Investigating the Dark Side of Social Media Marketing: Case of Cyberbullying on Micro Celebrities

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ABSTRACT

A substantial growth of using social media is the new marketing trend in last few years. Influencers are now recognized as new micro-celebrities. So that, marketing professionals are increasingly using them for a better placement of their products. This new trend is considered as the bright side of social media. But, little is known about the dark side. This research investigates the dark side of social media in the particular case of Instagram platform. We focused on cyberbullying as an abusive way usually used by followers in order to highlight the real effects on micro-celebrities. This research innovatively used netnography method to extract and analyse Instagram posts on the official account of one well-known Tunisian micro-celebrity. All contents shared during 3 months by individuals involved in this research were recorded using Nvivo 11.0 for thematic analysis and coding. Results shown that strangely, cyberbullying in Tunisian context doesn't cause psychological disorder but made the victim viral and famous. It seems that masquerading was provoked by the micro-celebrity to get more followers, more endorsement and more profit. Limitations and future research directions were stipulated.

Keywords: Social Media, Dark Side, Instagram, Cyberbullying, Micro-celebrities, Digital Marketing, Netnography
JEL Classifications: M3, M37

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the use of Internet and different social networks has become a recurring practice in the daily lives of Internet users (Lu et al., 2022; Livingston et al., 2014). In other words, Social media help people for making friends and keeping contact with family, friends, teachers etc. Also, social media allowed a fast access to information by sharing and getting more knowledge because it helps to get a good self-image (Craig et al., 2020). This is the normal consequence of the great use of smartphones and technology that pushed the people to frequently use social networking application as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Tic tok etc. (Jargalsaikhan and Korotina, 2016).

This new way of life based on being a part of an everyday life become an attractive way to get followers on some platform like Instagram and create some new micro-celebrities (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016; Lin, 2022; Schettino et al., 2023). In 2022, Instagram held 61.1% of the total audience with 1.3 billion of online engaged users (Statista, 2022). This can be explained by the features offered by this platform like talking, sharing, interacting with others or just viewing photos and videos. In practice, using social media can reduce the feeling of loneliness (Pittman and Reich, 2016) giving way to a more complex phenomenon which is voyeurism in the cyber world (Mäntymäki and Islam, 2016).

From a marketing point of view, micro-celebrities interact straight with consumers and communicate their own experience through social media. Also, they will influence other consumers to make the purchase decision (Aji et al., 2020). Consequently, consumers who are already influenced ask to know more about these products

and/or services. This will increase the purchase intentions (Godey et al., 2016).

Previous investigations have pointed out the positive impact of social media on companies, peoples and society (Aji et al., 2020; Akram and Kumar, 2017, Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Sabate et al., 2014). However, many empirical studies showed that intense social media usage is problematic because it exposed users to many aggressions in the cyber world including trolling (Buckels et al., 2014), online firestorms (Pfeffer et al., 2014), false information (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017), addictive use (Blackwell et al., 2017), discretion invasions (Pai and Arnott, 2013), and cyberbullying (Chan et al., 2021; O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

Regarding Internet's negative effects, some scholars started to concentrate on the dark side of social media. Some authors highlighted problems linked to social media such as Internet dependence (Mazer and Ledbetter, 2012) and decreasing of social abilities (Milani et al., 2009). However, researches who looked at different social media impacts still in an embryonic stage (Sheldon and Newman, 2019). In fact, more investigation of how social media's adoption has changed human way of life and transformed the interaction from concrete to cyber world needs to be studied (Chohan and D'Souza, 2020).

One of the biggest problem is the cyber world is cyberbullying. Some authors pointed out its negative impact on teenagers and youth (Yudes et al., 2021; Batool et al., 2017). Other scholars considered the psychological effects on the victims (Maurya et al., 2022). Among those authors, its appeared that cyberbullying has many negative implications on the students at university (Oladimeji and Kyobe, 2021; Carter, 2013; Abaido, 2020). Nevertheless, the existing literature has mostly concentrated the effect of social media in user's private lives in different context. But, as far as we know, there is a lack of information concerning the impact of cyberbullying on the Tunisian influencers as this practice is widely existing in that specific context.

