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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MURDER

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Social Sciences and Globalization

by
Brandy Nichole Jones
June 2020

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ABSTRACT

This research contains information on how much or if at all social media influences murder. Social media has such a big impact on the lives of many around the world, it is almost impossible to avoid. There is research on how social media effects brain processes and may even cause addiction. And there is research on why people commit murder, but there is little to no research on the role social media can play in some murders. Social media is almost like an alternate universe where people can pretend to be the people they want to be in real life, they filter and add what they want others to see. Not to mention they are able to say and do whatever they want to do because they are not held responsible for their words and actions.

The problem comes when people take what happens on social media and bring it into the real world. They take the actions and the words and give them power. In some results in suicide, crime, and in these cases murder. Murder is done from one human beings' action to another; therefore, it is important to mention that social media cannot be responsible in someone's death due to actions of others. However, it can play a role in why they decided to take their actions on step further.

In the cases found below there is reason to believe that if social media did not exist these murders would not have taken place. These murders were committed out of the heat of the moment, anger, and jealousy, all brought on my actions on social media from one person to the next. If social media did not exist

these actions would not have taken place and both parties could be alive today.
Social media allows people to not take responsibility for the words and actions.
This research shows how much these words and actions can affect people
around the world.

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I would firstly like to acknowledge and thank Cristina Sedano, thank you for being such a great peer and an amazing friend. If it was not for you I do not know how I would have completed this program, every question I had you had an answer, every battle I faced you were right there with me. Thank you especially for all your guidance writing this thesis, you had helped me more than you know.

Thank You

DEDICATION

To my parents, Kathy, and Anthony Jones.

Thank you for everything. Thank you for every first day of school walking me to my class up until my last year in my master's program. Thank you for always pushing me to do my best, for supporting me and believing in me even when I did not always believe in myself. Thank you for teaching me lessons that could not be learned from a textbook. You showed me how to be strong when things get tough, to fight even when no one is fighting with you, and most importantly to never give up. Even through hardships of your own, you always supported me as a first-generation college graduate, and made sure that I had everything I needed to succeed, and it means the world to me. You both were there for me when I was struggling to understand concepts and you are both here with me to celebrate the completion of this degree. It is as much my degree as it is yours. I love and admire you both so much and will forever be grateful for you. You helped me prove that you do not have to have all the money in the world to succeed. I promise to make you proud.

But no, I am still not applying to any Doctoral programs, sorry mom...

Lots of Love

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

Social Media is everywhere, it is continuously growing and evolving as time goes on, as well as the ways it is impacting society in both positive and negative aspects. But Then Again, what exactly is social media? Social media is a phrase that society uses to describe communication applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, and many more others. The thought of a social media post, comment, reply, or even a like, can result in the loss of a life is implausible to many. While social media does not cause someone to be murdered or even physically hurt another human-being, it does give those with the intent or possible intent, easier access to their victims. Think about it, there are over 2,234 million Facebook users, 1.900 million YouTube users, 291 million Snap Chat accounts, 355 million Twitter users, just to name the top few, the likelihood of social media being used for the worse is more likely with the more users it attracts (Smith, 2018).

There has been a lot of recent research on media and the effect it has on people, especially the youth in the population. Social media has brought a lot of benefits to communities around the world, but with positives impacts, there comes the negative ones too. Researchers recognize that while social media does help connect people who might not have connected in person, it also increases the disconnect people are experiencing in real life. Media influences

youth in negative ways that society is not recognizing, it effects not only the way youth communicate, but also how they interact with each other. The personal aspect is being taken out of the scenario and allows people to feel like they can say and do anything they want without fear of repercussion.

There has also been countless research conducted on murder and why people commit it. Researchers have gone into depth about the statistics of who is more likely to commit what type of murder and why. They have created the different categories of murder and the effects it has on those around it. Not to mention, research on how to prevent future murders from happening and building up neighborhoods to decrease the amount of murder that happens in lower income neighborhoods.

However, there is a lack of research on the combination of the two. There is little to no research conducted on the role or influence social media has on murder. This correlation starts from the lack of connection people have because they are missing the face to face interaction, causing a depersonalization of contact with one another. This is then making it consciously easier to have less emotional push back when thinking about committing a crime and can sometimes lead to one person murdering another. Social media not only takes the personalization out of human connection, but it also creates a path for predators to find their victims easier. Social media tends to share your location and other information with others without the person even knowing, this making them more susceptible to becoming a victim. One of the other problems there is with social

media is it creates the need for attention, and it creates the idea that any attention is better than no attention. This then leads to the need to be noticed in any way possible, they crave their fifteen minutes of fame, even if it means murdering another human.

While it is hard to say social media is responsible for the murders that occurred, they can be seen as responsible for creating outlets that allow strangers to meet, murders that are being posted on their websites, and murders that occur due to content on their websites. It is hard not see the involvement and the increase of not only hate crimes, but lives lost since the creation of social media in the past ten years. Would these murders have occurred if social media did not exist? In some cases it can be argued that these murders could have happened anyhow, however there are some cases where these people would have never met if it were not for social media or the internet therefore the murder could not have occurred. There is little to no limitations to what can happen online, and people can literally get away with murder. Researchers see that social media is creating more antisocial behavior, which is also a link to personality traits that are possessed by murders.

To research this topic, one must understand social media and murder and the effects it has on people as separate entities. Then there is the combination of the two which leads to a dangerous environment that anyone can fall into. There is research conducted on social media and the effect it has on the human mind and human behavior and there is also research conducted on murder and why

people commit it. The problem with this is they are separate projects. It is hard to trace social media and prevent the murder. Not to mention, there is no current way for social media to prevent these occurrences from happening and even taking the posts down right away is nearly impossible unless someone reports it. The other problem with social media is there is so much freedom and it is worldwide, there is no way to trace and track those who are committing these crimes without the help of the public, but by that time there have already been hundreds and thousands of views and the need for attention has been met. Which then therefore in the mind of the murderer, it was worth the risk. The real questions are does social media play a role or influence rage based or emotion driven murder? Does it give society the ability, the access, the incentive to take the next step and kill? How does social media affect one's ability to make rational decisions?

The purpose for this research is to bring light to the fact that these two worlds are intertwined more than society is recognizing. Social media does play a role in murders that occur not only in The United States but also around the world. Media has been hiding and not being recognized for the role they play in society when it comes to crimes including murder. The goal is to show that there is a need for more research on the subject to help reduce the amount of lives lost due to this trend and need for attention, lack of control, and lack of remorse from one's peers. With this research social media could play a more active role in

protecting their users from these tragic endings and can come together with the criminal justice system to create a more secure safe network for all their users.

Definitions

What is Social Media

To begin with social medias are websites or apps that allow people to interact with each other that is not in person. Many social media apps allow one to create a profile with pictures and information that the users choose to upload. They allow individuals to create a persona that they want the world to see. After the profile is created, they start searching for friends, followers, groups, hashtags, and many other things to get in contact with others. People on these platforms can choose to follow certain subjects, people, and vice versa (Nations, 2019). Once they choose who they are connecting with a newsfeed is created. In this feed there is information that others post for their followers to read. Anyone can find any information about any topic due to the parameters of social media. There are no limits, people can make their profiles private or public, but once the information is posted it is nearly impossible to get it back (Nations, 2019).

Social media sites give their users a lot of flexibility when it comes to setting up their profiles and what they can put on them. There are different ways to organize their user settings, friends, and followers, and manage the information they see in their news feeds. With that comes to notifications when something new is posted. There are settings where one can receive a notification

if someone, they follow posts a new picture or tweet (Nations, 2019). There is also the ability to see if the people who they are sending pictures and information to are taking screenshots of their information. However, there is no way to tell what others are saving and updating about another person. This can lead to cyber stalking and bullying. It just gets even more intense with the abilities to rate, review, and vote on anything and everything on most of these apps. This then increases jealousy and the fear of missing out (Nations, 2019).

While Social Media was created to help people stay connected with friends and family, it has also made it possible for businesses to expand their business across state and even country lines; it keeps people up to date on trends; and it can also be used for many different crimes. The internet and social media are dangerous places, especially for those who are unexpected of the hazards. The first social media outlet created was in 1997 called Six Degree (Hendricks, 2019), and from there the birth of social media began.

Live Streaming

There is now more than ever more flexibility when it comes to self-broadcasting or live streaming on all these apps so others can see what one is doing right in that moment. The problem is that people who are using the live streaming function have more control of it than the actual social media site (Glance, 2017). There is no delay in streaming and there is no stopping it when something goes wrong, because there has yet to be a monitor on it on any social media platform. Live streaming is exactly what in sounds like, streaming from

one's phone to their followers or the world, live, in real time, what they see their followers see right in that moment. While there are some pros to it, there was no caution when it came to the cons. The pros are it is better for businesses it is easy to use and allowed people to get the word out right away. (Glance, 2017)

Communication

When social media was created, it was safe to assume that it was for the good of all people. It was made to grow businesses, stay in touch with friends and family and many other things, no one assumed that evil would play a role in it as well. Social media entertains people while also providing people the information they need to know about what is going on in the world and life around them. They also can see trends and what is new and up in coming and at the same time they are able to better network with one another to find the jobs they are looking for (Netivist, 2015). Not to mention companies and non-profits are able to be seen better with little effort. Social media allows people to come together whenever they want. However, that is not always a good thing.

Social media allows people to talk to each other without ever seeing the other person. This then increases cyber bullying and even can lead to stalking. There is so much information about oneself on social media that it makes them an easy target (Netivist, 2015). People can spend hours and hours online, they become obsessive and self-absorbed, even addicted to it. Then there is the fact that many apps and sites do not have the greatest privacy or security for its users. It allows groups to form such as terrorist or radicals where criminal activity

is created. Social networking has changed how people live their lives, but it is not all for the good. There is little to no control on what an individual can do to prevent their privacy from being hacked (Netivist, 2015).

Murder

Then there is murder, which is under common law, the unlawful killing of another human being, it could be the single most serious criminal offense. Depending on the circumstances, one can be sentenced for years, life, or even to death. However, there is various definitions of what murder is, it can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Besides common law there is the term malice, which means the murderer did not plan to murder its victim or otherwise known as recklessness (Legal Definitions, 2020). The definition of murder has evolved over the past few centuries, but in the United States it comes down to four different types, intentional murder, a killing that resulted from the intent to do bodily injury, killing that resulted from a depraved heart or recklessness, and murder committed by an accomplice during the commission of, attempt of, or flight from a certain felony (Legal Definitions, 2020). Murder occurs daily throughout the world and there has been plenty of research conducted on why people kill people, however murder still occurs all the time.

Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction is the constant checking and scrolling through multiple social media outlets. It has become increasingly popular over the past few years. Psychologists estimate that about five to ten percent of Americans

meet the criteria for social media addiction. It is categorized as a behavioral addiction because one is becoming concerned about social media and have a feeling that is uncontrollable to check it. They use it so often it impairs other important things in their lives. Just like any other substance abuse user, you could not tell by just looking at them, but their mood changes based on their addiction, salience, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse occurs just like any other addict (Hilliard, 2020).

The reason why people become addicted to social media is because of the dopamine inducing social environments that is created by social media. Social media can be compared to gambling and drugs where the user will use and take or give as much as they can to keep their “high”. Studies have shown when people receive likes and retweets, a chemical reaction is triggered just like it is in drugs like cocaine. This makes a person crave for the likes and retweets causing the addiction (Hilliard 2020).

Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is described as an invasion of online privacy and it is a crime. While it does not have to include physical contact, it is not any less dangerous than in person stalking. Cyberstalking involves the use of technology to make someone afraid or worried about their safety. This is when one threatens another or invades their privacy repeatedly overtime. Cyberstalking is rare among strangers; it is more common to happen by someone they know (Hunduja, 2020). It is also difficult to prove because one does not know until it has become a problem.

By this point in time, people start victim blaming, and telling them they should have asked for help sooner. “If the person is sharing all this information about themselves and others, are they giving people permission or access to their lives whenever and wherever they are is it not on them to resolve the problem”, that is the common view of the outsider. However, that does not account for all the information that is being shared about the individual without them even knowing it. Then who is to blame, social media, the internet, the phone creator? One example of this would be geotagging, which is the geographical tag that is applied to social media posts including pictures, status updates, tweets, and everything else people have access to when they post something (WCSAP,2020). For most smartphones this is already enabled, and people do not have to turn it on for it to be used. To prevent one’s location from being shared they must turn the feature off themselves.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

Antisocial personality disorder which is also known as sociopathy, is a mental disorder where the person has a consistent record of showing no regard for what is right and wrong, they ignore others rights and feelings, and does not show any care for humanity. People diagnosed with this personality disorder tend to manipulate others, be callous, or indifferent towards others. They show no remorse or guilt for their behaviors. Antisocial Personality Disorder can be linked to addictions such as drugs and alcohol (DSM-5,2015).

