

Fabricating Salacious Rumors on the Internet exists among Adolescents Affect the Emotions, Mental Health, and Well-being of Bystanders or Spreaders

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Abstract. Through reviewing previous research, the opinion if teenagers and other bystander one internet salacious rumors and the influence on those bystanders are discussed in detail in this article. The topic was split into three different directions for discussion and proof. The first one is whether will the bystander perceive the falsehoods as true or not with a conclusion of internet user will easily truth falsehood and will transfer the rumor immediately. The second one is dose social media amplify or narrow the effects of cyberbullying (especially for salacious rumors) in comparison to reality towards the bystanders. For this topic, the finding is that cyberbullying's impact on victims and bystanders is amplified by social media's viral nature. The last one is intimacy of the bystanders and the person in rumors has an effect to the result with a conclusion of It's important for individuals to realize the importance of intimacy and to consider the impact that bystander behavior may have on the subject of the rumor and the overall outcome. As a result, the spread of social media will amplify the influence of cyberbullies on victims and bystanders, and will also increase the credibility of many rumors, and the credibility of rumors will also be affected with the importance of intimacy or intimacy. This paper can provide some reference for research of relative fields. Future research should contain some of the solutions to prevent the salacious rumors, therefore, to help females to stay away from the rumors.

Keywords: Salacious rumors, adolescents, cyberbullying, bystanders.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, the proliferation of fabricating salacious rumors on the Internet among adolescents has raised concerns about its impact on the emotions, mental health, and overall well-being of bystanders and spreaders, particularly focusing on the influence of pornographic gossip that spreads on social media.

While delving into the archives of scholarly resources, it becomes apparent that a gap exists in the body of literature concerning the specific scrutiny of online salacious rumors that target adolescent females. Although a subset of research studies has directed their focus towards cyberbullying (a closely related area) and the potential influence of online rumors on the lives of adolescents, it is evident that ample opportunity remains for conducting a more exhaustive exploration within the domain of online rumors.

This literature review intends to investigate the complexities of this phenomenon and examine its effects on the feelings and moods of male and female adolescents who are aware of the false news. By exploring the main questions of whether these teenagers perceive the falsehoods as true or not, whether there are polarized results of comprehend the false news between genders, how the rumors behave differently in social media and reality, and whether social media amplifies or narrows the effects on adolescents, this paper strives to provide insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological impact and potential consequences of such online behavior. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing research and scholarly works, this review seeks to shed light on this pressing issue and identify potential avenues for future research and intervention strategies to foster a safer and more empathetic online environment for all adolescents.

2. Factors and Influences of Rumors toward Teenagers Who Are Bystanders

2.1. Effects on Difference of Rumors from Reality and Internet

Cyberbullying emerges as an urgent worldwide concern, with statistics indicating that cyberbullying victims comprise 20% to 40% of the child and adolescent population in numerous nations [1]. The prevalence of cyberbullying has exhibited an upward trend from 2007 to 2016, and this upward trajectory persists. The ramifications of cyberbullying profoundly impact various dimensions of young individuals' lives, notably influencing emotional and social elements that can contribute to suicidal inclinations. These repercussions extend to the victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of cyberbullying [2]. Fabricating salacious rumors can be considered as a kind of serious cyberbullying, which is presently an alarming problem worldwide due to its impact on the emotions, behavior and psychological well-being of not only the victims, but the bullies themselves and also bystanders. Social media seems will amplify the effects in comparison to reality. Given that people of generation Z are exposed to internet since they were born, they are the majority of people which use social medias the most. Professionals have voiced apprehensions that online communication's physical separation and anonymity might lead to an escalation in adverse bystander conduct, accompanied by cyberbullying and online harassment [3]. These affordances of social media are likely to incur greater influence.