In this study, we tried to explore cyberbullying using netnography method. That being said, this article will be designed as follow: The literature review will be presented in section 2. Then, the methodology will be detailed in section 3. After, the results and discussion will be respectively in section 4 and 5. At the end, section 6 will include the conclusion of this research with theoretical, managerial implications and futures directions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Dark Side of Social Media
Nowadays, customers are mostly part of the new "digital natives" generation who grow up with social media (Bennett et al., 2008). That being said, the technology progress contributes to the social media carry (Rahmawati and Puspitasari, 2022). Unlike traditional media (radio, newspaper, television, radio, broadcast television, cable and satellite, print, and billboards etc.), social media is omnipresent, more used and can reach more targets and support interactivity (Baccarella et al., 2018).

Previous studies concentrated on positive impact of social media on persons, companies, and society (e.g., Baccarella et al., 2018; Wagner, 2017; Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Sabate et al., 2014). They recognized the improvement in marketing, customer services, and all the business based on information exchanges. They noted that social media can boost the communication between the company and the customer (and employees), through the progress all operational actions, supported by "information exchanges," as marketing, customer relationship, product innovation etc. (Baccarella et al., 2018).

But, it seems that social media have a great risk in different levels. By "dark side", Baccarella et al. (2018) flashed on the undesirable impact of social media on the society and indicted that we can see the bright and dark side simultaneously. In fact, social media can be used to be connected with contacts who are far from us and to disconnect from our close friend at the same time. So, "Dark side" may mean something which is less examined, less understood, less searched "Something that, when prompted to consider, we all know is there, yet something that many of us have not incorporated into our theory, understanding" (Twinley, 2013).

Moreover, social media allow its users to develop an individual's friendship but can also create some troubles such as harassment and cyberbullying (Kwan and Skoric, 2013). The impact of cyberbullying is very serious because it can boost nervousness, sleep loss, and depression and in extreme case it can leads to suicide of the victim (Baccarella et al., 2018; Levenson et al., 2016).

Literature indicated some of the dark side of social media such. We cite for example trolling (Buckels et al., 2014; Hardaker, 2010), false informations (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017), cyberbullying (O'keeffe and Clarke-pearson, 2011), privacy abuse (Pai and Arnott, 2013), addictive use (Blackwell et al., 2017) and also self-consciousness (Przybylski et al., 2013).

2.2. Cyberbullying
Even if managers of social media platforms acknowledging that their platforms have harmful impacts, it seems that users still not aware about the potential risks of cyberbullying.

Research on cyberbullying has been multidisciplinary. Chan et al. (2020b) argued that 50% of researches were realized on psychology field, 20% in the information systems/computer sciences field and 7% on the communication field.

The definition of bullying in general is difficult as there is no common agreement on the definition (Oladimeji and Kyobe, 2021; Langos, 2012; Gladden et al., 2014; Pieschl et al., 2015). In fact, bullying is commonly considered as a violent behaviour with the intention to cause physical or psychological pain to others' (Randall, 2003). Literature shows that bullying fulfil two conditions which are: (1) reappearance-this behaviour is frequent (2) power inequality-the victim is generally in a situation where protecting themselves is not possible (Smith, 2016).

Due to the numerous definitions of traditional bullying (and especially cyberbullying) in the literature, the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention worked with many experts through several fields and pointed out a general definition of bullying as follow:

> "*Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behaviour(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.*" (Gladden et al., 2014, p.7).

Consequently, the bullying behaviour that frequently happens with various technological media is known as cyberbullying (Ireland et al., 2020). A growing body of literature suggests different terms to designate bullying in Internet, such as online social cruelty (Kowalski et al., 2012), electronic or online bullying (Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007; Freis and Gurung, 2013), Internet harassment and irritation (Ybarra, 2004) and Internet bullying (Williams and Guerra, 2007).

But, cyberbullying is being the most common term used by researchers (Chan et al., 2019). Therefore, it appears that more and more studies on cyberbullying was based on traditional bullying literature (Field, 2018; Patchin and Hinduja, 2006; Tokunaga, 2010). Many researches have pointed out that cyberbullying is a hostility committed against others over digital communications such as posts, comments, emails, websites, chat rooms or simply by sending image through mobile phone (Patchin and Hinduja, 2015). This violent behaviour can provide mental hurt to the victim, which is recurrent many times and happens between persons with an inequality of power (Kowalski et al., 2014). In this situation, people who think that they have higher position send negative comments and practice cyberbullying with others considered in lower position (Kowalski et al., 2014).

