

Psychological Causes of Internet Violence among College Students and Countermeasures Against it

Zizeng Liu, Ye Sun

College of Marxism, Dalian University of Foreign Studies, Dalian, Liaoning 116044

Abstract: As the main participants of online behaviors, college students are increasingly paying attention to the phenomenon of inflicting and being subjected to online violence. The main manifestations of online violence among university students include addiction to verbal violence, creating or spreading rumours, invading the privacy of others, and even dropping out of school or committing suicide. On the basis of social psychology, through analyzing the psychological factors influenced by the immaturity of college students' psychological development, the need for emotional catharsis, the rebelliousness against the real order, and the psychology of rebellion, we explore countermeasures from three levels: society, school and students themselves, and seek a solution to the problem of college students' online violence, so as to promote college students' civilized and healthy access to the Internet and maintain a good online and social order.

Keywords: Internet violence among university students; Psychological causes; Countermeasures against it

With the rapid development of the Internet, the online virtual society is gradually taking shape as a new social form. As a young group in society and a major participant in online behaviour, university students can quickly adapt to the Internet as an indispensable social arena. While enjoying the dividends brought by the development of the Internet, they are also prone to fall into the swamp of online violence and become the perpetrators or victims of online violence. An in-depth analysis of the psychological influencing factors of college students' participation in cyber violence and a search for a solution from different levels will, on the one hand, help to solve the actual cyber violence problem occurring among college students and play a substantial role in cultivating their bodies and minds; on the other hand, it will help to shape a healthy and civilized cyber environment and promote harmonious social development.

1. Embodiment of the problem of online violence among university students

1.1 Addiction to verbal violence

Online verbal violence refers to the phenomenon of violating and damaging others' human dignity, spirit and psychology by means of denigration, contempt, abuse and insult in the form of discourse hegemony on the Internet. The most obvious manifestation of the problem of online violence among university students is online verbal violence. Using uncivilised words and attacking others on the Internet, the university students who are attacked in turn hit back with even worse words and phrases. This behaviour can make verbal vulgarity a bad trend in the university student community, causing verbal violence to become an addiction, not only on line with uncivilised words, but even affecting daily life offline, and bad language habits becoming a negative epidemic on campus.

1.2 Creating or spreading rumours

Due to the anonymity of online communication, it is not uncommon for university students to spread rumours without screening and adding fuel to the fire after being hit by information on online violence. Some university students may themselves be perpetrators of online violence and rumour-mongers, and the more things that happen to students around them, the faster they spread. Rumour mongers and rumour spreaders spread false news through WeChat and Weibo, especially group chats, creating a bad online atmosphere in universities and affecting the normal campus learning and living environment.

1.3 Invasion of others' privacy

The bad consequences of cyber violence are not only the pollution of the network atmosphere, but even more so the attacks transferred from the network to the real life. After the perpetrators of online violence have made bad comments, the followers will "flesh search" for the person concerned and abuse and attack him or her, causing substantial harm to the victim. The small size of the campus and the speed with which news spreads among young people makes it less difficult to "flesh search". By spreading bad news among the victim's teachers and classmates, the victim's image in the campus social sphere will plummet, which will inevitably have a negative impact on his or her studies and life on campus and may prevent him or her from studying and living normally.

1.4 Victims drop out of school or commit suicide

Students who are subjected to online violence, under the pressure of online opinion and pressure and real social pressure, will feel strongly guilty about their previous behaviour, deny all of themselves because of one incident or one aspect of fault, and become depressed, unwilling to be in the environment of criticism anymore, want to escape from reality and drop out of school. For those with weaker psychological capacity, pessimism surges and they even despair of life and commit suicide and other deplorable acts.

2. The psychological causes of college students' online violence

2.1 Immature psychological development

University is a stage of rapid psychological change for students, and is a critical period for the formation of their world-view. At this time, the psychology of college students is maturing, but not yet fully mature, still has plasticity. This is both a golden period of development and a 'dangerous' period. For example, some non-mainstream niche opinions are good at using inflammatory rhetoric to get the attention of university students, who are more socially engaged and more likely to fall into the wrong path of online violence. This is why university students need special care, education and guidance. If online violence is not strictly controlled, it will have a negative impact on the psychological health of university students.

