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Exposed Online, Endangered Offline: The Intersection of Social Media Presence and Gendered Violence in Pakistan



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Abstract

Digital platforms, which offer greater freedom for self-expression and communication, can also expose individuals, particularly women, to heightened risks of harassment and violence, especially in societies where freedom of expression is prioritised. In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, the widespread use of social media tools often leads to online bullying, which can escalate to face-to-face violence. This study explores the growing prevalence of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Pakistan, focusing specifically on TikTok users in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study employed a survey and correlation design, with data analysed using statistical software (SPSS). This quantitative study gathered data through structured questionnaires distributed across both formal and informal WhatsApp groups. The findings reveal a strong correlation between women's visibility on TikTok and their exposure to various forms of violence, highlighting the increasingly blurred boundary between online and offline abuse. The research emphasises the urgent need to consolidate responses to TFGBV by strengthening legal protections, raising awareness about digital rights, and challenging the socio-cultural norms that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Keywords: Technology-Facilitated Violence; Gender-Based Violence; Tiktok; Cultural Conservatism

Introduction

The advent of the digital revolution has reorganized human interaction, providing a new environment of communication and empowerment, as well as new forms of gendered violence. Social media has become a magnet for gender-based violence (GBV) in patriarchal societies such as in Pakistan, and the acts are not only confined to online forums. However, they are also carried out in offline societies. All this, in the end, leads to the direct taking away of the lives of women (UNFPA, 2025; Bailey & Burkell, 2021). In Pakistan specifically, women's online participation is especially susceptible as both digital and cultural conservatism butt heads to form deadly effects. This is an escalating crisis that recent tragic events have highlighted. Social media presence has had a real-life repercussion, as a 17-year-old TikTok celebrity, Sana

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Yousaf, was murdered in June 2025, after declining online propositions at her Islamabad home (Al Jazeera, 2025). Likewise, the January 2025 case, when 14-year-old Hira Anwar was killed by her father because she did not accept his authority, is the second illustrating and heartrending example of how digital speech may become even deadly (Reuters, 2025). The incidents are reminiscent of previous tragedies including the 2016 honor killing of a social media personality Qandeel Baloch by her brother, due to her presence on social media, and the 2024 Karachi killings of four women by one man who was angered by their presence in TikTok (CNN, 2016; Al Jazeera, 2025).

Patriarchal society in Pakistan creates a favourable climate where online and offline gender-based violence flourishes. Patriarchal rankings frequently leak into online arenas and sealed women challenging conventional values or asserting themselves support high scores of violence and intimidation (Mohd Hanafiah, 2017). This is a representation of how the conventional violence of honour has merged with a prevalence of modern digital tools, and how such fuels further insecurities for women involved in online interactions.

Discrimination based on gender in Pakistan is correlated with numerous religious, cultural, and socioeconomic issues that cut across different strata in the society (Ahmad et al., 2020). Gender identity construction on sites such as Facebook is conditioned by the role of religion, class, and culture, and moral policing transfers the patriarchal control into virtual spaces (Salam-Salmaoui, 2022). This institutes what are called gendered landscapes that reproduce inequality both online and offline.

The extent of the crisis can be seen in statistics, as the number of women killed in the name of honour in 2024 is 346, in 2023, this number was 324 (Al Jazeera, 2025). These numbers mostly reflect the conventional honour killings, without the increasing trend of the presence of social media preceding violence. According to the reports of the Federal Investigation Agency, thousands of crimes using cyber violence are reported every year, which indicates the impact on the mental state and the further development of such cases into real violence (Abbasi et al., 2021).

Historically, research that addresses GBV in Pakistan has talked about domestic violence and honour killings as part of a family setting. Nevertheless, new studies expand this perception by pointing out how the gender-based violence

phenomenon has migrated to online harassment, threats, verbal abuse, and blackmail along with physical damages (Abbas et al., 2023). Such a large perspective is essential in comprehending the role of digital platforms in the enhancement and continuation of gendered violence.

The coverage of violence against women in Pakistan by the media usually breaks journalistic ethics through revealing the identities of the victims and creating a narrative of the victim-blaming activity (Hassan, 2024). This adds to the culture of impunity, where violence on the Internet is decriminalised and selfishly treated as being less dangerous than violence that occurs in real life (Al Jazeera, 2025). Additionally, online bullying is a part of a larger phenomenon of a culture of violence toward women. It deprives them of their voices both locally and digitally in the civic sphere (Faith, 2022).