Social media's influence on cyberbullying can have profound and lasting effects on both victims and bystanders. The amplified audience and viral nature of social media platforms make salacious rumors spread like wildfire, reaching far beyond the confines of real-life interactions. Anonymity and physical distance on social media provide a shield for cyberbullies, emboldening them to engage in more harmful behaviors without facing immediate consequences. This heightened anonymity can exacerbate the fear and vulnerability felt by victims, making it difficult for them to identify and confront their aggressors. The persistent and permanent nature of online content intensifies the impact of cyberbullying incidents. Salacious rumors, once spread, can linger indefinitely, continuously affecting the victim's emotional well-being and reputation. The lack of emotional cues in online communication can lead to misinterpretations, resulting in heightened emotional distress and confusion for the victim. Additionally, the global reach of social media transcends geographical boundaries, exposing victims to a diverse and extensive audience. This broad exposure can lead to feelings of powerlessness and isolation, knowing that the rumor has reached far beyond their immediate community. As bystanders witness these incidents unfold on social media, they play a crucial role in either perpetuating or mitigating the effects of cyberbullying. Bystanders' reactions, whether supportive or harmful, can significantly impact the victim's emotional state and overall well-being. The perceived public shaming and shame associated with salacious rumors on social media can have severe consequences for the victim's mental health and self-esteem. Victims may experience long-lasting emotional scars and struggle to regain a sense of control over their personal narrative. Furthermore, social media's echo chambers reinforce and validate the rumor's content, making it challenging for the victim to counteract or disprove false information. The lack of control over the spread of rumors on social media contributes to the distress experienced by victims. Despite reporting or attempting to remove harmful content, rumors may continue to circulate, leaving the victim feeling helpless and powerless. This sense of powerlessness may lead to self-censorship and withdrawal from social media platforms, limiting the victim's participation in online communities and negatively impacting their social life. Addressing cyberbullying on social media requires a collective effort from individuals, parents, educators, and platform providers. Promoting digital citizenship, responsible online behavior, and strict policies against cyberbullying are crucial steps to create a safer digital environment. Empowering bystanders to intervene positively and providing support to victims are equally vital in combating the amplification of cyberbullying effects on social media. By fostering a culture of kindness, empathy, and respect online, we can work towards reducing the harmful impact of cyberbullying, particularly concerning the spread of salacious rumors on social media platforms.

Bystanders who see salacious rumors on social media can also be significantly affected by cyberbullying incidents. Witnessing such harmful content can evoke various emotional responses, including shock, anger, sadness, or guilt, as bystanders empathize with the victim's plight. They may face a moral dilemma regarding whether to intervene, ignore, or perpetuate the spread of rumors. The presence of bystanders on social media can either empower or disempower the victim and the cyberbully. Supportive reactions can empower the victim, while engaging in harmful behavior or remaining silent can disempower them and embolden the cyberbully. Frequent exposure to cyberbullying incidents might lead to desensitization among some bystanders, normalizing such behavior. Witnessing cyberbullying incidents can instill fear that they, too, might become targets in the future, leading to self-censorship. Bystanders' reactions can shape the narrative and influence the rumor's credibility. Some may feel a sense of responsibility to intervene or report cyberbullying to support the victim and create a safer online environment, while others may be hesitant due to fears of retaliation. Social norms and group influence play a role in how bystanders respond to cyberbullying. Moreover, the emotions stirred by witnessing online incidents can impact offline relationships. It is crucial to foster responsible and supportive online behavior, encourage positive bystander intervention, and promote empathy and digital citizenship to create a safer and compassionate online community for all.

2.2. Whether Adolescents Will Perceive the Falsehoods as True

Whether will bystanders perceive the falsehoods as true. Falsehood refers to the phenomenon of spreading a digital foot print of unfounded and unverified information on the internet in the form of pictures, blogs, text, and videos. And this dubious information is often mistaken for facts that are believed by people [4]. Most people are not very good at distinguishing between falsehood or rumor and news. But they will choose to spread or share what they believe, even if it is incorrect. A study explores spreading fake news which is mainly made up of a survey which is about asking participants for several sets of headlines and letting them identify whether it is true or false [4]. The result shows that the sharing intent of false headlines is much higher than the assessment of their authenticity, suggesting that many people are willing to share content that they cannot identify as inaccurate [5].

In addition, Onook Oh et al. mentioned three conditions under which the respondents will believe that the rumor is true [6]. Firstly, in a crisis, the platform characteristics of media synchronization and expression richness affect the possibility of rumor recipients believing false rumors to be true information. Secondly, rumors received from more socially connected people are more likely to be believed to be true. Thirdly, belief in rumors during a crisis is associated with greater intensity of information and behavioral action. Also, people tend to treat equivocal information as true (as opposed to being suspicious about its authenticity) and consider it to be true [7]. Beyond that, the literature also illustrates the belief of rumor is affected by social media. "As the emotional attachment to the device becomes strong, it instills a "sense of trust" in the technical system, such as the dependence on iPhone and computer, which affects how receptive the received information. Therefore, false rumor information received via mobile phones is more likely to be considered credible than information received via non-mobile or less mobile ICT devices [8].

