    | 33        |
| 3.2   | Quantitative vs Qualitative           | 33        |
| 3.2.1 | Qualitative Research                  | 34        |
| 3.2.2 | Drawbacks of Quantitative             | 35        |
| 3.2.3 | Drawbacks of Qualitative              | 35        |
| 3.2.4 | When are Case Studies Useful          | 36        |
| 3.2.5 | Limitations of Case Studies           | 37        |
| 3.3   | Questionnaire                         | 37        |
| 3.3.1 | Advantages of Questionnaires          | 38        |
| 3.3.2 | Drawbacks of Questionnaires           | 38        |
| 3.4   | Online Questionnaire                  | 39        |
| 3.4.1 | Questionnaire Part 1                  | 39        |
| 3.4.2 | First Portion Questionnaire Questions | 39        |
| 3.4.3 | Potential Challenges Part 1           | 39        |
| 3.4.4 | Questionnaire Part 2                  | 40        |
| 3.4.5 | Sample Questions Part 2               | 40        |
| 3.4.6 | Difficulties Section 2                | 42        |

|       |   |           |
|-------|---|-----------|
| 3.5   | Collective Case Study                                 | 42        |
| 3.5.1 | Potential Disadvantages of Collective Case Study      | 44        |
| 3.6   | Organizations Data to be Analyzed                     | 44        |
| 3.6.1 | Women Who Tech, Rad Campaign, Lincoln Park Strategies | 44        |
| 3.6.2 | PEW   | 45        |
| 3.6.4 | Lincoln Park Strategies                               | 46        |
| 3.7   | Conclusion  | 47        |
|       | <b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</b>                | <b>48</b> |
| 4.1   | Safe Space Survey                                     | 48        |
| 4.1.2 | Response Rate and Procedure                           | 48        |
| 4.2.1 | Quantitative Data                                     | 50        |
| 4.2.2 | Analysis of Part 1                                    | 58        |
| 4.2.3 | Quantitative Data                                     | 60        |
| 4.2.4 | Analysis of Online Survey Part 2                      | 62        |
| 4.3   | Qualitative Data                                      | 69        |
| 4.3.1 | Case Study 1  | 69        |
| 4.3.2 | A Comparative Study                                   | 74        |
| 4.3.3 | Case Study 2  | 78        |
| 4.3.4 | A Comparative Study                                   | 80        |

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 5.1   | Overview   | 84  |
| 5.2   | Literature Review Summation                                  | 84  |
| 5.3   | Methods Chosen and Rationale                                 | 86  |
| 5.4   | Discussion of Findings and Analysis                          | 87  |
| 5.4.1 | Which individuals are more likely to suffer from harassment? | 87  |
| 5.4.2 | On What Platforms do victims experience the most harassment  | 89  |
| 5.5   | Cross Comparative Conclusion                                 | 90  |
| 5.6   | Validity and Reliability                                     | 90  |
| 5.7   | Limitations of Research and Future Recommendations           | 91  |
| 5.8   | Conclusion   | 92  |
|       | <b>Bibliography</b>  | 94  |
|       | <b>Appendix 1: Graphs and Visuals</b>                        | 100 |
|       | <b>Appendix 2: Consent Form</b>                              | 107 |

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

The world of online media is one that is growing rapidly, and the recourse of online media is often left unquestioned. With the increasing popularity of online media, it is worth questioning the impact that it may be having on our society. The online universe is one that comes with its own sets of risks and dangers which are separate from that of the offline world. Harassment takes place both online and offline, but the way in which harassment takes place through means of social media is relatively new and lacking in research. Different populations of people may find themselves at different levels of risk for encountering online harassment based on their demographic background.

Intersectionality is another concept that people are becoming more familiar with as society strides to become a fairer and more understanding place. The study of intersectionality originally proposed by Patricia Hill-Collins (1989) later followed up by Kimberle Crenshaw (1990), and applied to modern media by Adewunmi (2014) is a concept that aims to educate groups about the struggle of other groups of people and how it places them at a unique advantage or disadvantage. Hill- Collins explains to her predecessor in an interview, "I wanted to come up with an everyday metaphor that anyone could use." (Adewunmi, 2014, p. 1)

Individually, these factors can include factors like age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, socio-economic status, education among others. When combining these factors together, there is a less studied group of people which may be more advantaged or disadvantaged by a

combination of factors. Perhaps one race or ethnicity is lacking in education and this has a carryover effect to their social economic status, this unique circumstance is known as intersectionality.

Fairchild and Rudman (2008) identify the online world as an understudied institution with regards to harassment when compared to commonly studied institutions of schools and the workplace. "The present findings suggest that stranger harassment is a remarkably common occurrence for many women, and that common means of coping with it may lead to self-objectification," (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008, p. 355). While harassment trends are becoming more understood in the offline social world, it is important to understand these relationships with regard to online media because it is such an integral part of everyday life and a mass institution.

## **1.2 Structure of Dissertation**

This dissertation is structured into five chapters which include the Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis and Conclusion. Chapter one includes the research objectives of this dissertation along with research questions. Chapter two consists of literature which are relevant to this study. Its components consist of scholarly research which relates to inequalities that exist in society based on demographic factors. Areas of research include feminism, gender inequalities, racial discrimination, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wave feminism, as well as intersectionality. I also studied research which relates to harassment in the offline world to see how it may relate to emerging trends that occur in the online world. While online and offline harassment are not

synonymous, they may share some of the same traits, characteristics, and trends. The Literature Review also includes more recent sources that relate to the dangers of the online world with regards to online dating, harassment within the LGBTQ+ community as well as the objectification of women when interacting with strangers.

Chapter 3 includes information outlining the methodology rationale used. Research was carried out through means of an online survey. The purpose of creating an online survey was to evaluate the current state of online users to gather data which could be evaluated statistically. Using the online method was also particularly useful given its easy ability to reach a large population of people. After evaluating and analyzing my own data, I use comparative case study methodology to analyze data which was carried out by various institutions (PEW Research Center, Women Who Teach Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies). The purpose of including these comparative case studies was to analyze how closely my data matches up with these institutions' data to see if my data correlates, to identify trends which may be common, and to increase the reliability of my own survey. The comparative case studies also allowed me the opportunity to study data that was unique to the research which was conducted by the various institutions and not included in my survey. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the Results and Analysis of this dissertation along with the help of various visual aids made up of an assortment of graphs. Chapter 5, the final chapter consists of the Conclusion which concludes this study and the arguments raised from the research findings. The Conclusion also consists of areas for further research.

### **1.3 Research Aims and Questions**

The purpose of this research dissertation will be to evaluate the current state of online media and the relationship that it has with online harassment. This dissertation will identify demographic factors which may or may not place online users at risk for encountering online harassment. Not only is online media a field of study that is lacking in research, but so are the applications and websites which it hosts as far as online harassment is concerned. This dissertation will also investigate the current state of online media apps and websites (Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Tinder, Bumble, Reddit, eBay, Amazon etc.) to determine where it is that individuals are encountering online harassment to analyze and see how the data compares to other places online.

#### **Research Questions**

- Who is most likely to be suffer from online media harassment?
- Who are the harassers?
- On what platforms do victims experience the most abuse online?
- How does online abuse vary when taking intersectionality into consideration?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review is to gain an understanding of relevant research related to gender, race, and intersectionality to educate myself on themes which are relevant to the basis of this research regarding online media harassment. The goal of this chapter is to review sources that relate to; who is likely to suffer from online media harassment, who the harassers may be, and how online abuse varies when taking intersectionality into consideration? This Literature Review includes secondary source research that investigates gender, race, and intersectionality to establish a basis in these areas, as well as, research that is directly related to gender, race and intersectionality as it relates to the realm of online media.

#### **2.1.1 Procedure**

To perform an accurate study, I constructed a literature review that investigates the topics in this research in detail from an informed perspective. I have collected and analyzed relevant scholarly sources related to gender studies, racial inequalities, as well as, intersectionality. Not only have I studied the psychological and sociological aspects of relevant research, but I have also reviewed literature which is relevant to gender, race, and intersectionality in direct relation to media. I then follow this with harassment cases which have been widely recognized particularly in the United States.

The objective of this Literature Review is to establish a complete understanding of the topics to be analyzed in this dissertation so that appropriate analysis can be performed. Scholars analyzed but not included in this literature include prominent feminists such as, Wollstonecraft (1792), Stuart-Mills (1869), de Beauvoir, (1949), Friedan (1963), as their work was essential to the progression and understanding of gender inequality both historically and currently. I continue my research by examining various authors who published academic journals directly studying the complex relationship existing between feminism and media production: Thornham (2005), Araiza (2014), Fitzgerald (2009), Jackson (2014), North, (2009), Davis, (2018), Emerson, (2000), Jaworska and Krishnamurth, (2012), Wear (2016).

Jackson (2010) and Courtemanche (2019) will be studied to better understand contemporary feminism and to better understand how media can be used to promote feminism in the forms of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wave feminism with the innovation of technology. Lorber (1993) and later Fausto-Sterling (2000) were worthy of study to understand how gender functions in society. I then followed up by analyzing racial inequalities in McIntosh (1988) and the intersectionality approach of Hill-Collins (1989) and Crenshaw (1991). Watkins & Emmerson (2011) is included in its own section to gain a better understanding of how social norms function in media.

To better understand how harassment functions in society, I analyze: Quinn (2002), Wade et al. (2014), Derr (2014), Messner (2014), Eisenham, 1993, (Rucinski, (1993). To better understand online harassment, I will analyze the research of: Rudman & Fairchild (2008) Couch et al. (2012) and Megarry (2014). Sources have been organized into categories based on relevance.

## **2.2 Analysis of Relevant Literature**

### **2.2.1 Feminism in relation to Media as a Social Institution**

Thornham's (2005) article 'A Good Body' The case of/ for feminist media studies', investigated how feminist media and cultural studies are central, theoretically to answering the question of when, how, and where females can speak with authority. It is the center of feminist study within media, and this research primarily looked at film and television, and how women have been underrepresented in professional occupations. Thornham digs deeper into connections between this issue and women playing more roles as professional investigators and heroes in popular media. It goes on to argue that most of these female characters are primarily characterized by anxiety that is centered around their perceived feminization in the view of the public (Thornham, 2005, p. 76). They are also viewed as transgressive characters because they do speak authoritatively, and they are able to speak up for themselves in a way that was not viewed as typically feminine in the past. Of prevalence in this article, was my reading of the fact that men and women are perceived differently in different cultures for having different features. One feature that is considered a major flaw is that some body types which may be unattractive to one culture may actually be viewed as attractive in other places around the world (Thornham, 2005, p. 81). Using this logic, I continued to ponder how culture and geographic location, as it relates to nationality has an effect on the experiences of online media users and harassment. Perhaps results that are generalizable to some nationalities or cultures are not generalizable to others.

Stefanie Davis's *Objectification, Sexualization, and Misrepresentation: Social Media and the College Experience* continues to clarify a problem that consistently takes place in media and has an unconscious impact on society. The problem is that media creates a visual perception of what women should be like. When women are constantly taking in media as many are in modern day society, they are consciously and subconsciously absorbing ideas for how they should look, dress, and what they should like (Davis, 2018, p. 1). Davis further describes how women are frequently portrayed in social media. She explains the fact that, "social media use can have major impacts on one's construction of identity, sexuality, and gender," (Davis, 2018, p. 1). With the large amount of users and the high interaction rate of social media is the subconscious messages that social media is putting into the environment.

The goal of Davis's article was to expound the impact the internet has on society from an academic perspective, while focusing specifically on media expansion and the impact it has on how individuals identify themselves online. This information may be relevant when it comes to answering the question of what role media plays in creating prescriptive attributes for people based on age, race, ethnicity, or other form of classification. This source was relevant as far as identifying patterns of behavior and themes which may be relevant to this dissertation.

*Rejecting the 'F-word'. How 'feminism' and 'feminists' are Understood in the Newsroom* (North, 2009), analyzes the phenomenon that most people derive their information about what 'feminism' and 'feminist' mean from the media, rather than university classes on feminist theory (North, 2009, p. 739). *Rejecting the F- Word* helped me to understand what potential impact the media and miseducation could have on feminism. Not only has media consumption

had a large impact on society, but it is where most people learn the definition for feminism. North goes on to explain how the media creates representations for women, and these subliminal messages often go unnoticed by the average consumer of media. North also explores how journalists identified as feminists survive and thrive in a news media culture that is particularly masculine. Although many of the journalists identify as feminists, they are not likely to use the word feminist in the newsroom (North, 2009, p. 741.) *Rejecting the F-Word* also illustrates that this paradigm exists for both men and women that identify as feminists. The article then goes a step further and discusses how journalists discuss ‘feminism’ and ‘feminists’ when they are portrayed in the media.

‘Special Issue on Digital Feminist Media Studies’ (Weare, 2016), examines the intersection of digital culture and experiences related to gender. Media studies have started to evaluate gendered rhetoric online that can be feminist sometimes, and sexist at other times. This article analyzes recent examples of gendering online cultures and how media users are linked in their production and consumption.

Feminist scholarship acknowledges that beliefs, practices, and communities are articulated in the online cultural landscape and demonstrate the vitality of gendered ways of thinking and living in a mediated world, as well as how online media shape and inform feminist philosophies. (Weare, 2016, p. 311).

The speaker describes feminism as, “something that is special and has concepts of meaning, power, and identity in modern online spaces.” (Weare, 2016, p. 311). This source also points out some areas for further research including online bullying, online activism, misogyny,

blogging, as well as female racial performance and social media. These areas for further research include emerging notions of meaning, power, and identity across contemporary online communities which directly relates to the research topic of this academic dissertation.

Social psychology has repeatedly proven that public attitudes towards feminism are primarily created from stereotypical views and this has created an invisible link between feminism and left-wing politics along with lesbian sexual orientation (Jaworska and Krishnamurth, 2012, p. 401). Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 'On the F word: A corpus-based analysis of the media representation of feminism in British and German press discourse, 1990-2009' prove that the way the media portrays feminism and its sexualization of women is what creates these negative associations. Even though Jaworska and Krishnamarthy use scientific reasoning to link the media to negative stereotypes, the findings are often based on text, and not numeric quantitative data. The research was also conducted in a majority white American setting so the result may not be generalizable to other populations. Jaworsk and Krishnamrthy also criticized previous forms of media that were produced in Germany and examining their progression. The most prolific aspect of this research is when the author describes using a tool known as "Corpus Linguistics." This term means that to study feminism, one can search from all works that fall under the umbrella of feminism, and this will provide researchers with evidence of the salient discourse that feminism is taking. (Jaworska and Krishnamurth, 2012, p. 404). 'On the F Word...' was particularly useful for understanding how qualitative research can be relevant when using scientific reasoning to analyze media.

### 2.2.2 Impact of Feminist Activism in Media

*Young Feminists, Feminism and Digital Media (2010)* by Sue Jackson looks at how young feminists have a growing impact in mainstream media, and they are receiving acknowledgment.

“Young feminists have a history of using media, popular culture and the internet as tools of feminist activism” (Jackson, 2010, p. 32). This information helped me understand, that it is a proven fact that young women are able to use modern media resources like the internet to positively affect feminist activism also known as 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wave feminism. It then goes on to show how this activism can be overshadowed by persistent culture that is post feminism.

“Shadowing this celebratory media fascination with feminism, however, rape culture proliferates off and online and anti-feminism is a burgeoning presence in mainstream and online media (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2016, p. 33). This brought me to the conclusion that there is not a clear answer on whether media is positive for feminist activism, or positive for anti-feminism. In my research, I create statistical data that can evaluate the effect that the media has quantitatively. While *Young Feminists, Feminism and Digital Media* provided beneficial information at the potential effects of mainstream media on feminism, it does not provide anything that can be measured statistically to describe a definite impact. Jackson goes on to examine how girls use and produce digital media, what the significance is in them doing so, and how the feminism that they show online relate to their feminist attitudes offline from a qualitative perspective.

The first three waves of Feminism are widely understood and recognized. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of feminism which we are currently living through, is said to have started around 2012.

Fourth wave feminism can be described as:

... a phenomenon that went under the radar because it was explicitly opposed to academic feminism and was considered too trivial to be interesting to the national media. Fourth wave feminism was the rise of girls' fan culture on the internet in response to popular culture. As television and online media became more widely used and studied, these influences had a great influence on society. For this reason, feminism was promoted through online media by questioning the way that women are portrayed in the digital age. (Courtemanche, 2019, p. 2)

Rather than fighting for how women are perceived in society, this battle takes place on a different level of consciousness which seems to be focused on promoting feminism in media which could have an impact on society. This resource helped me to learn what feminism currently looks like and how it may relate to online media and online harassment.

### **2.2.3 Gender as an Ideology**

"Believing is seeing biology as ideology" (Lorber, 1993, p. 568), is an article aimed at explaining the fundamental differences that exist between men and women particularly in western society. Lorber explains the fact that because women have wombs, they are predestined to live an entirely different social life than their male counterparts (Lorber, 1993, p. 570.) Traditionally, in western society there are only two sexes which exist and there are male and female, and these differences are what society is built on. Lorber's argument is that although male and female bodies do differ physiologically, these differences are exaggerated and transformed by social practices. Neither sex nor gender are pure categories because variation still exists, for example, a woman who cannot reproduce (Lorber, 1993, p. 572). Biology also fails to explain

the difference because chromosomes cannot describe the individuality that exists in trans people. Lorber proposes, society taking a constructionist perspective on sex and gender and rather than grouping people by their genitalia, it may make more sense to group people based on their patterns of behavior (Lorber, 1993, p. 576). Gender is created by cultural implication and social relationships based on Lorber's study. "Not biology but culture becomes destiny." (Lorber, 1993, p. 572) Perhaps the culture and prejudices of groups of people have a unique effect on users' experiences online. Whether it is the culture of the country, nationality, ethnic group, or even the general culture of online media may be an area for further research.