However, this theme of social media and gender-based violence in Pakistan needs to be studied in detail. The urgency to address gendered risk on social media, where platforms such as TikTok have over 25.2 million users as of 2023, is also undeniable (OOSGA, 2023). In the context of digital spaces as the focus of social interactions and self-expression, the problem of gendered violence that women must experience should be realised and addressed to reinforce their right to engage in the digital world and to remain safe. The study seeks to investigate the intricate connection between social media and gendered violence in Pakistan and suggest the direction of intervention strategies on how to safeguard women in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected.

Literature Review

Gendered violence and social media usage have become exploitable fields of academic research in which the intersection of patriarchal society and the widespread usage of digital tools takes place. This literature review explores technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), social media harassment, and the offline-online continuum of violence. However, the literature used in this review primarily focuses on sources relevant to Pakistan and its culture.

The academic debate around the issue of technology-facilitated gender-based violence has changed considerably throughout the last decade. Bansal et al. (2024) conducted a scoping diagnostic study that revealed all technologies available for GBV

in low- and middle-income countries in Asia between 2006 and 2021. They found out that TFGBV encompasses different forms of behaviours such as cyberbullying, sexual harassment, image-based abuses, threatening communication, and gender trolling. Still, the prevalence levels of violence depend on its nature. The authors noted that technology-facilitated GBV is "a widespread phenomenon, with increased incidence during the COVID-19 pandemic," highlighting the temporal dynamics of digital violence.

Powell and Henry (2016) provided foundational conceptual work by defining technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) as encompassing online sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, cyberstalking, image-based sexual exploitation, and coercive behaviours facilitated by digital technologies. Recent scholarship has emphasised the structural nature of digital violence where Bailey and Burkell (2021) argue for understanding tech-facilitated violence through structural and intersectional lenses, noting that digital platforms both reflect and amplify existing power imbalances.

Global Patterns and Regional Variations

Research reveals significant global patterns in technology-facilitated gender-based violence while highlighting regional variations. The UN Women (2023) report on technology-facilitated violence notes that globally, 73% of women experience some form of online violence, with certain groups facing disproportionate risks. Human rights defenders, journalists, politicians, and young women face particularly elevated rates of violence, with 73% of women journalists having experienced online violence in their work.

Watson (2023) conducted empirical research examining online abuse against women in public-facing occupations, developing a seven-element framework demonstrating that online abuse directed at women is "misogynistic, frequently includes violent threats and dismisses female contributions to online discussions." Her research revealed occupational variations in abuse patterns, with women police officers more likely to receive appearance-based criticism and competency challenges. In the South Asian context, Sultana et al. (2024) examined violence against women on Twitter in India, finding evidence of increasing trends in misogynistic content during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study contributed to the development of

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taxonomies for measuring online misogyny in low- and middle-income countries, noting the adaptations required for different cultural contexts.

Pakistani Context: Empirical Findings

Research on digital harassment in Pakistan highlights the intersection of cultural and patriarchal structures. A 2017 study by the Digital Rights Foundation surveyed 1,800 women across the country, revealing that 40% had been stalked or harassed on apps like WhatsApp and Viber, and 81% were unaware of cyber harassment laws, showing a significant gap in legal awareness. Ali (2025) found that societal norms and conservative family structures limit women's internet access, leaving those who do use it vulnerable to online abuse. This research emphasizes the sexism and devaluation of female voices online, forcing many women to withdraw from the digital space. Salam-Salmaoui (2022) explored how online moral policing in Pakistan reinforces patriarchal norms, with women's gender identity being shaped within a framework of religious, cultural, and traditional discourses. Ahmad et al. (2020) examined the offline-online harassment continuum, finding that 80% of female university students had experienced or witnessed street harassment, with most agreeing that no public space feels safe. These findings suggest that online harassment amplifies, rather than replaces, traditional gender-based violence.

Media Representations and Institutional Responses

The relations of the media narratives to violence against women have been explored in academic research on how the narratives either challenge or reinforce/perpetuate the violence against women. According to Hassan (2024), victim-blaming or revealing the identities of victims is one of the ethical failures observed in Pakistani newspapers. According to Kamran (2020), the existing legal frameworks aimed at reining in online violence are still ineffective: social processes are not controlled, the limitations imposed by the platforms are insufficient, and women have to practice self-censorship. Critical views, such as intersectionality and capability approach, have been used both to comprehend the relationship of race, class, sexuality and nationality alongside gender in the creation of digital violence and assessing how public harassment limits the liberties of women. However, there are still significant gaps, one of which, according to Bansal et al. (2024), is the lack of unanimity in terms of definitions and approaches, which makes it more challenging to measure prevalence itself and

develop effective policies globally, including around issues such as the non-consensual distribution of images.

