

The Portrayal of Sex Content on Tumblr

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ABSTRACT

Social media is increasingly being used by the community to communicate information. As an alternative for obtaining entertainment, communication, and information exchange, numerous social media platforms are employed by various societal levels. Social networking features have many benefits, but some sites also have risks. This paper will look into how Tumblr has affected social issues. Data from respondents, which included Tumblr users, teenagers, and parents, was collected using qualitative methods of in-depth interviews. The study's key findings demonstrate that this Tumblr platform has an effect and influence on the audience in a variety of ways, including uncensored exposure of pornography, triggers immoral act among the youth, cyberbullying and online harassment, early exposure of sexual knowledge and many more. It is hoped that the results of this study will help more people realise the risks associated with social media, including Tumblr.

Keywords: social media, information, Tumblr, teenagers, parents

INTRODUCTION (*Times New Roman, Bold, 12*)

Social media gives a very big impact in each and every adolescent in entire world. Social media brings positive and negative feedback towards the users. Youth nowadays feels really connected to the SNS that they spend their most of the portion of their daily life interacting through social media. The negative side of this issue is that teenagers tend to use Tumblr frequently just to see inappropriate picture and other sex content posted by irresponsible users.

While media use is an integral part of the daily life of adolescents, there are a number of risks associated with social media use, specifically, negative effects on mental health, cyber bullying, texting or sexting, dangers of sexual solicitation, and exposure to problematic and illegal content as well as privacy violations. A human being cannot do the same thing for long because they tend to be boring, but the younger can stay long hours just on Facebook without any complain. The risks that teens face online are similar to those faced offline. However, the risk profile for the use of various types of social media depends on the type of risk, a teen's use of the media, and the psychological makeup of the teen using them. It is important to note that teens most at risk often engage in risky behaviors offline and also have difficulties in other parts of their lives.

People utilise social networking sites to interact with others in their lives. As example Tumblr is used to connect friends, strangers and people worldwide to keep on track how their daily life goes by posting some cool pictures, gifs, videos and let people see it and even comment on their posts. David Karp, a twenty-one-year-old at the time, started Tumblr in 2007 (McCracken et al., 2020). Tumblr is perhaps the free blogging site on the internet with the quickest growth (Jenkins, 2012). But, some of the users are irresponsible and tend to post inappropriate pictures of them or other for people to see. There is the biggest part on Tumblr that can leads to social ills when they keep posting the uncensored graphic and it happens when mostly teenagers get affected.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tumblr is known as the websites where you can shared images, videos, your personal life, your daily routines or maybe gaining some knowledge and information's. But everything has it pro's and con's. For example, Tumblr is one of the social media who has no filter on it. There might be some sexual content that is not suitable for the user especially under age user.

Without the guidance of both parents, children and teenager who use Tumblr might watch this inappropriate content that is not suitable for them. Apart from sexual content, there are other uncensored contents such as drugs and negative lifestyle. Drugs in this context means Tumblr expose to users about how drugs can be something "cool" to do. In 2013, a study showed that 7 out of 10 teenagers are influenced by Tumblr itself on how to take or make drugs. For example there is a harmful drink called "Purple Drink" or Purple Swag" and this drink is populared by negros rappers. It contains harmful substances that can only be taken in a strong coughing syrup.

Thus, Tumblr does contains sexual and uncensored contents. As we know that most teenagers in this world use social media in their daily life, most of their time is spent on social network. Now, it has become phenomenal situation because almost every teenager aged from

11 years old has their own cellphone with internet that they can use to browser anything, using their private times.

Parents have to make a wise decision on keeping eyes on their children from doing inappropriate things. If the teenagers keep on watching these inappropriate things, they may have practice things into their daily life. And this may lead to sexual harassment which is can danger the life of people surrounding. Sexual harassment can be very dangerous and the punishment should be as equal as what the person did, or maybe even more.

Finding resulting from exploratory research provides good information on the impact of Tumblr on social ills amongst teenagers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How sexual content in Tumblr effects younger generation?
2. How users can encounter explicit contents on Tumblr?
3. What forms of sexual and vulgar content has been posted on Tumblr?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the effects on sexual content in Tumblr towards younger generation.
2. To understand on how users encounters explicit contents on Tumblr.
3. To identify certain Tumblr profiles that posts sexual and vulgar contents in any form such as videos and pictures.