*The Five Sexes Revisited* by Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) takes on the challenge of explaining the reality of biology as an imperfect measure of gender. Intersex is used to describe individuals who biologically have both male and female anatomy. Hermaphrodites (Herms) have one ovary and one testis, male pseudohermaphrodite, Merms have testes and some female anatomy but no ovaries. Female pseudohermaphrodite, Ferms have ovaries and some male anatomy but no testes. Fausto-Sterling's argument is that these other sexes deserve to be recognized as other sexes to reduce marginalization. This source was useful for me to better understand inequality that is created through gender and to better understand the relationship that it has with social norms. The interesting aspect of this research by Fausto-Sterling was the fact that, "[w]estern culture is deeply committed to the idea that there are two sexes," (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p.166). Making the choice between male and female which automatically creates discrimination for those who are intersex or individuals who are gender non-binary. While Lorber (1993) originally proposed that there were more than two sexes, Fausto-Sterling (2000) provides a

scholarly approach towards identifying new categories helping us to create a more inclusive spectrum for people to identify their gender.

#### **2.2.4 Race Studies and Intersectionality**

In Peggy McIntosh's *Unpacking the Knapsack that is White Privilege* (1988), she explains the advantages that exist in society based on being white and male. As a feminist who studied male privilege, McIntosh first took into consideration all forms of privilege and she observed the fact that most people who were the benefactors of privilege fail to acknowledge it. She describes white privilege as:

... an invisible package of invisible assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I am to remain oblivious. Like an invisible knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks... (McIntoch, 1988, p. 30).

McIntosh goes to great lengths to describe the complex social advantage that white men have in society. Simply by being male and white, there is an endless list of privileges that they receive in society and it is capable of helping them maintain an advantage when it comes to survival. She then goes on to explain that if white males do not acknowledge their privilege then no progress can be made as far as advancing women's equality. She further points out that, "[w]hites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'." (McIntoch, 1988, p. 31) This research by McIntosh may be relevant when it

comes to analyzing the experiences of online media users in relation to why some people may be more vulnerable to suffer harassment online.

Throughout history up to and including our current society, has been dominated by tensions related to race, gender and social class. For this reason, I decided to include Patricia Hill-Collins *The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought* (1989) in my literature review. Hill-Collins studied what is known as intersectionality in an attempt to accurately describe the oppression that women of color faced in the United States. Even though the book was published nearly thirty years ago, I thought that it would serve as an accurate reference for understanding oppression that women of color may face in today's society. Hill-Collins was one of the first feminists to offer a different approach with included women of color. Previously, feminism was understood as a movement that primarily featured white middle-class women (Hill-Collins, 1989, p. 746). The interlocking oppression described by Hill-Collins is one that consists of black women choosing between their identity as both women in the United States and African Americans. She explains that at times, if she chooses to identify as an African American, she is viewed as less feminine by society. She explains further that if an African American woman chooses to identify as a female, her uniqueness in being African American is lost (Hill-Collins, 1989, p. 747). This research by Hill-Collins made me consider how there can be a compounding relationship that exists between race and gender. Taking these two factors into consideration and studying them in relation to online media harassment may help provide a more accurate approach to research rather than only analyzing the factors of race and gender individually.

Kiberle Crenshaw's *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, And Violence*

*Against Women of Color* (1991) takes another look at intersectionality and the unique

experiences of women of color prior to Hill-Collins. Crenshaw points out the fact that immigrant women are often forced to remain in abusive or less than satisfying relationships because they are afraid that they may be deported (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1241). This complex situation creates a more dangerous environment for women who are considered immigrants, and this is a unique complexity that only they can relate to. Not only do these women fear being deported, but they also face cultural barriers. In their culture, men may be allowed to behave in a way that is abusive, and women may be culturally obligated to abide by their rules especially if they are immigrants. Another cultural barrier explained is the fact that these same women may also face language barriers. Crenshaw's research had me taking not only intersectionality into account but also the effects of language barriers which may be separate or linked to other factors like ethnicity, culture, race or gender.

Based on the research of Sue & Sue, *Considering the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*

(1999), the invisible veil can be described as a term used to define the phenomena that

individuals and their view of the world are formed by cultural conditioning which happens on

an unconscious level. This social construct creates a dynamic that features cultures being blind

to other cultures unintentionally, however, even though there may not be intent,

discrimination is still a byproduct. Sue & Sue then go on to describe that "values, assumptions,

beliefs, and practices of our society are structured in a manner as to serve only one narrow

segment of the population" (Sue & Sue, 1999, p. 31). This research on cultural diversity alludes

to the fact that the world system is one that is meant to be universal for everyone, but in

reality, it only benefits a small group of people. The basis of their research was to identify how collective ideology, beliefs, and biases that have been embedded into society unconsciously, and what impact they may continue to have. It is for this reason that it is important to consider the invisible veil when thinking of how the world is shaped, and what impact it may have (Sue & Sue, 1999, p. 32). *Considering the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* helped me to consider cultural diversity and how it relates to users' experiences on the internet.

### **2.2.5 Media in Relation to Social Norms**

*Feminist Media Criticism and Feminist Media Practices* by Watkins and Emerson looks at multiple areas in media that have received criticism (Watkins and Emerson, 2011). The first area that it explores is how gender creates social norms and values that influence the actions that we practice in society and our conventional ways of thinking. It then goes on to examine how feminist criticism has led to reception studies. These reception studies are based around examining how audiences actively engage the media around them. The third area of research in this article was how feminism has helped create the study of masculinity. Moreover, the last section describes the two areas that will have a transcending effect in media in the future which are the sex industry and the effects of globalization. (Watkins & Emmerson, 2011, p. 311). The article then goes on to describe one of the biggest misconceptions about feministic media. This is, that feminism is not about criticism, but it is more about promoting social change. It was not until the 60s or 70s that gender role stereotyping in television and film normalized the dominant cultural values and customs that solidify male culture and the domination of women. *Feminist Media Criticism and Feminist Media Practices* helped me create

a fundamental basis for understanding gender studies as it relates to social norms and conventional ways of thinking. This research by Watkins and Emerson also got me thinking about what impact factors like active engagement, masculinity, and the sex industry may have an impact on online media and harassment.

### **2.2.6 Harassment**

In the article “Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of ‘Girl Watching’”, Beth Quinn (2002) elucidates that experiences of sexual harassment differ based on gender. Sometimes what women see as harassment, men see as harmless fun or communication that is normal for males to participate in. Quinn’s article uses analytical interviews of both males and females to uncover why these differences exist and the answer may exist in the requirements of masculinity (Quinn, 2002, p. 386). The particular practice that Quinn chooses to analyze is the practice of ‘girl watching.’ The study suggests that men do not see their behavior as harassment partially because masculinity requires men to see women objectively. Quinn concludes that males are not ignorant to the fact that they are participating in sexual harassment they just chose to ignore, to save their masculine identity. ‘Girl watching’ is specifically used as a term to describe an act that men participate in, which includes their sexually evaluating women. Quinn chose to analyze the workplace environment because this is where harassment is prevalent (Quinn, 2002, p. 392). She also points out the fact that ‘girl watching’ is regularly trivialized by statements like “boys will be boys.” “Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of ‘Girl Watching’” may help me answer the research question of who is likely to play the role of the harasser and why other users find themselves in vulnerable circumstances as it relates to online experiences.

*Ruling out Rape* (Wade et al. 2014) is a more recent article that explains sexual assault in the United States and how it has become an epidemic. It points out the fact that colleges in the United States are breeding grounds for rape culture. Wade, the first author in the article, explains the fact that simply attending college puts women at risk, given the fact that one in five women experience sexual assault in college (Wade, 2014, p. 17). Brian Sweeney (2014) explains that the college environment becomes more dangerous when combined with the dangers of drinking, which is a subculture of college parties. He goes on to explain that policies which are aimed at reducing drinking on college campuses or reducing the amount of parties does little to remedy the problem. Amelia Seraphia Derr (2014) focuses on the fact that sexual assault is underreported because of college culture and a lack of action being taken by universities when sexual misconduct is reported (Derr, 2014, p. 21). To remedy this problem, Derr proposes that a culture of prevention is created to better control the rape epidemic that is occurring on U.S. university campuses. Messner (2014) expounds the unique environment that exists for American athletes at colleges. Male athletes are the most likely males to rape, yet they often form organizations aimed at reducing violence against women (Messner, 2014, p. 23). They are often embraced by the college and most members of the school, so their actions are rarely questioned until intersectionality comes into play. Men of athletes appear to be incriminated at a higher rate than their white peers. "Ruling out Rape" provided research in relation to real life harassment that is occurring in the United States. I conduct a similar study as far as analyzing vulnerable populations and uncovering who makes up the population that is likely to misuse online media and harass others. It also analyzes vulnerability by gender which is similar to the research basis of this dissertation.

Anita Hill was one of the first African women to proceed with a sexual harassment complaint that took place on a national level and it ultimately promoted feminism in a way that empowered women. In 1991, Anita Hill, a professor at the University of Oklahoma's law school detailed sexual harassment which she suffered at the hands of Judge Clarence Thomas (Eisenham, 1993, p. 179). Thomas, who was the supervisor at two government agencies denied all allegations and claimed that the complaints were the product of stereotypes. Thomas claimed that he was only being harassed because he was an African American. Hill's description of the type of harassment that took place included vivid sex stories, describing pornography, group sex and other vulgar sexually explicit material. Hill stated that, "[i]t would have been more comfortable to remain silent. But when I was asked by a representative of this committee to report my experience, I felt that I had to tell the truth. I could not keep silent." (Rucinski, 1993, p. 585).

On the third day of hearings, Thomas and his team switched their defense from one of race to one of Hill Collins' mental competency. Because she passed a lie detector test that increased the strength of her accusations, Senator Alan K. Simpson made the statement that, "if a person suffers from a delusional disorder, he or she may pass a polygraph test. Therefore, a polygraph examination in this context has absolutely no bearing on whether the events at issue are true or untrue." (Rucinski, 1993, p. 587) The federal prosecutor was also part of Thomas's defense team. Even after all of the controversy, Thomas was still able to get a place as a Justice for the Supreme Court. Although Hill did not win the case, her action to speak out had a snowball effect with many other women eventually coming forward and speaking out against abuse starting one of the first #metoo movements. The case of Anita Hill v Clarence Thomas was

relevant for this literature as it relates to harassment and intersectionality. By studying prior cases of harassment and how both race and gender played a part, I can better understand what type of impact these factors may have on individuals as it relates to online media. I also found it interesting that the intersectionality approach affects males and females differently as seen in the case of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas as both parties are identified as African American.

### **2.2.7 Harassment in the Digital Age**

Research presented in *Everyday stranger harassment and women's objectification* by Fairchild and Rudman suggests that receiving unwanted sexual attention from strangers in public places is an experience that young women often encounter. The effects are also potentially damaging to the individual's well-being mentally and physically with the primary outcome being objectification (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008, p. 338). "Unfortunately, many sexual harassment researchers seem to assume that sexual harassment is a phenomenon experienced only in the workplace or at school," (Rudman & Fairchild, 2008, p. 340). This source was particularly useful for my research as far as minding the gap between gender, harassment, and its lack of study with regards to online media. Most research on harassment up until now has been carried out in schools and workplaces because they were the places worthy of study given, they are where people spend a significant amount of time. However, with the high interaction rate of the internet, this institution should also be analyzed as far as harassment is concerned and which individuals are likely to suffer.

*Online incivility or sexual harassment? Conceptualizing women's experiences in the digital age* is an article which builds on the twitter hashtag #mencallmethings. This hashtag is a place for women to discuss and describe mistreatment that they receive online from males. Megarry argues the fact that the types of harassment which are indicated within this hashtag should be recognized as online sexual harassment (Megarry, 2014, p. 46). This source was extremely useful as it reassured me that the phenomenon of online media harassment is still relatively new and unstudied. "Launched in 2006, the growth of Twitter as a microblogging platform has been exponential, yet little research to date specifically considers women's experiences of the medium," (Megarry, 2014, p. 46). This indicated that the role of gender in the world of online media is unexplored which made me want to investigate the topic further especially in relation to other demographic factors.

*What are the real and perceived risks and dangers of online dating? Perspectives from online daters: Health risks in the media* is an article that discusses the dangers of participating in online dating given its increase in popularity. Previously, online dating was frowned upon by most members of society, "Online dating has broadened out from a once marginalized and stigmatized activity to a mainstream social activity recognized by many as an appropriate way to meet prospective partners" (Couch et al., 2012, p. 697). This again got me thinking that online media is becoming so prevalent that its effects must be studied given the large impact that they may have on society. A key aspect of this research was the concept of risk. It seems that inevitably, by participating in online dating, users perceive themselves as more vulnerable, and compromised than they would be when dating in person. I then began to wonder if this

online phenomenon applies to more than online dating. Perhaps interacting with individuals online comes with its own set of risks that include vulnerability and objectification.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

From analysis of the above sources, I was able to formulate valid research questions for this research dissertation. They are as follows:

- Who is most likely to be suffer from online media harassment?
- On what platforms do victims experience the most abuse online?
- Who are the harassers?
- How does online abuse vary when taking intersectionality into consideration?

After examining current studies and existing research, I was able to identify these future areas for study as they relate to gender, race and intersectionality studies. By grounding myself in the fundamentals of gender and race studies, I gained an understanding of how these two factors function. I then combined these fundamentals with the umbrella term that is used to study these areas and how they relate along with other social factors known as intersectionality. I also gained a better understanding of existing literature as it relates to vulnerable populations categorized by demography, as well as gaining a better understanding of how media may influence these populations. The goal of this literature review was for me to better understand the relationship between demographics, online media and harassment based on existing research.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

#### **3.1.1 Overview**

I will be using a collective case study to analyze the environment that exists online and how it relates to online harassment. I will then compare and contrast case studies which have been funded by various institutions against online survey data that I collected. I will do this by carefully constructing online surveys that are both qualitative and quantitative.

For the quantitative data, I will ask question that are multiple choice questions so that the relationships can be assessed with statistics. Within the online portion of the questionnaire, I will also include some questions that are open ended and give the participants an opportunity to express themselves. I will post the survey online to ensure that it reaches a large, diverse population of people. An online survey will also provide immediate statistics that can be evaluated quantitatively to draw conclusions. The results will be organized in digital format and I can also construct these numbers into visuals or graphs that aid in understanding. I will use qualitative data to identify missing themes and to reveal attitudes and answers that I may have been omitted or otherwise not included in the survey.

This research will include an in-depth analysis of various institutions who recorded their own data with differing objectives relating to online media. Using quantitative and qualitative data, I will be analyzing both the data from each institution itself on an individual level as well as

examining how the data sets are related. The purpose of this methodology chapter will be to provide an overview of the methods used in this research and to provide an overview of the institutions whose data are the subject of my analysis.

### **3.1.2 Research Questions**

- Who is most likely to be suffer from online media harassment?
- On what platforms do victims experience the most abuse online?
- Who are the harassers?
- How does online abuse vary when taking intersectionality into consideration?

### **3.2 Quantitative VS Qualitative**

Quantitative data is made up of information that is quantifiable so that statistics can be easily performed. Qualitative data, on the other hand, is particularly descriptive and looks at phenomenon which can be seen but not easily measure numerically. Quantitative research is conceptually linked to uncovering facts about social phenomena which are definitively taking place (Minchiello, 1990, p. 5). In the case of my research, the phenomenon being studied will be the varying consistency of online treatment based on factors such as gender, social class, ethnicity, education level and age. This research will also include coded questions to uncover how users are using online media.

Researchers, who use the quantitative approach, assume that a certain level of the phenomenon exists. The researchers then go out and collect data that is relevant to the subject that they are studying. Then through statistical testing, the researchers can assess relationships by testing the relationship against a hypothesis test. After the researchers perform the

statistical test, they can make inferences based on the data that was used in the research. (Carr, 1994, p. 716). Quantitative research requires gathering data that is numerical and arranging the data by category, ranking, or some other form of measurement. A positive aspect of quantitative data is that it can be used to build graphics which display the information in interesting ways that can unveil more patterns and trends. Quantitative research is aimed at establishing rules or laws that exist in relation to a phenomenon that has an effect which can be seen across various contexts. The purpose is to test a theory to see if the researcher should accept or reject it. Although experiments are typically used to create quantitative data, it is also possible to use observations as well as questionnaires to produce quantitative information. An example of this could be that a list of closed questions or a rating scale are created to produce numerical data or data that can be broken down into categories. For example, yes/no questions are easily quantifiable as one can be coded as 0 and the other as 1 (Antonius, 2003, p. 44).

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research involves interpreting subjects with a naturalistic approach. The researchers study subjects in their natural environment and record research that attempts to make sense of phenomena in a way that relates to their intended meaning. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data is not in the form of numbers (Punch, 1998, p. 4). The qualitative approach increased in popularity as psychologists began to realize that the traditional means of carrying out research did not fully address the human aspect of things. In recording qualitative research, the research is looking to understand the social reality of the participants on a personal level, a group level, or even a cultural level. Qualitative research is aimed at solving questions like how and why?