Limitations in Research

There are some biases and limitations that can be found in this research study. To begin with, the sample cases, there are few cases where the women murders the man which can show a bias against women murders. Not to mention there is little representation of the LGBTQ community in this study, there is only one case known to be a part of the community, which then could suggest a bias against LGBTQ. Not to mention the access to more cases might have been limited due to the popularity in the media, the cases that were selected where broadcasted in more than one social media outlet, therefore eliminates those cases that only involved a single outlet. To add onto the media only broadcasts what they believe the people want to see, therefore some races, ethnicities, genders, and those of different sexual orientation than the viewers might not have been represented as well.

The cases are in the majority heterosexual and they are either Black or White, with little representation of Hispanic, Latino, Asian, or Indian descent. It is also important to mention that there is a limited amount of murder from women to men it is either men to men, women to women, or men to women. This does not mean that women to men murders do not exist or do not have a social media influence, there was just little coverage in this case study. Overall, the cases in the majority were from the United States but do not represent all populations in the United States.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review contains numerous amounts of research on not only social media but murder as well. This review begins with describing the incentives to murder even without social media involvement. With the understanding on why people murder it will give a better understanding as to why those who murdered online did what they did. There are many occasions and reasons on why people commit murder, such as time and place, cognitive capability, emotions, and psychological disorders. Other reasons include that lack of guidance and participation one's guardians have in their life, the less time children spend with adults, the more time they spend on the internet.

The literature review continues to describe the effect social media has on society. Some of the negative effects include social media addiction, the effect social media has on the developing brain, the creation of antisocial disorders, and finally the change in interpersonal relationships. Social media is shown to be a powerful tool in societies and is forever changing the future of technology and social relations.

Finally, there is the combination of the two. There is too much access to violent crimes on the internet including murder, that is becoming normalized in the minds of children and young adult. The more normalized it becomes, the more likely they are going to partake in the activities. In today's world there are

more video games, videos, and language use that suggest that violence is okay, and it is all present through social media.

The Cognitive Capacity and the Incentives of Murder

There are many reasons why people murder some including jealous, possessiveness, impulsive temper, juvenile delinquency, and anger. Then there is childhood trauma, brain trauma, hormone imbalance, alcohol induced, and social inequalities, just to name a few (Daly and Wilson, 2009). In more recent years there is the idea that there is more murder occurring because of the modern weapon creations and the easy accesses people have to it. There is less face to face interactions and a higher rate of weapon usage when it comes to how people deal with their problems (Daly and Wilson, 2009). Researchers have also found that the amount of violence on television has increased over the years and has led to the normalization of violent acts which can eventually turn into the normalization of murder (Daly and Wilson, 2009).

To begin with there is multiple different type of offenders. Firstly, the passive offenders, people that believe that they are always being taken advantage of which causes them to build up anger and hold it in until they burst and act irrationally and sometimes without even realizing what they did was wrong (Minter, 2013). Then there is the traumatized type which is believed to always be on the offense and never really trusting anyone, they do not accept criticism well and upholding grudges against others. They are set in their ways. Finally, the most common, the narcissistic type that is seeking for attention and

will continue to reach for it until they receive it on a constant bases (Minter, 2013).

While many people are able to control their thoughts and prevent them from becoming actions or at least are able to channel their anger and frustration into nondestructive outlets; some people struggle with it and their thoughts become violent impulses and even lead up to murder (Greenemeirer, 2011). The question many researchers are asking is what turns anger into actions? Everyone is born with cognitive control, or otherwise known as self-control. But the human brain makes it easy for humans to be influenced by others. For example, by watching a violent movie or video, one is more likely to act out violently opposed to those who did not watch the violence. While this is not the case for all, it is very common because there is a problem with a balance of power between one's control mechanisms (Greenemeirer, 2011).

Finally, it is important to note the mirror effect that is shown in many social settings whether social media or murder is involved. People mirror people they admire or want to be like, no one is completely themselves one hundred percent of the time. This is related to murder and social media because the media gives people the outlet to display themselves for others to mirror, and many murders that occur, are often mirrored or otherwise known as copy cats (Meindl, Ivy, 2017).

Looking at mass shootings for example, there was the Columbine High School that ended in a mass murder, with a target of students and staff. They not

only shot and killed but there was also a two bomb attempts. Since then there have been many bomb attempts on populated areas, and even more mass shootings in schools and concerts. These mass shootings and bombs are recreating Columbine because people who already displayed violent behavior and or psychological issues, saw how much media attention these two received for their act. They are in textbooks and are well known for their mass murder and it gave the incentive to others who were looking for this same time of crime (Meindl, Ivy, 2017).

If social media did not promote these mass shooters and their life stories, there would be a lack of mirroring because the results did not end in the way they had hoped. People mirror the behaviors that get them the attention they are seeking. If the news did not release their names if social media did not let these mass shootings go viral, they did not play them on every news channel for weeks on end, if it was not plastered all of every social media platform, the chances of recurrence may be slimmer than it currently is (Meindl, Ivy, 2017).

Media Violence

On average as a society 73 percent of people are on Instagram daily, 90 percent are on Facebook, 54 percent on Snap Chat, and 95 percent on YouTube (Hendricks, 2019). With this much social media usage daily, people are more than likely to have some negatively effects, especially psychologically. Research conducted on the subject found there is a connection between social media usage and psychiatric disorders that include depression, anxiety, internet

addiction, and low self-esteem to name a few (Pantic, 2014). In the late 90s there was research conducted that found that the internet negatively affects social relationships. This is because there is a decline in communication among friends and family members as well as the reduction in communication in the user's social circle. This then leads to feelings of depression and loneliness, which can lead to a slower social development amongst children (Subrahmanyam K, Kraut RE, Greenfield PM, et al., 2000).

With the invention of social media children and adolescents are spending more time in front of computer screens which in return leads to the lessening of interpersonal skills and it also effects how people interact with one another. Along with depression, social media brings out low self-esteem which takes along eating disorders, addiction, and many other mental illnesses. The possible connection between low self-esteem and social media is that social media platforms are all about self- presentation, the reason why people uses it. Social media encourages people to promote themselves in unhealthy ways to get likes and views, then leads to narcissistic behavior among the poster and depression among the viewers (Mehdizadeh S., 2010) In a study conducted at NYU, 100 students who use Facebook, self-reported narcissistic personalities. They also found those who have low self-esteem are more involved online in terms of having more self-involving content on their social media profiles (Mehdizadeh S., 2010).

Researchers knew that there was an increase in violence, even before one of the first documented mass shootings. MTV and the American Psychological Association (APA) came together to create a campaign to end youth violence. While this campaign took place over 20 years ago, there is still a major problem when it comes to murder and violence in the United States and across the world. In the United States the availability to guns is like no other country, it has some of the most liberal gun laws in the world (Holmes, 2020). Then there is the availability of information on explosive on the internet. The internet allows anyone and everyone to gain information from their homes on their computers without anyone knowing (Holmes, 2020).

Not to mention with the rise in divorce rates in more recent years leads to children having less supervision and leaves them without role models to resolve conflict (Holmes, 2020). All that and the mixture of violence on the television, music videos, and social media leads to children and teens seeing violence at a higher level of intensity. This leads to children and young adults thinking that the violence is normal and increases the amount of it happening each day (Holmes, 2020).

To refer to the columbine high school massacre that was suggestively related to the Matrix, The Basketball Diaries, or even Marilyn Manson music. Two teenage boys walked into the high school with semi-automatic handguns and shot guns. They ended up killing 13 people and injuring many and then turned the guns on themselves. With no real answers, the only link investigators could

come up with is the boys were attached to violent media. They mimicked films such as the Matrix with their long trench coats and the type of weaponry that was chosen. While there is no evidence that suggests that they watched these films, there was evidence though that they did enjoy listening to Marilyn Manson, and their internet usage and interest computer games makes it easier to link the violent media content to this attack (Boyle, 2005).

Lack of Parental Guidance

There is the notion of the absence of moral compass has increased the amount of violence that occurs throughout society. Church seems to be a thing of the past, while it used to be obligatory now it is an option, and many believe that there is a lack of moral values being taught in society today. While they still exist, it is not to the scale that it used to be in the early 20th century (Holmes, 2020). Not to mention, the breakdowns of neighborhoods and communities. In the earlier days everyone knew their neighbors and spent times socializing with them. There was more group activities and exercise compared to now where there are more individual activities and online activity (Holmes, 2020). With all this change it is only inevitable that there is going to be an increase in crime and violence among young adults. There is a lack of guidance, accountability, and stability among youth.

Online Social Networking Addiction

Addiction is a loaded word with the definition of “being imprisoned to a habit or object that is psychologically or physically habit forming” (Dictionary.com,

2020). Social media however is becoming more and more addictive especially to teens and those who are in their early 20's. While this new research and it is still being debated, many researchers believe that social media is a new type of addiction and around five to ten percent of Americans meet the criteria for addiction (Hilliard, 2020). Researchers have found the root to the cause of social media addiction; it starts with the dopamine filled social environment and social media is the host. It has the same effect as gambling and drugs have on people, social media makes it to where the consumers crave it and keep coming back for more (Hilliard, 2020). Researchers suggest the social media addiction is just like any other addiction, signs include mood modification, salience, tolerance change, and withdrawal symptoms and finally relapse (Hilliard, 2020).

On the other hand, it is important to mention, researchers have found that social media outlets such as Facebook have also improved self-esteem. Gonzales and Hancock included groups of student participants subjected to three different situations: exposure to a mirror, exposure to one's own Facebook profile, and a control setting (Gonzales AL, Hancock JT., 2011). The researchers used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to measure the self-esteem of the participants. They found that there was a positive effect of Facebook on self-esteem supporting the Hyper-Personal Model where a selective self-presentation positively impacts impressions of the self (Gonzales AL, Hancock JT., 2011). There is also the "objective self-awareness theory which suggests that anything that causes stimulus to oneself to become the object instead of the subject of the

consciousness will lead to a diminished impression of the self “(Gonzales AL, Hancock JT., 2011) The stimulus is suggesting at looking at oneself in the mirror, hearing one’s own voice, writing one’s own vitae, or anything where the attention is being brought on oneself “(Gonzales AL, Hancock JT., 2011). More research conducted found that it is very likely that a Facebook users’ check their own page more than once a day, they are trying to look at themselves through the view of others by viewing their own biographies, pictures, posts, and so on. This can be either a reduction or a boost to one’s self-esteem over time and in a short period (Gonzales AL, Hancock JT., 2011).

In 2012 the Andreessen et al. developed the Facebook Addiction Scale, a scoring system originally based on a total of 18 items. It is testing things such as salience, any mood changes, amount of tolerance, any withdrawal, conflict, and relapse (Andreessen CS, Torsheim T, Brunborg GS, et al., 2012). Using this scale and a questionnaire, researchers experimented with 423 university students. The test showed a high trustworthiness and proved to be relevant to the student population (Andreessen CS, Torsheim T, Brunborg GS, et al., 2012). In the same year the Griffiths voiced concerns that the phrase “Facebook addiction” may be not be the right term because there is so much more to Facebook then just social networking, there are games, businesses, and so many other things that are done through the app (Griffiths MD, 2012). However, in many researchers’ opinions it is an important addition to the study of addiction

because many users are still attached or addicted to the use of social media, no matter what the reason is.

Social media effects more than social status, it also effects the brain. Being addicted to social media can be both physical and psychological, A study at Harvard University found that the same parts of the brain light up when a person is on social media as it does when they are consuming an addictive substance. When a person experiences something rewarding or uses a substance that is addicting a reaction is created in the dopamine producing areas of the brain. In brief, the brain receives a reward when someone is addicted to a chemical or in this case social media or receives a message, a like, or a comment on social media which is causing positive reinforcement (Hilliard, 2020).