Cultural and Contextual Considerations

Research emphasises the importance of cultural context in understanding technology-facilitated violence. Salam (2021) documented how Pakistani social media users navigate complex intersections of religion, class, culture, and tradition, with platforms like Facebook highlighting both "reproduction of prevalent cultural models of masculinity and femininity" and "resistance to existing socio-religious cultural norms."

The literature reveals how conservative cultural contexts can amplify digital risks for women. Research indicates that in Pakistan, "women are often forced to give up their social media passwords by their own family" under pretexts of trust, blurring distinctions between private and public digital spaces.

Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between high TikTok visibility and the likelihood of experiencing offline threats or violence among women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- To assess how cultural conservatism in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa influences the severity of TFGBV and the prevalence of victim-blaming against women on TikTok.
- To compare the rates and severity of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) experienced by male and female TikTok users in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hypotheses of the Study

- **H1:** Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with high TikTok visibility are more likely to face offline threats or violence than those with limited or private profiles.
- **H2:** Women from more culturally conservative districts in KP experience greater severity of TFGBV and higher levels of victim-blaming on TikTok.
- **H3:** Female TikTok users in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face significantly higher rates and more severe forms of TFGBV than their male counterparts.

Research Design

This research is conducted through a quantitative survey to explore the relationship between social media presence and gender-based violence among TikTok users in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The study adopts a cross-sectional survey

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research design to investigate the current experiences of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) amongst the TikTok users of KP. Through this approach, the trend of prevalence, forms of digital harassment, and the interaction between the online and offline vulnerability in the context of a cultural environment within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is captured. The customs and values of Pashtuns are colliding with the rapid emergence of digital technologies.

The participants have engaged via formal and informal social networks, including university groups, women's networks, and civil society networks, often utilising WhatsApp groups. The primary data collection method involves sending structured questionnaires to WhatsApp groups specifically targeted at TikTok users. This online dissemination scheme is compatible with the study's objective, which focuses on experiences mediated by technology. It capitalises on the popularity of WhatsApp among KP members who communicate through this platform. The data addresses demographic details, patterns of social media use, experiences of online harassment, reporting behaviour, perceived awareness of legal protection, and perceived effects on offline safety.

The questionnaire incorporates validated scales, including adapted versions of the Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence Scale (Powell & Henry, 2016) and measures of digital harassment frequency. Open-ended questions capture nuanced experiences that structured responses may miss, particularly focusing on the continuum between online harassment and offline violence, including escalation patterns within KP's conservative cultural framework.

Quantitative data analysis utilises SPSS version 26 software, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis provides frequency distributions and prevalence rates of different TFGBV forms. Cross-tabulations examine the relationships between demographic variables, social media usage patterns, and experiences of harassment. Inferential analysis employs chi-square tests for categorical associations and logistic regression to identify predictors of online harassment, while controlling for demographic factors.

Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, maintaining anonymity, and providing support and resource information. Data storage follows encrypted security protocols with restricted access. Study limitations include potential

selection bias from convenience sampling, possible overrepresentation of educated urban populations, and cultural factors that may influence disclosure willingness. The cross-sectional design limits the establishment of causal relationships, and digital distribution may exclude women with limited internet access or those subject to heavy family monitoring.

Results

Table 1: *Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Study Variables*

Scale	Items	N	α
TT Scale	7*	100	.92
OH Scale	5	100	.85
OV Scale	3	100	.86**
CC Scale	2	100	.77