### **3.2.2 Drawbacks with the Quantitative Approach**

The issue with the traditional quantitative approach is that it limits the ability of the participant to express natural behavior. Because experiment participants know that they are in a lab setting, they are likely to respond differently in some circumstances than they would in real life. This is also true when it comes to surveys and questionnaires. Because people know that they are being observed, social pressure come into play and can mess up the consistency of the experiment making it less effective. (Carr, 1994, p. 718)

One of the biggest limitations when it comes to recording quantitative data is a lack of variability within the data set. To conduct a strong quantitative experiment, a large sample size will be required. Smaller sample sizes are less accurate because they consist of less data. This also significantly harms the ability of the study to be relevant when taken into different situations consisting of varying populations (Denscome, 2010, p. 31). Another limitation of the quantitative method is that the statistical process can be performed inaccurately. If the researcher lacks expertise and does not apply the statistics correctly to the equation, it can have a negative effect on the outcome of the research. This can relate to variability, balancing equations correctly, and creating an appropriate null hypothesis for the data set being used. (Black, 1999, p. 3)

### **3.2.3 Drawbacks of the Qualitative Approach**

A disadvantage of qualitative data is the fact that it can be somewhat subjective. They usually do not include a large sample size. The context of qualitative data may also have inconsistencies which means that the study may not be as generalizable as quantitative research is. It is the

responsibility of the researcher to analyze the data and to do their best to explain how they came to said conclusion (Punch, p. 1998).

#### **3.2.4 When are Case Studies/ Collective Case Studies Useful?**

The use of the case study approach is particularly effective to use when a researcher is in need of obtaining an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest in its natural real-life context. (Yin, 1999, p. 1211). To define research questions worthy of case study, the researcher must be informed by existing literature and have a prior appreciation of the theoretical issues and setting to appropriately analyze the case. Each case should also have a pre-defined boundary that defines the boundaries being the nature and time period covered in the study, the relevant social group, geographical location of interest for the researcher, types of evidence used, as well as priorities for data collection and analysis (Stake, 1995, p. 1115).

The job of selecting the appropriate cases to study is another crucial element to conducting a case study. In a collective case study, numerous cases are selected for analysis. This methodology allows the benefit of replication and the advantage of finding comparisons between multiple cases. By choosing a typical case, researchers may be able to turn their findings into theory. (Stake, 1995, p. 1117). To gain a thorough understanding for each case, the case study approach usually involves a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The use of multiple sources has been approved as a way of increasing internal validity of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By conducting both quantitative and qualitative

research, researchers can develop a clearer and more definitive conclusion because it is based on a variety of research.

### **3.2.5 Limitations of Case Studies**

The biggest limitation of quantitative research in relation to a traditional case study is that it does not take place in a natural setting so the results may not carry over to real life. Case studies have been widely criticized for their lack of scientific process which some experts argue makes them less generalizable (Stake, 1995, p. 4). To ensure transparency, researchers describe the steps taken to conduct the research in detail involving the case selection, the data collection process, the reason for the particular methodology chosen as well as the researchers' background or level of involvement. To ensure generalizability, the result of a case study is never taken out of context. The result of the case study is only considered relevant in the context which it occurs. (Barbour, 2001, p. 1117)

### **3.3 Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are a form of case study research which can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature depending on the questionnaire's structure. Typically, when the researcher asks close ended questions, they are conducting quantitative research by nature as the data can be easily translated to statistics. Questionnaires which consist of open-ended questions are more qualitative in nature. The purpose of qualitative research in regard to questionnaires is that they provide a different type of analysis which requires more discussion and less numerical data (Fowler, 1995).

When it comes to new studies, the primary focus is online surveys which take place on the internet. The advantages of online questionnaires in particular is the facts that they can reach a

large population with a relatively low cost, they potentially reduce the intrusiveness of the interviewer and their equipment, and they can provide multi-media stimuli. However, online questionnaires have drawn criticism because they cannot verify the eligibility of respondents, the context in which the questionnaire is completed, along with other issues relating to internal validity. Both traditional and online methods are currently the consensus way to construct valid research with regard to questionnaires (Lavarkas, 2008).

### **3.3.1 Advantages of Questionnaires**

Advantages of online questionnaires include rapid data collection, low cost, and higher levels of objectivity when compared to other means of conducting primary data. When questionnaires are administered, they provide the researcher with immediate data which ultimately speeds up the speed of the research which can be beneficial. Also, it is relatively inexpensive to create an online survey which is still reliable in nature (Couper, 2000, p. 468).

### **3.3.2 Drawbacks of Questionnaires**

Online questionnaires come with their own drawbacks which include various forms of response bias. Researchers need to make sure that questions are worded appropriately, in a sequence which makes sense, that does not influence one way of answering over another. If questions are created in a way that is not methodical in nature, the research will not be valid. Even if the researcher creates a nearly perfect questionnaire, there may still be participants who do not answer honestly or who simply choose to select random answers. It is extremely important that the researchers who conduct questionnaire research do their due diligence to reduce all forms of response bias (Tourangeau, 2000).

### **3.4 Online Questionnaire**

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire Part 1**

The first portion of my online questionnaire will be built around finding out as much as I can about the individual respondent. I will collect data on the user's age, gender, annual household income, education level as well as their nationality. This will be helpful for finding significant relationships that exist exclusively between people who are part of specified populations.

"Demographic questions in a survey allow researchers to gain background information on their participants. These questions provide context for the collected survey data, allowing researchers to describe their participants and better analyze their data" (Allen, 2017).

#### **3.4.2 First Portion Questionnaire Questions**

What is your age?

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Have you ever applied for social security income (SSI) benefits, or not?

What is your gender?

Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

How do you identify sexually?

How likely are you to interact with online media?

Have you ever been attacked online?

#### **3.4.3 Potential Challenges Section 1**

Challenges that I could potentially encounter in recording this data is response bias. People may not be truthful in their answers. This is always a problem for online surveys, so I try to do my best to include multiple answers that suit everyone, so people are more likely to answer. I also

leave “prefer not to answer” for questions that may be considered sensitive. This could become problematic if the data becomes corrupted by too many prefer not to answers and it could be a particular group of people who keep preferring not to answer. For example, poorer people may be less likely to answer their income accurately or may be more likely to prefer no not answer. I also left some questions open ended so that users could put in their own answers. This could give people the opportunity to express themselves more individualistically in the case of nationality and gender so that everyone feels included and has a chance to answer. This could be problematic because some people may rush through the survey and not select a nationality which could again corrupt the data. To control for all forms of response bias, I will make sure that I do not take this data too seriously and that I keep an eye out for it. (Lavrakas, 2008)

#### **3.4.4 Questionnaire Part 2**

The second portion of this online survey will consist of questions that relate to online media and harassment. I will ask questions that are media specific but are coded to have relevance to survey takers true experiences with online media and harassment. This section will assess survey takers and their experience online. It will include coded questions to discover answers to questions like who has been harassed online, who they were harassed by and varying experiences in chatroom engagement.

#### **3.4.5 Sample Questions Part 2**

1. How likely are you to use online media on a daily basis?
2. Have you ever been harassed online? (cyberbullying, stalking, shaming, hacking, hate speech etc.)
3. Have you ever been called an offensive name online?
4. Have you ever been physically threatened online?

5. Do you know who attacked you online personally?
6. Did you meet the person who attacked you via the internet?
7. Have you ever been stalked online?
8. Have you ever been sexually harassed online?
9. Do you know someone other than yourself who has been harassed online?
10. On what platforms have you been harassed?

Facebook

Instagram

Snapchat

YouTube

Twitter

Other

11. If you have been harassed online, where did the harassment take place?

Social network site/ app

Comment section of a website

Discussion forum (reddit)

Online dating app

12. Have you reported online harassment to a higher authority?

Yes/no

13. Have you ever been harassed in an online chatroom?

Yes/no

14. Do you use any form of online chatroom?

Yes/ no

15. Where does the majority of online harassment take place?

Fill in

16. Where have you personally received the most harassment online?

Fill in

17. What types of harassment have you encountered online?

Fill in

### **3.4.6 Difficulties Section 2**

This portion will be the most difficult portion of my research as I have to find questions that accurately measure people's experiences and how they use online media. I will have to code questions which are practical and measure the true attitudes and opinions of the survey takers in relation to their roles in online media harassment. I will do my best to not ask questions that could be offensive or insensitive. The questions listed on these surveys will not include any bias, such as leading questions or questions that may implicate a particular attitude over another. I have also included fill in the blank questions to provide qualitative data in my research.

### **3.5 Collective Case Study**

The method that I will use to conduct my research will be through an extensive collective case study. A collective case study is one that includes more than one case that share a common denominator and they use both qualitative and quantitative research to link individual case studies together. (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe. 2010, 3). Collective case studies have also been referred to as multi-site case study or multi-study site.

The goal of collective case studies is to examine research questions within a number of contexts, using identical methods of data collection and analysis. A common theme in collective case studies is that the person who is conducting the research wants to understand both the physical site itself as well as why the result occurs. At the same time these same researchers want to develop a comparison among all of the sites that are being studied. The individual aspects that were studied originally as singular case studies can then be examined

simultaneously to create a collective place for analysis to take place (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010, p. 4). The design of this research is to examine a number of cases that are linked together through a common issue or some form of similarity. An important aspect of collective case studies is that the individual cases must share some link for them to be worthy of study as a collective. (Stake, 2005, p. 2).

When collective case studies take place, a common list of research questions are used to guide the study of each individual case. Collective case studies can be particularly useful because they are usually practical in application especially with regard to specific social institutions such as schools where it can be difficult to differentiate between context and the events that occur. In the case of this collective case study, the social institution being explored will be online media as a collective. Another important thing to keep in mind in regard to collective case studies is that it is essential that they are conceptualized within the qualitative paradigm, but it may also include both quantitative and qualitative data. Context is a critically important aspect of collective case studies to be considered and discussed in the analysis section of this research (Yin, 1981, 58). What makes case study different from simple qualitative or quantitative research is the fact that in case studies, the phenomenon is studied within the environment that it actually takes place and never take out of context, so it ensures generalizability, but it is never taken out of context.

The concept of cross-case comparison is important when conducting a collective case study because this single aspect is what differentiates it from a traditional case study. These cases are

explicitly linked through common characteristics or other commonalities which is what the researcher is primarily interested in analyzing and understanding (Johnson and Stake, 1995, 556). The group of commonalities that exists can be referred to as a quintain. This term gives researchers a precise way to refer to the data that is most relevant to this type of study. Instead of focusing on one single event, a collective case study researchers' goal is to better understand the quintain or collection of categorically bounded cases.

### **3.5.1 Potential disadvantages of Collective Case Study**

Not only do collective case study researcher face strict budget constraints, but they also sacrifice a great deal of time. For this reason, it is important that the researcher divides their time appropriately. They should spend a similar duration of time researching each case. If researchers do not plan their time out appropriately, they could end up limiting the amount of time that they are available for later study which can compromise the integrity of the experiment because the data collection process has been compromised. (Crowe et al., 2011, 11). In order to conduct a collective case study, the researcher first has to identify the research questions that they plan on exploring. The consideration of the research questions provides a greater appreciation for the research particularly with regard to the methodology that is used.

## **3.6 Organizations Data to be Analyzed**

### **3.6.1 Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, Lincoln Park Strategies**

Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies conducted a survey which included 1,000 Americans over the age of 19 and the content of the survey related to users' experiences with harassment online in the year of 2014. The surveyors elected to conduct this

study in 2014 because it was the year following the #metoo movement, a movement aimed at curbing sexual harassment, abuse, and gender inequalities. As online media has continued to allow victims an environment to speak out against harassment, this study provides statistics on anti-harassment efforts from 2014 to 2018.

The study included 1,000 adult participants 53% of which were women and 47% of which were men. The interviews were weighted for quality assurance proportionally. The Bayesian confidence interval for this survey was 3.5, which provides a margin of error that is approximately  $\pm 3.1$  at a 95% confidence interval.

### **3.6.2 PEW**

Pew Research Center is a public database that aims to inform the public about current affairs including but not limited to, opinions and trends that help set the foundation for how the world functions. The Research Center conducts polls, records demographics, performs content analysis and other research that is based on research. They also are a research center who remains neutral when it comes to influencing public opinion. They do however have the goal of creating an environment for people to read research and become educated on a topic. By providing the public with research, PEW hopes that it can enhance public dialogue by encouraging people to make judgements based on neutral, non-bias, information. By providing people with neutral researchers, people can make sound judgements relating to political opinion based on facts. (<https://www.pewresearch.org/about/>)

Pew Research has produced empirical research by means of conducting public opinion surveys. This means of conducting surveys aims to allow everyone a voice while other forms of conducting research provide the public with relevant demographic, economic, and political information to better understand society and how it functions. The research organization is one that prides itself on independence, objectivity, accuracy, humility, transparency and innovation. The statistics used for this section of case study specifically explore the subject of online harassment based on gender. “We generate a foundation of facts that enriches the public dialogue and supports sound decision-making”. (<https://www.pewresearch.org/about/>).

### **3.6.3 Rad Campaign**

Rad Campaign call themselves a digital agency, and they pride themselves in being an organization that maintains the goal of changing the world by creating innovative apps, advocacy, as well as fundraising campaigns. These innovations have a lasting impact for the industrial size nonprofits which Rad supports. As advocates for reproductive justice, LGBTQ+ rights, immigration, gun reform, education, and better living wages along with other benefits. The purpose of this organizations to create a more fair, just, and equitable society. Rad campaign also says that one of their motivations is to challenge cultural norms and other processes which enable inequalities. (<https://radcampaign.com/about>)

### **3.6.4 Lincoln Park Strategies**

Lincoln Park Strategies recognizes themselves as a ‘full-service’ research firm that takes on the work of corporations, non-profits, as well as political clients that are from various places around the world. The purpose is to help these institutions to conduct research and to collect data. In the world that is consistently evolving, Lincoln Park Strategies continues to transform and

expand the manner in which they carry out collecting and analyzing data for their clients. By using quantitative, qualitative, and analytic research methods, this research firm is able to display data in a way that is complete and more integrated. (<https://lpstrategies.com/our-work>)

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The goal of this collective case study will be to analyze the above individual case studies which have taken place and to cross-compare them with data that I have collected on my own. After understanding the content of each case study individually taking factors into consideration like, how the study was performed, what context it was performed in, who conducted the study, and during what time frame the data is based on, I will conduct a collective case study analysis. I will analyze both the data individually and collectively to see what implications can be seen and what conclusions can be made as far as online media and harassment. The analysis will primarily look at factors like gender, race, intersectionality, translatability and the role that online platforms play in the process.

By using a mixed method approach, I will be able to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a better understanding of the relationship that exists between feminism and media, as well as what it implicates (King, 1994, p. 20) The quantitative data will be useful for making statistical calculations about attitudes or opinions, and the qualitative data can be used to display the variety of ideas and to potentially categorize them in the future to show diversity or a lack thereof. Analyzing the results of this research could reveal new or changing trends that exist as far as gender studies, intersectionality, and the network of online media.

## Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

### 4.1 Safe Space Survey

To conduct my own original research, I created an intuitive survey aimed at addressing users' experiences with online media and harassment which was conducted through the means of SurveyMonkey. The #safespacesurvey consists of 20 unique questions which asks users both multiple choice and open answer questions that aim to analyze the current environment which exists online with regards to online harassment.

#### 4.1.1 Restatement of Research Questions

The first portion of question is relevant to demographic information concerned with addressing my research questions, which are:

- 1) Who is likely to be harassed when using online media?
- 2) How does online harassment vary when taking intersectionality into consideration?

The second portion of statistics are more concerned with answering the research questions:

- 1) Where does online harassment take place?
- 2) Who are the harassers?

#### 4.1.2 Response Rate and Procedure

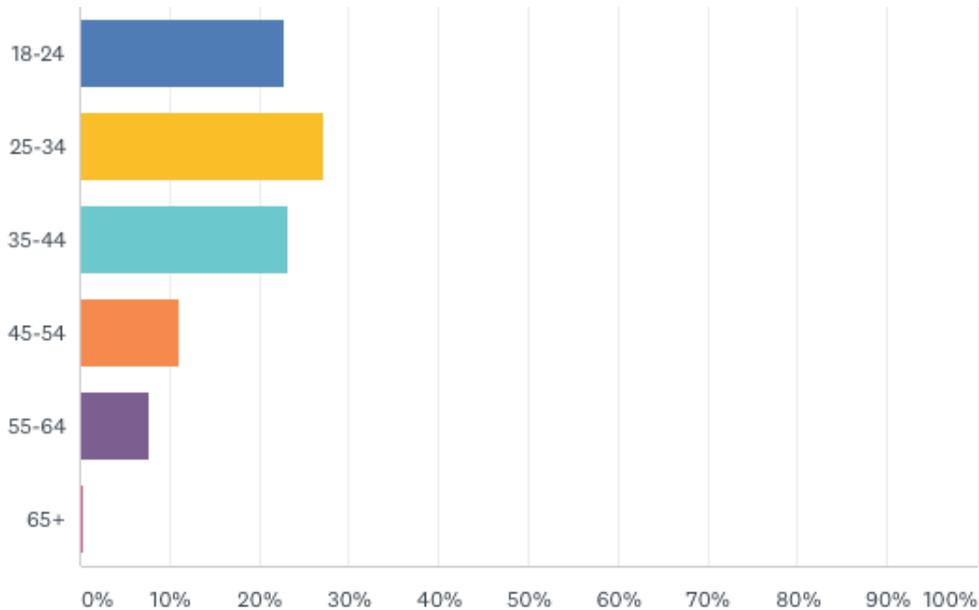
All of the data is anonymous and random, as it comes from SurveyMonkey's paid databank. The questionnaire was posted online and filled out by random participants to ensure some level of generalizability although it is not necessarily scientific in method. The data appears to follow somewhat of a normal distribution and it also appears to have a fair amount of variability. Of 206 respondents, there was a 100% response rate.