As regards to the research of Chan et al. (2019), the cyberbullying is any form of aggressive behaviour on the digital world done by a group or an individual recurrently touching individual who cannot simply protect themselves. In another sense, cyberbullying can be the origin of harmful and or distressful situation to victims (Camacho et al., 2014). So that the aggressor can remain anonymous and numerous others can quickly execute and disseminate cyberbullying at any moment without directly confronting the victim (Henares-Montiel et al., 2022).

Given all of this, we admitted that cyberbullying has several negative consequences such as loneliness, high levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, poor academic or professional performance, and in some circumstances, suicide (Oladimeji and Kyobe, 2021; Kowalski and Limber, 2007).

Furthermore, current research focuses primarily on the various types of cyberbullying, such as flaming meaning the act of sending someone or an online group angry or vulgar messages, harassment by sending continually offensive messages, cyberstalking like threats of harm or intimidation, denigration which is the act of posting harsh statements about the victim and masquerade which means the act of pretending to be someone else while sending or posting content in order to make someone look bad (Willard, 2004; Abaido, 2020).

2.2.1. Difference between traditional bullying and cyberbullying

Despite the resemblances between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, Rosen et al. (2017) pointed out some differences. In fact, the traditional bullying is felt by the victim only at the time and place where it occurred. In other words, bullies are found at place of work or at a school. Usually, the victims of bullying in schools are the children who are different because of physical weakness or overweight or other else, and the bullying occurs all day long. In general, the victim can forecast when he or she is going to be bullied and can live a slight period of respite from bullying on going back to home.

On the contrary, the bullies in social media stay most of the time anonymous, and this is what makes this form of bullying more dangerous because there is no specific time for a victim to suffer from cyberbullying (Chan and Wong, 2020a). So that, the individual feel amplified sense of victimization because there is no break from the stress till the victim gets back the electronic device (Singh and Banerjee, 2018). Some authors underlined the different forms of cyberbullying like uploading images, sharing insulting messages and communication that happen in virtual world which is not the same on the reality experienced habitually (Dooley et al., 2009). Similarly, recent international studies pointed out the quick propagation of bullying content in cyber space to a widespread audience by liking, sharing, and hash-tagging.

2.2.2. Cyberbullying on Instagram among micro celebrities

Several studies recognised communities and online networks as a group of individuals who form an online relationship with other users with the same interests. A growing body of literature recommends Instagram as one of the most important network sites because it has a better social relations compared to other social media (Al-Haddad et al., 2023; Blight et al., 2017). In fact, recent studies have explored the motivations for Instagram use and its relation with age and narcissism. In this perspective, Sheldon and Bryant (2016) argued that most important motive of using Instagram was surveillance and getting an easy access to information about other users such as number of friends, relationship status and the standard of living (Oladimeji and Kyobe, 2021).

Also, Instagram inspires peer to peer communication and make people in a hurry to get new followers, more likes and comments on posts in order to be conform to social norms (Wiederhold, 2018). This pushed the users to generate other accounts for malicious purposes such as cyberbullying (Waterloo et al., 2018). Furthermore, some of existing studies focused on Instagram has shown that more and more people are getting popular on Instagram, the more they are exposed to the danger of cyberbullying (Tiffany, 2018).

Given all of this, it is commonly admitted that cyberbullying can leads to negative feelings such as stress, frustration, sadness, confusion, distress, loneliness, anger and hurt (Cassidy et al., 2013). Moreover, cyberbullying victims can get a deep depression

causing in extreme case the suicide. However, a limited number of scholars claimed that there is a correlation between cyberbullying and being more viral and well-known on social media. So, it seems that victims of cyberbullying are gaining financial benefits because their name and profile goes viral instead of getting psychological hurt (Situmorang, 2019). This is the origin of the appearance of some micro celebrities who uses social networking sites, blogs and videos in order to reach a superstar status (Sadasri, 2020).