METHODOLOGY

The type of the research can be classified by its process, its purpose and its outcomes. Researcher has decided the process will be qualitative process and the method will be such as using personal accounts, unstructured interviews and participants' observations about the topic that has been chosen, "The Potrayal of Sex Content on Tumblr". The purpose of the research is analytical or explanatory research. This is because researcher goes beyond merely describing the characteristics, to analyse and to explain on how the social ills can leads to sexual issues that has been featured through Tumblr. The researchers had decided to interview three types of people that are Tumblr users, teenagers and parents. In-depth interview brought the meaning of qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular idea, program, or situation. The data gained from the in-depth interview will be analysed using thematic analysis technique. To preserve the respondents' privacy, the names mentioned in the report are solely fictitious.

FINDINGS

RO1: To study the effects on sexual content in Tumblr towards younger generation

Uncensored Exposure of Pornography

According to our all interviewees, they had come across uncensored pornography whether intentionally or not on Tumblr.

Misinterpretation of Sexual Precaution

We asked all of the interviewees about do they think all of the sexual content on Tumblr being uploaded voluntarily or by intimidation. According to Akmal Hakim, he said "The content on all social medias are of voluntary work and although it might contradict at times, Tumblr is known for its users to express whatever they feel which includes sexual desire".

Azfar Muzaffashah and Shezwin Ana also said it was uploaded voluntarily but Nurfatin Sima disagreed and said it was intimidation all along. Coming from a parent's point of view, Rosnani said "I personally think that most of the sexual contents were uploaded voluntarily".

Triggers Immoral Act Among The Youth

According to Nurfatin Sima, she said that "Before any user of Tumblr post anything on Tumblr, the one who is in charge with the security of Tumblr should filter the content first". Akmal Hakim also added on saying that "Generation Y is infamous for their laid back, easily influenced personality so I believe that sexual content generates a harmful idea and if it prolongs, immoral behavior might be taken as a normalcy among young generations".

According to Rosnani from a parent's perception, she said that "I think the young generations mind will be tarnished". Another statement from Shezwin Ana, she stated that "The fact that Tumblr is one of the source for young generations get to see those sexual contents, makes parents worried about their daily routine. This is because the media itself encourage the idea that sex is the ultimate outcome of all relationships or expression of love between two people".

Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

According to our interviewee Nurfatin Sima, she said that she has never been through or witnessed any sorts of online harassment. "Since I was 16 years old, I have never seen or witnessed any sorts of harassment". As for Azfar Muzaffashah, he said that "Yes, I have once witnessed online harassment before. I believe that cyberbullying is happening all over the world without we even realize". For Akmal Hakim, he believes that online harassment do happens throughout the creation of Tumblr, "No, I have never witnessed any of harassment, but I am sure that it happens somewhere throughout the creation of Tumblr?". Shezwin Ana said that she had never witness any online harassment; "So far, I haven't witnessed any kind of online harassment yet". Same goes to Rosnani, a mother to 3 daughters said that she has never seen any online harassment.

Early Exposure of Sexual Knowledge

For Azfar Muzaffashah, he thinks that early exposure of sexual knowledge is good. He said that "It is good but they have to know what is wrong and right to do. For example, it is okay for a married couple to do things sexually, but for youngsters it is a wrong thing to do especially free sex".

But it is different for Nurfatin Sima. She said that "Early exposure is not good because they are too young to be exposed with any social network nor sexual knowledge because

youngsters are fast learner and it could give bad impact to them". According to Akmal Hakim, it is depends on how the knowledge being exposed. He said that "Early exposure produces positive results only when it is controlled and whether or not the message is being portrayed correctly". Shezwin Ana also said that "Different countries have different ages of consent. As we all aware, in Malaysia we have higher ages of consent and specific age restrictions relating to these kind of exposure and today the media has turn normalizes this sexual knowledge and become socially acceptable concept, and become peer pressure". As for a parent's opinion, Rosnani said that "Early exposure of sexual knowledge among young generations will make them even more knowledgeable about sexual knowledge".

RO2: To understand on how users encounters explicit contents on Tumblr

Being encountered with sexual post

We asked our five interviewees whether they ever encountered any sort of sexual posts on Tumblr, a majority of three said yes and another two interviewees said no.

Early exposure of Tumblr

We interviewed four youngsters whom which three of them started using Tumblr at the age of 13 to 18 years old and the other only started at the age of 22. However, Rosnani as a parent is not a user but acknowledges the existence of Tumblr.

Explicit contents on Tumblr

We asked all of our interviewees, how do they think the users can freely post and view any explicit contents without being suspended. According to Akmal Hakim and Nurfatina Sima, they both think it was privacy settings on Tumblr and Akmal Hakim stated that "Tumblr is famously used because the rules and regulations are created loosely to allow its users to post whatever they want but some lines should not be crossed and Tumblr is also equipped with blocking function like many other social medias". Meanwhile, Azfar Muzaffashah and Shewin Ana said it was no disclaimer and Rosnani as a parent mentioned both of it and she added more by saying it was posted by Tumblr itself.