Social media provides the brain endless amount of rewards throughout the day, it is hard to control or prevent from happening. The brain soon rewires itself to believe that likes, comments, messages are positive affirmations and continue to crave them. Another factor to this addiction is the reward part of the brain is most active when a person is speaking about themselves. It is estimated that individuals talk about themselves 30 to 40 percent of the time, however on social media it is almost all about themselves, showing off accomplishments, trips, bodies, anything to get them more attention and that brings the percentage up to 80 percent (Hilliard, 2020). When people lack the affirmation, they seek then they

start losing the high of the reward and will do anything to get it back, including murder if it brings them enough attention.

However, the question is can social media addiction are medically diagnosed? For it to be diagnosed

The Tenth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems (ICD-10) defined several specific criteria for dependence syndrome such as a strong desire or sense of compulsion, difficulties in controlling consumption behavior, physiological withdrawal state after reduction or cessation, evidence of tolerance, and so on (World Health Organization, 2014). A diagnosis can only be made if three or more of the criteria are present during the previous year (World Health Organization, 2014). Could be quite difficult to distinguish SNS addiction from Internet addiction, which is a much more general disorder (Block JJ, 2008).

Many researchers compare to cigarettes, but social media addiction is harder to resist than cigarettes and alcohol due to the social pressures around it, even though it is not recognized in the Diagnostic Manual for Mental Health Disorders (DSM-5). Social media is increasing and changing rapidly it is hard to keep up with it, never mind study it. However, scientists in the Netherlands have invented their own scale to identify possible addiction. Another researcher in the UK at the Nottingham Trent University analyzed 43 studies and concluded that social media addiction needs to be professionally treated. They found that the

extreme usage of social media was linked to relationship problems, worse academic achievement, and less participation in offline interactions can create social media addiction. This then can have an impact on one's self-esteem. There are more and more people trying to conform into what social media wants them to be then actually being themselves, this leads to body dysmorphia, Photoshop, catfishing, and so much more. Women especially are feeling inadequate and fall into depression because of social media (Block JJ. 2008).

Social Media Causes Jealousy

The fact that most everyone is on social media, it is hard not to think that those who are not online are not suspicious, especially when it comes to young adults and their relationships. Many like to over share online and expose every detail of their lives to strangers and the "Randoms" of the social media world. Social media influence in relationships has raised jealousy among people. Jealousy is best defined as one being envious of another's accomplishments or ownership (Persch Ja, 2009). With social media these feeling skyrockets because people can investigate not only their partners but those their partners interact with. They can investigate everything including locations, likes, contacts, careers, schools, infidelity, pretty much anything one can possibly know about a person is online (Persch Ja, 2009).

Researchers have found that Facebook causes jealousy and the negativity of it creates strains on relationships. Perch suggests that Facebook is responsible because one is exposing them to the world, and nothing is hidden

anymore (Persch Ja, 2009). While this is not true for all those who use social media, those who have low self-esteem and trust issues are more likely to experience jealousy compared to those who are confident with themselves and trust within their relationship (Persch Ja, 2009). Also, those who are in committed relationships are less likely to experience jealousy compared to those who are uncommitted to each other (Aylor B, Dainton M., 2001).

Sheets et al. states that there are four types of jealousy evoking situations which are when a partner shows interests in another person, when another shows interests in one's partner, when one's partner talks about or interacts with prior relational partners, and ambiguous scenes involving the partner. (Sheets VL, et al, 1997). Facebook creates an easier path because one is interacting with more people than they normally would in real life, there are more opportunities to cheat, lie, and hurt their partner than there is in society. This is causing partners to constantly question each other and their relations with others.

In this research they had 308 participants that ranged from the age of 17 to 24. 50.5% of them were in committed relationships, 8.3% were causally dating one or more people, 3.7% were in an open relationship, 0.7% were married, 0.3% divorced or separated, and 33.6% were not dating anyone. Researchers used the Facebook Jealousy scale that was created to evaluate the experience of jealousy in the specific contact of Facebook. The questions that were used were "How likely are you to become jealous after your partner has added an unknown member of the opposite sex?" and "How likely are you to monitor your partner's activities on

Facebook?” (Buss D, Larsen R, Westen D, Semmelroth J, 1992). They found that about 75 percent of participants were likely to add someone who they either had a relationship with or sexual relations with on Facebook, and 79 percent reported that their partners had done the same. Almost all of them reported that their partner has friends on Facebook that they do not know (Buss D, Larsen R, Westen D, Semmelroth J, 1992).

Through this research they found four patterns among the participants. Firstly, the accessibility of information including statements about increase amount of information available through Facebook about the relationship one’s partner has with another person, then there is relationship jealousy which is the link between Facebook participants own or their partner has experienced jealousy. The third theme that was noticed was that Facebook was an addiction, indicating that the participants had a hard time limiting the amount of time they were spending online and checking for updates. And the final one is the lack of “content; this is about the ambiguous nature of Facebook and the fact that it can potentially create negative consequences such as jealousy. (Muise, Amy, 2009).

Emotive Capacity and Murder

According to BBC Future there are a lot of negative impacts that come along with the positives of social media. One of those being the level of stress it creates on a person’s life. People are using social media to tell the world everything that is going on in their life, the good, the bad, and the ugly. They include personal problems, political views, and many other stressors people face

daily. In a study conducted in 2015 by the Pew Research center in Washington DC, they researched if social media causes more stress than it relieves. They took 1800 people and found that women reported to be more stressed than the men. They found that Twitter is one of the main causes of the stress; they stated that the more time they spent on Twitter the more stressed they felt.

Another research that was conducted in 2014 in Austria they found that people's moods are lower after using Facebook for only 20 minutes compared to those who just browsed the internet. In a study conducted at the University of California researchers addressed the emotional content of over 100 million Facebook users between the years of 2009 to 2012 (Guy, 2018). They found that the weather influenced peoples' emotions by one percent. For example, if it were raining, one percent of people would post something negative, if it were sunny, one percent of people would post something positive. Researchers investigated cities where it is constantly raining and found that one negative post influenced about 1.3 people in drier cities to post something negative. However, those who posted positive posts, they had a positive influence towards others by 1.75 persons, this shows that positivity is more influential than negative posts (Guy, 2018).

Anxiety is another topic when people are looking at social media. Researchers have looked at the general idea of anxiety provoked by social media and it has created worry, trouble sleeping, and hard time concentration. A research study conducted by Computers and Human Behavior found that those

who use seven or more social media networks were three times more likely to have higher levels of general anxiety than those who use zero to two social media networks. This shows that the more people use social media the more likely they will have general anxiety (Guy, 2018).

Another popular topic that comes with social media is depression. There are multiple studies connecting depression with social media usage. Two studies that involved more than 700 students were able to see that there were depressive symptoms such as the feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness were linked to online interactions with their peers (Guy, 2018). Those who had more negative interactions felt more depressive symptoms. In another relative study involving 1700 people found that there was a threefold effect, social media, depression, and anxiety, and the more these people used these networks the worse their anxiety and depression got. The reasons for this are because people are hiding behind the screen. They are cyber-bullying and having a distorted view of other people's lives, they see what others want them to see. This makes them think that they are falling behind, not good enough, rich enough, smart enough, creating feelings of missing out, anxiety, and finally depression (Guy, 2018).

With all of this and the combination of addiction, jealousy, anger, and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), teens and young adults are still developing their brains. During this time, the brain is still in the pruning stage which is the process in which your brain decides which information is important to keep in long term memory and what information is okay to forget about. The brain does this so it

can make room for more efficient connections and prepare the brain for adulthood. Many researchers found that the areas that are being pruned at this time are the areas that involve controlling one's emotions, impulses, and high-level reasoning and decision making (Guy, 2018). These are the same areas in the brain that are most associated with criminal behavior and on top of that, they are often weak during teenage years. Which means that teens do not always think of the consequence of their actions before they commit to them. This then explains the high crime rate among teens and why in many states, depending on the crime, they are tried in a juvenile court and not charged as an adult (Guy, 2018).

Interpersonal Relationship Changes

Researchers from the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships created a study to see how much social media has an influence on relationships. In their study they link together 34 pairs of people who have never met before and had them have a ten-minute conversation about an interesting event that had happened to them recently. They all sat private booths with each other and had a phone on top of their table. Those who had the phone in eyeshot had more trouble recalling the interaction they just had, and it was less meaningful. This is also true with romantic relationships, in Canada at the University of Guelph they surveyed 300 people from the age of 17 to 24 in 2009 about any jealousy they felt when on Facebook. Women spent more time on Facebook than men in this study and often felt more jealousy when doing so. The researchers were able to

conclude they felt the Facebook environment created these feelings of jealousy and enhanced concerns about the quality of the relationships at hand.

Social media can also create feelings of envy. In a study including 600 adults, about a third of them said social media made them feel negative emotions including emotions of frustration which lead to envy. This is all because people can compare their lives with others who post on social media. They see that some people are living more extravagant lives and better lives than they are which sparks feelings of envy amongst friends. Then those who see these posts respond back with their own posts and it causes a spiral between people which leads to those adding more and more to their profile, things that made them jealous in the first place.

Social media also changes people's social relationships. They no longer feel the need to interact in person anymore; everything is through social media and the mobile phones. In a study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2018, researchers surveyed 7000 19 to 32-year old's and found that those who spend majority of their time on social media were twice as likely to report feelings of social isolation. This includes the feeling of not being able to find a sense of social belonging, or engagement with others. Face to face interactions are being replaced with online interactions and slowly they are starting to disappear.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The methods for this research were to use a content analysis to find if there was a correlation between social media and murder. There were many news articles that were read and many that were selected but not all that was read were used. In this section one will find the methods that were used to collect the data used throughout this research paper as well as the research procedures that were followed to complete this research. This includes the approach that was used, how the sample was chosen, the limitations to the procedures chosen, and what would have been done differently if the researcher were to start over.

Data Collection Methods

Case Selection

For this research there was 24 murder cases that were selected to represent the population of the United States between the years 2009 and 2019. The 24 cases are a representation of murders that had social media involvement in the last 10 years. This time frame was significant because it measures the start of when social media took off on the internet to the most current time. These cases occurred in the United States or were American citizens at the time of their death. There were two cases that did not have a location attached to the names, however after researching more into their whereabouts it was concluded that the likelihood of them living in America was more than likely. Then there were a few cases found outside the United States that were used as a comparison to the

United States to see if social media influenced murders occur more in the United States or if it was a worldwide problem. These cases included countries such as England, Mexico, and India. In total including the ones from other countries there is 30 cases for this study. All these cases included murder of at least one human being, and they all included the use of social media before or during the murder. When looking at the use of social media, the cases that were selected are the ones that involve both the murder and the murderer using social media as either a way of communication, meeting, or display of the murder.

There were many types of news articles that were used for this research. Ones representing the nation such as ABC and NBC news coverage, ones that represented the state, and ones that represented the city that the murder occurred in. In the selection of which news articles to use, there was a matter of which resource gave the most information on the suspect, victim, social media involvement, and the murder itself. There were some cases where multiple news sources were used to complete story. For each case there was a comparison of at least two news articles to confirm all information was correct and there was no outlying information.

To prevent research bias there were multiple articles involved to make sure that the cases were described in the most factual and informative way. There were articles used that held social media accountable for the murder, and some articles believed there was little social media involvement and they had no influence on the actions of an individual. This is important because it is showing

an unbiased representation of facts by allowing the audience to see the researcher did follow the parameters that were set and did not filter the results. However, there is a bias on what the search engine is choosing to show, for example the most popular cases consumed the search for the first few pages of the search. Cases that would get more attention and were more popular are represented on the first 10 pages while the rest of the unpopular cases are left for last in the search engine results. This can be viewed as a poor representation of societies in the United States.

Research Procedures

These cases were found in a few different ways, first the researcher used Google Scholar, using the terms “social media murder in United States” and “Murder on social media in United States” to search. After finding some cases and information on the topic it was important to go through each link, and read the abstract, from there it made it easier to see which cases matched the search requirements —United States case, last 10 years, each case required names, dates, location, and type of social media that was used in order to be involved in the study. Another source that was used was Lexus Nexus search engine; the same keywords that were used in google scholar were used in this search. This gave the option to filter down to each date, where it occurred and any other information that was needed. Going through the cases the researcher only selected those that matched the listed requirements. This however disqualified a

lot of cases because there was either missing information about the participants or the locations were not listed making it difficult to see if they met the parameters.

