Case Study on the Dissemination of Radicalism on Social Media

I. M. Aburezeq[1*], *F. F. Dweikat*[2], *A. S. Al-Shaar*[3] *and M. A. S. Khasawneh*[4]

[1]Department of social science, Faculty of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Al Ain University, Al Ain, UAE
[2]Department of Curriculum and Instruction/ Instructional Technology, Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, UAE
[3]Department of Self Development, Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies (Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University), P.O. Box: 1982, Dammam 43212, Saudi Arabia
[4]Department of Special Education, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there is a close connection between exposure to radicalism and the quantity of terrorism-related discourse on social media. For this study, responses from local high school students were gathered using a technique called as simple random sampling. The number of samples was determined using the method for proportional stratified random sampling, with a precision value of 10 percent and a confidence level of 90 percent. After applying these settings, a total sample of 93 respondents was generated. The data collection process comprised survey research and literature studies, while the data analysis methodology included single table analysis, cross tables, and hypothesis testing. Due to the fact that the majority of respondents visited social media for less than one hour in total, the results suggested that the impact of social media discourse on broadcast of terrorist actions was minimal. There is a connection between the degree of exposure to radicalism and the impact that terrorist rhetoric has on social media. This connection is weak yet indisputable.

Keywords: Ideology, Radicalism, Social Media.

1 Introduction

At first, communication in the media only flowed in one direction, which implies that users of the media could only view and enjoy the content that was presented by media sources. However, as time has progressed, media enthusiasts would not only enjoy the content that has been presented, but they can also participate in filling out the content that is displayed on the online platform [1].

The development of new technology always results in the introduction of innovative modes of human communication. There is no denying the significant impact that the media has on society in the modern day. It is almost difficult to avoid being influenced by the media in today's contemporary culture, which is a fact that cannot be refuted. The media, together with all of its content, is already there to be a component of human existence, regardless of whether or not we are aware of this fact. Social media has a significant impact on our daily lives. Because social media is so user-friendly and efficient, individuals and communities now have a better chance of being able to produce, receive, and broadly spread messages in a manner that is both speedy and participatory.

Terrorism is a coordinated attack with the purpose of instilling feelings of terror in another group of people [2]. Terrorists have the intention of letting the public know what they are fighting for, and the victims of this crime are typically innocent people. One example of this would be a suicide bombing, which results in the death of a group of innocent people who were around the terrorist at the time of the attack [3], [4]. Terrorists have the intention of letting the public know what they are fighting for. According to psychologists, when people are overpowered by emotions of weakness in competition, they believe themselves to be fully passive and become objects, which means that they lack both their will and their identity [5], [6], [7], [8]. In order to conceal this sensation, he creates the impression that he is capable of accomplishing anything, of being able to command other people, and of even inflicting harm. This gives him the impression that he is able to make himself effective (useful), and that he is required by a large number of people. A feeling of believing that he has an impact in reality may be created by relating it to social interactions, interactions with inanimate things, or even via ideological beliefs. This might provide the impression that he does have an influence in reality.

*Corresponding author e-mail: ibtehal.aburezeq@aau.ac.ae

The concept of radicalism refers to an outlook that advocates for a fundamental shift in the way a society comprehends its origins via the use of coercive methods such as forcing or even committing acts of violence. According to the findings of a number of studies, the emergence of radicalism among young people is influenced by a variety of factors, including psychological factors, political and international conditions, textual religious texts, and the loss of role models, which leads young people to search for new charismatic figures [10], [11], [12], [13].

People's lives are the most significant component in the development of technology, and the presence of social media is the most important part of that growth. The objective of social media is to explore and get the information that is required. These organizations that promote extremism and terrorism utilize social media as a medium or instrument to disseminate their ideology. According to Schmid [2], terrorists use a variety of strategies when targeting the media. Active use includes the following activities: communicating fear messages to a large audience; polarizing public opinion; trying to recruit new members to the terrorist Movement; outwitting the enemy by spreading false information; advertising themselves and causing them to feel represented; raising public concern for victims in order to pressure the government to make compromises or concessions; distracting the public from unwanted issues in the hope that their news of terror fills the front page of the media. In Indonesia, bombings are a common occurrence. The media are quick to describe each instance of bombing that takes place as an act of terrorism the moment it takes place.