Tumblr in New Era

According to Akmal Hakim, he answered no and he stated that "Tumblr is still at the lowest rank being compared to its competitors but it is widely used by teenagers or young adults aged 25 and below". Nurfatina Sima also said no and the other two interviewees from the youngsters said yes it is being rapidly and frequently used at the moment. Meanwhile, Rosnani from a parent's opinion, she said that "No, because Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are more popular".

Stop Explicit Posts on Tumblr

In this question, researchers asked all of our interviewees, how and in what measures they think would put a stop to this issue. According to Rosnani, a parent's perception, she said that

"Parents should be more aware of their child's online behavior, be more attentive because what they see online will and may influence their attitude". Coming from Akmal Hakim's point of view, he added on saying "Tumblr should implement a stricter rule to avoid any sexual content being spread without the needed censorship". And Nurfatin Sima stated that "Security. Before a person sign up for a Tumblr account, they should have provide an extra into so that underage cannot make an account on Tumblr". Meanwhile, Shezwin Ana said that secure the privacy control and the limitations.

RO3: To identify certain Tumblr profiles that posts sexual and vulgar contents in any form such as videos and pictures

The Consequences of Sexual Content

These days there are too many overexposed and under-prepared sexual content on media. According to the interviewee, Rosnani said that "The consequences of sexual content on Tumblr will lead to premarital sex and other sexual problems". According to Shezwin Ana, the fact that Tumblr is one of the source for young generations get to see those sexual contents and also the media itself encourages the ideal that sex is the ultimate outcomes of relationship between two people makes many parents nowadays wonder about their children's' routine on social media. While Akmal Hakim, he stated that "Sexual content on Tumblr might affect young generations' idea towards sex thus giving them a slight misinterpretation of what they should and should not be done". Nurfatin Sima also added on saying that "It will irritate Tumblr's user that has no interest towards sexual post". Besides, Azfar Muzaffashah said that "Sexual content will damage our young generations". That is mean, with widespread access to the internet; curious teens may accidentally or intentionally be exposed to millions of pages of material that is uncensored, sexually explicit, often inaccurate and potentially harmful. Thus, according to Akmal Hakim, he said that Tumblr should implement a stricter rule to avoid any sexual content being spread without the needed censorship.

Many People Getting Addicted to Tumblr

"This is because of its wide ranges of profiles from music to any other entertainment. Even when you Google, you will be sent by link through Tumblr," said Rosnani. According to Shezwin Ana, "Tumblr is one of the easy access links for them to get all the contents such as animated gif and amusing images". Coming from Akmal Hakim's perception, he stated that "The access Tumblr users get to any content from all over the world shows how fast Tumblr is compared to Facebook and Twitter and how easy it is to upload one's file gives satisfaction to its users thus creating an addiction".

Nurfatin Sima also said that people getting addicted to Tumblr because they first recognize tumblr before other social media back then, while Azfar Muzaffashah said that it is different from other social media. They get inspired from posts on Tumblr with amusing pictures and videos.

The Responsibility Towards Sexual Content

According to Nurfatina Sima, security is the most important thing. She stated that “The person who is in charge with the security of Tumblr should be responsible towards the content”. As for Akmal Hakim, he said that “The users that overlooked the rules and those who enjoyed pornography without knowing the actual risk of spreading it”. Azfar Muzaffashah said, the most responsible person towards the sexual content is the user itself. Same goes to Shezwin Ana, she said that “The users should be responsible and also the people from the social media”. Rosnani thinks that both sides which the users and Tumblr should be responsible towards this issue.

The Excessive Spam of Porn Blogs

According to Akmal Hakim, he said that “I think it is one's right to blog but the content should only be restricted to them and those who do not find it inappropriate”. While Nurfatina Sima thinks that porn blogging is disturbing, “It is so irresponsible and it is disturbing for those who have no interest towards that kind of blogs and content”. Coming from Shezwin Ana's opinion, she said that “If society has failed at anything, it is merely that they have failed to give youth all the information from what they have posted online”. It is a different view from Rosnani from a parent's point of view, where she stated that it is quite normal for porn blogging in this era. As Azfar Muzaffashah, he said that “It is a bad and a wrong way to use the social media”.

The Mocking of Women's Dignity

We asked all of our interviewees what kind of impact Tumblr has had on female sexuality. According to Azfar Muzaffashah, he said that “It affects female's dignity when people post explicit pictures of them and somehow it is a kind of harassment”. According to Nurfatina Sima, she said that “It gives very bad impact where people start to lose respect towards women and the dignity of women is mocked”. Shezwin Ana said that it is quite surprising to see users of Tumblr posting inappropriate pictures of women, “It is quite surprising when people tend to post nude pictures of a woman but when it comes to men it would be so wrong”. As for a parent's point of view, Rosnani said that “I have seen posts objectify women a lot on Tumblr and it saddens me how people are careless and being okay about this issue”. Akmal Hakim added that Tumblr is a good channel and he believes that some of the users have a good intention in spreading awareness and equality between both sexes.