In this way, micro celebrities become well-known over content shared on social media which can get the followers attention (Alrwashdeh et al., 2022; Annastri et al., 2021). In other words, they are individuals who use social media as instrument for making their audience and who are not famous in the common way (Eroğlu and Bayraktar Köse, 2019).

Invented by Theresa Senft (2008), the word micro celebrities refer to "*a new style of online performance that involves people "camping up" their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites*" (Senft, 2008, p. 25).

So that, micro celebrities create a self-branding and used technologies in advertising for products to be consumed by others (Senft, 2008). Instead of being recognized through amazing talents or accomplishments, it is the ideas of the all the day lived involvement which is highlighted here. Notably, micro celebrities accomplish visibility and position on the cyber world by talking about some topics to their followers (Baker and Rojek, 2019). It seems that the micro celebrities get famous not by their ordinary persona, but because of it (Khamis et al., 2017) and the social media increase the visibility of normal people and make them became well-known.

Sadasri (2020) stipulated that micro celebrity phenomenon is increasing more and more. In fact, it is documented in multiple studies that there are two categories of micro celebrities:

- Reached micro celebrities: a designation as a celebrity based on a person's decision to consciously raise their position, visibility, and popularity.
- Recognized micro celebrities: a title given to a celebrity as a result of media coverage, such as blog post rumors or paparazzi (Sadasri, 2020).

Sometimes, micro celebrities became well known because of their provocative content (Situmorang, 2019). Yet, there is no legal framework to prevent online bullying against them particularly when there is an ignorance of media literacy and internet ethics.

2.3. Netnography
The literature review shows that Robert Kozinets was the pioneer of netnography defined as "*a written account of online cyber culture, informed by the methods of cultural anthropology*" (Kozinets, 1997). Then, this author claimed that netnography is "ethnography adapted to the study of online communities" (Kozinets, 2002). This quote vividly illustrates that netnography is a blended method of ethnography applied to net generally used in qualitative analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Kozinets, 2015).

In the same perspective, it appears that netnography focuses on the researcher observation and recording of discussions or acts of a designed population for a specific period of time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Nawi et al., 2023). That being said, the investigator is being submerged in the participant all day live only by observation (Creswell, 2013). Phipps and Saunders et al. (2009) emphasized that observation is nowadays frequently used for data collection allowing a deep and rich data for the research.

Numerous publications used netnography in different fields. For example, we cite sociology, travel and tourism, geography, media studies, gender research, addiction research and education as reported by Kozinets (2010). This kind of research highlighted the inductive method based on the grouping of the literature and primary data collection that leads to findings and can generate new theories (Xun and Reynolds, 2010). According to those scholars, the netnography approach is a qualitative method that provides clear vision about consumer's requirements, wants, preference and symbolic meanings in relation with the digital world (Kaya et al., 2017).

Thus, when applying the netnography approach, Kozinets (2010) pointed out different guidelines such as the necessity to have implicated online participant observation as a key feature. Also, this author underlined the importance of ethnography for a better understanding of some cultural issues. Lee and Broderick (2007) argued that netnography researchers are not dealing simply with words, but also with drawings, images, voice files photography, audio-visual presentations, websites and other digital things.

Kozinets (2002) specified five steps in the application of netnography: (1) including the community under study, (2) gathering and analyzing data, (3) ensuring reliability, (4) carrying out an ethical research and (5) giving people a chance to provide feedback.

3. METHODS

In this research, we will apply the netnography approach as described by Kozinets (2002, 2010). The first step called the entrée involves identifying the relevant online communities. We decided to select online posts on verified profile of a well-known Instagram micro celebrity in Tunisia having 600,000 followers. For this purpose, we start following the account of this micro celebrity in order to collect all needed information. In this study, we will not mention the account of this micro-celebrity as she wanted to remain anonymous.

Then, the second step consist on data collection and analysis by copying data from Instagram and deep examination and observations of the interactions. More specifically, we observed the comments and we gathered posts related to cyberbullying from February to April 2023. In sum, 3739 comments were selected. Likewise, we used a qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 11.0 for both capturing and processing the material. To download the profiles, the "NCapture" feature in Nvivo 11.0 software was used, allowing us to download and take a capture on the entire profile with all its history, as published at the timeline. Observations

were made over a 3-month data collecting period by considering all text, image, or video posts made by users. Further, they were thematically analysed and coded and all posts containing the word "hate" or any lexical synonym served as starting points for mapping interactions surrounding the designation of hate.