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

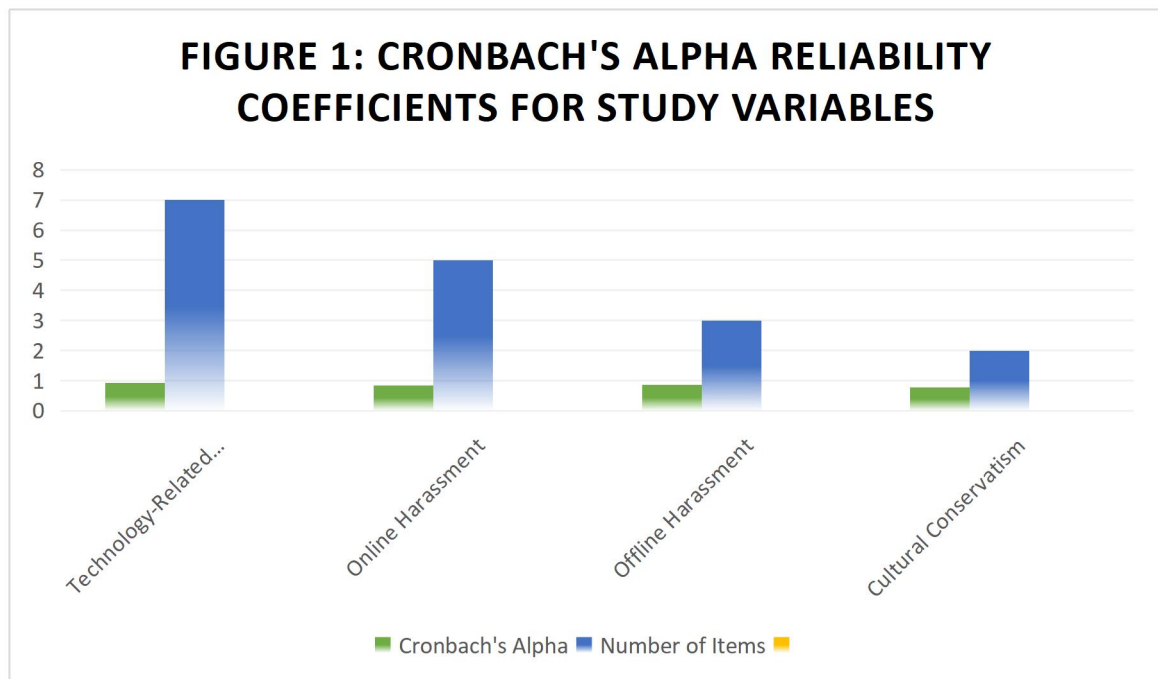


Figure 1 illustrates the internal consistency of all measurement scales, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.77 to 0.92, all of which exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 for reliable psychological instruments.

Description

Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for the study variables,

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indicating the internal consistency of the scales used in the research. The reliability coefficients in the TT Scale (Technology-Related Violence), OH Scale (Online Harassment), OV Scale (Offline Violence), and CC Scale (Cultural Conservatism) are very high, having a value that is above the designated margin of 0.7, and thus having a high reliability in assessing the concerned constructs.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables*

Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
TT Total	100	20.94	4.83	11.00	36.00	0.37	0.98
OH Total	100	12.47	2.91	5.00	17.00	-0.64	-0.46
OV Total	100	6.30	1.11	3.00	9.00	-0.07	0.38
CC Total	100	4.51	1.21	2.00	6.00	-0.37	-0.83

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the study variable, including the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), minimum (Min), maximum (Max), skewness, and kurtosis for each variable. The data indicates the distribution characteristics of Technology-Related Violence (TT), Online Harassment (OH), Offline Violence (OV), and Cultural Conservatism (CC), with TT showing moderate skewness. At the same time, OH, OV, and CC display relatively symmetrical distributions.

Table 3: *Frequency Distribution Summary for Study Variables*

Variable	Score Range	f	%	MOHt Frequent Score	Mode f (%)
TT Total	11-36	100	100.0	21.00	21 (21.0%)
OH Total	5-17	100	100.0	15.00	24 (24.0%)
OV Total	3-9	100	100.0	7.00	35 (35.0%)
CC Total	2-6	100	100.0	5.00	27 (27.0%)

Note. All variables showed complete data with no missing values ($n = 100$).

Description

Table 3 presents the frequency distribution summary for the study variables, showing the score range, frequency (f), percentage (%), mode of the highest frequency score (mOHt), and the frequency of the mode standard score (mOHt f) for each variable. All variables (Technology-Related Violence, Online Harassment, Offline Violence, and Cultural Conservatism) exhibited complete data, with no missing values. The mode

for Offline Violence (7.00) occurred most frequently at 35.0%, while the modes for other variables ranged from 21.0% to 27.0%.