The use of social media and internet networks as forms of mass communication is very important due to the fact that users may remain anonymous while yet reaching a large audience. As a result, social media platforms are an option worth considering for the dissemination of political ideas and extremist viewpoints to anybody who has connection with online network systems. Because young people, including students, are active users of social media, this is what leads students to be more likely to be exposed to certain doctrines, particularly radicalism. It is impossible to dispute the fact that young people utilize social media. Therefore, it is essential to plan out how the dissemination and presentation of this information to students through social media is to be tracked so that it can be monitored.

2 Methods

In this particular research, a population was chosen using a method known as Simple Random Sampling. The total number of respondents that participated in this survey was 93. In the meanwhile, the method of proportional stratified random sampling is used in order to choose the respondents who are eligible to take part in the sampling process. This method is employed since the population that is being investigated in this research has a diverse set of characteristics, including differences in gender and educational background that stem from a variety of fields of study. For the purpose of data collection, the survey in the form of a questionnaire was given to the individuals who participated. When evaluating the data, this article makes use of both the single table analysis approach and the cross-table analysis.

3 Results and Discussion

Frequency on Accessing Social Media

The following cross table explains the correlation between the number of times one accesses social media in a given day and the amount of time spent opening the virtual world rather than participating in social activities in the real world. According to the obtained data, 41 individuals answered regularly and 40 individuals reacted extremely frequently. However, there were also students who replied seldom despite their small number; these 11 individuals were the only ones who responded infrequently.

The average number of individuals who agree with the assertion that people spend more time opening virtual realms than interacting in the real world is 45. There were 27 responses who disagreed with the statement, while there were 14 who agreed with it. However, 5 respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, while 2 respondents strongly agreed.

The aforementioned logic enables us to reach the following conclusion: the frequency of accessing social media is quite frequent, as shown by the average response to doing so often. This is shown by the fact that 41 of the 93 respondents answered regularly, and 40 reacted quite frequently. On the other side, there are those respondents whose responses are almost never open. Another element influencing the conclusion is the fact that respondents are more interested in pursuing other activities than enrolling for social media accounts. Researchers tested the concept that individuals would rather spend their time engaging with the virtual world than the physical one. As a consequence of the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that relatively few students would prefer open virtual worlds than socialize in real life. This is due to the fact that just 14 of the 93 respondents agree with this assertion, while the rest disagree. One may conclude that students spend a great deal of time on the internet, especially social media, but this does not indicate that they engage in no other activity.
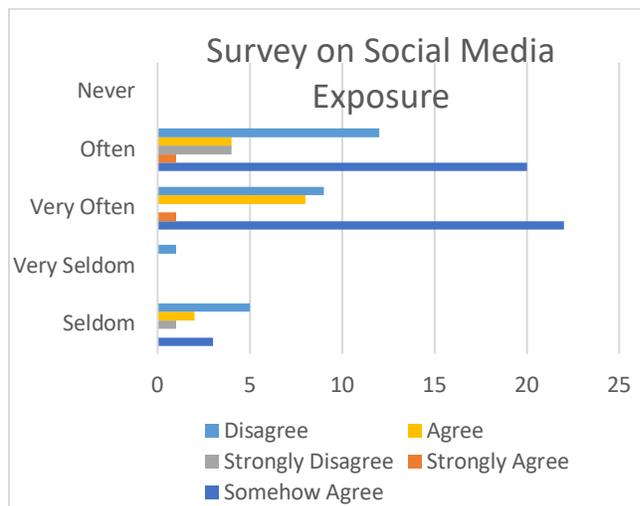
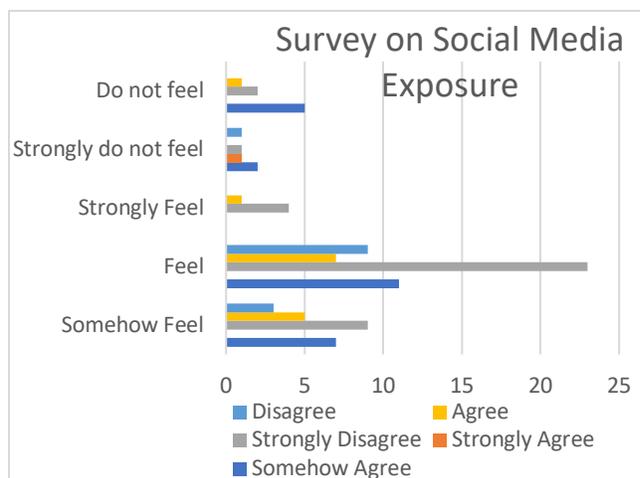**Figure 1.** Data processing result from questionnaire (2022).