Finally, there was the use of news articles that were located online by searching for social media's involvement in murder. Some of these social media outlets such as the Sun and local and global news sites were used. Some included ABC and NBC while others were the Chicago press. In this case the information was verified on at least one other news media outlets, or by a search for the case on Lexus Nexus to verify the information was represented correctly. This is how the researcher found 24 cases throughout the United States and six news outlets describing murders and social media involvement out of the country.

Researcher was also able to use these social media outlets to follow up on the comments, posts, pictures, and so on that was submitted by both those who are murdered and the murderer. This was beneficial because than there was the ability to collaborate the two subjects, find the relationship between the two parties, and connect social media and murder. While not all social media profiles were active, it gave the reader the opportunity to understand the events leading up to the murder. There was the use of Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to check their profiles and see the posts that lead up to each murder was necessary however in some cases they had been taken down or the parties involved a minor and for their protection their name was not shared in

documents. Not to mention website like Myspace which is older and not as active made it difficult to find the users. Also, the date of occurrence in some cases were 10 years ago, so going back through all the social media posts proved to be difficult and in some cases.

These 24 sample cases represent the population of all US murders in the past 10 years that involves social media and murder. This research procedure is unbiased because there are cases that did not have a direct link to social media, and they were still included in this study. If the case mentioned any social media involvement, included murder, and was conducted in the past 10 years it made it into the sample. This made it easier to eliminate most biases and stick to the parameters that were set.

It is also important to note that while there was not a known research bias there could be an unknown bias from these online news companies. It is hard to say that certain economic status, races, religions were not represented well in the sample. This could lead to a research bias of choosing certain races, religions, or quirks about the study.

If there was time to do it over it would be important to have a bigger sample size to represent the United States. While 24 cases are a good start, there needs to be more confirmed cases to make an inform decision on the research. If it were to be redone, it would be important to make sure to do interviews with victims family and suspect and family in order to figure if there is a

class and race divide and if some people are more likely to get reported on than others.

There was a breakdown of each case into specific categories for each the victim and the suspect. These categories included names, race, gender, age, social media platform used in link to death, location, previous crimes, psychological diagnoses, previous relationship with each other, the year it happened, the conviction, time given, how they were killed, why they were killed, how many people were involved, whether or not it took place in a group setting, and if there was any previous verbal abuse. This is important to the research procedures because it allows readers to see if there is a certain group of people that experiences this type of murder more than others.

If there were anything else done to prevent bias, there could have been the use of court cases and police case files to prevent social media bias. The government documents would just include the facts therefore they would be more reliable on the subject. However, they were not used because in many cases it was difficult to find or they were sealed. Also, in the in some cases that were found turned out to be vague on what social media outlets were used and what was said or done on these outlets. These cases were more about the murder itself and how it was done, not so much of what caused it.

After collecting all the information possible, the researcher was able to create a table to compare all the different information for each case. In this table it included information for the victim such as age at death, race, gender, social

media usage, and for the suspect their name, age, race, location of the murder, social media usage, psychological disorders if anywhere diagnosed, amount of victims, whether they committed this crime in a public place or not, whether they broadcasted it or not, how they killed their victim, and the overall reason for the killings. This helped to see if there was a pattern in any way between races, age groups, locations, certain platforms, reasons on why they are killing others.

Table One. Comparison of Social Media and Murders

ID	Name of Victim	Age of Victim	ender of Victim	Name of Suspect	Age of Suspect	Race	Conviction	Year	Location	Relation	Social Media	How	Why	before Social	Multiple Murders	Group Settings	Verbal Abuse	Discorders	Reporte
1	Jerrod Parker	18	M->M	Jarrom Frazier	19	BB	Unknown		Indiana	Rival	twitter	shot	rage	y	n	y	y	n	n
2	Caroline Wimmer	26	F->F	Calin Lawson	28	B-W	25 to life	2009	New York	acquaintance	MySpace	Strangled	rumor	y	n	n	y	n	n
3	Jack Lubel	18	M->M	Taras Bond	18	B-W	unknown	2019	Tennessee	None	texting app	shot	catfished	n	n	y	y	n	n
4	Hugsten	49	M->M	Hugstan Schlicker	15	W-W	20y	2008	Arizona	father	MySpace	shot	grounded	y	n	n	n	n	y
5	Kwane Dancy	22	M->M	Jameg Blake	22	BB	21y	2010	New York	friend	twitter	shot	rage	y	n	y	y	n	n
6	Erinda Martin	14	F->F	Donnell Flora & Neice	14	BB	>5y Uncle -	2014	Illinois	Rival	FB	shot	Argument	y	n	y	y	n	n
7	Prentis Robinson	55	M->M	Douglas Cleveland Colson	60	BB	100y	2014	North Carolina	None	FB	shot	Post	n	n	y	n	n	n
8	Sarah Rose Ludemann	18	F->F	Rachel Wade	19	W-W	27y	2009	Florida	Rival	Text	Stabbed	Argument	n	n	y	y	n	n
9	Rannia Williams	27	M->F	Jonathan Robinson	36	BB	1y predator	2018	Louisiana	Girlfriend	FB	Shot	B Adictic	y	n	n	y	n	n
10	Bianca Devins	17	M->F	Brandon Clark	21	W-W	Unknown	2019	New York	Girlfriend	Instagram	Stabbed	obsession	n	n	y	n	n	n
11	Shawnee Garrison	23	F->F	Tierra Thomas	19	BB	Unknown	2019	Philadelphia	None	Instagram	Stabbed	Post	n	n	y	y	n	n
12	Robert Gohlin	79	M->M	Steve Stephens	37	BB	dead	2017	Ohio	None	FB	Shot	rage	n	y	y	n	n	n
13	Steve Stephan	37	M->M	steve Stephens					Ohio	Self	FB	Shot	rage						
14	Emma Neiderbrock	16	M->F	Richard Alden Samuel McCrosley II	20	W-W	life	2009	Virginia	MySpace Friend	MySpace	hammer	rage	n	y	n	n	n	y
15	Melanie Wells	18	M->F	Richard Alden Samuel McCrosley II		W-W	life	2009	Virginia	MySpace Friend	MySpace	hammer	rage	n					
16	Pastor Mark Neiderbrock	50	M->M	Richard Alden Samuel McCrosley II		W-W	life	2009	Virginia	Parent of Emma	none	hammer	rage	n					
17	Dr. Debra Kelley	63	M->F	Richard Alden Samuel McCrosley II		W-W	life	2009	Virginia	Parent of Emma	none	hammer	rage	n					
18	Kaya VanWert	16	F->F	Cathleen Boyer	16	W-B	Unknown	2016	Pennsylvania	Rival	FB	Stabbed	Argument	n	n	y	y	n	n
19	Nicole Lovell	13	M->F	David Eisenhauser	18	W-W	50 years	2016	Virginia	Relationship	ikiktexting app	Stabbed	catfished	n	n	n	n	n	n
20	Jun Lin	33	M->M	Luca Megrotta	32	W-A	Life	2012	California	line for Sexual Re	Craiglist	Stabbed	Attention	n	n	n	n	n	y
21	Unknown	NA	NA	Sean Yessquez	20	M	200 years	2017	California	None	FB	Shot	Attention	n	y	y	n	n	n
22	Danone Cook	18	M->M	Dylan Hemphill	19	B-B	probation ar	2018	Illinois	friend	Instagram	shot	Attention	y	n	n	n	n	n
23	Lucy McHugh	13	M->F	Stephen Nicholson	25	W-W	33y	2019	NA	Relationship	texting app	Stabbed	rage	n	n	y	y	y	y
24	Graciele Holler	45	M->F	Jeffery Langford	24	W-W	Still in trial	2019	Utah	Mother Son	FB	not Stabbed	Attention	y	n	n	y	y	y
25	Jesus Melchioro	unknown	M->M	Flynn Rojas	19	M-M	Still in trial	2019	California	None	FB	Shot	post	n	n	y	y	n	n
26	Jermaine Groupall	15	M/F->M	nuel Oliver Rowland, Junior Simpson	17-21	B-B	12-22 years	2018	NA	None	FB	Stabbed	Gang	n	y	y	n	n	n

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This section includes information on the hypothesis of the research as well as what was found, such as the cases that were discovered and the results of those cases. For each of the cases there is a summary at the end explaining if social media played a large enough role in the murder to be held partially reliable. Each case will have a synopsis of what occurred before each murder and what lead the person to kill another human being, and what happened after the murder. After the cases are connected to social media and the literature research mentioned above, there is the summary of the results found. This will include all factors such as race, age, gender, and so on. This is important to include because it can speak to the representation of the United States that is at risk because of social media. Finally, there will be the comparison of social media in other countries to the United States. There are cases listed from other countries on how social media influenced murder in their countries. This will help correlate that social media is a growing problem that needs to be recognized and held accountable for the lack of control on these platforms.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis is that there is a connection between social media and murder. In some cases, social media is the link between the murderer and the murdered. Social media did in fact impact the lives of these individuals one way

or another and has shown the true dangers of media. The researcher believed that she would find many cases that were easily correlated to social media and the murders that occurred. Not to mention the research thought she would be able to represent each state of the United States however that would be too many states to research and would have too large of a sample. The hypothesis is that social media is growing and so will murder rates.

General Patterns

When it comes to relational patterns there are some that exist in this data set. In a broader sense there was the pattern of the “copycat”. People were recreating things they saw in other media post or from their peers to receive the same attention the person prior received. For example, the constant live streaming murders, it started with one and then others saw how fast they could get recognized and how many views they could get, that they decided to do the same. Another example would be the murders that included showing off guns and money online and accidents happening such as the gun going off.

Majority of these cases are due to fights over a relationship or another person who posted something about their relationship, online. This was creating a lot of rage and anger between the two parties. The relation of these involved posting on social media about another person or hate speech about the victim or someone breaking up with the other over the media. If they were not arguing over a boy or a relationship, then there was a fight between friends. The common

factor is that the words that are posted online for others to see are very effective towards another person. They cause unnecessary negative emotions which lead to bad decisions. It is important to mention there is no correlation between states or locations according to this data set, they are well spread out across the country. Finally, another relational pattern is that most of the suspects are male and most of the victims are female due to cases of multiple victims.

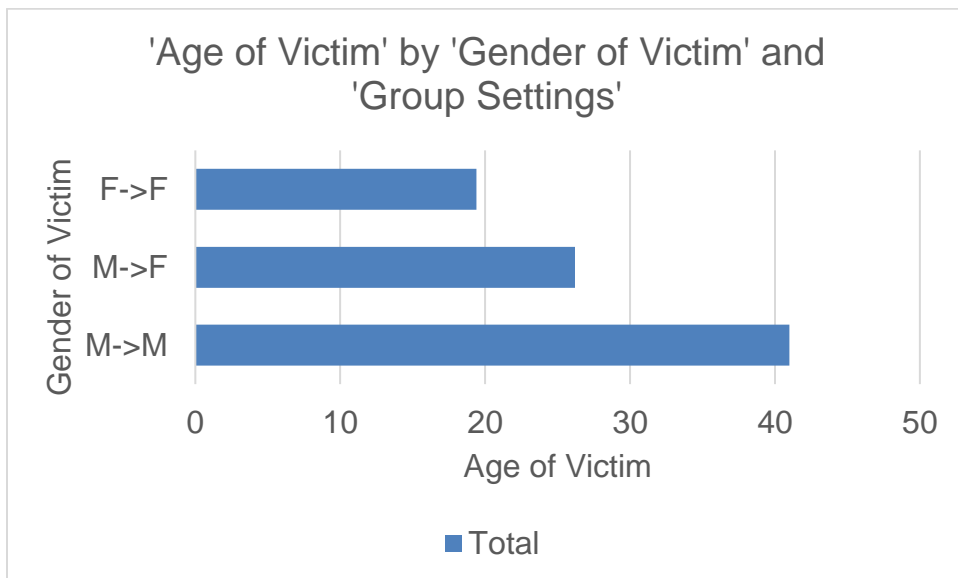


Figure One. Age and Gender of Victim and Suspect

Rumors, Postings, and Jokes

Rumors, postings, and jokes that occur on social media seem to be taken very seriously and can end up in murder. Just as it did for eighteen-year-old

Jerrold Parker, who died due to multiple gunshot wounds because of a tweet. Investigators on the cases stated that society today is in the information age where the harassed can never escape the harassers due to social media being the direct line between the two (Rodriguez, 2016). In this case the tweet stated “If anyone got a problem with us, we could solve that right now. Hit my line.” This came from an account that Leggett had, and it was a retweet of what Javhonn Frazier, Parker’s friend had tweeted originally (Rodriguez, 2016). He accused a man by the name of Kalen of not being able to rap (Rodriguez, 2016). After the retweet Frazier tweeted Leggett for his number and Leggett responded with it, Frazier then proceeded to text Leggett that he just needed the number and would hit him up after he got off. Then Leggett texted back, “bet”. After a while, the two decided to fight later that day. With one last text stating they were outside, witnesses stated they saw Leggett shoot Parker, Frazier picked up his friend and laid him on a car while he ran to get help, but it was too late (Rodriguez, 2016). A young man died because of a social media posting about a friend’s rap skills, this shows that social media is a danger to all, and it can help aid murder.

