

Navigating the Digital Landscape: An Ethnographic Content Analysis of Black Youth's Encounters with Racially Traumatic Content on Social Media

Authors : Tiera Tanksley, Amanda M. McLeroy

Abstract : The advent of technology and social media has ushered in a new era of communication, providing platforms for news dissemination and cause advocacy. However, this digital landscape has also exposed a distressing phenomenon termed "Black death," or trauma porn. This paper delves into the profound effects of repeated exposure to traumatic content on Black youth via social media, exploring the psychological impacts and potential reinforcing of stereotypes. Employing Critical Race Technology Theory (CRTT), the study sheds light on algorithmic anti-blackness and its influence on Black youth's lives and educational experiences. Through ethnographic content analysis, the research investigates common manifestations of Black death encountered online by Black adolescents. Findings unveil distressing viral videos, traumatic images, racial slurs, and hate speech, perpetuating stereotypes. However, amidst the distress, the study identifies narratives of activism and social justice on social media platforms, empowering Black youth to engage in positive change. Coping mechanisms and community support emerge as significant factors in navigating the digital landscape. The study underscores the need for comprehensive interventions and policies informed by evidence-based research. By addressing algorithmic anti-blackness and promoting digital resilience, the paper advocates for a more empathetic and inclusive online environment. Understanding coping mechanisms and community support becomes imperative for fostering mental well-being among Black adolescents navigating social media. In education, the implications are substantial. Acknowledging the impact of Black death content, educators play a pivotal role in promoting media literacy and digital resilience. Creating inclusive and safe online spaces, educators can mitigate negative effects and encourage open discussions about traumatic content. The application of CRTT in educational technology emphasizes dismantling systemic biases and promoting equity. In conclusion, this study calls for educators to be cognizant of the impact of Black death content on social media. By prioritizing media literacy, fostering digital resilience, and advocating for unbiased technologies, educators contribute to an inclusive and just educational environment for all students, irrespective of their race or background. Addressing challenges related to Black death content proactively ensures the well-being and mental health of Black adolescents, fostering an empathetic and inclusive digital space.

Keywords : algorithmic anti-Blackness, digital resilience, media literacy, traumatic content

Conference Title : ICCPSS 2024 : International Conference on Counseling, Psychology and Social Science

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : December 02-03, 2024