Figure 2. Data processing result from questionnaire (2022).

The above explanation enables us to reach the following conclusion: the great majority of respondents feel that being exposed to terrorist discourse results in the manifestation of particular repercussions. This is evident from the numbers shown above, which indicate that 50 of 93 respondents felt this way. In contrast, several individuals' replies suggested that they felt little to nothing. The aforementioned information allows for the following conclusion to be drawn: The large majority of students questioned believed that the assertion was false, while just a minority agreed with it. It is conceivable to conclude that, although the discourse about radicalism has an impact on the involvement of the average student, this is not always the case. This effect does not suggest that people feel compelled to behave similarly; rather, they perceive that those who can justify any means to achieve their goals are operating in an unnatural way.
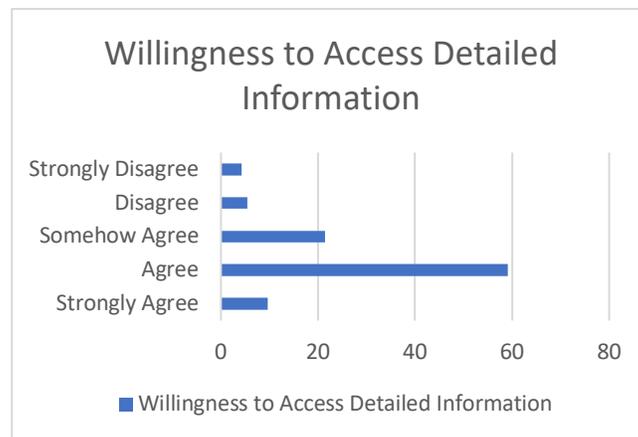
Access on More Detail Information

Figure 3. Data processing result from questionnaire (2022).

The data shown in the figure above reveals that 55 individuals have expressed a willingness to use social media in order to get further information on terrorist acts. In the meanwhile, twenty individuals came out and stated that they were not in favour of being required to acquire further information regarding terrorist acts. The remaining respondents had a split opinion, with 9 people strongly agreeing, 5 people disagreeing, and 4 people very disagreeing that we can learn more about the frequency of terrorist activities via social media.

The majority of students feel that it is necessary for them to get detailed information on occurrences of terrorism via the use of social media, which is the conclusion that can be derived from the number that was shown earlier. This is due to the fact that there are some channels that have a reputation for having positive evaluations and are well-known for the speed with which they provide the most recent information.

4 Statistic Test Result

Correlation Test with Spearman's rho

Table 1. Data processing result from questionnaire (2022).

