Research on the Role of Digital Media in Promoting #Metoo Movements

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Abstract: Sexual harassment has sparked a revolution in recent years, especially by sharing posts on social media platforms with the hashtag #metoo attached. People of all backgrounds and races began sharing their personal stories of sexual assault online. It has changed the way people think about the sexual harassment issue and bridging the individual with the collective and illustrating the systemic nature of social injustice. The support #metoo campaigns have got is huge and has created a change in people's perspective and opinions toward the problem/ issue. The purpose of the study was to analyze and find out the impact of social media platforms on the #Metoo movement and explore how victims use social media platforms to express their experiences and provide evidence. We will also explore how #MeToo has gained more light and support, and how people have changed their way of thinking, which will be explored in the article. Results indicated that the social media platforms provide a new way for people to discuss online and provide victims with a space to support them. And it is likely to make long-term changes in politics, culture and the world because the #metoo movement turns the hashtag into feminism as a complex recursive process aimed at political change.

Keywords: #MeToo Movement, Social Media, Sexual Harassment, Gender Violence, Public Sphere

1. Introduction

Internet and social media platforms have had a major impact on the #Metoo movement by awareness sexual harassment, as well as provide a space for open discussion and engage followers and citizens participate in the #Metoo campaign. Through the use social media platforms and internet on the issue, sexual harassment has become not just a social issue but political issue around the world. The #Metoo movement is one that has had a recent impact on a global level uses web 2.0. Sexual harassment includes a range of behaviours, from mild violations to sexual abuse or sexual assault. Sexual harassment is an unwelcome behaviour that may make people feels offended, humiliated or intimidated. Harassment can occur in many different social environments, such as workplaces, clubs, schools, and churches. The #MeToo movement was created by Tarana Burke [22]. The main goal of the campaign is to help young women with backgrounds recover from sexual violence and then expand to include all young people, homosexuals, transgenders and people with disabilities. When Alyssa Milano and other actresses attracted people to spread the world in 2017, the movement was restored and gained tremendous momentum. This article will discuss some of the main key theories; the two-step flow; public sphere; propaganda and political economy are highly relevant and provide an academic perspective. The two-step process allows opinion leaders to share information through social movements; the public sphere allows citizens to open conversations, social movements use advertisements and celebrities to promote movements, media ownership has power to influences the social movements. Furthermore, how this movement influenced the new media will be explored.

2. Background

2.1. Social Engagement Through Social Platforms

Social media turned the #Metoo movement into a global social issue. People use social media to discuss the issue globally in a variety of ways. Opinion leaders have played an important role in the new media environment. In web 2.0,

two-step flow has explanatory power in online public forums [7] and opinion leaders play a crucial role in the information sharing process, and they transmit information about a topic to others [19]. However, social media is a new platform for opinion leaders to transfer information and opinions to their audiences [43] and opinion leaders can face global audience [19]. Opinion leaders have a high level of knowledge and expertise on social issues [31, 44] and they need to post messages more often to build their reputation in the community [13]. Opinion leaders collect information online, offline as well as traditional media sources [32]. It has been found that news that is shared by trusted opinion leaders on social platforms affects the audience's perceptions, while social media users are more likely to trust content shared by friends [40]. Social media uses technology to interact with users, for example, using hashtags, re-twetting, mentioning and responding [47]. In this era, it is a common new tool for social media to connect with people. By using them, social movements will go globally. After Milano starter Twitter shared the #MeToo hashtag on Twitter, she received 53,000 responses. Using hashtags can spread of social and political movements which make the content searchable, more visible to others [42] and helps to promote messages on Twitter because they embed topics in tweets [35]. Tweets are 'showing compassion and encouraging others to continue the #Metoo movement'[20]. New media will definitely affect the practice of citizen participation, which has power and technology in online activities [5]. Through the 'two-step flow' and 'media technology' theory, social media can help #metoo promote a global movement.

The emergence of digital and social media has played an important role in exploring sexual harassment in past two years. Web 2.0 has heavily influenced the way in which people learn about sexual harassment, how and where they express the idea, and how this affects the public. The internet has provide a new way we interacting online communities, it is also seen as a new aspect of the public sphere, as it is often used as a discussion area for like-minded people to discuss ideas. In today's environment, the online platform has a strong power in political acknowledgement, 'operating as an open, horizontal and widely used communication network'[30]. Citizens not only can send and share information but also shape public opinion and call for action. The public sphere is that the 'realm of our social life', wherever opinion is often formed and access to all citizens or any voters [10]. The digital public sphere is known as "self-communication"[6, 29] and it creates a space in which organizations work together as a group to form the essence of civil society [39] like #metoo movement. However, the rise of social media has created new impetus for the dissemination of public information [12]. The internet and social media are ideal public spheres that provide information and tools for the role of the public in the social and political arena [28] and internet and its platforms allow people to reach different viewpoints and it has become a new form of digital activism and image circulation, and it invites outlets such as "new areas for public discourse."[8]. Social media

