

CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DIGITAL VIOLENCE PERCEIVED BY WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract: *The research highlights the perceived consequences of female students in the Department of Social Work on the manifestation of domestic violence and digital violence against women. The research is based on a qualitative method, the structured interview guide being used. Fifteen individual interviews were collected to better understand whether women integrated into university education are aware of the consequences of violence of any form, but also to identify measures that prevent and combat violence in general. The findings of the research show that respondents delimit the consequences of domestic violence in two areas: the medical part, often encountered in domestic violence, through physical and sexual abuse, and the emotional and emotional part, encountered in the context of digital violence on the area of verbal, emotional, psychological abuse. Respondents specify that regardless of form, violence is equally serious, with long-term consequences for the victim.*

Key words: *digital violence, domestic violence, consequences, women, society.*

1. Introduction

The article „Consequences of domestic violence and digital violence perceived by women in contemporary society” examines the consequences that domestic violence and digital violence bring to society as a whole, but also to women, more specifically, because the number of cases of femicide and violence against women increased in 2025 in Romania. At the same time, solutions and strategies are also discussed to prevent this widespread phenomenon, because in the contemporary period everything evolves rapidly, and society must take early measures to avoid adverse situations.

The evolution of society has led to the evolution of technology. Technology has altered human relationships and interactions in the physical environment. Temporal and

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geographic boundaries have changed and been instantly overcome with social networks. But in addition to the visible benefits, technology has brought risks and consequences to people, often invisible, because abusers can hide abuse behind screens (Harris & Vittis, 2020).

Kelly (1987; 1988; 2012) stated that the exacerbation of gender violence is constantly developing, but also other forms of manifested hatred of the person. The author conceptualized the „continuum of violence”, and Stanko (1985, 1990) saw the concept as a climate of insecurity, because violence against women, regardless of the environment in which it is carried out, is seen as damage and injury to the person, being encountered since ancient times.

Carballea & Rivera (2020) takes into account that the number of cases of domestic violence and digital violence against women broke out with the imposition of protection and safety measures during the Covid-19 pandemic, when globally, the phenomenon of violence against women took on amplitudes, both between partners, cohabitants and at interpersonal level.

Elias-Lambert (2012) talks about the „Love is Not abuse” (LINA) application as a protection resource, but also educational, used and intended for parents, to prevent abuses and risks in the digital environment. This app provides information on the issue of digital violence online, in particular, to teenagers and young people.

Domestic violence has evolved with society and the internet and has turned into online violence. People addicted to social networks and technology are more likely to have lived in an information society, with dangers online. Digital media is perceived as an important platform that helps social interactions between people. The existence of instant messaging, personal accounts on social media platforms, and many apps that use video call, have transformed expression and human relationships (Kara et al., 2022).

Personal relationships can feel benefits because there is a direct and constant connection, but also serious effects, on the side of personal freedom. In toxic relationships, the concept of digital violence and the limitation of individual freedoms is noted. The transmission of videos and photos online can affect the integrity of people, because secret attacks on video and audio materials appear, then insults, threats, harassment, generally felt by the female sex (Hellevik, 2019; Powell & Henry, 2017).

Bjelajac & Filipović (2020) says digital violence has its origins in general violence. In this form, regardless of its purpose, it is equated with the force used, with the differences in power, with the damage and abuses both physical and emotional, sexual or economic. In general, the phenomenon is seen as a serious violation of both the interests and rights of the victim. In the digital environment, violence takes a more aggressive form and forces victims to behave inappropriately to their desires and principles.

In literature, digital violence is seen as a new term, but with serious scientific effects in recent decades. The link between physical violence and digital violence is based on the negative consequences and effects that are felt both online and in the physical environment. The digital environment is more dangerous because abusers can hide. The victim can interact with a trafficker or an abuser, and the emotional and addictive bond is created online, where they connect as friends, then talk on video call, transmit indecent images, the moment when abuse and harassment can occur. From a

criminological perspective, the digital environment is not considered safe, because cybercrime has evolved, and combating it entirely is almost impossible. (Powell et al., 2018)

Digital violence has changed rapidly with the help of the online environment and has shifted from subtle tactics to conventional, complex methods based on the emotional sphere and technology. Awareness of online dangers leads to the identification of extremist materials and the constant recognition of misinformation, deepfakes and abusers. Authors in the literature encourage critical thinking in the digital environment to notice abusive messages more quickly, in order to reduce radicalization (Afzal et al., 2024).