DISCUSSION

While obtaining information, researchers have acknowledged that Tumblr is what teenagers are using nowadays. People who use Tumblr did not miss on getting unfiltered and vulgar content online especially in their own Tumblr. Due to the randomness between users, one day they can post an appropriate content, next day, they post pornographic content and call it 'artistic'.

As researchers try to gain more knowledge from Tumblr's users, they stated that mostly some of them misinterpret the content itself. Artistic value and art form photography often confuses users of its vulgarity, so it does mean that the posts are voluntarily. The

researchers have also found that immoral acts among the youth occur when they are relaxed and easily influenced of what they saw on the internet including sexual contents on Tumblr. This will cause some negative aura between them and also their environments. Plus, it can easily pollute their mind without they realizing it. This has become a major concern towards younger generation especially when they exploit themselves to the internet. In fact, sexual content attract more attention than educational content.

Throughout this research, Tumblr has been said to be one of the main source of cyberbullying which also includes online harassment. As rare as it is too been seen on Tumblr, but it still is. Especially some personal photos that has been trusted to not be exposed, being posted on Tumblr. Besides, researchers have found that early exposure of sexual knowledge is good to the younger generation. With sufficient control of sexual knowledge, this will give effect to younger generations in positive ways.

As the research process being occurred, it is confirm that most society encounters sexual post on Tumblr more that they tend to. Commonly known, Tumblr has attracted users in their early age. 13 to 18 years old has known Tumblr and has been using it often. This means that Tumblr do gather among younger community members as users. Researchers also have found that Tumblr lets it's users to create post freely as it respects their users interest and to share it amongst community members. But, Tumblr provides major settings that gave the choice to their users to view or not to view pornographic or adult content posts. It basically means that it is the choice of user to see it or not.

It has come to a conclusion that Tumblr is not as popular as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. But, it is used by younger people and majorly raises its users every year due to the more widely content. During this research, researchers have come to conclusion that Tumblr itself should increase the strictness of their community guidelines especially sexual posts. This also means in any form such as pictures and videos. With users stated their birth date, Tumblr should detect the year they are born in, and use it to filter underage content. Mostly, younger people are trapped with such system.

In addition, researchers have found that the consequences of sexual content via Tumblr may lead to misinterpreted sexual acts. As naive as younger generation, they tend to get involved in the trendy situations, sex included. So, sexual content should be avoided from them as much as possible.

In this research, it is said that Tumblr can be quite addictive. In some reason, it is because the similarities between Tumblr and any other website because it does share post which are animated and attractive. Interactions between users also are partial in getting more users to sign up.

As researchers interact with interviewees, it has come to a point that users themselves are responsible of what they watch and share from Tumblr. The choice of viewing adult content is definitely a choice that has to been taken seriously by users. But, it is ignored due to the sexual thrive by users especially teenagers.

The researchers also found that porn blogs spamming is strictly wrong and majorly disturbing towards other users. Some may say they do this to poke some fun, but it has certain level of consequences to be done. Basically, it means that excessive spam of porn blogs is very

wrong and should be taken serious by social media developers like Tumblr that lets users to post almost everything on their timeline. As for more sensitive issue, exploitation such as personal photos of women and videos of them doing anything vulgar, does affect women generally. As equality stands, women has been objectify by men mostly due to poke fun or even personal vengeance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF STUDY

As this research is done attentively and logically based on people's experiences in social media, it is a good source of information for people to learn more about Tumblr and its contents. As younger generation who wants to get involved with signing up a Tumblr accounts, this research is important to them as they will be more cautious in viewing content on Tumblr and also any other social media sites. As Tumblr is letting it's users to post anything they want, it is important for the new users to get comfortable the first time they sign in.

For academics functions, it can aid most students to give more attention on bringing positive attitude in Tumblr by posting academic stuff on it. This research can also be expanded by students in giving Tumblr a realization of their current age-restriction system. Furthermore, this will also help new users to experience more welcoming community on Tumblr.

The researchers recommends that the research of Tumblr to be more widely studied. Not only on sexual content, but also more issues such as music theft and plagiarism. More people giving notice to Tumblr will surely give the social networking site to be more noticeable and will possibly make drastic changes. The researchers also recommend that studying the content before signing up for an account in social networking sites is very important and need to be taken seriously.

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