		Total x	Total y
Total x	Correlation Coefficient	1000	.211
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.	.043
	N	93	93
Total y	Correlation Coefficient	.211	1000
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.043	.
	N	93	93

According to the results of the correlation analysis using the Spearman method, the value of the Spearman coefficient (rho) for the variable influence of the discourse of terrorism on social media on students' exposure to radicalization is

0.211. When the Guilford time is used, the result of 0.211 shows that the relationship is not very strong. It is conceivable, using the expected number, to calculate how big of an influence news of terrorism has on the level of radicalization exposure experienced by students.

The amount of influence that discourse connected to terrorism has on social media has been calculated to be 1.9 percent of the exposure that students have to radicalization. The effect that is exerted as a consequence is little, and there are many factors that contribute to the 98.1 percent of stampede students who are exposed to radicalism. Since students were not educated to be radical by their surroundings and had no previous experience joining radical organizations, the observed factor determining the quantity of radicalism exposure among students was small.

This was the case since students had no prior experience joining radical groups.

The daily actions and environments of students may also have an effect on the degree to which they are exposed to radicalization. It is clear from the statement that respondents would prefer to stay at home rather than hang out with friends, and it is also clear that they would rather be friends with someone who shares their interests than with someone who has a different interest (religion, ethnicity, ideology). This demonstrates that certain respondents may be susceptible to radicalism due to a lack of diversity and anti-social attitudes. A radical enjoys being alone and dislikes differences because they believe their interpretation to be the most accurate, and this demonstrates that certain respondents may be vulnerable to radicalism as a result of a lack of diversity and anti-social attitudes, which is supported by previous investigation [14], [15], [16].

The conclusion that can be drawn from the results presented above is that the relationship between the influence of reporting on terrorism on social media and the level of exposure to radicalism among students is low but definite. This conclusion can be drawn due to the fact that the relationship is low, but it is definite. According to the findings of the correlation that was performed with the Correlation Coefficient formula developed by Spearman, the Spearman coefficient (rho) of the variable the influence of terrorism reporting on social media on the level of exposure to radicalism among students is 0.211, and the magnitude of the influence strength of the X variable on the Y variable is 1.9% of the level of exposure to radicalism among students. These findings are based on the results of the correlation that was performed. The influence that has been produced is not very significant, and there are other variables that contribute to the very high degree of radicalism that pupils are exposed to (98.1 percent).

The daily behavior and environment of students can also influence their level of exposure to radicalism, as evidenced by the statements of some respondents, with 22 percent preferring to stay at home rather than hang out with friends and some 19.4 percent preferring to be friends with someone who has something in common with them (religion, ethnicity, ideology). This demonstrates that some of the respondents may be vulnerable to radicalism due to the absence of disparities and the prevalence of anti-social sentiments. Because fundamentally, as Herrero [17] argues that someone who is radical likes to be alone and does not tolerate diversity because they believe that the knowledge that they proclaim is the truest, despite the fact that there are several other reasons that might impact their decision.

According to the findings of the research, the factor that contributes to the weak strength of the influence that variable X has on variable Y is 1.9 percent. This is due to the fact that the level of exposure to radicalism among students is relatively low. This is due to the fact that new students are not educated by their environment to be radical, nor do they have experience joining in previous radical organizations. And since the amount of time spent looking at terrorist news on Instagram is very low, despite the fact that there are still some responders who have a rather high degree of exposure to the topic. However, this has not been able to verify that the responder is exposed to radicalism, which means that the impact between the X variable and the Y variable does have an effect, but it is rather little.

5 Conclusion

Students often have minimal exposure to radical ideologies. It is plainly obvious from the replies to the questionnaire that the great majority of respondents like outdoor activities and do not often use the Internet. The majority of respondents feel it is natural to form friends with those who have similar viewpoints; nevertheless, they do not believe it is a mistake to make friends with those who hold opposing views. The great majority of responders reject extremism and recognize that people have the right to have diverse viewpoints. The overwhelming majority of students believe that the existence of radical organizations is in no way normal. As a consequence of this data, we may conclude that the respondents' sentiments about radical organizations are unfavourable. The dissemination of terrorist attack discourse on social media channels has an impact. The correlation discovered as a result is faint yet distinct. This suggests that the influence of reporting on terrorist attacks on social media accounts on the extent to which students are exposed to extremism is negligible but indisputable. There are other factors that may affect the extent to which students are exposed to radicalism, and the effect that has been made is not particularly large.