2.2 The need for emotional catharsis

Freud believed that any anger would accumulate, and if it could not be vented at any time, it would explode at a certain point, and its manifestation could be illness or violence. As an "ivory tower" in the eyes of the public, university is considered to be full of sunshine, positivity and beauty, but entering university is like entering a mini-society, and academic pressure, interpersonal interaction and emotional state can also bring stress to university students, resulting in negative emotions. Faced with multiple pressures, anxiety, tension and anger that cannot be resolved, university students use the Internet as a breakthrough to vent their grievances on social media platforms. Once the venting of discontent exceeds a certain "degree", university students will become involved in online violence. Venting negative emotions is a way to release psychological stress. However, this wrong way of venting one's frustration is only a momentary pleasure for the participants themselves, while for the society, it causes a flood of negative emotions on the Internet, which is not conducive to the interactive communication and healthy development of the whole society.

2.3 Self-release under the mask of personality

People's images in the real world and the online world present a different and strongly contrasting image, a phenomenon that is a reflection of personality masks in real and virtual society. As different roles in society demand different things from people, wanting to satisfy and maintain their roles in different environments, they put on different personality masks. When the social roles people play in real life do not satisfy their own wishes, and there is disagreement with the real order or the personality they play, but they cannot change this reality, they release themselves by reaching their own heartfelt goals through the more anonymous online interactions. They publish on the internet what they are afraid to express in real life, and vent their grievances on the internet. Many of those involved in online violence are not the ones who break the law in reality, but rather the ones who seem to follow the rules but are usually silent. It is not uncommon for students in the university community, who normally appear to be gentle and do not use vulgar language, to let themselves go on the Internet, not suppressing themselves, making sometimes biased and irresponsible comments about an issue, and committing online violence without regard for the feelings of the person concerned.

2.4 Herd mentality

People are people in social relationships and are generally influenced by the outside world, i.e. other people's views are more or less likely to have an impact on their own judgement. Herding is a change in behaviour or beliefs based on others. Of-

ten when people judge something, they are prone to preconceptions and are more inclined to see things from the standpoint of others or groups that have been disseminated to them. The phenomenon of herd mentality is common as most people in a group are unable to maintain their independence and judge things objectively, and feel pressured once their views differ from those of others. Positive herd mentality can lead to a team or group progressing towards positive goals, mutual recognition, encouragement and solidarity, which can be beneficial to the development of the group. However, negative herd mentality can affect the social climate and bring about serious consequences. For example, in cases of online violence, university students who see and hear that the views of their peers are generally consistent in their tendency to blame and abuse the victim, will follow suit and use verbal violence against them. For them, standing up and refuting will lead to the same attacks as the victim, and even objective evaluations will be taken out of context, so that university students are controlled by the herd mentality in their own online behaviour.

3. Countermeasures against online violence among university students

3.1 Social level

3.1.1 Legal regulation

The reason why participants in online violence dare to express their opinions on the Internet unscrupulously is that, from the legal perspective, the cost of breaking the law is low and the difficulty of law enforcement is high. Due to the virtual nature and anonymity of the Internet, it is difficult to find the source of online violence, and the large number of people involved in online violence makes it impossible to pinpoint individuals, and it is difficult to define online violence decisively. In order to maintain an orderly network in a country governed by the rule of law, legislation should be enacted to regulate online behaviour, define illegal online behaviour, crack down on online violence, and elevate online violence from the moral level to the legal level for restraint. In addition, measures should be taken to promote online law enforcement under the premise of protecting citizens from infringement of their basic rights, and to speed up the promotion of the real-name system on the Internet, so that the black hand of online violence has nowhere to hide and to pursue responsibility to the end. "It is not a slogan, but a basic understanding of every citizen's behaviour on the Internet. We should make good use of legal means to control the evil of online violence, raise citizens' legal awareness and speed up the construction of a rule-of-law state.