Cebecioglu & Altiparmak (2017) developed focused research on students' perception of digital violence. Basically, the research starts from the same idea as the current study, but uses a quantitative research method. The respondents are also the students, who specify their own perceptions about technological devices in a context where digital violence is increasingly present in social media. The research included both male and female students, and the results show that both genders have faced digital violence and harassment online.

Danger in the online environment generally occurs during adolescence, when sexual temptations are also involved, intimate relationships being a critical period for both emotional and physical development. International research indicates that teenagers experience different inhibitions, generally having a negative opinion about their own body. Intimate relationships start from digital interaction because girls often face emotional, sexual coercion and manipulation (Doucette, 2021).

Coman et al., (2025) develop research on the area of the new generation of Beatles fans and brings to the full plan the online environment, through which new communities of fans are created, even if the band no longer exists. It is noticed on all levels that the online environment has expanded and acquired a new structure, being an environment in which there are constant social interactions.

It is noted the study developed by Bătrânu-Pințea & Coman (2023), which brought remarkable conclusions for the literature. First of all, with the new generations and the evolution of technology, there is a growing digital literacy among both minors and young adults. More and more current generations communicate through their own personal language, in the virtual environment, made up of signs and symbols. Thus, technology is available everywhere, and communication has become more diverse, but also more dangerous.

Technology has also brought positive perspectives on the sphere of communication, as more and more families have chosen to migrate for a more satisfying financial gain, and with the help of social networks have continuously communicated, having unlimited opportunities to evolve, on all spheres, as Bătrânu-Pințea et al. (2023). In the literature, there are more and more topics such as the impact of technology on the person, the use of smartphone and its effects. Research shows that the smartphone connected to an internet network, in the long run, leads to addiction (Vintilă et al., 2021).

According to the studies presented, there is a clear link between the concept of domestic violence and digital violence, and in 2025, they are interconnected and

becoming stronger. The consequences for young people, especially the female sex, are negative, with real effects on both the psyche and the social, sexual and human sphere. The research brings news on the topic of digital violence and how it is perceived by young social work students.

2. Objectives

The purpose of the research is to identify the consequences of domestic violence and digital violence among women, as well as to identify measures to prevent the phenomenon.

O1: Identify the consequences of domestic violence and digital violence against women

O2: Exploring measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and digital violence against women.

Q1: What are the measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and digital violence against women?

Q2: What are the consequences of domestic violence and digital violence against women?

3. Material and Methods

The research tool used consists of an interview guide with six questions focused on the following aspects: how the online environment is perceived by women, both during the relationship and after the breakup, and what dangers it can bring after the relationship has ended; what are the emotional and psychological effects that digital violence can bring on victims; and what is the reaction of woman when cases of violence occur, of any form, near her and what is reaction of society in general; what role does parental education play in preventing violence; what are the characteristics of the abuse experienced in the offline environment versus the abuse from the online environment: what measures are needed to be implemented in Romania so that violence against women is prevented and fought against. A detailed interview guide was used to collect data and fifteen individual interviews were collected. The data collection and processing process were carried out in September 2025. The data was collected and transcribed literally for better visibility and understanding. Respondents received the pseudonym of „R” to preserve the privacy and anonymity of individuals. All respondents were informed about the purpose and objectives of the research and agreed to participate voluntarily in the research.

4. Results and Discussion

The first objective of the research is to identify the consequences that domestic violence and digital violence have for. From the responses of the respondents we notice that after the couple relationship ends, there is a period when you wonder if you keep the relationship present also online on social platforms. All respondents say that this decision depends on how the relationship worked in the past, the personality of each

partner and the reasons for separation.

„If we talk about youth, keeping in touch online can become dangerous because you post a story about where you are, what you do and with whom. This is where frustration arises, nerves and egoism appear, because the person becomes jealous. Here comes the denigration, to want to destroy its reputation.” (R1)

At the same time, the respondents also draw attention to the behaviors after the breakup, because people are hurt and can take revenge. Important issues related to online posts were discussed, and most respondents said they never post „story” photos right when they are in the location, but only after they have left to protect themselves and there are no excessive risks in terms of physical safety.

„If you had a decontrollable relationship, you have to cut all the connection online, if it was based on respect, it is okay to be friends on social networks.” (R2)

Respondents also believe that if former couple partners remain in satisfying relationships in the digital environment, there may be a risk that posts may be a factor that can create unforeseen conflict, threats and jealousies with serious risks, both emotional and physical. Respondents believe that when former couple partners are still following and are friends on social networks, the obsessive temptation to see where and with whom the person is, then bouts of jealousy, identity crises, reproaches, frustrations, threats and even physical and verbal abuse of the person may occur.