Table 4: *Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. TT Total	20.94	4.83	—	.42**	.18	-.12
2. OH Total	12.47	2.91		—	.35**	.20*
3. OV Total	6.30	1.11			—	.13
4. CC Total	4.51	1.21				—

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

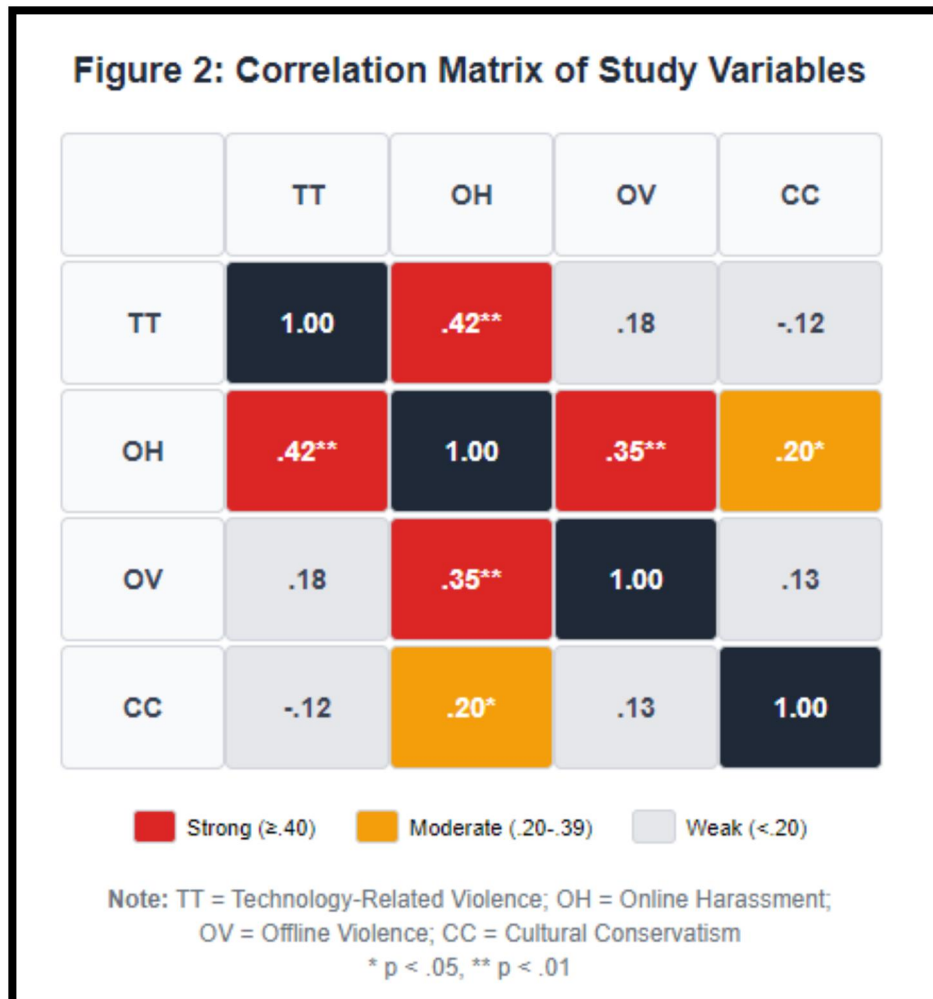


Figure 2 reveals significant positive correlations between Technology-Related Violence and Online Harassment ($r = .42^{**}$), Online Harassment and Offline Violence ($r = .35^{**}$), and a moderate positive correlation between Online Harassment and

Cultural Conservatism ($r = .20^*$).

Description

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive associations between Technology-Related Violence (TT) and Online Harassment (OH) ($r = .42, p < .01$), and between Online Harassment (OH) and Offline Violence (OV) ($r = .35, p < .01$). A modest positive correlation was found between Online Harassment (OH) and Cultural Conservatism (CC) ($r = .20, p < .05$). Additionally, there was a small, non-significant correlation between Technology-Related Violence (TT) and Offline Violence (OV) ($r = .18$), as well as a negative, non-significant correlation between Technology-Related Violence (TT) and Cultural Conservatism (CC) ($r = -.12$).

Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test Results by Age Group

Variable	Age 15-25 ($n = 92$)	Age 26+ ($n = 8$)	95% CI			
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	[LL, UL]
TT Total	21.00 (4.69)	20.25 (6.58)	0.42	98	.676	[-2.79, 4.29]
OH Total	12.61 (2.83)	10.88 (3.60)	1.63	98	.107	[-0.38, 3.85]
OV Total	6.33 (0.98)	6.00 (2.14)	0.80	98	.426	[-0.48, 1.14]
CC Total	4.57 (1.23)	3.88 (0.83)	1.56	98	.122	[-0.19, 1.57]

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

Independent samples t-test results showed no significant differences between age groups (15-25 and 26+) for Technology-Related Violence (TT) ($t = 0.42, p = .676$), Online Harassment (OH) ($t = 1.63, p = .107$), Offline Violence (OV) ($t = 0.80, p = .426$), and Cultural Conservatism (CC) ($t = 1.56, p = .122$). The 95% confidence intervals for all variables included zero, indicating that age does not have a statistically significant impact on these study variables.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test Results by Gender

Variable	Male ($n = 67$)	Female ($n = 33$)	95% CI			
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	[LL, UL]
TT Total	20.99 (4.56)	25.85 (7.40)	0.13	98	.895	[-1.91, 2.18]
OH Total	12.43 (2.99)	17.55 (6.80)	-0.18	98	.857	[-1.35, 1.12]
OV Total	6.19 (1.14)	11.52 (4.00)	-1.37	98	.173	[-0.79, 0.14]
CC Total	4.51 (1.32)	9.52 (3.97)	-0.03	98	.976	[-0.52, 0.51]

Note. *TT* = Technology-Related Violence; *OH* = Online Harassment; *OV* = Offline Violence; *CC* = Cultural Conservatism.

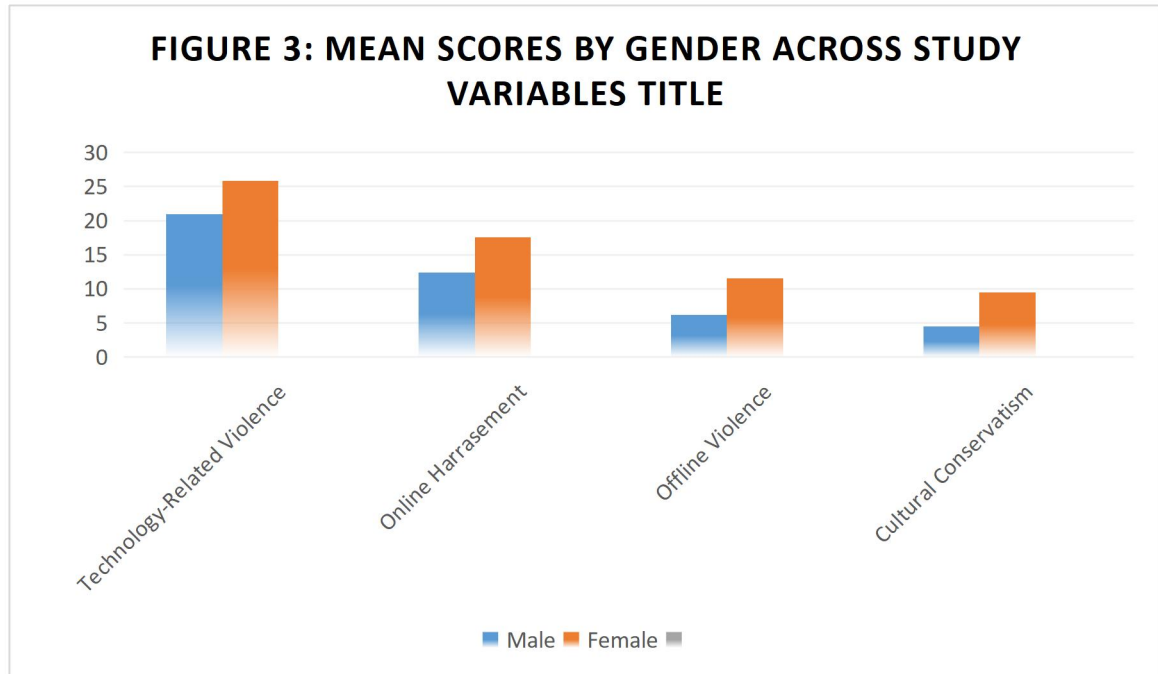


Figure 3 displays the mean score differences between males and females across all study variables, with females consistently showing higher means. However, statistical analyses revealed no significant gender differences (all $p > .05$).

Description

Table 6 presents the results of an independent samples t-test comparing gender differences across various variables. The table presents means (M), standard deviations (SD), t-values, degrees of freedom (df), p-values, and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for male ($n = 67$) and female ($n = 33$) participants, indicating no significant gender differences.