As far as methodology is concerned, I am convinced that I am using the correct scientific approach. I believe that the collective case study was the most effective methodology to analyze the information at hand because online media harassment is such a wide topic that includes a wide range of variables and factors. The usage of multiple cases helped to narrow down which areas were worthy of further study as well as allowing comparative data to compare against my own survey. By comparing the various statistics of more professional research surveys, I was better prepared to make statistical analysis based on the information I received. I initially conducted and analyzed my Safe Space survey to see what conclusions I could draw. I then pointed out unique differences that may be specific to my data set, addressing why they may or may not be generalizable, then I go on to analyze them and propose why they may be occurring along with the influence they may have. I then analyze the statistics of both the PEW Online Harassment Survey, as well as the survey conducted by Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies. The purpose of comparing my Safe Space survey statistics is to accept and/or reject my original hypothesis and to test the validity along with the generalizability of my survey, by comparing it to data which was collected by research institutions. The use of quantitative and qualitative data along with the use of multiple-choice questions offset by a number of open-ended questions seems to have been the best way to conduct this research. While more calculations and causal relationships can be assessed, this is the most prominent data which is relevant to this research dissertation.

## 4.2.1 Quantitative Data

### Online Survey: PART 1

#### 1. What is your age?

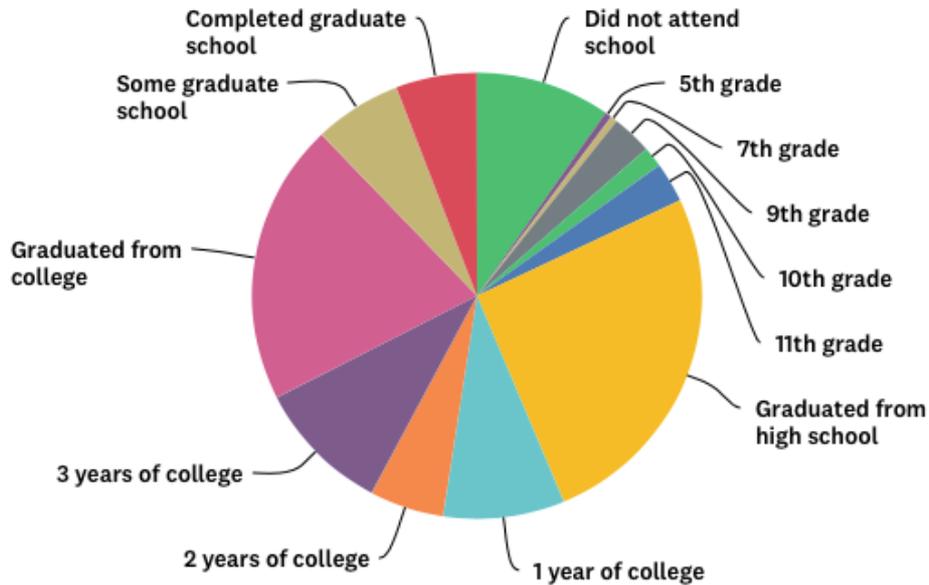


*(Figure 1)*

The purpose of this question was to establish a baseline for determining which age groups were most vulnerable to experiencing online harassment. When adjusting the filter to ages 25-34, over half, an alarming 54% of respondents admitted to being harassed online. The age group of 35-44 further demonstrate this trend and increases to 56% of participants admitting to being harassed online, while 37% of the individuals aged 55-64 had been harassed in some way which is still significantly lower than it is for individuals under 18-24 (68%). This helped me to answer the research question of who is being harassed, and it somewhat confirms my hypothesis that abuse varies by age group.

## 2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

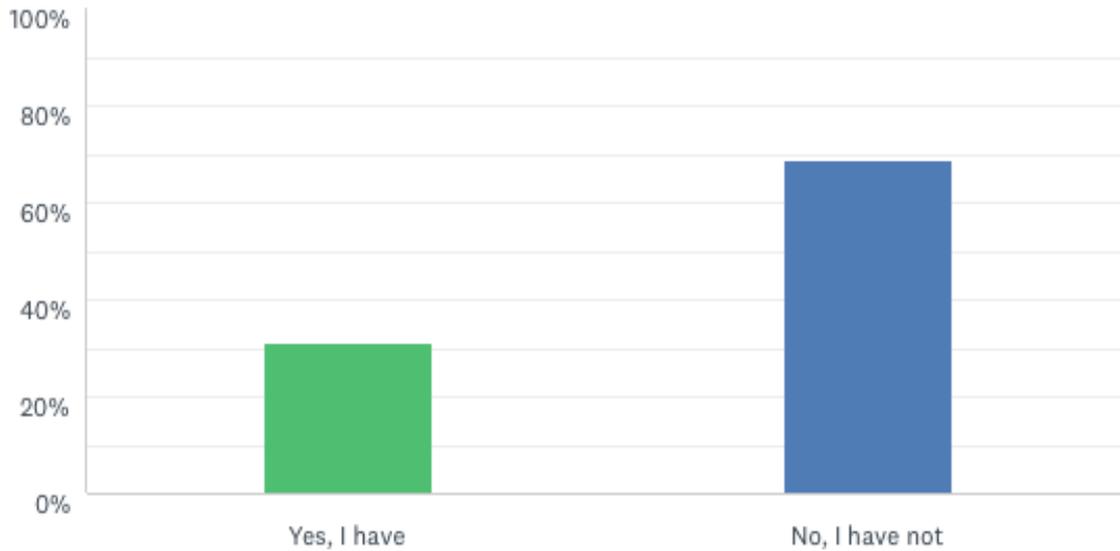
Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



(Figure 2)

For individuals who completed high school, 53% answered yes to suffering from some form of online harassment while the other 47% did not. 57% of individuals who completed some college have been harassed which may indicate an increase in vulnerability online with an increase in education level. Additionally, only 45% of individuals who said that they did not attend school encountered online harassment which may further push this theory. Interestingly enough, individuals who claimed that they either completed college or graduated from graduate school admitted to being harassed at an alarming rate of 59%. However, this data may be taken out of context given the fact that individuals who have lower education levels also interact less with online technology.

### 3. Have you ever applied for Social Security Income benefits?

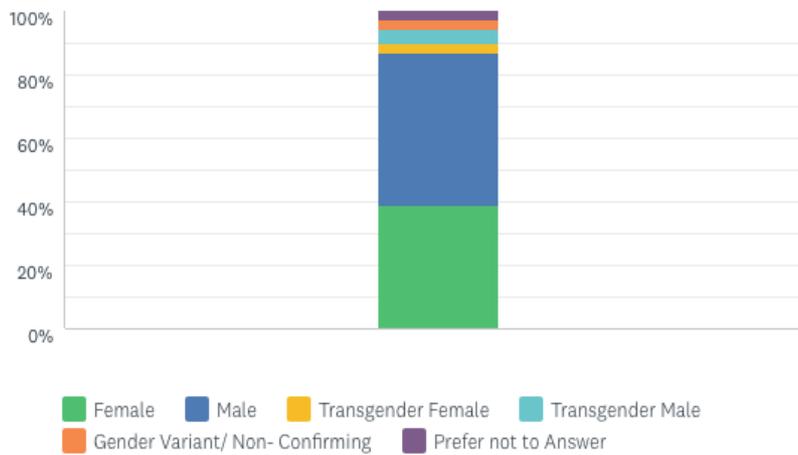


*(Figure 3)*

This question was aimed at establishing the social economic status of the participants without asking them what their income was directly. 64% of participants who received social welfare admitted to suffering from some form of online harassment. However, only 51% of respondents who did not receive social welfare suffered from online media harassment. This data may be particularly interesting given the fact that higher education levels had a positive relationship with a higher level of online harassment. Perhaps individuals with higher education have more access to online technology and are therefore more likely to be harassed. The purpose of this question was to see if online abuse varies by social economic status.

#### 4. What is your gender?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



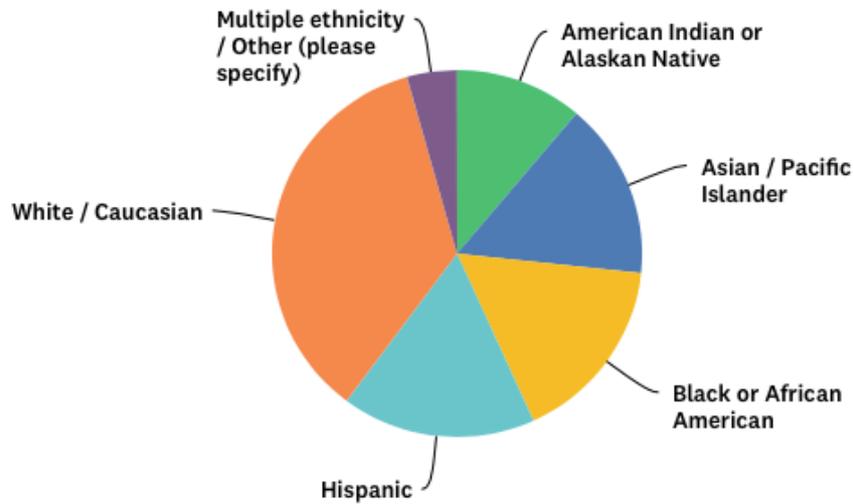
*(Figure 4)*

Based on the data collected, 52% of women suffered from some form of online harassment. 54% of men said that they suffered from online harassment, so this data is nearly equal given the amount of variability within this data set, especially considering that 48% of the population identified as male while only 39% identified as female. Of the transsexual individuals who participated in this study, 75% of them admitted to being harassed online with transsexuals who identify as males being harassed 80% of the time and 67% of transsexuals who identify as women. These statistics are somewhat unusual given the fact that most abuse of transsexual individuals who identify as women. However, these numbers may be somewhat generalizable as there was a surprising 7.5% of the population who admitted to being transgender-4.8% trans male and 2.9% trans female. The non-binary group was also harassed at a higher level 67% than cisgender male or female groups. The 'prefer not to answer' group is closer to the average at a slightly higher 60% of these users reporting harassment. I also left this question with a

comment box for users to write in answers, to give users a chance to specify but no comments were received. this answered my question of how online abuse varies by gender.

**5. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)**

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



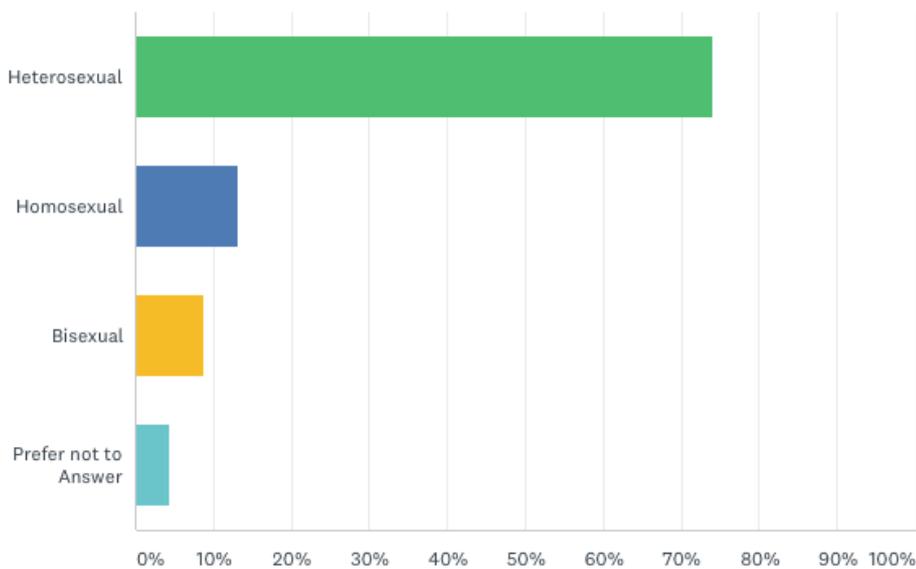
*(Figure 5)*

Of individuals who identified as white in my data set, 45% of the population experienced online harassment. It is also worth mentioning that the White/Caucasian population made up a majority of the population. An overwhelming 67% of the African American/Black population had experienced online harassment. Of the Hispanic population, 49% of the participants claimed to have fallen victim to online harassment which is closer to the average. The Asian/Pacific Islander population also seems to be at an increased risk of suffering online harassment with 63% of respondents answering the survey with yes when asked if they had been harassed online. Another interesting fact of the ethnic makeup of this data is the fact that Native

Americans suffered a high level of harassment as well, at a remarkable 70%. While these numbers may seem alarming for Native Americans, they are less likely to be generalizable given the low number of Native American respondents. Of the mixed-race population, which was also relatively small, only 55% of respondents suffered from online harassment according to the survey. If this data is credible, it may support Fausto Sterling’s theory that those who have different biological anatomy than the gender that they choose to identify also known as intersex with will be marginalized in western society because of the dichotomous system. (Fausto-Sterling, 2000)

### 6. Do you consider yourself to be?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 1



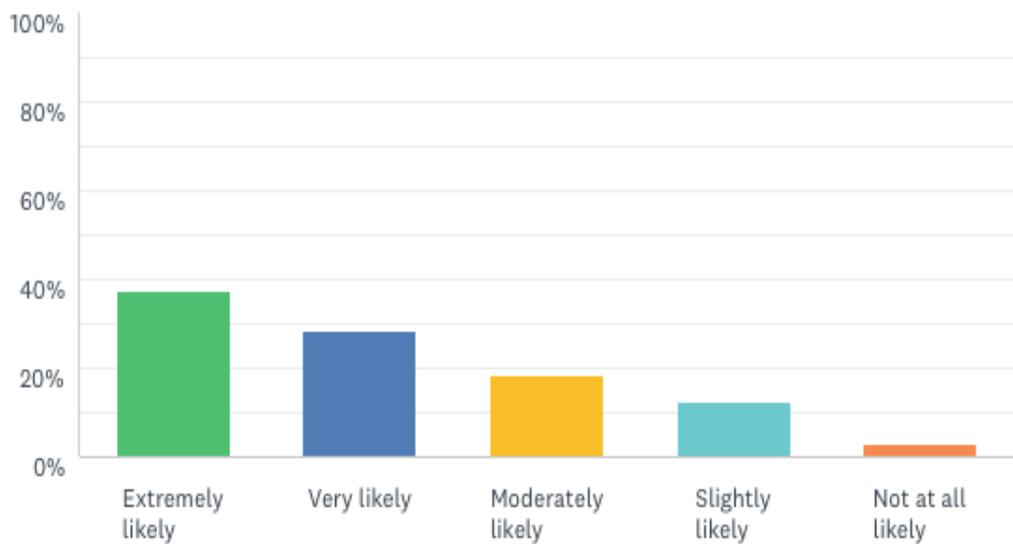
(Figure 6)

This question established demographic information relating to respondent’s sexuality. When taking sexuality into consideration, the heterosexual population which is also the majority

population of the respondents is harassed 54% of the time. Of users who participated in this survey that also identified themselves as members of the LGBTQ+ community, 59% claimed to suffer from online harassment. While this number is a slight increase from the heterosexual population, it is not dramatic, but it is significant and worth mentioning that individuals who identified as LGBTQ+ are harassed at a slightly higher rate based on this data. An alarming fact however remains that 83% of bisexual respondents said that they had suffered from harassment which could be further proof of Anne Fausto-Sterling’s theory of intersex individuals having a more difficult time navigating the dichotomist society of the western world (Fausto- Sterling, 2000). This question answered my question of how online harassment varies by sexuality.

**7. In a typical month, how likely are you to use online media platforms?**

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0

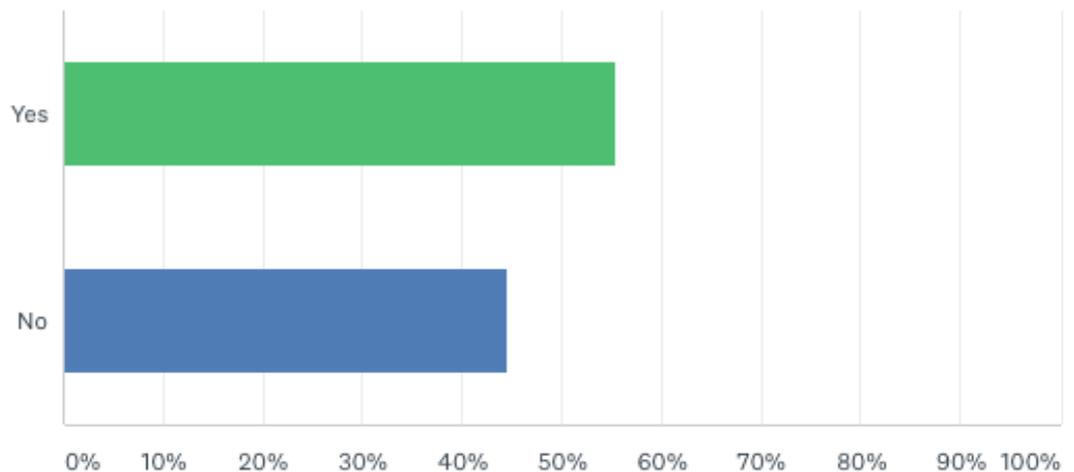


*(Figure 7)*

This data shows the internet usage rate of the respondents. Of participants who are 'extremely likely' to use the internet, 68% suffered harassment. Of the 'very likely' group, this number drops to just below half, at 49%. 'Moderate' internet users' data reported slightly higher at 53%. Of the 'slightly likely' to use online platforms group, half at 50% of users were harassed. Of the 'not at all likely' to use the internet respondent group, 0% of users admitted to suffering from harassment. Clearly, increased internet usage is a factor for increased harassment even though it is difficult to tell given the relatively small sample size.