If social media did not exist or was not a large part of these young men’s lives, this murder would most likely not have happened. The teenagers in this case were hiding behind the screen and saying whatever they wanted to one another until one could not control their rage and acted out of character and murdered the other. When people are online, they have less accountability for what they say and in many times are anonymous in what they are saying. Which

means that they feel freer to say and do whatever they want (Mando, 2008). If it were not for social media this boost of testosterone and anger would more than likely not have occurred.

Another case where social media be a neutral platform would be in the case of Prentis Robinson, a 55-year-old man who was shot one block away from the police department, while he was on Facebook Live. Robinson was walking home from the police department after reporting a stolen phone. He was known for Facebook Living his everyday events in his neighborhood such as drug deals which often made people upset. One of his neighbors said this was bound to happen because people would get angry and at some point, they will snap. The suspect was 65-year-old Douglas Cleveland Colson, who was seen walking towards Robinson when he was shot. Robinson shouted to the man that he was on live, and that is when he was shot. The police could not find any evidence of motive or why he decided to kill Robinson that day.

This case involves a man who was continuously sharing on social media about illegal things that were going on in his neighborhood. He knew he was upsetting people and knew that it was probably not a good idea since his cellphone was already stolen, but he continued to do so. Colson could have possibly been one of the people Robinson previously recording and he had enough and decided to kill the man.

Overall, this murder would not have taken place if it were not for social media because Robinson was posting it for everyone to see. Social media made

him believe that what he was doing was right and gave him the power and the right to record everything. The man was murdered because he was constantly filming people who did not want to be filmed and in this case he filmed the wrong person whose emotion were intensified by the actions of Robinson's which caused him to break and murder him.

A case of a Texan man was shot to death because of a meme that was posted to make fun of a local gang on the internet. Jesus Maldonado was making fun of a gang on the internet, angering them, and challenging them to a fight. However, when they showed up, gang member Fabyan Rojas had a gun and shot him to death. The 19-year-old had a large criminal history, so it was not surprising to police when they arrested him for murder. He would constantly post videos of lighting rabbits on fire and letting them run around the backyard squealing for help while he and other laughed in the background (ABC30, 2019).

Due to his criminal past it is not unbelievable that he committed murder because he was already in trouble with the law and killing animals (ABC30, 2019). This man does show psychopathic tendencies however this was not brought on by social media because he was not posting these videos for likes he was posting it for torture and would have done it anyway. However, in the case of this murder, yes, he would have probably murdered someone eventually, but it would not have necessarily been Jesus. Jesus was murdered because of a meme he had made about the gang and they made plans to meet up on social media, so in this case social media is an influence on his death. It allowed Rojas

to post the videos of animal cruelty and did not take it down or monitor his activity online. Social media could have deactivated his account, or filtered his messages, this could have been prevented.

In another case, Shawntae Garrison and her sister were stabbed multiple times, killing Shawntae and leaving her sister in critical condition over an alleged Instagram post where one group of girls was making fun of another gang. They met up for a fight and ultimately died for it. The Instagram post has not been released, but witnesses on scene confirmed that this is what started the fight between the two groups (Tanno, 2019).

Just like the other case it is hard to say that this murder would not have happened if social media was not involved. Social media did play a role in this murder because the meeting of the two gangs took place online, however if the girls were involved in a gang, it makes it more likely that this murder would have still happened.

In a similar case, an 18-year-old mom was stabbed to death by a former best friend who was 16 at the time, over a fight about a boy on Facebook. The argument was over the Kayla child's father and who was going to get his attention. Kayla was stabbed in the neck and chest by Cathleen Boyer because according to witnesses Kayla was winning the fight. She died because of an argument about DeJesus who was arrested hours before Kayla's death for beating her and dragging her by her hair. After Cathleen murdered her best

friend, she went to Facebook to write that she was wrong and was going to turn herself in, no remorse (True Case Files, 2019).

This case used social media as a platform to fight while the two knew each other before hand, they never jumped to murder or fighting before. Social media did have a correlation with this murder; however, it is hard to say that this murder would not have occurred if social media was not involved. These three have a history of getting angry and abusing each other, it is possible that they would have ended up murdering one another eventually, it was a matter of time, just like some other cases that were found. However, in this scenario it happened to start because of a social media posting.

In a research study conducted in 2016, the researchers found out how much influence social media has on the spread of rumors, jokes, and conversations, and how quickly things progress through the internet. The internet is made up of one large community that anyone can access and see anything anyone has ever posted. With all this information it makes it clear to see how things can be changed and blown out of portions just like to case above. Society gets information so fast through social media, sometimes even before it hits the mainstream media, it is difficult to keep everything under wraps when it has been exposed to this environment (Dizikes, 2018).

The given definition for rumor is a “circulating story of questionable veracity, which is apparently credible but hard to verify, and produces sufficient skepticism and/or anxiety so as to motivate finding out the actual truth” (Dizikes,

2018). Rumors have changed over the years, now they can happen online without ever meeting the person. Just like when it comes to news stories there is different versions and then the truth of what really happened.

Urgency and Need

Social media can become a necessity for many people, they cannot go a day without checking it and if they do, they experience withdrawal from it. Just as Hughstan Schlicker experienced. He was obsessed with social media and would spend most of his day online talking to people he had met online. One afternoon he told the virtual friends on Myspace that he did not feel like living anymore, he was frustrated and started threatening suicide. At that point, his friends called the police to warn them about his threats and when the police brought it to his mother's attention, she did nothing (Walsh, 2009). She stated that she knows her son and he would not do such a thing and promised to lock up all the guns in the house. His father on the other hand was a little bit more concerned with these threats and decided to take away all social media and internet from his son. This made him furious, to the point where he pointed a gun to his father's back and killed him. He stated, "it felt like someone stabbed me" when his father took away his internet access "it went straight through and no matter how hard I pulled, I couldn't pull the knife." (Walsh, 2009)

It is accurate to state that Hughstan suffered from social media addiction and when his fix was not getting fulfilled, he did what he felt was necessary to get his fix back. Social media was controlling his life and by his father suddenly taken

it away ensued anger and hatred. His dopamine levels were not being reached so there was no relief or joy reached and he needed it just like someone craves a cigarette or alcohol (Walsh, 2009). Therefore, one can conclude that if social media did not exist, he would not have had an addiction to it and would not have killed his father to get it back. While it might have been possible for him to become addicted to another substance and committed the murder of his father if his father took it away, this was not the case.

In another case that took place in Utah, a man named Jeffery Antonio Langford killed his mother and turned to Facebook live as an alibi. He stated that his mother killed herself and he was just filming because he wanted to prove himself innocent in the video, he stated "I saw my mother shoot herself in the face." (Darrah, Nicole, Oct 28). After being asked why he did not call 911 instead of making three videos featuring her dead body, he stated he did not want her to kill him. In the second video he claimed that he would not be going to jail and in the third on he stated that his mother deserves to be sent off on the same day that his father died (Darrah, Nicole, Oct, 28). However later police found that it was not possible for her to kill herself with that gun, it was staged, and he murdered her. In the case of this murder he panicked after he shot her and thought he would be safe because of social media. He had the idea that it was just as good as a person and he was in an urgent need for an alibi (Darrah, Nicole, Oct 28). While this did not work out for Jeffery, his mothers' lifeless body

is now posted all over social media with no way of getting it down (Darrah, Nicole, Oct 28).

This case shows urgency and the need for social media to attempt to cover up a murder. In Jeffery's case he saw social media as a way out, while social media might not have been the reason, he committed the murder, it was the way he decided to cover it up. The need of social media to cover up the murder was apparent in this case, even though it did not work out for him, in his head it was necessary to get rid of his mother. There is nothing written on whether it was premeditated and he planned on posting it to get out of the murder, if this was the case then social media could be responsible for the murder, however if it was just a last minute thought after the murder, then social media was just a convenient cover up (Darrah, Nicole, Oct, 28).

Then there is the well-known case of Robert Godwin and Steve Stephens, the Facebook live murder. This Facebook live was an unfortunate cry for help from Steve Stephens, he was in a low place in his life where he had lost everything, he had to gambling debt. He turned to social media for a cry for help, he begged them to convince him to stop from committing murder, he stated that his life was going so wrong that he could murder someone (Solon, 2018). On the Easter Day Godwin was shot in the head after pleading for his life because Stephens life was not where he wanted it. After Stephens murdered Godwin, he proceeded to upload the video to his profile for everyone to see. It was shared

millions of times and viewed by even more. It took two hours for Facebook to take it down (Solon, 2018).

This is an example of Urgency and need because Stephen's believed that it was his only way to get the help he needed. He was looking to his followers and reaching out as one last cry for help and no one did anything, no one called the police or tried to stop the murder from happening (Solon, 2018). It is not clear the complete motive of Stephens for choosing a random target such as 74-year-old Robert Godwin, because after police caught up to him, he killed himself. This murder might not have taken place if it was not for social media because there is reason to believe that if social media did not exist he would not have killed anyone because he would not have felt the pressure to follow through with his words that were broadcasted all over social media (Solon, 2018). Social media brings a lot of social pressures to the surface, and if he did not follow through, to him, it might seem as if people were going to judge him for it, even if that was not the case in real life.

Conflict and Jealousy

Conflict and jealousy are a big problem that arises in social media. One example of where jealousy went too far is with Caroline Wimmer. She was strangled by her ex-boyfriend, a convicted felon because she told his current girlfriend on Myspace that he was a cad. He strangled her to death with a hair dryer cord all because she told his girlfriend on Myspace that he was unfaithful with her (Gendar, 2009).

However, it is hard to say in this case whether or not social media had escalated the situation because Wimmer could have very well have had told his girlfriend in person about his unfaithfulness, and it was not the first time he was charged with assaulting a woman. In 2006 he was arrested for punching and choking his live-in girlfriend at the time and the mother of his two kids, then he later hit her with a metal hammer. In this case he was never convicted, and the case was sealed. This woman was astonished at his arrest for murder (Gendar, 2009). This then make it plausible that he was eventually going to kill someone whether social media played a role in it or not. He had prior history of abuse, anything could have set him off to make him hurt or murder another person, it was just a matter of time before it happened again. On the other hand, social media could have influenced this murder because it was never mentioned why he killed her. It is plausible that he killed her out of rage of being embarrassed on a social platform.

In another case a 14-year-old girl was murdered over a conflict about a boy that all started on Facebook. In 2014 a Chicago teen was fatally shot by another 14-year-old girl in a street fight. Edina Martin was walking home from school with a friend when the unnamed (due to being a minor) 14-year-old came up to her and shot her in the back and shot another person in the arm. This fight started on Facebook, the two girls who went to the same school and according to family they were close friends. The two friends were arguing over a boy and the unnamed teen let her anger take over (ABC, 2014). Her Uncle who was

paralyzed due to being shot, supplied her with the loaded gun to go handle her business. He was also charged with his niece. Classmate Kimberly Taylor stated, "She wasn't a bad kid, I mean, everybody gets suspended. She was not bad. When I heard that, I was sad for her. It hurts my heart to see her life is away. She throws her life away." (ABC, 2014).

Many that witnessed the murder and the victim's family stated that Chicago is not a place for a child to grow up. Just hearing from classmates one can tell that it was not a safe environment, "... everyone gets suspended...". The family moved from one city to another to give their daughter a safer environment to grow up in. The girls were friends at the time, and while they had media conflicts, they also had in person conflicts. Therefore, the odds of this murder happening without social media is more likely. Nevertheless there is research that states that teenage and young adults brains are still developing and with the influence of social media they are in less control of their emotions leaving them to make choices that they would not normally make. This is making it plausible that the influence of social media did impact the outcome of this fight.