allows victims to give voices so that everyone can hear them. Digital public sphere is more equal 'digital democracy' [14]. Victims publicly share their personal narratives, express rape culture narratives, and claim that a place is the authoritative voice of sexual assault [45]. For #metoo, it provides more room for those involved in the victim were more likely to be reweeted and have more followers who engaged in tweeting victim support content [38]. The digital public sphere is an alternative hegemonic space for public participation [36]. In this era, the public sphere allows people to freely discuss sexual harassment issue.

2.2. Social Media as the New 'Fifth Estate'

Online platforms have become a new way for people to connect with society, and the organizations build strong relationships with people. It will be seen how sexual harassment has become a political issue through the 4th Estate theory. Media ownership posted something online, it will go viral online quickly, and people enjoy sharing information and send tweet to one another. The Internet is vital to enable individuals to network and enhance their communication skills in new ways, this is called "Fifth Estate" [9]. Individuals are more able to find and share their information on social network sites [26], it is called 'clictivism' for online activities. In this era, #metoo has ability to promote social and political movements around the world [37]. More importantly, the #MeToo movement has a power to affects the society. Some articles point out that communication resources are organized and controlled by media ownership, which is called participatory or citizen media. [2, 5, 11]. The political economy of social media can clarify how communication is used in processes and structures [21]. Media ownership needs to identify the characteristics that a certain audience needs to create audience-related content [34]. However, individuals who use many different social media platforms so this has led media ownership to use multiple platforms to circulate content [48]. In today's society, information supports diversified two-way communication, against the situation in the dominant and marginalized mainstream media [25]. New media creates closer connections between individuals and affects the economy. New media has become an important responsibility and has made great contributions to social change and news media organizations have power and influence [9]. Social media has removed mass communication from the industrial content production process, making it human-centric rather than traditional mass communication, but it still creates new elites and power [33]. As social media becomes more and more part of our daily lives, media ownership has the power to influence society, but the #metoo movement has established strong relationships with people around the world.

2.3. Using Celebrities to Reach More Audiences in #Metoo Campaign

Media ownership promotes advertising and uses celebrities to reach more audiences in social campaigns, especially #metoo and young people. #Metoo use advertising includes

images, short films and tweets on Facebook. It is suggested that if the presented advertising content is similar to the user's interest, it draws the user's attention to the advertisement [46] and displaying specific advertising messages for target audiences [15]. Social media advertising builds strong public relationships between social movements and customers [17]. Moreover, the user's participation in and advertising through Facebook [41], found that users were interested in social movement announcements and they felt they chose to focus on part of the social movements community. Since the birth of the web 2.0, political groups and movements have used the digital platform to further advance the partisan agenda based on a series of communication strategies [24]. In this era of the internet, social media has become one of the most powerful branding tools for organizations to target their customers, and enhances the impact of promotions on customer perception and awareness [1, 27]. Establish a close relationship between the customers and the brand, prove a credible story, and support the authenticity of the brand image [23]. Moreover, social media is considered to be the main medium for consumer celebrity political appeals. Due to the participation of celebrities, such as Milan, Paltrow, Judd, McGovern and other internationally recognized actresses involved in the #metoo movement, followers participate #metoo more frequently. Web 2.0 allowed celebrities to communicate directly with fans through social media platforms [16]. This encourages two-way communication between celebrities and fans [3]. Youth uses celebrities to gain social information [18]. Market seek medium to use the media as a marketer to actively communicate and influence their consumers on new media [4]. Social media is a powerful tool for citizens to participate in #Metoo movement through advertising and celebrities, it build strong connection with brand and citizens.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, social media revived the #Metoo movement and it is now receiving wider public attention through the social media, it is important topic within the society as many people participate in #metoo movement. Media support and participation are generating social change through awareness, education and engaging the public in solutions. The heavily impacted digital social media has affected new platforms and forums; it also allows victims to express their opinions through social media platforms. Social media not only provides new opportunities for supporters, especially the victims. Social media can be seen as a direct influence on public awareness of sexual harassment. By analyzing the many ways in which social media can affect sexual harassment. We can see that we live in a digital environment and attract people to awareness sexual harassment through social movements, thus providing us with a better society politically and economically. If the #MeToo campaign maintains its quantitative advantage and continues to express its emotional anger through social media, it is likely to make long-term changes in politics, culture and the world.

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