**8. Have you ever been harassed online? (cyberbullying, stalking, shaming, hacking, hate speech etc.)”**

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



*(Figure 8)*

Of individuals who responded to this survey, 114 respondents (55%) answered yes with another 92 respondents (45%) saying that they had not been harassed. This question was used to establish a baseline for users to self-report if they had been harassed online or not. The

purpose of this question was to determine if participants had ever experienced any form of online harassment in general. Answers for this question are then compared to the answers of questions #1-7 to make comparative data. While users may report various forms of online harassment, this question was used to make comparisons related to demographic statistics. However, I followed up this question with more specific question related to online abuse, to analyze if respondents were just as likely to say that they had suffered harassment as they would be to say that they got called a name. The purpose of this is to maintain consistency. The data appears relatively consistent given the fact that individuals report experiencing harassment 55% of the time and other forms of harassment are either slightly lower, or significantly lower than 55%.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of PART 1**

It appears that online harassment does vary widely based on demographic information. Younger adults, and younger individuals in general are at an increased risk of suffering from online harassment. This hypothesis seems truer when compared to the data of the transgender population, as well as the significant differences that are seen based on sexuality. “The incidence of harassment of young women and men who do not fit into pervasive norms for gendered appearance and behavior is both well-documented and disturbing,” (MacIntosh, 1988). With the way that this data is arranged, it appears that even on the internet, gender norms come into play, and those who do not fit into a majority group are at an increased risk for harassment. Not only were individuals at increased risk of suffering harassment because of their gender and sexuality, but they were also at increased risk due to their race. Minority groups were disproportionately affected by online harassment which continue to prove

Kimberle Crenshaw’s theory that was revamped by Bim Adewunmi, “[t]he better we understand how identities and power work together from one context to another, the less likely our movements for change are to fracture the future (Adewunmi, 2014 p. 4). By better understanding the relationship that exists between race, sexuality, gender, and other demographic information, perhaps a better solution can be created to reduce online harassment that benefits most parties without harming others in the process. Also, by not understanding the identity and power structures well enough in the offline world, the internet has now replicated the same type of discrimination that exists in the real world.

**9. What types of harassment have you encountered online?**



*(Figure 9)*

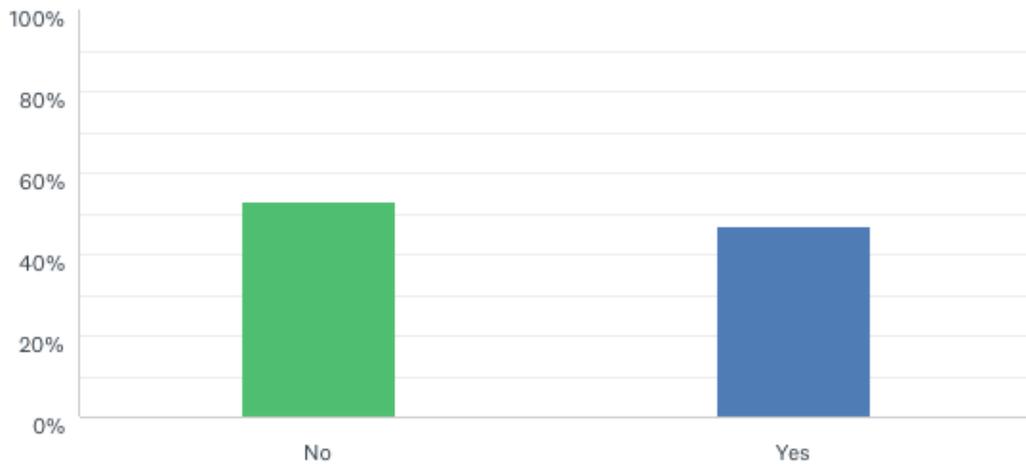
The word cloud assesses the type of harassment that participants have encountered. The prominent types of harassment appear to be threats (18%), blackmailing (9%), name-calling (11%), bullying, sexual harassment (6.4%) and comments (6%). Nothing (4%), trolling (4%), stalking (4%), hacking (4%), sexual harassment (3.5%), none (3.5%). The rest of the forms of harassment were mentioned less than 3% of the time.

### 4.2.3 Quantitative Data

#### Online Survey PART 2

##### 10. Have you ever been called an offensive name online?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



*(Figure 10)*

47% of respondents admitted to being called an offensive name online at some point. The purpose of this question was to analyze if users' responses to how often they are attacked online has a similar or lower likely of occurrence when compared to how often they are called names. The fact that based on data collected in question #8 (Figure 8) users are attacked online at a higher rate 55%, than they are name called 47% question #9 (Figure 9), may indicate more reliability in the survey. If the amount people were called an offensive name was higher than the amount that users that were harassed, it could have meant that the data was less reliable or that people do not realize that name calling is a form of online harassment.

### **11. Have you ever been physically threatened online?**

45% of respondents said yes when asked if they had been physically threatened online. While this number is lower than that of name calling at 47%, the difference is not significant. This can be an indicator that physical threats are becoming just as common as name-calling which could mean that online media is becoming more dangerous to navigate.

### **12. Do you know the individual who attacked you online personally?**

52% of participants in this survey responded that they do not know the individual who attacked them personally online. This may indicate that online media is more dangerous to interact with particularly when dealing with strangers. The purpose of this question is to find out who is doing the harassment. Normally, harassment is common to people who know each other. "Sexual Objectification is a clear component of both sexual harassment and stranger harassment" (Fairchild, & Rudman, 2008, p. 343). This may be an indication that sexual harassment is increasing given the fact that strangers are more likely to harass than people who are familiar. It may also indicate the fact that women are becoming more vulnerable because their gender is more likely than the male gender to suffer from harassment at the hands of a stranger.

### **13. Have you ever been stalked online?**

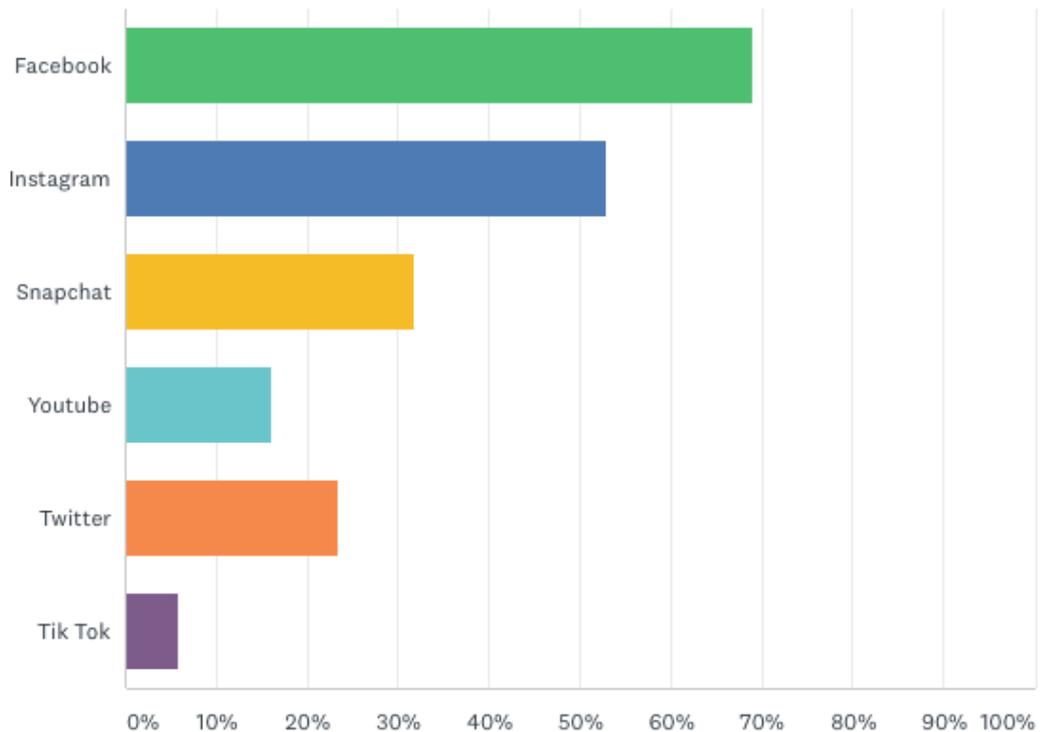
As far as stalking is concerned, 51% of people answered yes to experiencing it personally online. This is higher than name calling at 45% and physical threats at 47% as far as identified forms of online harassment. This may indicate that stalking online is becoming incredibly more prevalent when compared to name calling and physical threats. This question was also inserted to ensure some reliability when comparing various forms of online harassment.

#### 4.2.4 Analysis of Online Survey PART 2

#### Where is online harassment taking place?

#### 14. On what platforms have you been harassed?

Answered: 204 Skipped: 2



*(Figure 11)*

As far as platforms are concerned abuse varies widely by online media platforms used. This question allowed users to check multiple boxes to select platforms for which they have been harassed. Facebook was the leading platform as far as online harassment is concerned with 69% of users suffering from harassment online. This is particularly interesting given the fact that Facebook is the largest social media platform. Another 52% of respondents admitted to suffering harassment while on Instagram which puts Instagram as the second ranking platforms

as far as the data in this survey is concerned. Instagram is a partner company of Facebook and nearly as large as Facebook, so it is interesting to see that harassment is much higher on Facebook than Instagram.

Snapchat was the third most common social media app to encounter online abuse with 32% of respondents admitting to being harassed on this platform. Snapchat is significantly less likely to be used as a mechanism for harassment based on this data. This could be because Snapchat is a more personalized app, which is not as inherently social as Instagram and Facebook. Also, Snapchatters are less likely to add strangers which are perhaps the greatest perpetrators of online harassment based on this survey data (52%). This difference may also exist because Snapchat requires more interaction to be social when compared to other platforms.

16% of respondents said that they were harassed on YouTube. YouTube, another partner of Google and Facebook, but has decreased in popularity in recent years. YouTube allows users the ability to post videos that they have created themselves and to share them with other YouTubers. Perhaps this statistic indicates that YouTube is a relatively safe app to use online with regards to harassment when compared to other online platforms. . The low figure could arise simply because YouTube users in this survey suffered less abuse because of the decline in popularity of YouTube.

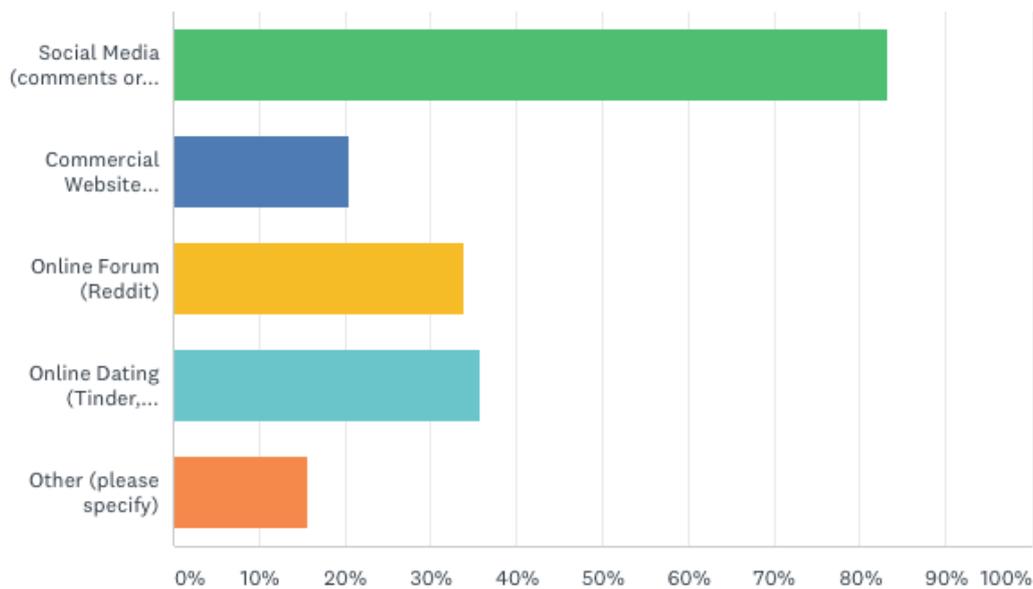
29% of respondents said that they had been harassed on Twitter which is significantly lower than Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. This is particularly interesting given Twitter's high usage rate and the makeup of its website which relies on opinions and frequent interaction with the general public. It is also particularly interesting given the fact that Twitter has grown rapidly since 2006 (Megarry, 2014, p.46), and it has been underexamined as a social institution

(Couch et al., 2012). Perhaps Twitter has taken appropriate steps to curb online harassment and other platforms should follow. Again, Twitter could simply be declining in popularity which makes survey respondents less likely to have been harassed there.

Tik-Tok, a relatively new app seems to be doing particularly well as far as online abuse goes at an extremely low 8%. This could be because Tik-Tok is a relatively new platform and not many users have used it. However, Tik-Tok is a Chinese operated social app which operates differently to the other apps in this study which are American based. Tik-Tok may be the new standard as far as social media apps are concerned, when it comes to being safe from harassment when interacting with online media.

**15. If you have been harassed online, where did the harassment take place?**

Answered: 204 Skipped: 2



*(Figure 12)*

To the extent that online harassment takes place, social media is where the majority of harassment is taking place with 83% of participants claiming this is where they were harassed.

This can be extremely concerning given the high prevalence of social media apps in today's society. With social media en masse increasing in popularity every year, one can only wonder if the increase in harassment will follow the same trend until more innovative and better policies are created.

Significantly, the next most popular place for users to encounter harassment based on this survey is when using online dating apps like Tinder and Bumble. 36% of users who participated in this survey experienced harassment while dating online, which could indicate problems for those who are looking for relationships online. Online dating is an increasingly popular trend, similar to social media apps, rapidly growing in popularity:

Searching online for sex might present risks of 'unwanted contact, con-consensual behavior and violence' although it is not clear whether this occurs with any greater frequency when the contact has been initiated through the internet compared to other means" (Liamputtong and Pitts, 2012, p. 701).

This may indicate online dating apps as extremely dangerous with regard to sexual harassment and online harassment in general. Online dating could be the future of dating; therefore, more appropriate measures need to be taken to make sure that those who are looking to date online do not suffer.

34% of online users who participated in this survey said that they had suffered from some form of online harassment while interacting with a commercial website, such as Amazon or eBay. This places online dating and online forums at similar rankings as far as online harassment is concerned.

Commercial website users experience harassment 20% of the time. Although this statistic is significantly lower than online dating and online discussion forums, online users are still at risk when using commercial websites, like Amazon and eBay. This may prove that commercial websites are where the least amount of harassment takes place, but there is still harassment taking place further demonstrating the dangerous potentials of online media. As far as qualitative data is concerned, I left respondents the opportunity to indicate other places where they had suffered online harassment. The overwhelming answer seems to be online gaming as a missed topic of discussion. Of the 16% of respondents who chose to write in their own answer, 59% wrote they had not been harassed, 1% mention social media indicating 'Snapchat' or 'Twitter', .05% simple wrote 'other', and the remaining 38% wrote in online gaming, or some form of gaming console as an instrument used for online harassment. This proved that taking a qualitative perspective was extremely important for finding lurking themes. Online gaming was not mentioned in my multiple-choice list and based on this data, perhaps it should have been. Its omission as an option could have reduced likelihood of respondents to say that they had been harassed online.

**16. Where does the majority of online harassment take place? (open answer)**



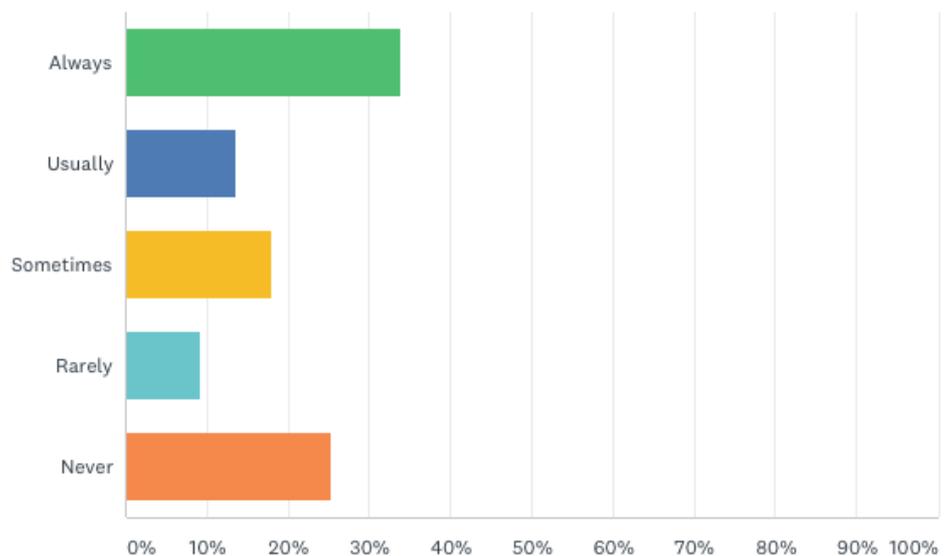
*(Figure 13)*

The purpose of this question was to ask an open question to give participants a chance to respond with their own opinions. While this data is still quantifiable the purpose of this question was to take somewhat of a qualitative approach to see which answers could have been missed. Not only does it allow hidden themes to be found, but it also allows me an opportunity to see if the open responses correlate to the initial question of where respondents are being harassed.