Table 7: One-Way Analysis of Variance by Occupation Status

Variable	Employed ($n = 8$)	Unemployed ($n = 2$)	Student ($n = 90$)	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
TT	<i>M</i> (SD) 16.75 (4.65)	<i>M</i> (SD) 18.00 (4.24)	<i>M</i> (SD) 21.38 (4.69)	3.98	2,	.022*
Total					97	
OH	<i>M</i> (SD) 11.88 (2.85)	<i>M</i> (SD) 11.50 (2.12)	<i>M</i> (SD) 12.54 (2.95)	0.30	2,	.740
Total					97	

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OV	6.25 (1.58)	6.50 (0.71)	6.30 (1.08)	0.04	2,	.961
Total						97
CC	4.38 (1.06)	5.00 (1.41)	4.51 (1.23)	0.21	2,	.811
Total						97

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

Description

Table 7 presents the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) by occupation status, comparing employed, unemployed, and student participants across the study variables. A significant difference was found in Technology-Related Violence (TT) ($F = 3.98, p = .022$), with students scoring higher than both employed and unemployed participants. No significant differences were observed in Online Harassment (OH), Offline Violence (OV), or Cultural Conservatism (CC), with p -values greater than 0.05.

Table 8: One-Way Analysis of Variance by Education Level

Variable	High School ($n = 4$)	Intermediate/Bachelor ($n = 85$)	Masters+ ($n = 11$)			
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
TT	21.50	21.34 (4.43)	17.64 (4.70)	3.02	2,	.054
Total	(10.02)					97
OH	12.00 (2.45)	12.58 (2.86)	11.82 (3.60)	0.38	2,	.686
Total						97
OV	7.25 (0.96)	6.24 (1.02)	6.45 (1.63)	1.76	2,	.178
Total						97
CC	4.25 (0.50)	4.48 (1.24)	4.82 (1.17)	0.47	2,	.629
Total						97

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

Description

Table 8 presents the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) by education level, comparing participants with high school, intermediate/bachelor's, and master 's+ education across the study variables. While a near-significant difference

was found for Technology-Related Violence (TT) ($F = 3.02, p = .054$), no significant differences were observed in Online Harassment (OH), Offline Violence (OV), or Cultural Conservatism (CC), with all p-values greater than 0.05.

Table 9: One-Way Analysis of Variance by District

Variable	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
TT Total	1.03	7, 92	.419	.07
OH Total	1.26	7, 92	.279	.09
OV Total	0.59	7, 92	.764	.04
CC Total	1.61	7, 92	.143	.11

Note. TT = Technology-Related Violence; OH = Online Harassment; OV = Offline Violence; CC = Cultural Conservatism.

Description

Table 9 presents one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) by district, reporting the differences between districts in Technology-Related Violence (TT), Online Harassment (OH), Offline Violence (OV), and Cultural Conservatism (CC). The p-values of all variables were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences between districts. All the effect sizes are small to moderate.

The study focuses on the connection between the presence of violence offline and social media, especially on TikTok, and the role of cultural conservatism in escalating the levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. As stated in the key findings, females with long visibility on TikTok are targeted more by threats or violence on the internet, which proves the hypothesis that when an individual claims their agency in a patriarchal society, their risk of exposure rises (Naseem et al., 2020; Karusala et al., 2019; Ammari et al., 2022). Moreover, cultural conservatism also significantly contributes to the prevalence and the severity of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and victim-blaming and harassment are worse in areas where cultural values are more conservative (Hicks, 2021; Dunn, 2020; Champion et al., 2022).

Discussion

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

The abbreviation TFGBV is already used in the academic world to characterize the set

of crimes that contain cyberstalking, image abuse, and online sexual harassment. The recent study conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa indicates that KP women with a high presence on the TikTok site are at a higher risk of being depicted with this form of violence, and as such, it demonstrates that online platforms facilitate online exemplification of gender-based violence (Bansal et al., 2024). To support these findings, correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between online bullying and offline violence, revealing a close connection between the two dimensions (Ojanen et al., 2025; Donato et al., 2022; Diaz-Aguado & Martinez-Arias, 2022).

Gendered Differences in Online Harassment and Violence

Prior examinations conducted in Pakistan have reported a strong gender divide in cyberbullying; the current study replicates them to TFGBV, but none is found in cultural conservatism (H1 and H3) (Qureshi et al., 2020; Ali, 2025). Still, women reported significantly higher rates of offline violence, revealing the intersection between online and interpersonal violence. Like the findings of Faith (2022), this information indicates that online bullying may lead to actual violence, especially in a country where the rights of women are limited (UN Women, 2020). That no gender gap exists in cultural conservatism and TFGBV can thus be explained by cultural and social norms that influence the social reaction to digital harassment in Pakistan (Kondhar et al., 2023).