Then, in order to improve the reliability of the data collected, we rejected postings in languages other than French or Arabic since they are the common languages used in Tunisia.
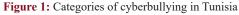
Moreover, our study respected the research ethics as suggested by Kozinets (2002). So that, we get the permission from the profiles whose comments have been selected. We explained the purpose of our research and ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the analysed profiles and informants. Only 2882 posts remain after this step and will be analysed. Finally, we will present some of the results to the members who have been studied in order to get their feedback.
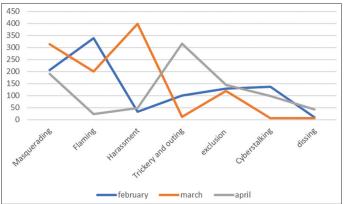
4. FINDINGS

According to our netnography study, 7 essential categories of cyberbullying were found as shown in Figure 1.

The mutual words were divided into many topics. Masquerading is the first and most prevalent type of cyberbullying in Tunisia (impersonating and putting someone down to make him look ridiculous, indelicate or trifle), next comes the flaming (includes sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages). After, we identified the harassment category of cyberbullying (involves sending rude and nasty communications). The fourth category that were identified is trickery and outing (when the bully provides embarrassing, private, or sensitive information about the victim). Then comes the exclusion (leaving the victim out of an online group by leaving hostile remarks). Next, we identify the cyberstalking (sending threatening messages). Last category of cyberbullying is dissing (the bully transmitted brutal information to ruin the recognition of the victim).

The percentages of each category of cyberbullying are shown in Table 1. We quoted also some sample of the post retrieved from Instagram.

Figure 1: Categories of cyberbullying in Tunisia

It appears that the most used category of cyberbullying is masquerading (24.73%). Some other categories found and were excluded from our research due to the low number of posts (<5) including sexism and religious concern.

Then, the participants' posts were gathered and divided according to relevant sub-themes of cyberbullying. The Figure 2 below is used from the observations of the posted comments on Instagram by all the respondents participating in our study.

In concrete, four categories of cyberbullying have a high percentage of information (75.83%) respectively masquerading (24.73%), flaming (19.53%), Harassment (16.65%), trickery and outing (14.92%). After that, we tried to explore the impact of cyberbullying on the progress of number of followers and product placement (mainly brands in cosmetics and catering).

For this purpose, we divided the posts by month, we were able to establish the correlation between brands partnership (product placement) and the number of followers. Figure 3 showed a significant increase in the number of followers just after being a victim of cyberbullying.

By the same way, Figure 4 revealed the evolution of the products placement and reveals how they increase in the period of observation.

Based on these results, it seems that the impact of cyberbullying is a bit ambiguous. In general, the cyberbullied victim suffered from serious psychological disorder. But in the Tunisian context, it seems that the effect can be viral and the supposed victim will gain in visibility on social media instead of suffering from negative consequence. Therefore, their monthly financial incomes will significantly be influenced by cyberbullying attack. In our case, the number of followers increased significantly after each cyberbullying. It seems that being a victim of cyberbullying in negative comments on Instagram is beneficial for the victim.

As shown in Table 2, it seems that the victim of cyberbullying gets some new followers each month (±6%). Also, we noticed that the bullied profile became more visible. This can explain the increasing number of product placement (±26 % in our case).

This is a strange result because the literature indicated that the victims of cyberbullying will have many mental problems that will leads, in normal case, to the decrease of followers' numbers. But this is not the case. By examining the influencer's posts, we noticed that all of them triggered cyberbullying. It seems that some influencers in Tunisia causes cyberbullying to get profit from it. This cyberbullying considered as dark side of social media seems to be a bright one. Moreover, we perceived a raise in product placement and brands sponsoring. In reality, the micro-celebrity place more than one product per day during the period of our observation.

As a final step in netnography, we present our results to some members who have been studied to get their feedback and comments.