The data collected in the open answer question was relatively close to those collected throughout the survey. Social media was the most common term used in the word cloud, further demonstrating the ongoing theme based on this data; social media in general? is the biggest threat to online safety. Facebook, a social media app, was the second most common term that appears in the word cloud securing its spot as the most misused online platform. Instagram, another social media app was a close second to Facebook for open ended responses, Twitter, third, and Snapchat came in fourth. IG, an abbreviation for Instagram also got a large amount of responses which means that Instagram was even closer to Facebook as far as online harassment is concerned based on this data. Other terms included in the word cloud are, 'comments, messages, social, Tinder, games and online games.' This data may indicate that comments are where people are receiving the harassment within social media, as well as messages. It also indicates Tinder as the next social media app behind Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. As mentioned previously, online gaming appears to be a growing environment for online harassment based on the feedback included in this open-ended question.

### 17. Have you reported online harassment to a higher authority?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



*(Figure 14)*

As far as reporting online harassment goes, 34% of participants say that they always report harassment to a higher authority. Another 14% of participants say that they usually report harassment, 18% of respondents say they sometimes report harassment, 9% say that they rarely report it and 25% never report online harassment to a higher authority. This data may indicate that a number of people are helping to derail online harassment by reporting it. With this course of action perhaps social media networks, and online media as a whole can do a better job at curbing online media harassment. However, with the other 35% of individuals not reporting or rarely reporting harassment, it can be more difficult to put an end to harassment because reporting it is one of the best ways to prevent it from recurring. “The experience of testifying and the aftermath have changed my life,” (Rucinski, 1989, p. 755) is what Anita Hill, political activist, said when describing the effects of speaking out against politician Clarence

Thomas. Hill noted that by speaking out against harassment, she encouraged women and other victims of harassment to come forward and it had a large impact on the #MeToo movement and reducing harassment. Perhaps if people who encounter the online harassment are more willing to take action against it, the overall amount of harassment will decrease. To follow this with more recent research directly related to online media, the failure to report harassment may be caused by a lack of regulation and a failure to effectively punish those who harass others online (Megarry, 2014, p. 46).

### **4.3 Qualitative Data**

#### **4.3.1 Case Study 1**

##### **Pew Research Center Online Harassment Survey (2014)**

The method that PEW research center uses in its experiment to observe users' experiences online with harassment was one which consisted of asking participants about six different types of online harassment. The survey was self-administered via the internet to 2849 participants.

According to adult users who participated in this study, approximately: (Duggan, 2014, p. 2)

- 60% of internet users admitted to observing someone being called a name which could be considered offensive
- 73% of adults who use the internet have experienced some form of harassment
- 53% of internet users saw efforts made to purposefully embarrass someone
- 25% of internet users had seen someone being physically threatened
- 24% of users admitted to seeing someone else being harassed so an extended period of time

- 19% of users admitted to seeing someone else being sexually harassed
- 18% of users said they had seen someone be stalked

Of Internet users who experience online harassment, these individuals' experiences with abuse varies as follows:

- 27% of internet users suffered some form of name calling
- 22% have had someone try to purposefully embarrass them
- 8% have experienced stalking
- 6% have experienced sexual harassment

PEW's survey was divided into two portions. The first portion of the survey took note of user's experiences with name-calling and embarrassment. The second portion of this survey consisted of a smaller sample size, but it included different forms of online harassment which may be seen as more severe or more personal. These forms of online harassment include: Physical threats, harassment over a sustained period of time, stalking, and sexual harassment. Of the population in PEW's study who admitted to being harassed (22% of all participants) 55% have experienced name calling and or embarrassment. However, the other 45% of users who admitted to experiencing online abuse encountered either physical threats, harassment of extended duration, stalking and sexual harassment.

**Who is Harassed?** (Duggan, 2014, pp. 3-4)

The results for PEW's research indicate that age and gender are associated with varying experiences in online harassment among adults.

- Younger adults aged 18-29 in general are most likely to encounter online harassment when compared to other age groups.

- 65% of adults aged 18-29 were the victim of at least one of the six elements of harassment that were used in this survey.

Another significant aspect of the data collected by PEW Research is the fact that it indicates younger women are at extreme risk of encountering online harassment:

- 26% of young women who participated in this survey encountered stalking
- 25% of young were target of sexual harassment.
- Young men and young women both are at increased risk for encountering physical threats and sustained harassment.

Men are marginally more likely to encounter at least one form of online harassment with:

- 44% of men admitting to experiencing online harassment and only 37% of women admitting to experiencing at least one form of online harassment.
- Men are also more likely to experience name-calling, embarrassment, as well as physical threats.

**Who is doing the harassing?** (Duggan, 2014, p. 4)

Of adults in this survey who admitted to experiencing at least one form of online harassment:

- 38% said that they did not know the person who was responsible for their most recent experience with harassment.
- 26% of these individuals also admitted that they do not know the true identity of the person who harassed them.

This means that half of the adults in this survey who experienced online harassment do not know who harassed them in their most recent online encounter.

**Where is the harassment taking place?** (Duggan, 2014, pp. 5-6)

- 66% of internet users who admitted experiencing online harassment said that it took place on a social networking app.
- 22% said that they were harassed on the comment section of a website which they had visited.
- 16% suffered some form of harassment when online gaming.
- 16% said they received emails to their personal accounts that would be considered harassment.
- 10% attributed their online harassment to an online discussion site like reddit.
- 6% said that they experienced some form of abuse on an online dating app or website.

Females and younger adults in general were more susceptible to suffering harassment on social media than any other place online. Men and young men in particular tend to experience online harassment when online gaming and they are likely to report it as their most recent experience with online harassment.

Of adults who experienced some form of online harassment, 60% chose to ignore their most recent incident while the other 40% took action to fight back. Of the adults who chose to respond to their most recent encounter, people took action in the following ways: (Duggan, 2014, pp. 5-6)

- 47% confronted the person who harassed them online directly.
- 44% unfriended or blocked the person.
- 22% reported the harasser to the website or online service.
- 18% made a public discussion online to bring the problem to the light.

- 13% changed the name of their profile or deleted their profile altogether.
- 10% left the online forum.
- 8% stopped attending some places events OFFLINE.
- 5% reported the problem to law enforcement.

Interestingly enough, whether people chose to ignore the harassment or people chose to report the harassment, both parties were almost equally as satisfied with the outcome. 83% of individuals who chose to ignore online harassment, and 75% of those who responded with some form of action were satisfied with the outcome or that it at least significantly improved the situation.

Individuals who encountered stalking, sexual harassment, and physical threats had significantly different responses to their most recent encounter when compared to the individuals who suffered name calling and embarrassment.

- 67% of the individuals who experienced stalking, physical threats, sexual harassment, and/ or sustained harassment took additional steps to respond to their latest threat.
- only 30% of the individuals who experience only name-calling or embarrassment chose to respond with any action.

The individuals who are experiencing more severe forms of online harassment are more likely to unfriend or block their harasser, confront the person directly online, reporting the person to the online service, and perhaps even stop attending certain events that occur offline as well.

The last portion of this survey explored the environment that exists online to gain a context about how the respondents perceive online environments, as well as what their attitudes and opinions of them are. Collectively, 92% of the participants agree that the environment which

exists online allows others to be hypercritical of one another when compared to their experiences with the offline environment. Of significance, 68% of the participants also agreed that online environments allow them to support others more easily than offline, and 63% of participants also believe that the online environment allows people the ability to maintain anonymity more easily than offline. (Duggan, 2014)

#### **4.3.2 A Comparative Study:**

##### **SAFE SPACE SURVEY with PEW**

Of the data collected in my Safe Space survey, 47% of participants were victims of online harassment, admitted to falling victim to name-calling. The survey conducted by PEW research reported a slightly higher experience of name-calling as 55% of the population said they suffered from name-calling. While my survey consisted of a smaller sample size (N=206), this data is within a similar range with a much larger data set (N=4,248), so the conclusion can be made that name-calling occurs somewhere near the range of 47%-55%.

25% of internet users who participated in the PEW research admitted to witnessing someone being physically threatened online. The data in my survey suggests that physical threats are being received at a much higher percentage with 45% of respondents answering yes when asked if they had been physically threatened online. This could demonstrate the phenomenon of online harassment becoming something that is taboo, underreported, and unregulated (Megarry, 2014, p.47).

The data collected by PEW research demonstrated significantly different harassment levels when compared to data collected in the Safe Space survey.

**PEW:** (Duggan, 2014, p. 2)

27% of internet users suffered some form of name calling.

22% have had someone try to purposefully embarrass them.

8% have experienced stalking.

6% have experienced sexual harassment.

**SAFE SPACE:**

47% name calling.

45% of respondents said yes when asked if they had been physically threatened online.

51% of people answered yes to experiencing stalking personally online.

12% of individual responded (sexual, sexism, or sexual harassment) as a key word when asked what type of harassment they had encountered online.

The range for general forms of harassment are significantly different which may indicate a lower level of validity in the data that I have collected. Users could have been more likely to indicate harassment because they knew that they were participating in an online survey, or perhaps respondents did not spend enough time evaluating and answering the multiple-choice questions. However, there is room for optimism as the number for sexual harassment are statistically similar which may indicate some validity. Also, the fact that users who participated in my Safe Space survey reported experiencing sexual harassment 12% of the time which is close to PEW's 8%, could indicate that the data can be taken more seriously. The fact that my data was collected through an open response question may further bolster this argument.

## **Where does online harassment take place?**

### **PEW Research Data:** (Duggan, 2014, pp. 5-6)

- 66% of internet users who admitted experiencing online harassment said that it took place on a social networking app.
- 22% said that they were harassed on the comment section of a website which they had visited.
- 16% suffered some form of harassment when online gaming.
- 16% said they received emails to their personal accounts that would be considered harassment.
- 10% attributed their online harassment to an online discussion site like Reddit.
- 6% said that they experienced some form of abuse on an online dating app or website.

### **Safe Space Data:**

- 83% social media (comments or direct messages).
- 21% commercial website (Amazon, eBay).
- 34% online forum (Reddit).
- 36% online dating.

16% other (gaming, email etc.) Incidentally, this data seems to follow a more similar distribution. Social media appears to be the consensus winner for where the majority of online harassment is taking place. When taking a look at commercial websites, we can see that both study groups report a similar level of harassment at just above 20%.

## **Conclusion: Safe Space and PEW**

The purpose of undertaking a comparative study with my Safe Space Survey and the data collected by the Researchers at PEW was to search for themes which may be common between each individual study. These two studies appear to show similar trends in statistics although the results are far from conclusive. However, based on observing both data sets, it appears that name calling is the most common form of online harassment. The data also suggest that users who do encounter online harassment, are not very likely to share their experiences with their peers which may lower general online harassment awareness. Sexual harassment seems to be occurring somewhere between 8% and 12% of the time which confirms Rudman and Fairchild's theory that sexual harassment should be studied in the online world as much as it is in the workplace or school (2008). Social media seems to be the overwhelming answer for where online media harassment takes place, with Facebook being the most misused. Commercial websites and online forums also receive their fair share of online harassment; however, they are significantly safer to navigate than social media apps abused on the data presented in these surveys.

### 4.3.3 Case Study 2

#### **Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, Lincoln Park Strategies Survey**

(<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

#### **Who is harassed?** (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

- During the year of 2014, 25% of Americans who participated in this survey admitted to being bullied, harassed, or threatened online, or admitted that they know someone other than themselves who has.
- The percentage then drops to 22% in 2016 and increases dramatically to 28% in 2018.

#### **Does it vary by race?** (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

When taking color into perspective, the numbers for 2018 say that 38% of Hispanic/Latin participants, 32% of black participants, 26% of white participants and 18% of Asian participants encountered some form of online harassment. These numbers significantly differ from 2016 where 34% Hispanic/Latin, 16% Black, 18% White, and 36% Asian admitted to encountering some form of online harassment. In 2014, 34% Hispanic/Latin, 28% Black, 20% White, 30% Asian encountered some form of online harassment. Native Americans are not included in this study due to a low number of participants and a low response rate which could have created bias.

#### **Does harassment vary by gender?** (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

Of the adults who participated in this survey, harassment varied significantly by gender. In 2014, 57% of women participants experienced some form of online harassment while only 43% of men admitted to experiencing some form of harassment. The gender gap continues in 2016,

as well as 2018 with 55% and 57% respectively of women experiencing harassment with men experiencing just 45% and 42% respectively.

These numbers become even more interesting when it comes to adults who admit to knowing someone else who has been harassed. 63% of women in the survey admitted to knowing someone other than themselves who were harassed online in 2014 compared to 37% of men.

In 2016, the numbers almost leveled out with nearly 54% women admitting to knowing someone other than themselves who had been harassed and 47% from men. However, the numbers then polarized again in 2018 with 62% of women and 38% of men admitting that they know someone other than themselves who had suffered at least one form of online harassment. These numbers may further perpetuate (Wade et al., 2014) that women are at a higher risk of facing harassment in society.

**Who is doing the harassing?** (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

47% of participants under the age of 35 said that they had been harassed or knew someone else who had been harassed in 2014. This number remained the same in the year of 2016 47%, however the percentage increased again to 55% in 2018.

Another interesting trend of this study was the fact that 67% of Americans who participated in this study admitted to knowing their harasser. This number then decreased to 61% in 2016 and dramatically decreased to 47% in 2018. Based on this survey, people are now being harassed more by people who they do not know which was not always the case.

However, young people still admitted to knowing who their harasser was at 72% in both 2014 and 2016. However, this number also decreased slightly to 66% in 2018.

### **Where does online harassment take place? (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)**

Based on the results of this survey, people encounter the most abuse on Facebook. This trend has also steadily increased with 62% of participants in 2014, 63% of participants in 2016, and 68% of participants in 2018 said that they experienced harassment on Facebook. Harassment experiences on Instagram and snapchat have nearly doubled from 5% experiencing abuse on one of the platforms to 11% experiencing abuse on Instagram and 10% experiencing abuse on snapchat. Also, according to this data, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn have been able to significantly reduce their harassment levels.

Another curious fact about the survey participants, is that over half at 53%, say that social networks do not do an effective job when it comes to dealing with hate speech and hate groups. 17% say that social networks alone are effective while another 30% are unsure if social networks are effective at dealing with hate speech.

Of participants who encountered online harassment, 25% of people reported the problem to the platform with this number increasing to 39% in the year of 2018.

(<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

#### **4.3.4 A Comparative Study**

##### **SAFE SPACE SURVEY with Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies**

This survey takes place biennially and collects data related to shifts in internet usage as well as online harassment. The biennial surveys first began taking place in 2014, and they have taken place in 2016 as well as 2018. Each survey consist of 1,000 Americans and the survey consists of questions relating to users' experiences with online harassment. Participants are all aged over 18 and the result were weighted to ensure proportional results. The larger sample size and the

duration of the study and the statistical method used are reasons to use this data for comparative analysis. (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

### **Who is harassed?**

#### **Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies:**

2014 - 25% of Americans who participated in this survey admitted being bullied, harassed, or threatened online, or admitted that they know someone other than themselves who has.

2016 - 22% of Americans who participated in this survey admitted being bullied, harassed, or threatened online, or admitted that they know someone other than themselves who has.

2018 - 28% of Americans who participated in this survey admitted being bullied, harassed, or threatened online, or admitted that they know someone other than themselves who has.

(<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

#### **Safe Space:**

2020 - 55% of Americans who participated in this survey admitted being bullied, harassed, or threatened online, or admitted that they know someone other than themselves who has.

During my research, which was completed in July 2020, 55% of respondents admitted to encountering online harassment which may lower the validity of my data given the alarmingly high amount of harassment. While it is likely that online harassment is increasing, it is unlikely to have increased exponentially in a 2 year period based on previous data.

#### **Who is harassed by color?**

When taking color into perspective, and without including data related to Native Americans due to a significantly lower response rate, the numbers for 2018 say that 38% of Hispanic/ Latin participants, 32% of Black participants, 26% of White participants and 18% of Asian participants

encountered some form of online harassment. Native Americans were omitted from this cross-study due to possible lack of access. These numbers significantly different from 2016 where 34% Hispanic/Latin, 16% Black, 18% White, and 36% Asian admitted to encountering some form of online harassment. In 2014, 34% Hispanic Latin, 28% Black, 20% White, 30% Asian encountered some form of online harassment. The data collected in my study show that 16% of Hispanics, 16% of Blacks, 15% of Asians and 35% of whites encounter online harassment. This may further indicate that my data is not to be taken too seriously given its inability to match previous data trends collected by the professionals at WWT, RC, and LP.

### **Who are the harassers?**

Another interesting trend of this study was the fact that 67% of Americans who participated in this study admitted to knowing their harasser. This number then decreased to 61% in 2016 and dramatically decreased to 47% in 2018. Based on this survey, people are now being harassed more by people who they do not know which was not always the case. Of the data collected in my study which takes place in 2020, 52% of respondents said that they did not know who the individual was that harassed them online. This may continue to prove the fact that people now know the identity of their harasser less than half of the time.

### **How does harassment vary when considering gender?**

Of the adults who participated in this survey (WWT, RC, LP) harassment varied significantly by gender. In 2014, 57% of women participants experienced some form of online harassment while only 43% of men admitted to experiencing some form of harassment. The gender gap continues in 2016 as well as 2018 with 55% and 57% of women experiencing harassment with men experiencing just 45% and 42% respectively. (<http://onlineharassmentdata.org>)

Based on the data collected in my Safe Space survey 2020, 52% of women suffered from some form of online harassment. 54% of men said that they suffered from online harassment, therefore this may be an indicator of invalid or unreliable data.

**Where does online media harassment take place?**

Based on the results of this survey, people encounter the most abuse on Facebook. This trend has also steadily increased with 62% of participants in 2014, 63% of participants in 2016, and 68% of participants in 2018 said that they experienced harassment on Facebook.