Impact of Cultural Conservatism on Online Harassment

The current research highlights how cultural conservatism contributes to the increase of TFGBV, particularly in regions with more conservative social norms. These findings support those of Salam-Salmaoui (2024), who examines the role of religion, culture, and social expectations in the shaping of online moral policing in Pakistan. Digital media platforms can serve as venues of strict gender roles, particularly in areas where the image of female roles is limited (Bailey & Burkell, 2021). The findings associated with online strengthening of patriarchal power are as follows: the intersectionality as used by Crenshaw (2013), who argues that women encounter violence in varying ways that are gendered as cultural, religious, and social environments overwhelm the raw issues of violence. Finally, gendered violence is not only made but also perpetuated because of the intersection of digital spaces of

conservative social values, which has been revealed by Agha and Agha (2021).

Correlation Analysis and Implications for Offline Violence

This study confirms a strong correlation between online harassment (OH) and offline violence (OV) ($r = 0.42$). Moreover, there was a significant positive relationship between online violence (OV) and technology-related violence (TT) ($r = 0.42$). These results mean that online violence predisposes real-life violence, thus validating the claim that online bullying often ends up in violent actions (Bailey et al., 2024). The findings support the need to consider online and offline violence as interconnected, since instances of online harassment may trigger offline violence, particularly in instances of strict patriarchal societies (Faith, 2022).

Cultural and Institutional Responses to TFGBV

The results illustrate the existence of significant gaps in the institution-wide responses of TFGBV in Pakistan. Despite the existence of a thorough legal framework, there are still challenges in fully embracing the digital world, and a significant issue is that all individuals are unfamiliar with the provisions of cyber law. According to the findings, a significant proportion of participants lack adequate legal knowledge about online harassment, underscoring the need for more training on cyber law. Furthermore, this paper confirms Hassan's (2024) claim that the media tends to cover cases of online harassment unethically, thus further perpetuating the silence into which victims are drawn and reinforcing the overall societal stigma. Many of them decide not to report and reveal their experience due to fear of being stigmatised or victimised once again (Raza et al., 2023).

Media's Role in Shaping Society's Attitude Toward Women's Digital Presence

Media discourses play a determinant role in the way society views the online engagement of women. The media facilitate the discourse of victim-blaming, which creates an atmosphere of impunity about gendered violence online. This was the situation that occurred in the current research, with several women not reporting about harassment online due to the stigmatisation that they feared. The alleged lack of ethical reporting of online harassment by media organisations compounds these problems. Thus, the victims feel re-victimised and affected by a sense of discouragement to report cases of online abuse, which encourages cycles of silence and inaction in relation to online harassment.

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The study shows that there is a combination of three elements: cultural conservatism, social media, and gender-based violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that develops a complicated and threatening environment towards women. The results indicate that online bullying and violence are impossible to examine and deal without considering offline violence which are usually the same continuum. Victim-blaming and moral policing exacerbate the risks of TFGBV as related cultural drivers, and it must be addressed on both institutional and cultural levels.

Conclusion

This research examines the relationship between social media presence, especially TikTok and gendered violence in Pakistan, and how the media online perpetuates patriarchal care. It displays the naturally risky feature of online bullying and aggressive behaviour, where women who assume digital independence, particularly in conservative areas, are at an increased risk of virtual and physical violence. The article reinforces the notion that TFGBV is being increased by cultural conservatism that is reinforced by mainstream victim-blaming tendencies and online moral policing. Further, the study establishes that online harassment is not only a lead-up to offline violence, but in fact, it represents the continuum of gendered aggression. It is also found that the narratives are often victim-blaming, thus making the female victims of digital harassment remain silent. Although adequate related legal frameworks are in place, most women are unaware of their rights, indicating an urgent need to increase awareness of cyber laws. There must be a multi-dimensional intervention that combines the struggle against digital and real-life violence and changes attitudes toward women being online in society. Additional research is needed to determine the long-term outcomes of TFGBV, measure legal and institutional responses. Lastly, the research activity should aim at the development of gender sensitive policies to combat the correlation between online and physical harassment in patriarchal societies.

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