„If you send pictures in different situations, when you break up, the online environment can bring consequences and threats from your partner. If you break up with each other, you can remain friends on facebook or other desocialization networks. If you break up because of an abuse of any form, any connection must disappear.” (R4)

Another question in the interview guide focused on the emotional and psychological effects that domestic violence and digital violence can have on the psyche of people in general, and the female sex in particular.

All respondents believe that any form of violence and abuse on any person, regardless of gender, is a negative influence felt throughout life, both from a relational, social, emotional point of view. The concept of „mistrust” or „fragile trust” remains in people and signifies that people who have faced violence possess emotional deficiencies, distrust in people, fears, anxieties. Respondents say that anyone who encounters abuse situations needs to consult meetings both in the offices of psychologists and in those of therapists and psychotherapists, because even if the vicious circle stops abuse disappears, the traces remain.

„In the long run, abused women can suffer toxic compromises of distrust, depression, anxiety, distrust, fear.” (R9)

A person who has lived through abuse situations for a long time may face exaggeration in behavior, continuous suspicion, social isolation and withdrawal from professional life. Participants in the study also described two behaviors they observed in abused women, there is a situation where the woman feels ashamed that she has divorced or ended the relationship because of the abuse and does not want to find another partner because she believes she is guilty and everything will be repeated.

„If you don't solve your out-of-the-box trauma, you're looking for the same pattern, which is the abuser type. Then you blame yourself for finding the same thing in every

man. I don't think the age difference between the partners leads to abuse. It all comes from the idea that a woman must be submissive.” (R4)

Regarding the separation and comparison of digital violence with domestic violence, and the severity of each of them, respondents consider that the problem is that type of violence that causes emotional damage, because, those do not heal as quickly, as the medical damage, but also, it says that it depends on how serious the physical wounds are, because there is violence where the wounds produced physically through abuse can lead to disability for life. However, if we refer to verbal and emotional violence, respondents believe that there are expressions and words that can cause emotional damage, being painful and very persistent, compared to physical wounds.

„Emotional abuse is very serious, words hurt a lot, even more than beating. Words make you reach points of revenge.” (R5)

Respondents use the phrase „words hurt and hurt more than the” beatings and so we can understand that they see verbal abuse as a form of control and manipulation of the desire for psychological distraction, being a catalyst that leads to revenge. Regarding the differences between the two media, digital versus physical, there is an ambivalence of the answers, because some respondents believe that there is security in the digital environment because you can end the interaction at any time, and other respondents say that most of the time, anyone can create an account under the identity of another person, and these accounts are not constantly checked.

„Physical violence is more serious, it is a close person in whom you have security. In the online environment you are taught by your child not to trust anyone because you do not know what person is behind the screen.” (R10)

At the same time, respondents consider that the online environment is more satisfying and secure, because, through communication, one can notice personality problems, behavioral disorders, which can stop the relationship before it advances in the physical environment and puts the person's life in danger. There was talk of visible violence and invisible violence as a concord and reference to domestic violence and digital violence. Visible violence is closely related, according to the respondents, to physical violence, the one that happens in the household, domestic violence. In terms of invisible violence, this is closely related to violence in the digital environment, where there are dangers that cannot be fully identified.

Also, another comparison between digital violence and domestic violence is made between the concept of violence coming from the outside and violence from within. Respondents also believe that emotional abuse versus physical or verbal abuse all have consequences, and their severity depends on many factors, from addiction to the abuser to childhood trauma and abuse, and the way of feeling consciously and unconsciously of each type of abuse.

„Equally, all forms of violence are equally dangerous.” (R5)

Objective two is to explore measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and digital violence. Respondents believe that the two phenomena intertwine and become more powerful and complex, with the continuous technological evolution. These phenomena cannot be prevented or combated if the population is not aware of the problems they bring, and the community and society do not change their mentality.

Study participants say they know or have experienced a concrete examples of digital violence throughout their lives. Most stories have the same beginning and the same ending, forming a pattern that repeats itself indefinitely, because, no changes are imposed in society and legislation. Respondents tell stories of friendship that turn into relationships of love, couple, which often start on social networks. When the partner notices that things are not based on respect, but rather on stalking or harassment, the thought of breaking up arises which leads directly to control and blackmail, threats. In these cases, respondents consider the vulnerability of the victim and manipulation, fear, and the best option is to call the competent police authorities to intervene.