**Conclusion: Safe Space and Women Who Teach, Rad Campaign, and Lincoln Park Strategies?**

According to Safe Space survey data, Facebook was the leading platform insofar as online harassment is concerned with 69% of users who suffered from harassment online saying that Facebook was the platform on which it occurred. Although the other social media data is not necessarily comparative, it does seem to promote the hypothesis that Facebook is the most widely misused social media application. This hypothesis may be proven further by including the word cloud (Figure 16) presented again below which indicates Facebook as the most common place for online users to suffer harassment. Social Media also appears to be the most commonly misused form of online media with regard to harassment.



## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Overview**

The purpose of this research dissertation is to evaluate contemporary online media and the interconnection that it has with online harassment. With a society that is heavily involved in technology, and consistent growth therein, the repercussions and effects of interacting with online media are yet to be fully understood. This research provides insight into how the dynamic of online media and the disproportional impact it may have on individuals when it comes to experiencing harassment online. The research questions of this dissertation are:

- 3) Who is likely to be harassed when using online media?
- 4) How does online harassment vary when taking intersectionality into consideration?

The second portion of statistics are more concerned with answering the research questions:

- 3) Where does online harassment take place?
- 4) Who are the harassers?

### **5.2 Literature Review Summation**

The purpose of the literature review was to establish a more complete understanding for the topics that are covered in this research. By analyzing the work of prominent feminists Lorber (1993), Wollstonecraft (1792), Stuart-Mill (1869), de Beauvoir (1949), Freidan (1963), as well as, Fausto-Sterling (2000) and Courtemanche (2020), I was able to better understand gender inequalities and the way that they cooperate both historically and in contemporary society. Wollstonecraft (1792) also showed me an example of how to use scientific reasoning to uncover sociological inequalities that are based on opinion rather than fact. De Beauvoir (1949)

gave me a complete understanding of gender norms and how they relate to prescriptive stereotypes that apply to gender and online media. The work of Jaworski and Krishnamurthi (2012) and Lorber (1993) helped me to understand why biology is not a perfect indicator of gender as there are too many factors to consider when considering gender. Following up this, Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) I was better able to understand how a dichotomous system inadvertently causes discrimination where people do not fit neatly into one of the two categories. Davis (2018) made me aware that social media and online media does have an impact on one identity, sexuality, and gender which makes it worthy of future study especially with regards to harassment given its high interaction and usage rate. McIntosh (1988) gave me scholarly research which may still give reason as to why it is that white males seem to experience a more optimal world in nearly every aspect because they are the majority population. Hill-Collins (1989) followed by Crenshaw (1991) helped me to understand how discrimination can become more unique when merging individual factors in what they define as intersectionality. Rucinski (1993) and Eisenham (1993) account of the Anita Hill v Clarence Thomas case taught me a practical scenario in which intersectionality was a factor. Wade et al (2014) gave me a hint as to which individuals are more likely to experience harassment and why. Rudman and Fairchild (2008) educated me to the fact that usually harassment is studied in the institutions of school or workplace which lead me to believe that online media is lacking research when compared to these institutions although online media is probably the most interacted with. Megarry (2014) builds on my hypothesis that online media is understudied and adds that even though women are speaking out against harassment, the acts that are performed against them are not being classified as harassment because they are taking place

online. Couch et al. (2012) made me aware that the new world of online dating is also understudied although it has grown in prevalence from a marginalized form of dating to a more mainstream approach. By connecting all of this research, and identifying gaps in existing scholarship, I was able to create informed research questions, and I was more prepared to analyze the results of my own research.

### **5.3 Methods Chosen and Rationale**

The method of collective case study by means of online questionnaire was effective for analyzing the data collected in my survey and it allowed me the opportunity to compare, contrast, and make new conclusions based on the data of various institutions. After I completely understood how each case study functioned individually, I was able to perform collective analysis and to draw conclusions which are supported by more than one type of data, and more than one data set.

By using quantitative data in the form of multiple-choice questions, I was able to conceptually link demographic information to online media interaction, as well as online media harassment (Minchiello, 1990). The quantitative data collected through open-ended questions also allowed me the opportunity to test it and make inferences Carr (1994). Punch (1998) made me aware that qualitative research is that which is not in the form of numbers and that they are typically geared towards finding out why or how. He also made me aware of one of the drawbacks of quantitative data which is that biases are a common occurrence in surveys and questionnaire, and they can lower the generalizability of the study. Denscombe (2010) made me aware of the

fact that larger populations that are more representative of real-world populations are more effective and more generalizable. Punch (1998) explains that using qualitative data can come with its own drawback which include lower response rate leading to lower levels of generalizability and it leaves the experimenter with the job of arbitrarily finding a way to analyze the data. I did this in the form of a demonstrative word cloud (Figure 9 & 10). Yin (1999) demonstrates the fact that case studies and collective case studies are effective when it comes to understanding a phenomenon. In the case of this dissertation, online media harassment and the relationship it has to individualistic factors is the phenomenon studied. Also, by selecting a typical case, the researcher may be able to turn their findings into theory (Stake, 1995, p. 1117) Stake also criticizes case studies for their lack of scientific rigor which he argues makes them only generalizable to the environment which they occur. Stake (1995) argues that collective case studies are particularly advantageous when it comes to replication of results, and comparative analysis which is why I went forward with this methodology and believe that it is the most effective way to evaluate online media harassment. Fowler (1995) made me aware that open-ended questions can be considered qualitative in nature which is why I include them in my survey. By using both qualitative and quantitative approach in my methodology, I was able to make my results more valid (Lavarkas, 2008). Understanding all three surveys individually and then cross comparing also benefited me as far as validity is concerned.

## **5.4 Discussion of Findings and Analysis**

### **5.4.1 Which Individuals/groups are more likely to suffer from online harassment?**

Based on the results of the research of this dissertation; it is clear that some individuals are more susceptible to encountering online harassment when compared with individuals from

different groups. It appears that younger individuals are significantly more likely to encounter online harassment when compared to older individuals.

### **Key Findings**

- Socio-economy status also appears to play a factor with wealthier individuals being more prone to encountering online harassment (Figure 1).

This may be due to the fact that individuals who are of a higher socio-economic status have more access to online technologies and spending more time online has a positive relationship with encountering harassment.

- While there is no consensus for whether online harassment varies by male or female, it does appear that females are at a slight disadvantage (Figure 2).

- However, members of the LGBTQ+ community are at significantly increased risk for suffering online media harassment with transgender individuals being the most susceptible (Figure 2).

- Minority ethnic groups are also at an increased risk for encountering harassment when they navigate the world of online media. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, as well as Native Americans are at an increased risk of suffering harassment (Figure 5).

- The level of harassment that users encounter appears to be directly related to the amount of time spent online.

- More time spent online has a positive relationship with the amount of harassment encountered (Figure 4).

- Around half of individuals whose data was analyzed in this dissertation admitted to encountering online harassment (cyberbullying, stalking, shaming, hacking, hate speech etc.) (Figure 5)

This data proves that there are many similarities between individuals who are likely to be harassed whether it be online or offline. Minority groups, whether they are classified by age, race, sexuality, gender among other factors are at an increased risk for encountering harassment. (Wade, et al. 2014, p. 16) This dissertation may prove that the same is true for online harassment.

#### **5.4.2 On what platforms do victims experience the most online harassment?**

Where online harassment is taking place is a more complex question to answer. The overwhelming answer appears to be social media with: Facebook being the leader among platforms. Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter follow closely behind although participants reported lower levels of harassment on these platforms (Figure 7, 8, and 9). Online dating seems to be the next most dangerous place for individuals who choose to interact online with online forums having a similar level of misuse. This may perpetuate the theory that searching online for relationships is related to an increased risk of harassment or unwanted contact. (Liamputtong and Pitt, 2012, p. 700)

Commercial websites seem to be relatively safe in comparison, although they are still widely misused (Figure 8). Online gaming appears to be the most prominent emerging place for online harassment with participants naming various gaming consoles, platforms, and games when giving the chance to state where they had been harassed. As far as types of abuse are concerned, the most prominent forms taking place are threats, blackmailing, sexual harassment, bullying and stalking (Figure 10). Less prominent forms of harassment seem to be trolling, hate speech, racism and body shaming.

## **5.5 Cross Comparative Conclusion**

Based on comparative analysis, it appears of individuals who encounter online harassment, around half have experienced name calling. Also, individuals who admit to encountering online harassment only share their experiences with their peers around half the time which may indicate that online harassment is becoming taboo. Sexual harassment is also occurring approximately 1 in 10 times in victims who admitted to encountering online harassment. Comparative analysis also identifies Facebook as the culprit behind most forms of online harassment. Social media is also recognized in general as the most consistently misused form of online media with regards to online harassment. Comparative analysis also proves that the majority of online harassment is happening to younger individuals and the harassers are made up of anonymous individuals most times which has not always been the case. It also seems likely that participants encounter more online harassment than they speak out against. This may make the harassment more difficult to stop given the fact that speaking out against harassment is the best way to derail, and prevent it (Rucinski, 1989, p. 587). Although this is yet to be proven in the realm of online media, the theory and result could still be applicable given the similarities that exist between online and offline harassment.

## **5.6 Validity and Reliability**

I believe that the method that I used to conduct this research, collective case study, was very effective for carrying out this form of research. I knew that my data may not be the most generalizable given the fact that the experiment was not conducted in a controlled setting and my inexperience with conducting online surveys. It is for this reason that I included comparative data so that I would know how seriously I could take the data that I collected in the

#safespacesurvey. Although some trends do indicate some level of generalizability between all three surveys, the results are far from conclusive and precise. However, this dissertation does provide more insight for trends that can be affirmed by comparative analysis.

### **5.7 Limitations of Research and Future Recommendations**

The use of multiple-choice questions to create quantitative data was the perfect way to create numerical data which I could later turn into graphs to display trends and patterns. The qualitative approach was not used enough, however, the open-ended questions did provide some insight to emerging places for harassment, namely, online gaming. The open-ended questions made for an interesting word cloud which I wish I could have included more. I originally planned to include open ended question which allowed users more individual responses; however, I was not sure how effective the response rate would be and how helpful the answers given would be. I thought that too many individuals would skip these questions or leave inaccurate responses due to the nature of the question.

This research included many drawbacks. The first of which I will acknowledge is the COVID-19 pandemic which created struggles in both collecting research, as well as carrying out the survey due to an inability to meet/see people. Initially, I planned to use a much larger data set for my research. To whomever may try to replicate this experiment, I would recommend using a larger data set that is more generalizable.

As far as further recommendations are concerned, intersectionality could have been discussed more and in a variety of contexts. Given the large amount of data that was collected, a seemingly endless amount of comparisons could have been made when adjusting the filters on survey monkey. For example, an individual could see how more demographic traits are

interlocked to answer more complex research questions like, are younger people of ethnic minorities also more likely to experience harassment if they identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. The original idea of this dissertation was to carry out more analysis of mutually exclusive, and non-mutually exclusive relationships, however, I quickly realized that it was not feasible given the large amount of data and the 20,000-word count limit for this dissertation. Another shortcoming of this dissertation is the fact that some of the questions could have been worded better or positioned in a different order that would have been more beneficial to receiving accurate responses. However, I remedy bias by stating that this data should not be taken too seriously given the lack of a controlled environment and a level of generalizability that is somewhat questionable when compared to statistics that were collected by institutions.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Based on existing research and the outcome of this dissertation, it is evident that the world of online media is one that is worthy of further study. With the statistics that present themselves in my #safespacesurvey along with the statistics published by various institutions, it appears that certain populations are more likely to be affected by online media harassment. Age, race, socio-economic status, gender, LGBTQ+ affiliation among other factors which have been known to cause unequal outcomes historically, seem to have a similar outcome online. However, the results are not always consistent with this theory, and the relationships that do exist are complex. Another indication of this study is that similar populations who experience harassment offline experience higher levels of online harassment also.

An interesting area for further research is the definitive link between increased time spent online and an increased likelihood for experiencing harassment. When taking intersectionality into perspective, it seems that individuals who are marginalized populations offline are also marginalized online. Social media is the primary means with Facebook being the most consistently misused. Online dating and online forums are not far behind when it comes to providing a breeding ground for harassment. Online gaming has also emerged as a place that individuals are experiencing online harassment. Commercial websites, on the other hand are still relatively safe in comparison. It seems that the only other distinguishable difference that can be made based on this research is the fact that users are attacked online more often by somebody who they do not know personally, which leaves the question of who the harassers are partially unanswered.

Given the fact that online media is becoming more prevalent in contemporary society, further research needs to be conducted as it relates to demographic inequalities, online media, and online media harassment.

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## Appendix 1: Graphics

Figure 1

1. What is your age?

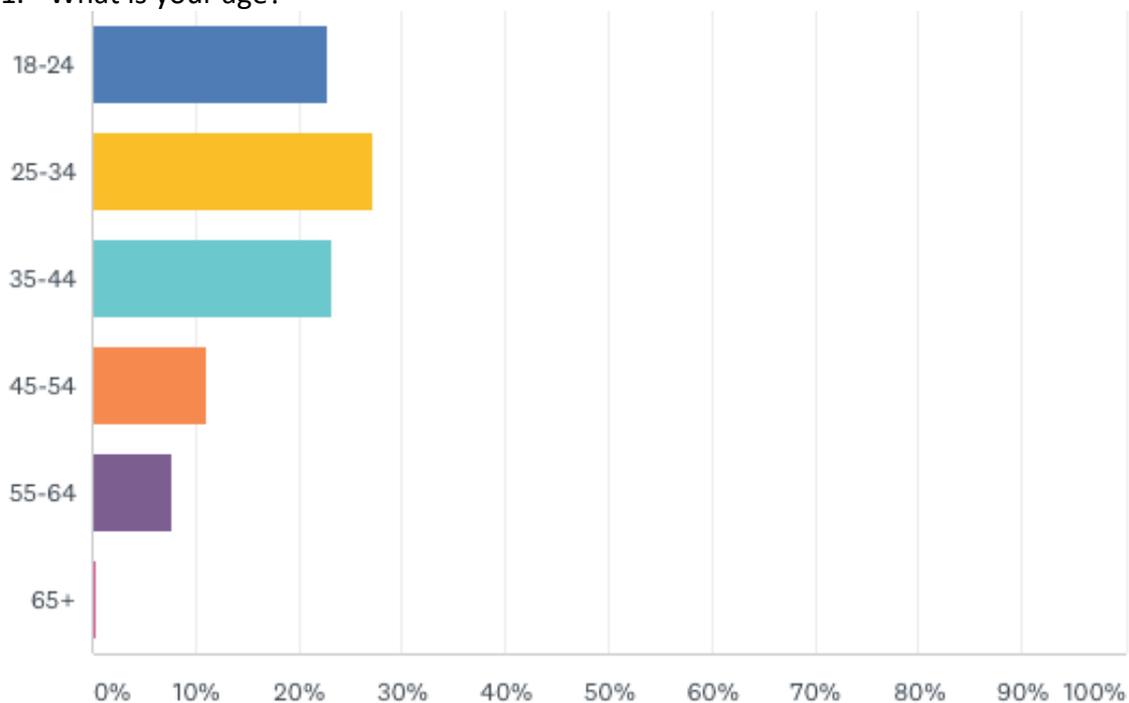
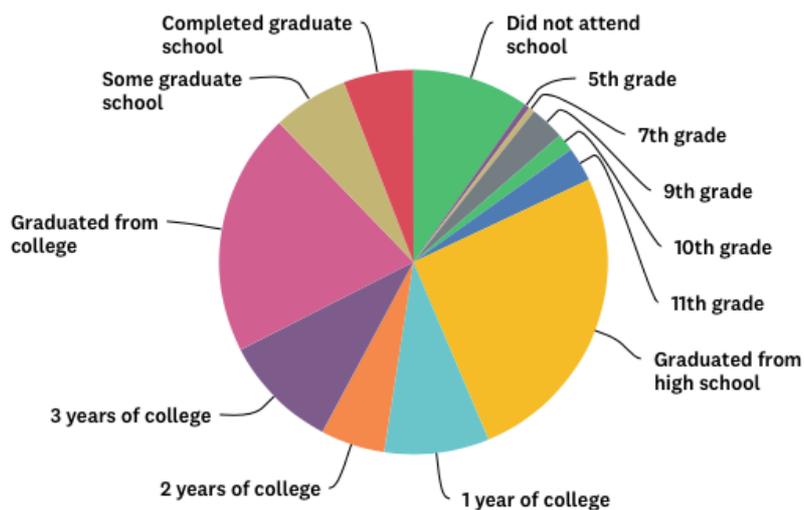