3.1.2 Control of public opinion

"Insist on improving the power of news and public opinion in terms of communication, guidance, influence and credibility, adhere to the people-centered creative orientation, adhere to the creation of a clean and upright cyberspace, and adhere to the telling of a good Chinese story and the spreading of a good Chinese voice." General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed at the National Conference on Propaganda and Thought Work the importance of giving play to the positive leading role of news and public opinion on the network ethos, and these important instructions must be put into practice and carried out well in propaganda and thought work. Mainstream media should fulfil their duties as the mainstream, promote healthy online behaviour, grasp the main theme and build a harmonious and beautiful online environment.

3.2 School level

3.2.1 Curriculum guidance

Schools should pay attention to the online behavior of college students, adhere to the Marxist theoretical system as a guiding ideology, and grasp the psychological dynamics of students while providing ideological and political education to them. Nowadays, the teaching materials of universities and colleges have included the education of Internet ethics into the content of the mental health course of ideological and political education, and group activities, flipped classes and seminars can be adopted in the classroom to make students learn and live the knowledge of Internet ethics. In addition, in the curriculum, the courses on the improvement of network technology should first of all do a good job in the education of network morality, promote the correct network moral thought, and promote the civilized and healthy Internet access of college students.

3.2.2 Psychological guidance

The psychological counselling centre of the university should pay attention to the psychological health of students on the Internet, and pay more attention to the students who come to the psychological counselling after being subjected to Internet violence, helping them to relieve their stress and negative emotions, and helping the university students who are participants on the Internet to analyse their psychological health as far as possible, so as to avoid their violent behaviour on the Internet. In addition, university counselling centres can use online mental health problems as a research topic and summarise the solutions to these problems based on real-life cases, so as to provide better assistance to students who have problems with online participants.

3.3 Individual level

3.3.1 Participants in online behaviour

University students, as important Internet subjects, should improve their professional abilities and pay attention to the improvement of their Internet morality, look at various events on the Internet dialectically, participate in Internet activities rationally, put their minds at ease and avoid becoming victims of Internet violence while resolutely refraining from inflicting Internet violence. University students should enrich their time after school, participate in more academic activities, take part in more social practice activities, absorb positive energy, reduce negative emotions caused by the imbalance between real and virtual roles, and look at social events in a positive light, thus reducing the possibility of participating in online violence.

3.3.2 Victims of online violence

When a university student becomes a victim of online violence, he or she should try to avoid being disturbed by negative comments from the outside world, firstly disconnect from the Internet, block the medium of violent verbal attacks, restrain himself or herself from immersing in the virtual world of the Internet, do not let negative emotions erode his or her psyche, and seek help from friends, school teachers, counsellors, psychological counsellors and other people to enlighten his or her psychological state according to his or her own situation. Those who have been seriously violated can even seek legal help to defend their legal rights.

References

- [1] Yang Yiyin, Zhang Shuguang. Social psychology [M]. Beijing: Capital University of Economics and Trade Press, 2015 edition.
- [2] Qin Hui, Tang Xianfeng, Jiang Mengcang, et al. The current situation of college students suffering from cyber violence and countermeasures [J]. Law and Society, 2021(24).
- [3] Zhan Yun, Cai Ruyi, Liao Shanfang, et al. The role of the psychological function of ideological and political education on college students' resistance to online violence [J]. Journal of Chengdu Normal College, 2021, 37(06).
- [4] Deng Xiaofeng. Research on the harm of online violence to college students and countermeasures [D] (Master's thesis). Mianyang: Southwest University of Science and Technology 2020.
- [5] Sun Yirou, Tang Changwei. Research on the psychological causes and countermeasures of current online violence [J]. Journal of Kaifeng College of Education, 2019, 39(08).
- [6] Jin Jia, Song Chenyang, Han Kechao et al. The hazards of online violence among college students and countermeasures of governance[J]. Journal of Jilin Provincial College of Education, 2019, 35(02).
- [7] Ai Ai. Research on Youth Cyber Violence and Response [D] (Master's thesis). Wuhan: Huazhong Normal University, 2018.
- [8] Shen Yuelong. A psychological study on the problem of online violence among college students [J]. Law and Society, 2016(16).