Also, Conservatives proved to be less sensitive than liberals and worse at distinguishing truth from falsehood. This can be explained in part by the fact that the most widely disseminated lies tend to promote conservative positions, while the corresponding truths generally favor liberals. As the share of partisan news increases, liberals tend to have a greater increase in sensitivity than conservatives, which exacerbates the problem [9]. Emotions can also affect a person. Kilhoe and Garrett proposes an experiment that uses emotions to determine whether people believe rumors. From the study, the researchers concluded that participants who felt angry were more likely to accept the rumors than those who weren't [10]. Furthermore, the level of anxiety will also affect the sense of truth of rumor. In "who hears what from whom and with what effect: a study of rumor", it demonstrates people who with higher anxiety level will believe the rumors stronger than the one who has lower degree of anxiety. Also, people with higher anxiety levels will spread more rumors than others [11]. However,

some of the bystander may stop the rumors as it spread to them, because these bystanders have some emotion respond, such as empathy and fear of victimization. Same as bullying, in a study of “Bystander Motivation in Bullying Incidents: To Intervene or Not to Intervene”, it mentioned an experiment of “in-depth understanding of children's perspectives and concerns when witnessing bullying.” The experiment illustrate that Some students argued that bullying elicits different emotional responses from bystanders, and that these emotional responses (empathy, fear of victimization, audience excitement) seem to influence their decision process to intervene or not to intervene. Some students argued that bullying elicits different emotional responses from bystanders, and that these emotional responses (empathy, fear of victimization, audience excitement) seem to influence their decision process to intervene or not to intervene. For example, bystanders who experience empathy may decide to intervene because they feel bad about the victim [12].

2.3. Effects of Intimacy of Bystanders and People in Rumors

The intimacy of peers determines the extent to which rumors are spread. When bystanders are closer to the bully, they are less likely to defend the victim. While when they are closer to the victim, they are more likely to act as defenders [13]. The bystander's ability to take action after seeing a rumor depends on the intimacy of his or her relationship with the author of the rumor. As soon as a rumor is widely circulated on social media, whether it is true or not, bystanders who have an empathic or close relationship with the rumor maker will support the rumor maker. Equally, people who share their experience with the subject or are familiar with the subject will prefer to defend. On the other hand, it doesn't think in terms of the Internet, where a bystander in reality may encounter influences that can cloud his or her judgment. But on the Internet, there are more strangers are bolder online than in reality. When bystanders feel some sympathy for the victim, the situation falls into the category of fulfilling a social need, and they do not need to consider interpersonal relationships.

In contrast, choices and judgments made by those with a high degree of intimacy with the rumor-monger fall into the category of intimacy needs [12]. Bystanders who are close to the rumored maker and more emotionally invested will have a sense of urgency and feel important. As a result, they may be more enthusiastic about sharing rumors and seeking approval or support from their social circles. Especially on social media, which spreads at an impressive rate. It can exacerbate the damage to the subject's reputation and well-being, even their mental and physical health. On the other hand, the closeness of the relationship between the bystander and the subject can be protective. When there is a strong connection in the density of this relationship, the bystander may deny and dismiss rumors. The subject's credibility is actively defended. It is possible that these intimate relationships can be used as a shield against the negative consequences of rumors. Such surveys lack evidence to support this view, such as details of data surveys or questionnaires. Yet another situation is the interactive nature of social media. Thus, we are more likely to develop stronger ties with those with whom we have more continuous opportunities for communication [4]. It has been shown that sustained interaction increases intimacy, and when intimacy reaches a certain level online rumors will be discredited (bystanders with high intimacy and no offline communication).

In different situation has different responses of bystanders on the internet. In general, intimate relationships have a great influence on bystanders' cognition and judgment.

3. Conclusion

This paper aims to discuss the impact of rumors on bystanders. It is divided into three parts: factors and influences of rumors toward teenagers who are bystanders, whether adolescents will perceive the falsehoods as true and effects of intimacy of bystanders and people in rumors. In conclusion, the urgency of addressing cyberbullying is underscored by the ubiquity of cyberbullying, driven by the viral spread of social media. The credibility of cyberbullying, which mostly revolves around unfounded rumors, is influenced by factors such as social media, personal anxiety levels, peer influence, and various environmental factors. Previous research has shown that people tend to accept

and spread news or rumors they encounter without question. It is important for individuals to recognize the importance of empathy and to think about the impact of bystander behavior on the goals and broader consequences of rumors. By developing trust, empathy, and critical thinking skills, we can navigate the intricate web of rumors, mitigate harm, and strengthen relationships. The primary goal of this article is to empower individuals to avoid blindly accepting false information, encourage independent judgment on social issues, and mitigate the harmful effects of rumor spreading on victims. Previous articles on this topic have often presented a single perspective and failed to fully reveal the harm of rumors. The multi-faceted literature reviews were not adequately investigated and the results were lacking in reference examples to certificate. In future studies, rigorous scientific data will be adopted to collect the real experiences of victims in different situations, and relevant experiments will be conducted to ensure that the experimental results are not accidental.

The constant development of the Internet has made research more realistic and up-to-date. It reminds that the ubiquity of the Internet should not be misconstrued as a license to engage in reckless behavior.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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