Figure 2

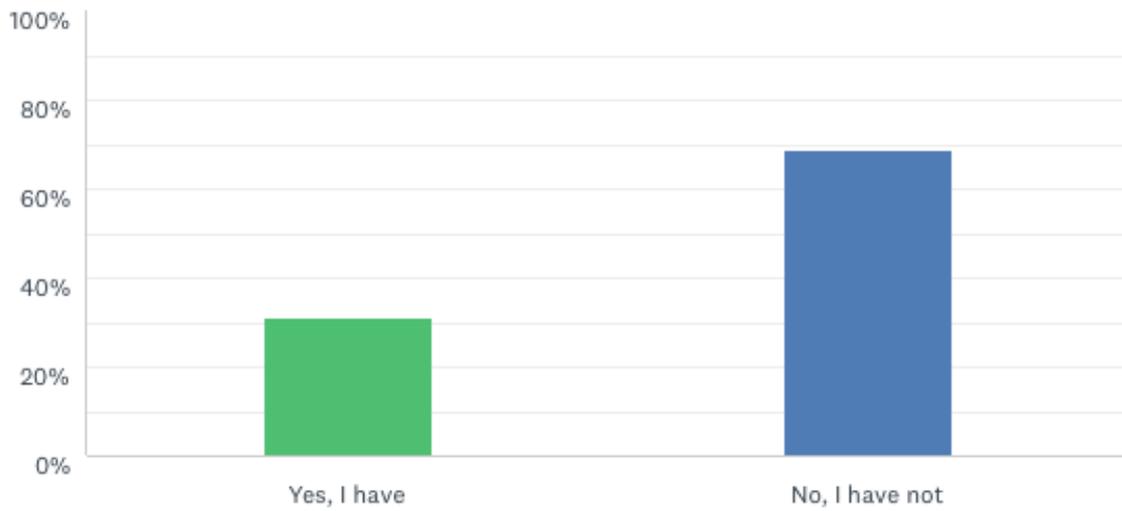
2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



**Figure 3**

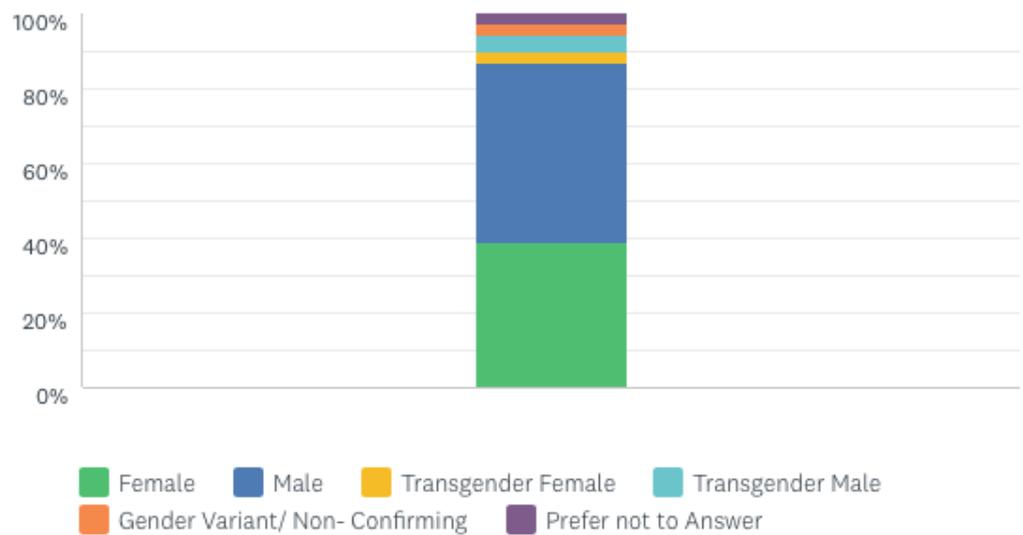
3. Have you ever applied for Social Security Income Benefits?



**Figure 4**

4. What is your gender?15

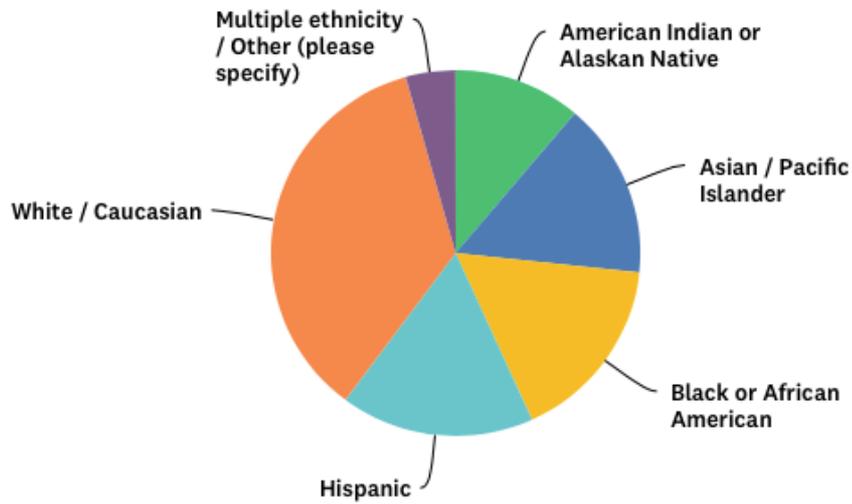
Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



**Figure 5**

5. What is your race/ ethnicity?

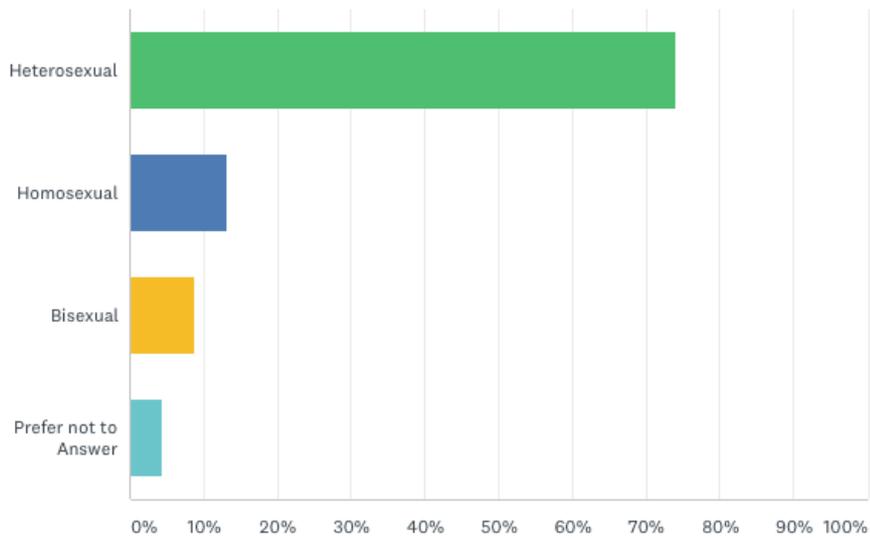
Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



**Figure 6**

6. Do you consider yourself to be?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 1



**Figure 7**

7. In a typical month, how likely are you to use online media platforms?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0

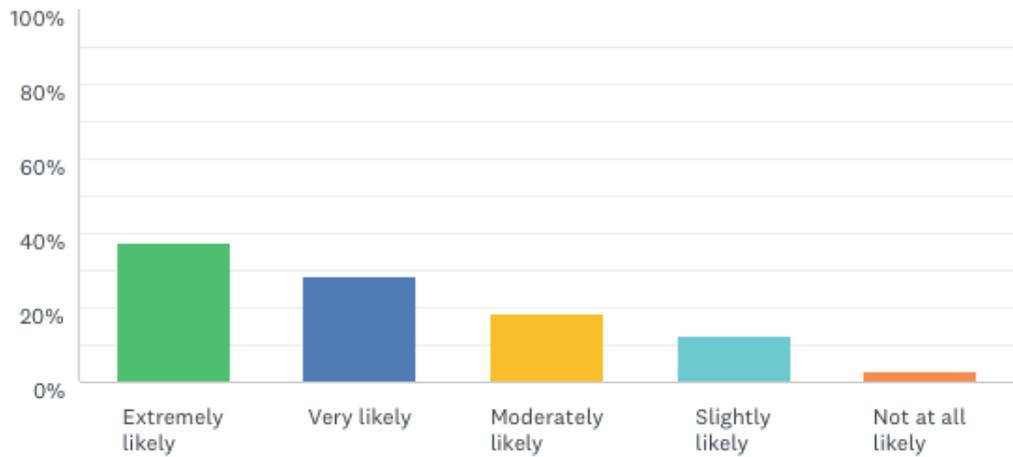


Figure 8

8. Have you ever been harassed online? (cyberbullying, stalking, shaming, hacking, hate speech etc.)”

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0

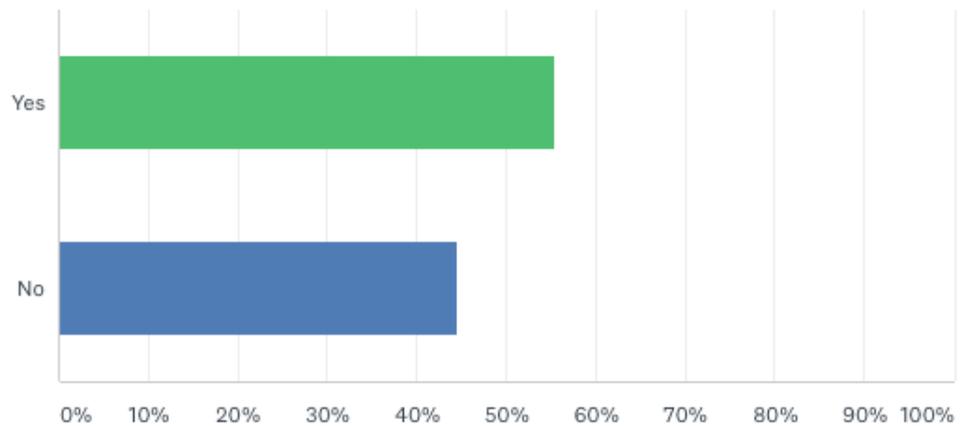


Figure 9

9. What types of harassment have you encountered online?



Figure 10

10. Have you ever been called an offensive name online?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0

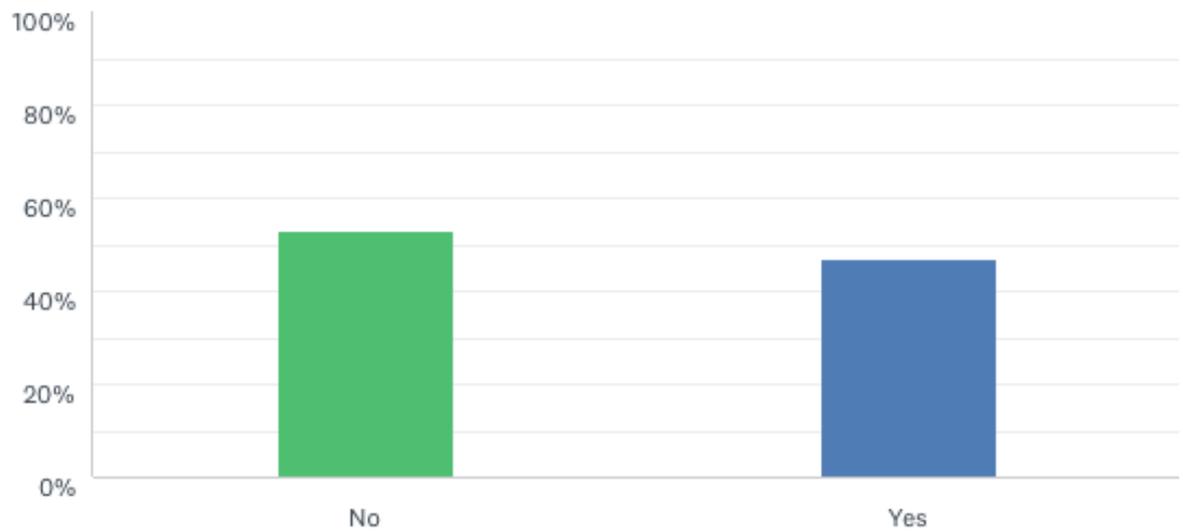
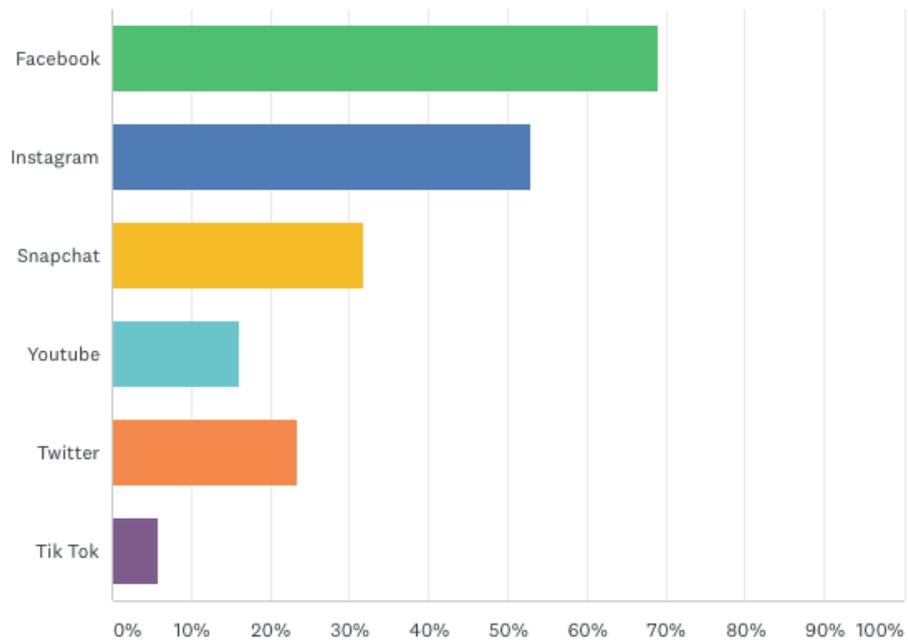


Figure 11

### 11. On what platforms have you been harassed?

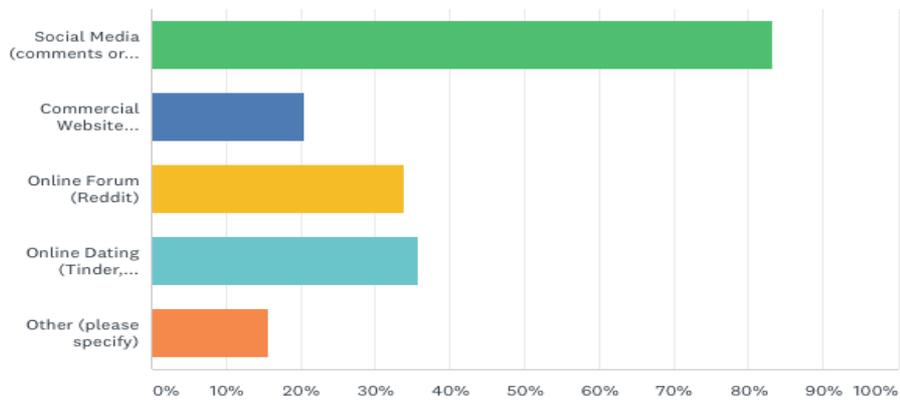
Answered: 204 Skipped: 2



**Figure 12**

### 12. If you have been harassed, where did the harassment take place?

Answered: 204 Skipped: 2



**Figure 13**

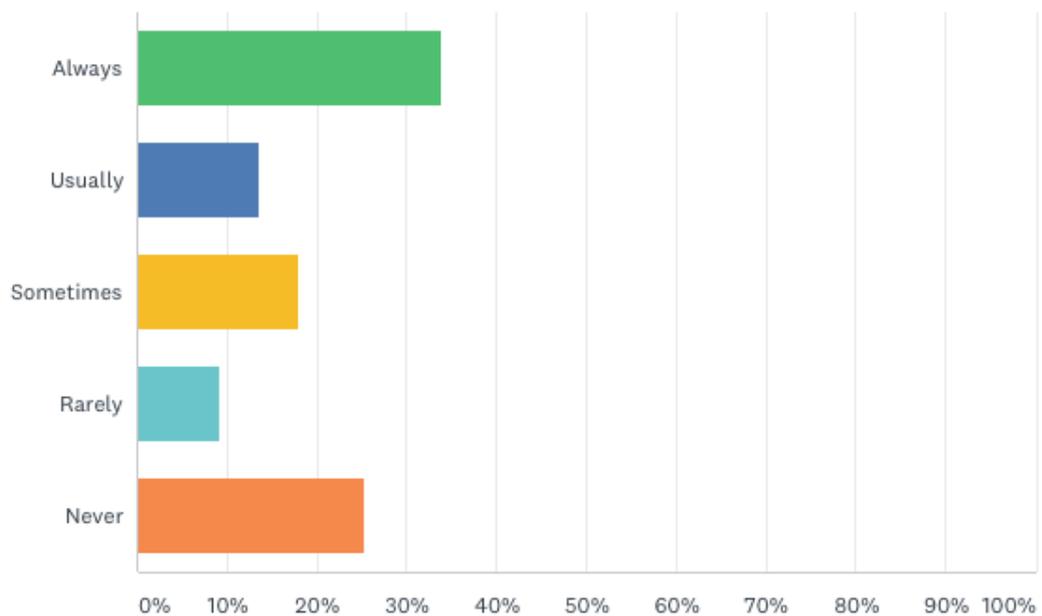
13. Where does the majority of online harassment take place? (open answer)

Online game know sure Twitter Socials Facebook  
apps Social media Tinder Instagram Messages  
Snapchat online games comments IG

**Figure 14**

Have you reported online harassment to a higher authority?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 0



## Appendix 2: Consent Form

Consent Form

Researcher: Malcolm Gordon

- The aim of this study is to examine the effects media on perception of feminism. It will examine movies and television.
- You will be asked 20 questions about your experience with feminism and your consumption of media. The survey should last around 20 minutes.
- This research will be of benefit as it will provide updated statistics for what effect the media has on feminism in modern times. A lot of research up to this point has focused more on newspaper and print journalism. This research provides an opportunity to study new media technologies, and their association with feminism.
- All information will be anonymized with the key kept in a password protected computer.
- Personal participant information will not be used for any reason and participants will not be identifiable in any published material.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
  - Malcolm Gordon – gordonm93@yahoo.com
  - Blathnaid Nolan : blathnaid.nolan@griffith.ie (research supervisor)
- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature : Malcolm Gordon