In a third case a teenager was killed due to an unknown to the families, love triangle. Rachel Wade was murdered by Sarah Ludemann because they were both involved with, the same man named Joshua Camacho (CBS News, 2010). She stabbed Wade to death in such a violent matter that the knife blade was bent. There was months and months of taunting and threatening towards one another on social media. The comments included, "Please tell me Sarah why

you would be a dumb-a** c**t and put a brand-new picture of you and Josh at the beach on your Myspace. Seriously, I told you to watch your f***ing back and not to f***ing chill with him. I'm guaranteeing you that I'm going to f***ing murder you, I'm letting you know that now," (CBS News, 2010).

While social media did add to the drama and the buildup of anger between the two, it was not the ultimate cause because they still had many in person altercations, including many that involved police. The girls did not only threaten each other on social media but also threaten each other in person. This murder was bound to happen with little or no preventative action taken. However social media allowed the confrontation to escalate and it could be possible that if the girls did not start the fights on social media there would not have been as much rage and anger and it could have been possible this murder would not have occurred. Nevertheless, if social media were to filter and monitor these interactions, there could have been more involvement from the police and social media could have saved a life.

Attention Getting and Risk Taking

Attention getting and risk taking are one of the more popular types of murders and accidental deaths when it comes to this study. They see any attention as good in attention or there are the consequences of trying to receive attention. Even if it means risking a life or even taking a life.

Many people have heard about Eric Clinton Kirk Newman or otherwise known as Luka Magnotta, "The Cat Killer". There was a Netflix documentary

conducted about him and his murders, not to mention many news articles and interviews done with the man himself. A little about Magnotta, he was born in Ontario Canada on July of 1982 to parents Anna Yourkin and Donald Newman. He grew up in a family of five, but in 1994 that all changed, his father was diagnosed with Schizophrenia which lead to his parents' divorce and him moving in a living with his grandmother. His mother was not shy of illness either, while never diagnosed; he described her as OCD and having tendencies to lock him and his siblings out of the house and killed their rabbit because of the mess it would make. In his young childhood, his mother, grandmother, and siblings would call him a "faggot" on normal bases. This then led to him living a life in the sex industry and an obsession with becoming famous (CBC News, 2012).

In 2005 he started his criminal career, where he impersonated women to apply for credit cards and purchased over 10,000 dollars' worth of goods. After this incident he changed his name to Luka Magnotta. He then began to make many profiles online over many years; he would make false claims about himself on these fake accounts to get attention (CBC News, 2012). As social media began to rise, so did his desire to be famous. One of the most interesting claims he made was that he was in a relationship with a well-known Canadian convicted murder, which he would dispute on his real accounts. After his capture, the police found that he had over 70 Facebook pages, 20 websites under different names, and countless YouTube accounts (CBC News, 2012).

Throughout 2007 -2008, he attends many auditions for reality shows but never makes a break television. In these auditions he states, “Some people say that I am devastatingly good looking.” This shows his personality (CBC News, 2012). Finally, in 2010 he posted the kitten killing video which got many people’s attentions. He posted right before Christmas a video of a man which was later found to be him, putting kittens in a sealed bag, and sucking the air out with a vacuum, killing them. This video took off, people were looking everywhere for this man and was not going to let it go until they got him. To Luka, this is all he wanted, he wanted people to know who he was, and he used social media to get people to pay attention to him (CBC News, 2012).

This then leads up to his murder of Lin Jun in 2012; he was an undergraduate student who met Luka online on Craigslist. After agreeing to meet with Luka there was no sign of the young undergrad from friends or coworkers. Then Luka posted a video of the murder on YouTube. The video shows Luka stabbing Lin Jun repeatedly with an ice pick (CBC News, 2012).

It is easy to believe that if all these people on social media would have just left the kitten video alone, would he have moved up to kill a person. They knew that he was obsessed with social media and making a name for himself, whether it was a good or a bad one. His obsession with himself is what got him caught, he went to an internet café to watch the video and see how many likes and comments he had received (CBC News, 2012).

In the end Luka's obsession with not only himself but his social media, led to a death of another man, if there had not been social media involvement, chances are this man would still be alive. He was not killed out of hate or passion; he was a stranger who trusted the wrong person with an addiction to social media (CBC News, 2012).

While this is a very interesting and specific case, it is not the first to occur, but it is one of the first to get so much media attention and police involvement. Unfortunately for his victim it was too little too late. This shows one type of attention seeking behavior that is brought out because of social media, that otherwise would not exist if it were for the creation of media. Having people track him down after the cat killing videos was just what he wanted. It gave him attention that he has been craving for years (CBC News, 2012). He wanted to be famous, he wanted to be a model, and an actor and when those did not work out, he took alternate measures. By killing the cats, he became famous, so he thought that if he upgraded from animals to people, he would become even more famous. He made up story lines along the way to get people to continue to follow him. He thought it through, and he knew what to do to get people to continue to follow and trace him. In the end social media got him the "famous" that he wanted and it also got him caught because he could not help but check on his social media in an internet café to see how many people were still talking about him (CBC News, 2012). This murder without a doubt would only have happen because of social media. He did this all for social media followings and for people

to know his name. In prison he stated that he was happy because people knew who he was.

Another one which society hears about often is accidental deaths. And now more often than not it is happening on social media. For example, looking at cases such as Dylan Hemphill and Dawone Cook where a friend was murdered on Instagram live by accident. Instagram and Facebook have created ways where a person can live stream their activities and other can watch and comment, which is exactly what these two 18-year olds were doing. In the beginning of 2018 these two men were in one of their Detroit homes living streaming and playing with a rifle with a bayonet and showing off their money to their viewers, when suddenly Dawone accidentally shot his best friend in the head, Dylan died instantly(Mollie Cahillane, 2018).

While Dawone only received three years' probation for his actions, he will have to live with the fact that he killed his best friend, all because they were seeking media attention from their followers. This happens way to often to too many young adults, as a society they get wrapped up in their views and their popularity that they are not paying attention and people die because of it. This death would not have occurred if it were not for social media, there would have been nothing to showcase on or to flaunt on. There social media addiction and the need to be accepted are causing murders to occur and there needs to be more of a focus on this type of murder.

A third case that relates to the prior two would be the case of Rannita Williams, who was murdered by her ex on Facebook live. When he was arrested, he told officers that he should be charged with first degree murder because he has plan to murder her it was not by chance. When he was asked what happened he told police that he made her go on Facebook live and apologize to his girlfriend (Zoellner, 2018). In the video Rannita is seen apologizing very nervously with her ex Jonathan behind her. He told her that he was going to make her famous because of this video. He then proceeded to shoot her in the legs and continued shooting at her and the police when they arrived on scene (Zoellner, 2018).

In his interview he stated that he shot at police because he wanted to die as well but he ran out of bullets. He was upset with Rannita for a comment she made on social media that was not shared and wanted her to pay for it. He was also irritated and heard saying, "Everyone wants to be famous, let's be famous today." (Zoellner, 2018) This statement goes to show that social media played a big role in both of their lives, and it was important enough to him to make her apologize on Facebook live. He also hinted at her need to be famous by making the statement "... Let's be famous today." He was aware of what he was doing in his actions and was not affected by any psychological disorders. He stated that he wanted to be charged with first degree because he knew what he was doing and he had planned it (Zoellner, 2018). Overall, this murder would not have occurred if it were not for social media because he wanted two things out of this

murder, an apology to his girlfriend, and to become social media famous. In the end he received both his demands and he is okay with spending the rest of his life in prison.

Social Media Changes People's Social Relationships

Social media has a bigger impact on human life than people give it credit for. People allow it to change the way they think and act to the point that it changes people's social relationships with one another. Just in the case of friends Jameg Blake and Kwame Dancy, one friend killed another over a twitter argument. Best friends who lived on the same block of houses in New York, got into a heated argument on Twitter over a girl. The two exchanged insults on Twitter, while onlookers and so-called friends joined in and add more insults to the fire. Hours before the murder occurred, Blake tweeted "N.... s is looking for u don't think I won't give up ya address for a price betta chill asap!" (Fenney, 2010) Not too long later Blake shows up at Dancy house and shoots him with a shotgun. Then two days after the murder, Blake tweets "R.I.P. Kwame." (Feeney, 2010)

Friends and family were astonished that a tweet or a couple of tweets could lead to Dancy's death. This shows that the anger was created by social media and motive was created on social media. This murder would not have happened without the use of social media. These teenagers were consumed by social media and what their peers thought of them. As previous studies mentioned above these teens were feeling peer pressure, and the lack of

responsibility that is commonly found among people who have social media disputes.

Another case that speaks to social media changes social relationships would be the case of Syko Sam who was a horrorcore rapper who murdered his online ex-girlfriend Emma, her parents, and her best friend that was spending the night. This is an interesting case because Sam and Emma had met online and never met in person until the day before the murders. The twenty-year-old met Emma on Myspace and they bonded over their mutual like for horrorcore rap. They lived on opposite side of the country, but Sam travelled from California to Virginia to see her and go to a concert with her. While Emma's friend and mother joined her to the concert, they thought that she was just going through a phase and this was not a permanent part of her life (Martinez, 2009).

Unfortunately, they would never know because the next day Sam killed Emma, her parents, and her friend. Police questioned Sam but there was never a reason for motive. They found by going through his social media and his songs that there was a change from his social media interactions to his in-person interactions with Emma. While his music was all about murder and death, his interactions with Emma were the opposite, they spoke every day up until her death (Martinez, 2009). When Emma's friend's mom would call the house to check on her daughter because she had not heard from her Sam would tell her that she was at the movies, or with friends, until she had the police do a well-

being check. That is when all four bodies were found bludgeoned to death and deeply decomposed.

This is a representation of his music and his anger towards society. However, it did not explain why he killed his girlfriend and her family (Martinez, 2009). Police had some thoughts that it was because her parents did not like him, and they lived a straight and narrow path as a pastor and a professor (Martinez, 2009).

Overall, these murders occurred because there was limited guidance when it came to social media and too much freedom among young adults. Not to mention since both these young adults were homeschooled and were not well socialized with the world, they depended on social media as their outlet to others (Martinez, 2009). This then changed how they interacted with people in person causing them to be awkward and made fun of by peers. In the end the lack of in person interactions with peers and an increase use of social media could be responsible for these murders.

Social Media is a Neutral Platform

A social media influencer was murdered by her boyfriend, Brandon Clark, due to the use of social media. Bianca Devens was her name and she was killed because her boyfriend did not like how much time she spent on social media. He had slit her throat and posted it on Instagram where then he proceeded to write "sorry" as the caption for the picture. Even though they had met online, and he knew what she did for a living, he did not like the attention she was receiving and

ended up murdering her and trying to commit suicide himself. He then posted pictures of himself with blood gushing from his throat. And then he took a picture of himself lying across his dead girlfriend's body (O'Neill, 2019).

After being taken to the hospital, Brandon survived and was charged with second degree murder for the murder of Instagram and tik tok famous Devens. They couple met online on a dating app and had only been in a relationship for about two months when they decided to go to a concert in Queens. People were calling the police with concern for Brandon the morning of because he changed his bio to "10/06/1997 – 7/14/19, Just know that I feel no pain now." (O'Neill, 2019)

Without a doubt social media influenced this murder, they met online and while they did have an in-person relationship, Devan's was murder because of her love for her followers and her addiction to social media. This is something that Brandon could not handle anymore and ended up killing her for, he was jealous of her followers because of how much attention she would give to them instead of him. He was also addicted to social media because he felt it to be necessary for him to post her murder and her body on social media with the caption of sorry. This is him in a tragic moment, and his first thought was to post to social media. Social media did play a huge role in this murder, and it most likely would not have occurred if it were not for social media.

Another case where social media was used as a neutral platform is with 18-year-old Tennessee boy was lured to his death by a connection on Snap

Chat. Jack Luibel was murdered in a driveway of a house that was located right next to a church because he thought he was meeting a girl, while instead he was met by two men who robbed and shot him. Jack knew something was wrong because he texted his cousin that the house looked “sketchy” and if he did not hear from him in 30 minutes to call the police, which is exactly what the cousin did. The two men approached Jack and Jack tried to fight him off, they ended up killing him over one hundred dollars and an ID (Broach, 2019).

This murder would not have happened if it were not for the use of social media. Without social media the two men would not have been able to catfish Jack into thinking that he was meeting a girl and they would have never been able to rob him and shoot him. Snap Chat gave the men a neutral playing field in which one group took advantage of another and in the end, someone was murdered. Since the conversations took place on snapchat where the messages disappear right after opening them, there was no way to tell who sent it and where it was sent from. This case represents the dangers of social media usage.