Table 1: Identified categories of cyberbullying and verbatim

Category	Number of posts	Instagram post samples (verbatim)
Masquerading	713 (24.73%)	" . . . No matter what you do, you will always remain ignorant and backward …"(Alloulou ben 23) " . . .In my entire life I have never seen a woman as tasteless as you, how despised you are…"(Zeiynoub) "…Do you think you are beautiful? Do you think you are civilized and classy? Rather, you are the opposite of that, and you make us feel disgusted with your insignificance and funny and strange appearance. I wonder if you see yourself in the mirror because you are like a witch who escaped from history stories…" (thisiz_manal1300) "…sexualized teddy bears, finally dollskill is not very different from balenciaga. you fall into contradiction, you don't know what you want to do. #uglyfashion#uglymessage…"(dorsafbenyou)
Flaming	563 (19.53%)	"…You are like the concern that pursues someone without knowing the reason. I swear to God that when I see you, I see a fallen woman who has no religion, no morals, and no values that govern you. People see beauty every morning and we only see the face of wh***s like you…" (nawalnaoula2) "…How cheap and b***h you are, you are just a commercially exploited body…"(abdo_bgg)
Harassment	480 (16.65%)	"…Come on guys, she clearly wants us to f*** her hard I swear to God, I will come to your place of work and r**e you and heal everyone's sins…."(x.-ayoub—bou007)
Trickery and outing	430 (14.92%)	"…You are like a robot or maybe an ugly plastic doll used in thriller movies. Do you call this beauty? Look at your eyes protruding like a camel and look at your chest hanging like a goat. Your mouth is like a sausage …Your face is full of imperfections. You become horrible girl hhhh …"(emeni3382)
Exclusion	394 (13.67%)	"…You are a disgrace to the Islamic nation…You represent yourself only, and you must be punished for the poison that you spread in the minds of our children. Go to hell girl, how I hate you and how I wish you a painful death…Stop saying that you are a Tunisian independent woman because we are not honoured by women like you s**t…" (Yasser-rez-7)
Cyberstalking	242 (8.39%)	"…all Tunisian people hate you, I swear to God you deserve to be killed…" (king-imad) "…You deserve to be buried while you are alive…" (fullatin)
Dissing	60 (2.11%)	"…What do you expect from a woman whose father used to beat her and her mother? You don't have any values because your family is in trouble, so no one cares about you, even I know how you used to live and the house you used to live in. You are a lying woman…"(nousanousa2000)

Table 2: Development of followers numbers and product placement (3 months' observation)

	Cyberbullying	Number of followers	Number of product placement
February	957	493000	12
March	1058	530000	22
April	867	600000	39

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand the dark side of Instagram in the case of cyberbullying on micro-celebrities in the Tunisian context. In this regard, we adopt the netnography method. In sum, the results obtained indicated that there are 7 categories of cyberbullying used in Tunisia. This result is in accordance with the literature (Borchers and Enke, 2022; Abidin, 2019; Li, 2007; Willard, 2005).

Many sub-themes emerged in our research to explain the categories of cyberbullying commonly used. The most used category of cyberbullying in Tunisia is masquerading (24.73%). After we quote respectively according to the order of importance flaming, harassment, trickery or outing, exclusion, cyberstalking and finally dissing. On this point, our results are contrary to what has been demonstrated in previous researches where harassment was the most used category of cyberbullying (Kies, 2021; Ab Rashid et al., 2022). This divergence can be explained by the difference of the cultural context. For example, the most used word in cyberbullying were moron, ridiculous, indelicate, ugly looking, cheeky, self-conscious and trivial. This category of cyberbullying is not so brutal and it seems that the micro celebrity is not disturbed by the negative comments.

Many previous studies pointed out that cyberbullying has serious disadvantage as it can push users to suicide. It can increase mental problems, anxiety, sleep loss, depression (Sheldon and Newman 2019; Levenson et al., 2016). But our findings demonstrated that this is not the case among the Tunisian public. In fact, the victim of cyberbullying continued to spread harmful content, fake photos and lies and as a result, the victim will receive more bad comments. This result is in line with Situmorang (2019) findings who stipulated that bullied victim may have positive and negative results. In particular, the victim will become more famous and will get more financial profits even if the method is not ethical. This result reminds us the findings of Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) who found that 40% of people who cyberbully others do it for fun or revenge. It seems the logic explication of our current situation because it seems that the followers are not disturbed by the cyberbullying nor the victim.