Acknowledgments:

this work through Small Research Groups under grant number (RGP.2 /136/43)

Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

References

[1] Wei, D., & Yang, X. (2012). Eulerian Gaussian beam method for high frequency wave propagation in heterogeneous media with discontinuities in one direction. *Communications in Mathematical Sciences, 10*(4), 1287-1299. https://dx.doi.org/10.4310/CMS.2012.v10.n4.a13

[2] Schmid, A. (2005). Terrorism as psychological warfare. Democracy and Security, 1(2), 137-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/17419160500322467.

[3] Kollias, C., Papadamou, S., & Stagiannis, A. (2011). Terrorism and capital markets: The effects of the Madrid and London bomb attacks. International Review of Economics & Finance, 20(4), 532-541. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iref.2010.09.004.

[4] Bufacchi, V., & Arrigo, J. M. (2006). Torture, terrorism and the state: A refutation of the ticking-bomb argument. Journal of Applied Philosophy, 23(3), 355-373. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5930.2006.00355.x

[5] Dean, C. (2014). The healthy identity intervention: The UK's development of a psychologically informed intervention to address extremist offending. In Prisons, terrorism and extremism (pp. 89-107). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203584323.

[6] Hammack, P. L. (2008). Narrative and the cultural psychology of identity. Personality and social psychology review, 12(3), 222-247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308316892.

[7] Côté, J. E., & Schwartz, S. J. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: Identity status, identity capital, and the individualization process. Journal of adolescence, 25(6), 571-586. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2002.0511.

[8] Crossley, M. L. (2000). Narrative psychology, trauma and the study of self/identity. Theory & Psychology, 10(4), 527-546. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354300104005.

[9] Adams, G. R., & Marshall, S. K. (1996). A developmental social psychology of identity: Understanding the person-in-context. Journal of adolescence, 19(5), 429-442. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1996.0041.

[10] Calvillo, D. P., Swan, A. B., & Rutchick, A. M. (2020). Ideological belief bias with political syllogisms. Thinking & Reasoning, 26(2), 291-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/13546783.2019.1688188.

[11] Jost, J. T., van der Linden, S., Panagopoulos, C., & Hardin, C. D. (2018). Ideological asymmetries in conformity, desire for shared reality, and the spread of misinformation. Current opinion in psychology, 23, 77-83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.01.003.

[12] Crowson, H. M., & DeBacker, T. K. (2008). Belief, motivational, and ideological correlates of human rights attitudes. The Journal of Social Psychology, 148(3), 293-310. https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.148.3.293-310.

[13] Weber, C., & Federico, C. M. (2007). Interpersonal attachment and patterns of ideological belief. Political Psychology, 28(4), 389-416. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00579.x.

[14] Lindekilde, L., Malthaner, S., & O'Connor, F. (2019). Peripheral and embedded: relational patterns of lone-actor terrorist radicalization. Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict, 12(1), 20-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2018.1551557.

[15] Knapton, H. (2014). The recruitment and radicalisation of western citizens: does ostracism have a role in homegrown terrorism?. Journal of European Psychology Students, 5(1). http://doi.org/10.5334/jeps.bo

[16] Kleinmann, S. M. (2012). Radicalization of homegrown Sunni militants in the United States: Comparing converts and non-converts. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 35(4), 278-297. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2012.656299.

[17] Herrero, D. (2018). Tabish Khair's Just Another Jihadi Jane: Western Civilization and 'War on Terror' Versus Islamist Terrorism as the Two Sides of the Globalization Coin. Societies, 8(4), 97. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc8040097.