A final case where social media was used as a neutral platform for murder would be the case of Nicole Lovell who was 13 years old when she died. She thought she was communicating with a friend on the texting app Kik when instead he turned out to be the person who murdered her. She became a victim to catfishing and a fake profile. She had been messaging with an 18-year-old named David Eisenhauser a freshman at Virginia tech and became intimate with him. At first David denied this interaction but after questioning he admitted to

killing Nicole, but he did not act alone. Fellow Virginia Tech peer Natalie Keepers helped plan the murder and hid the body with him (Van Sant, 2016).

Overall, this young girl died because of an interaction she had online through a texting app that was fabricated. She thought this man really liked her and wanted to be with her, when simply that was not the case, the app allowed them to connect and find each other. If the app did not exist neither would have this relationship and Nicole would still be alive. Kik influenced this murder because there is a lack of boundaries and guidelines supplied by the app.

In conclusion there has been a lot of connections between social media and murder. In this case study one can conclude that people on social media have an untouchable mindset that was described earlier in this research. People tend to forget the consequences that follow their actions when they are online. This case study shows that there were a lot of unnecessary deaths due to overuse of social media outlets to handle disagreements and share personal feelings.

Summary of Results

There is a lot of information that can be found in this study, from race, gender, and reasons why, to how and who committed these murders. To begin with there was the finding that more men are committing these murders than women in this case study. And while there were women who murdered, there were few and they murdered other women instead of men. Men murdered more men but also murder several women as well. When it comes to race more black

people murdered others in total and more white people killed white people compared to black people killed fellow black people, there was one Mexican who killed another Mexican and one white person killing an Asian. There were only two cases where a black man killed a white man and one case of a white women killing a black woman. With one can conclude that in most cases people in this case study were killing within their race.

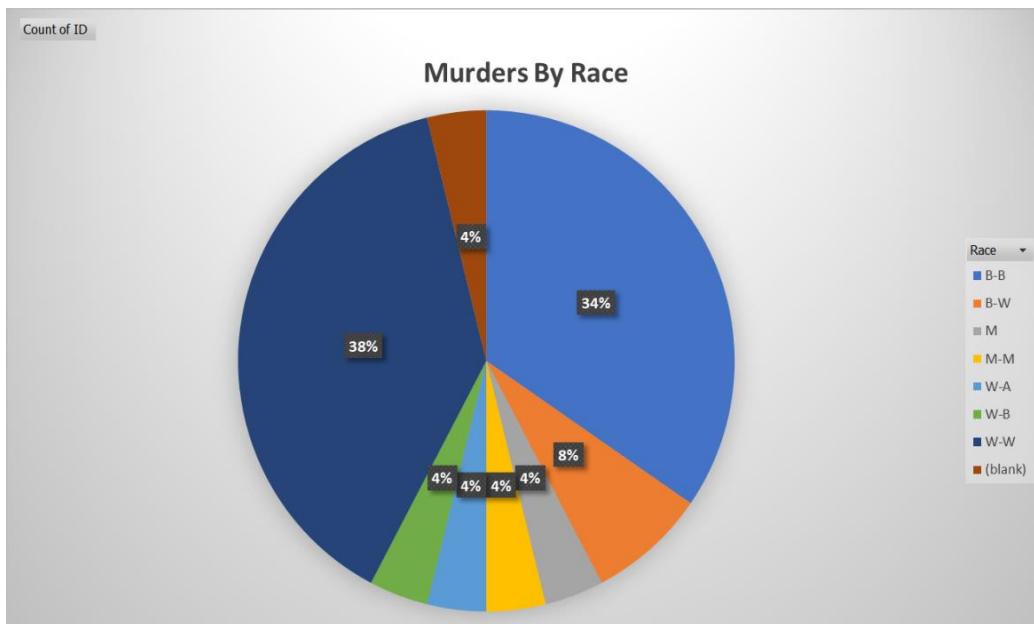


Figure Two. Murder by Race

There was also evidence that showed that majority of these deaths were caused by rage of something that was posted online, and few were in other

categories such as catfished, gang, attention, and jealousy. There was another interesting finding that majority of these cases, the victim was either shot or stabbed which promotes the thought that there is little control over who and how someone gets their hands on a gun or a knife. The social media usage was majority Facebook with a close second of Kik or another form of texting app such as WhatsApp. This shows that the more popular the app the more murders occur on it. The age range was between 19 and 36 with one outlier of 60, majority of them being in late teens early twenties, which is when the brain is still developing, and they are most vulnerable. Majority did not have prior crimes or psychological disorders, yet half experienced verbal abuse with no known police reports. Another interesting finding was that less than half of them knew each other prior to social media.



Figure Three. How the Murder was Committed

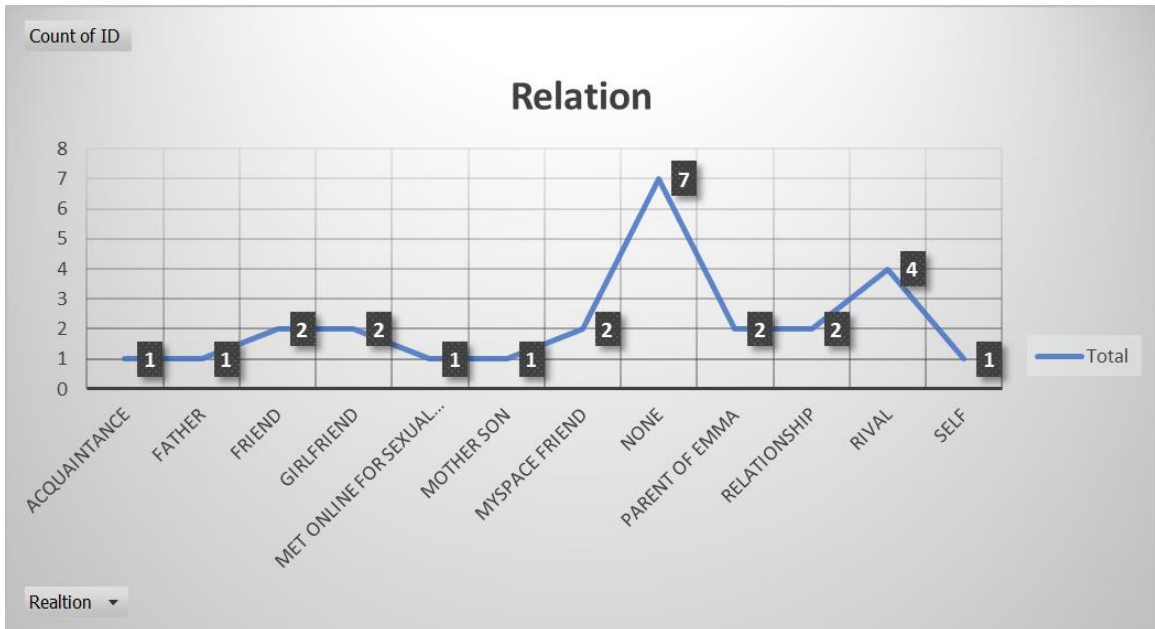


Figure Four. Relationships

Most importantly, this research found that social media does play a role in murder, or these murders would not have occurred if social media did not exist. In this study there was 26 confirmed deaths and out of the 26 deaths, only two were undetermined if the murder still would have occurred with or without social media presents and six where the likelihood of occurrence without social media presents would have still occurred. That leaves 18 cases where someone was murdered because of the influence of social media, that could have been prevented if social media took extra precautions with their users and their content. That being said at least in these 18 cases, social media is partially

responsible for the deaths of these individuals and more research should be conducted on the topic.

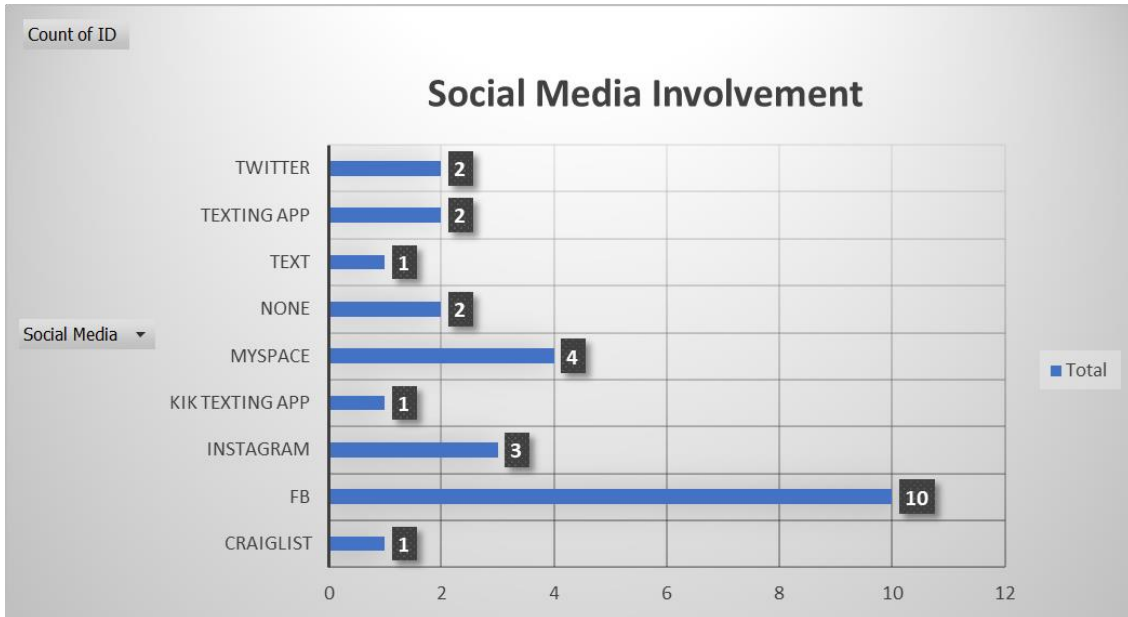


Figure Five. Social Media Involvement

Relationship Between the Murderer and the Murdered

In this research study there are many different types of relationships between the murderer and the murdered. After looking at the case studies found for this research one can see that majority of the people had a previous relationship with their victims before murdering them. Many were friends, lovers, acquaintances, who knew each other before the murder occurred, but the

murdered occurred because of something that took place online. There were the cases of couples who showed jealousy of another person or jealousy about the time a person spends on social media, creating a strain on their relationship. The same strain that can occur when one is working too much and not spending enough time with their partner.

There were four cases found where they did not know each other. The first one was a male who thought he was meeting up with a girl he was speaking with online, but it turned out to be another male and his friend catfishing him, robbing him, and ultimately murdering him. Another interaction was where two males met online and one was murdered by the other because they wanted internet fame, there was no interest in each other, or feelings involved, it was all for the attention of others. Then there was the Facebook Live Murderer who killed his victim because he was there at the wrong time and he had a lot of anger. Finally, there was a case where a male met a female online whose parents did not want them to interact because they met online. Therefore, the male got angry with the girl's parents because they were preventing the relationship, so he went to their house and murdered the entire family.

The rest of these cases each one of them knew each other and let their aggression get the best of them. Many of them were young adults or teens whose brains were still maturing therefore they were not completely in control of their feelings and aggressions. This is notably true in the case of the young man who murdered his father because he took away his social media privileges. He

let his anger towards his father get the best of him and ended up killing his father for it. This can be the same for the friends who got into an argument on social media which lead to them meeting in person and one killing the other. There is a pattern of people who knew each other previously to social media murdering each other.

Social Media and Murder in Other Countries

There is social media all around the world including countries that are considered third world such as Africa and India but do the murder rates follow the same as they do in the United States. Social media plays a big impact on those who are developing their countries, it is a way to contact people from other countries, connect, and bring them and their money to their counties. This is great for the tourism industry and will hopefully create a more stable income for these people. In more recent years there has been an increase in smart phone users and owners, the question is should they be concerned about what social media has brought to the developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom?

England

There have been cases going back to the early 90s on how much media violence effects the state of mind of the youth. It has such an effect that it has even led to murder. In February 1993 in England, a two-year-old boy names James Bulger was kidnapped from a mall and later murdered by two ten-year-old boys. In their trial Justice Morland added the idea that the exposure to violent

videos could be related to the crime. In the trial there was a blurry security video that had been the center of the case. In the video one can see James being led out of the mall by the two other boys. However, there was no verification that these two boys had seen any violent videos, therefore they could not confirm why these boys led the innocent two-year-old to his death.