Furthermore, our results revealed that the Tunisian Instagram users want always to get new information's about the micro-celebrities that they follow as a form of voyeurism. Likewise, instead of decreasing the number of followers, it is exactly the opposite phenomenon that happens because more often the micro-celebrity is bullied, more known he will be. This result supported the findings of Annastri et al. (2021).
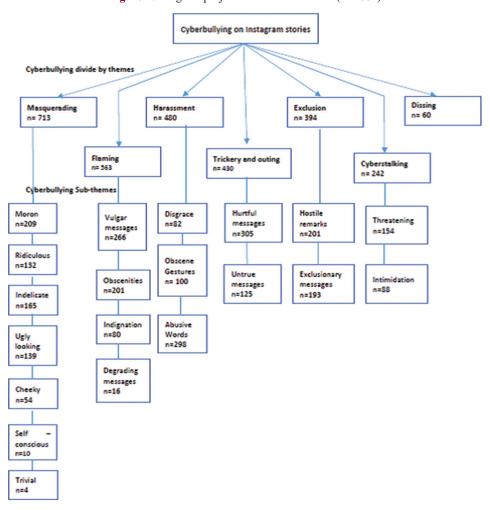
Figure 2: Diagram projected from observation (n=2882)

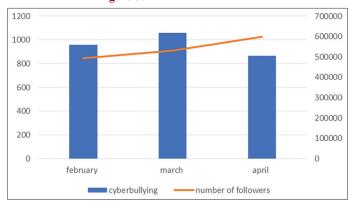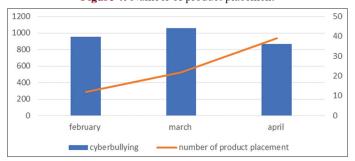**Figure 3:** Evolution of followers

Figure 4: Number of product placement

Besides, negative comments help the micro-celebrities to become more viral and flooded with endorsements. In our study, we found a significant increase in the product placement, sponsoring and gifted products during the period of data collection. In sum, this dark side have been ignored by the literature where the majority of research considers that cyberbullying will cause problems for the victim. As reported by Baccarella et al. (2018), the wrong social media use will lead to negative consequences on the society and a negative influence on teenagers.

6. CONCLUSION

The cyberbullying as one of the dark side of using social networks has captivated researchers and practitioner's attention. Nonetheless, some knowledge still missing about this subject. Most of the previous research zooms in on the "bright side" of social media, viewing only advantages of this technology use. Conversely, investigation of the dark side of social media still in an embryonic stage especially in the Tunisian context with a lack of empirical and conceptual studies.

Notably, our study identified 7 common categories of cyberbullying, but other studies identified different categories. Moreover, our study has made it possible to highlight a dark and hidden side of the use of cyberbullying by some influencers in Tunisia.

From a methodological perspective, our research allowed a test of netnography method in the Tunisian context. Finally, our research has some managerial contributions. The results will help media professionals in making better decisions about the influencers they work with. In fact, understanding better this side of social media isn't to convince practitioner to quit the social media but to be more attentive because a poor internet brand strategy can ruin an enterprise and generate a massive viral social backlash. Thus, any mistake made on social media by the micro-celebrity will be hard to rectify later.

Some limitations of this study may affect the generalization of the results. First, the number of micro celebrity profile studied was limited as well as the duration of data collection. Also, the netnography method doesn't allow any information about the population of the study. Moreover, the obtained results cannot be generalized because the chosen micro-celebrity was a female, so we cannot guess if the result will be the same if the gender of the victim change.

Future research should explore the impact of increased visibility of victims of cyberbullying on purchase intention of product that they place on their Instagram profile. Also, scholars can try in future research to understand the motivations and antecedents of the Tunisian follower's behaviour that explain the attachment to a micro-celebrity he already hates. Finally, researchers can provide some solutions to limit this unethical practice of micro-celebrities of being a victim to earn easy money from social media in general.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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