Another case that occurred in London would be the case of Jermaine Goupall who was with a group of friends while being chased by another group of boys that ranged from that age 17 to 22. The four were a part of a gang that was in a rivalry with another gang that night (BBC, 2018). There had been multiple music videos from each gang posted online taunting one another until they finally decided to meet in the streets to fight. Unfortunately, Goupall just happened to be out that night and he was killed in the process of this fight. They thought he was a part of the other gang when he was not. This murder started with the internet because they were posting online about each other to get under each other's skin. However, while social media did escalate the situation (BBC, 2018). The odds of this happening are still very likely because it was between two gangs, and gang violence is a serious problem that in many cases end in death.

India

There is a massive problem with social media in India. There is a constant miscommunication among its users throughout the country which is leading to many unnecessary deaths. India uses an app called WhatsApp to communicate with not only each other but as their main source of news. While to many this

may be unreliable, this is the only source they have. They have experienced a lot of wrongful death because of the rumors spread on this app and the app has done little to fix the issue at hand.

One of the most recent deaths was that of 65-year-old woman named Rukmani who was killed by a mob attack. She was on her way to the temple with her family when they had a bad feeling and decided to turn back and head home instead. On their way back they were attacked by a mob, their car was destroyed, her family was beaten to the point of permanent injury, and she was murdered (Goel, Raj, Ravichandran, 2018). This happened because they were mistaken for child abductors or as they call it in India, child lifters. They were stripped of their clothes and beaten with iron rods, sticks, punched and kicked. They were left for dead by the mob with all their belongings stolen. This family is left with permanent scars both physical and mental from this attack. The app that is owned by Facebook did nothing about this murder and did not take responsibility for the murder (Goel, Raj, Ravichandran, 2018). The mob was never arrested or charged. They got away with murder.

This was far from the first case of murder in India. In 2018 in the month of May, there were two cases of lynching reported. The first one was a man who was trampled to death and hung from a bridge for everyone to see. He was falsely accused of child lifting and they crowd did not stop to question him or listen to what he had to say, they used him as a message to all the child lifters out there, that they will be caught and they will be murdered for their actions

(Dutta, 2018). The other case that was reported in May of 2018, was that of a 60-year-old woman whose name was not provided. She was lynched for giving children foreign chocolate. She purchased some chocolate as a treat to hand out to the children and she was murdered for it. She was also thought to be a child lifter, and this was her ploy to get the children to come with her. While she also tried to explain her actions, they did not give her any chances and lynched her as well (Dutta, 2018).

In the same month, in a different district in India another man that was 26 years old was lynched by another mob for the same suspicion. May 28th a mob of over 500 people lynched someone who identified as transgender because the mob was suspicious of the involvement with a child lifting gang (Dutta, 2018). The next month, June 8th, four more men were killed, all in different districts, June 13th a man was tied to a pole and beaten to death. June 19th another man beaten and then lynched because there was a rumor on the app that he was to blame for a cow slaughter which did not occur. This lynching just like the ones before it, went viral on WhatsApp (Dutta, 2018). People were happy that there was something being done about these child lifters and they are getting their revenge. However, they were unaware that every single one of these lynching's were wrongful deaths of innocent people who were made to seem to be bad. The police in India admitted that they believed the increase of lynching's were due to the app and there was little to nothing being done about it (Dutta, 2018).

WhatsApp did act by limiting how many times a message could be shared and how many forwards a person has a day. However this is the very least they could have done, this has not slowed down the amount of rumors that are being spread across the country through this app, it is not slowing down or preventing the amount of murders that are occurring on a daily bases (Dutta, 2018).

Mexico

In Mexico they are having the same problem with social media as the United States and India. There is a spread of rumors and lies that is travelling throughout the country due to social media. In 2018 there were two men that were murdered in broad daylight because of rumors spread on WhatsApp. The rumor stated there were a lot of child kidnappers entering the country and they should be on the lookout for any suspicious activity. The message continued to state that these men were organ harvesting to sell on the black market, and leaving this child for dead (BBC, 2018). As soon as this message was forwarded throughout the country, people began to panic. The community members did not stop to question anyone or the message itself. Two men were soon arrested on suspicion of child kidnapping, however there was no evidence to hold them, so they were soon released to the public (BBC, 2018). The public did not want to take any chances, they believed the message and they were going to make sure the two men did not get away with their accused crimes. As soon as they hit the town they were surrounded by a mob of citizens and beaten to the ground, set on

fire, and burned to death. Then their bodies were left there for two hours before anyone reported it or their bodies were removed (BBC, 2018).

Soon after the community found out that this was a hoax, a lie, and they murdered two innocent men. Just like in India, WhatsApp that was founded by Facebook, is one of the most popular ways of communication in Mexico and it is once again filled with lies and fake stories of child abductors and many other serious crimes. The people of Mexico use this app just like the people of India to get their daily news and they have been subjected to the wave of lynching's that are targeting up and coming countries across the world (BBC, 2018).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Currently many people do not think twice about social media. They do not filter their thoughts, their posts, the friends they add, who they know, and do not even bother with privacy settings. This research can make people think twice about their actions online and make their social media environment safer and a positive one. Throughout this paper it is discussed how social media not only effects social relationships but it also creates addictive behaviors for some, it allows young adults who's brains are not developed make in depth decisions, creates antisocial behavior, and allows people to make emotional or rage based decisions based off of what they see on social media.

To begin with social media has been researched on how it effects its users. They have found that it does change how people interact with each other and it can create psychological damage among youth and young adults. Researchers have found that many of the users on social media are still in their teens or early twenties, the stages where the brain is still developing. This makes them more likely to make rage and emotional based decisions which could end up being deadly. However, it is important to recognize that social media did not make these individuals commit murder, they made that choice. It is however in some cases the reason they commit murder or suicide because of the content that can be posted on these platforms. People who are not emotionally stable

may feel inclined to take it off the internet and bring it into real life. However, this is not social media telling them to do so, this is just social media providing them the platform to get from step to step.

There are many reasons that could be added onto why someone commits murder, some people need more than one reason to commit murder, some are by accident, some are just people trying to prove themselves to others. In conclusion, social media is not sole responsible for any deaths, they are just a factor into why people are being murdered.

This research did have limitations in how much information could be collected about individuals, but it did allow room to suggest for future research. Some of that research can be how social media glorifies death in any way possible. The more views the more likely people are going to use their platforms. Even if it means someone's death is being played on repeat for millions to see, they are a sacrifice to social media's end game of being the best and getting the most interactions and views. In the end there needs to be a mentality change when it comes to the creators of social media. There needs to be less about views and likes and more about uniting societies instead of creating a divide between them, like we are seeing today. Social media is a powerful tool that is being used for the worst and there needs to be a stop to it.

Research Question

"Does social media play a role in murder? Does it give society the ability, the access, the incentive to take the next step and kill? How does social media

affect one's ability to make rational decisions?" There are many reasons as to why this research is important. There is a lack of understanding on how social media works, the purposes, and the usage which is leading to crimes such as murder becoming more common. There is also a lack of knowledge on the power social media has over a person. With this research, society can see how impactful or uneventful social media is in society and what steps are being taken to correct it.

This research shows the public how important it is to hold social media accountable for the actions they are allowing to take place. With this research is can open the doors into further investigations on how social media plays a role in murder. Obviously, social media is not committing the murder, but they are providing the platform to make the transition from nonmurderer to murder by not having the users be accountable and not watching dangerous behaviors occur.

Overall social media is responsible for the content they allow on their sites whether it is positive or negative. They take credit for the positive but when is the time to take care of the negative? Social media allows strangers to connect and allows murders to be sensationalized on their platforms, and nothing is being done to prevent it. There is a significance to this research which could open eyes to show how social media effects social environments and norms for the worse.

Limitations

There were many limitations to this research. Due to the time restraint, there was not enough time to dig deep into each case and see where and when the interactions started. If there was time to go into each case and go back to each social media profile and trace the social media interactions between the murderer and the murdered there might have been more information that could have been presented on the relationship between the two, if there was a feud how long it was going on for, was it egged on by peers or was it one on one, and many other details that could have been prevalent to the case studies. On top of that there was limited information on each case, they were conscience which lead to looking into multiple references to get the full story, with that being said there could be pieces missing in each case and it would not be known.

Another limitation was the resources on the subject, there is not a lot of research, if any, on the role social media plays in murder. There is an abundant of research on social media and the effects it can have on people and there is research on murder and what could cause someone to murder. However, there was no previous research on the two combine and how it effects society. This made it difficult to link the two. While it was possible to suggest that certain actions on social media caused certain reactions in the brain that lead to physical altercations, there is no hard evidence.

There was no access to the murderer or the families, if interviews were to be granted, there would be a lot more insight on the thoughts and emotions that

were involved in social media. This could be beneficial to some of the cases where it was hard to find the link or the link was suggested instead of concrete. It would also allow for the full story to be told, and not from a third party reporting the occurrences. Interviewing those who are responsible for the crime could give researchers a better grasp on the “why” and would allow them to suggest or diagnose the murders. Interviewing would be the best route to take for future research.

There were also limitations such as what was reported the most and what was accessible, for example, murders that happened on social media but in childhood, the names were not stated for their protection. This made it harder to trace and find the full story of the murder and limited the cases to those who were of adult age in their state or were charged as an adult. There was the limit of what was public information, not all cases were deemed public which made it difficult to get any information on. Not to mention, there were plenty of cases that took some time to find because they were hidden by the media or did not receive enough attention from the public to be in the top 500 searches. This narrowed down how many the researcher was able to find that fit the research criteria.

Finally, there is the limitation of foreign cases, it was difficult to find much information on the cases that were outside of the United States, this could have been for many reasons. There were few resources that allowed information about each foreign case and the details were vague. If there were to be more information released on the matter, then there would have been a better compare

of countries to see if this were more of a United States of America problem or an overall problem. While the cases showed that it is a worldwide problem, more documentation would have been beneficial.

Future Research

There is a lot of future research that can be conducted on the subject of social media and murder, but more importantly there is plenty of research that is needed to link how social media plays a role in murder, causing murders to happen that would not normally have taken place. This study for the most part looked at cases in the United States and touched on cases outside the United States to compare. Future research needs to be more involved in how social media plays a role in foreign countries and their murder rates. There is a small amount of information on why these murders are taking place therefore it makes it harder to provide a solution for their endings. As mentioned before there are plenty of occurrences around the world, but there is very little being done about. Not to mention there needs to be more research conducted on how social media effects brain development and what psychological disorders are created by social media. There is a root problem social media is causing and there needs to be a solution developed to solve it.

There is more than murder happening on social media, there are suicides and an increase in white collar crime. With further research there can be understanding and the creation of laws to prevent what is causing these suicides

and crimes. This research was only conducted on social media, there are plenty of other media platforms that are causing harm to society such as day time talk shows, for example Jerry Springer, that are causing people to feel targeted and angry which could lead to murder. There could be future research on how media plays a role in crimes. People like to follow those around them, if they see it on television, chances are they will recreate it if they feel like the original person received attention for it. Which is what makes shows like Jerry Springer so popular. People are getting their 5 minutes of fame for acting irrational and creating violence.

Not to mention since people do like to follow the people who are before them, some future research in how media plays a role in mass murders would be an interesting outlook. Recently there have been more documentaries on how mass murders are popularized by the media and how murders are more likely to become copycats if they see that what those before them got them the attention they are seeking. If we reduced the amount of media or what is shown on the media would that prevent or decrease the amount of murders including mass murders. Or instead of demolishing the coverage completely, could eliminating the facts about who committed the mass murders help reduce the amount due to the lack of fame they are receiving?

Is murder sensationalized? Currently there is a rise in protests and race wars, can this play a factor into murder and if so how? We are noticing a rise in social media coverage of people of color being murdered by police, is this

actually accurate or is it due to social media sensationalizing off these innocent lives being taken? This research would open a lot of doors into research about race and culture and if there is more to the story than what social media is portraying.

Are countries without social media experiencing less crime and murder or are these crimes inevitable? Overall this research on how social media plays a role on murders in the United States is just the tip of the iceberg, there is so much more research that could be added onto this topic and can lead to a change in how media is portrayed today. After all this information is gathered it could be presented to the creators and owners of News broadcasts, television shows, and social media outlets, to demonstrate the dangers they are allowing on their broadcasts without knowing.

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