Abuse can be perpetuated for years, and study participants say that its occurrence is in childhood, when the child must be educated that no form of abuse should be tolerated and accepted, but often children are believed to have different prejudices, stereotypes, differences and ideologies of power and become abusers. All respondents believe that preventing and combating any form of violence against women should become a collective responsibility, in which all actors in society must intervene and stop perpetuation.

„We need education because many girls do not know what narcissism, emotional abuse, and psychics think it is normal. We need information so that women and men know the profile of abusers, characteristics and know how to overcome the situation. There are cases when the mother was physically abused and the girls are looking for the same abuser in their partners.” (R6)

At the same time, respondents believe that education in educational institutions is necessary, as well as information campaigns, but it is important what parents pass on to children, models and how they should relate to the other person in difficulty. Acceptance of violence of any nature comes with social taboos, prejudices, stereotypes, fears, indifference and massive disinformation about understanding toxic behaviors. Respondents believe that Romania needs to implement a broad education especially among the ages that include teenagers and young people, because they are much more vulnerable and have access to social networks. In general, young girls consider that forms of psychological and emotional abuse are signs of love, of the fact that the partner cares about what happens in the relationship.

„Love does not hurt. Love is that which does not create obsession. Love creates respect. Women need at least 10-15 free therapy sessions. Domestic violence is still taboo, even if it becomes normal, considering how often it happens. Men need education. And our parents must be educated, because what they lived throughout their childhood is transmitted intergenerationally”. (R2)

The patterns seen in the family can be repeated, if the abuse was treated as a taboo subject, which should not be discussed and does not exist. Thus, it has become a normal behavior that can be accepted without information. In the family sphere, study participants consider that communication between the child and parents is the most important thing to ensure optimal mental health, because alarm signs appear from the first toxic events in the child's life, but many parents do not recognize them, are engaged in professional life and do not bring them to the surface, do not delineate them, as normal or abnormal. Parents should also be careful about how they handle the

problem, because if children feel vulnerable, judged and emotionally abused, they will hide the facts and prefer not to discuss anything with their parents.

„Parents should monitor the children's phone, even if they are teenagers. Mistakes can happen, but it is important that children know that they are not judged and they are always understood. Parents through education must provide security. Children usually hide.” (R12) (R12)

Prevention of domestic violence and digital violence against the female sex can only be achieved if early signs of abuse behavior are identified. It is noted from the collected responses that the young people of the current generation are more attentive to the signals from the digital environment transmitted, to the subtle behaviors, regarding the control intentions, the desire for jealousy and manipulation.

„When I talk to a boy online I look if he has anger behaviors, if he insists on pictures, if he is excessively jealous, if he wants passwords, if he wants to see where I am and who I always have, if he wants to control me. And if we have a direct offline relationship, I look at the behavior, how he behaves with people around, even with animals.” (R3)

The results of the research are broad and complex, which shows that the phenomenon of digital violence and domestic violence are important for contemporary society, especially for women.

5. Conclusions and Discussions

The current research brings a complex dynamic regarding the mentality of women and the phenomenon of domestic violence and digital violence, often felt more by women. There is a clear need for involvement of responsible institutions, both on the emotional counseling area of the victim and on the field of therapy for aggressors. At the same time, the practical implications of the research bring recommendations in the legislative area, because, the need for clear and firm normative acts is noticed, it has to recognize the phenomenon of femicide in Romania, and to be seen as a serious crime, which violates human rights, having harsh and long-term punishments, even if the woman survived, so as not to repeat the ordeal.

It is also highlighted that punishments should be properly offered, even if it is only violence of any nature, consumed only in the digital environment, which is considered public space. Thus, abusive comments, harassing, threatening, distributing photo/video materials without agreement must be sanctioned. Regarding the involvement of institutions, there is a lack of trust towards them, because these agents are not formed in the area of emotional trauma, and the recommendation is that all policemen and magistrates must necessarily have emotional training on the area of understanding the trauma felt by the victim throughout the abuse.

Another recommendation is related to the electronic protection orders in order to locate the aggressor in order to prevent abusive behavior. At the same time, the subject of sexual education is regarded to be as important as that of Romanian language and literature and Mathematics, because it provides access to information that can save the lives of people, regardless of their age. Prevention plays an important role regardless of times and social phenomena.

The research findings show that the two research goals have been met. The consequences of domestic violence and digital violence against the female sex come both in the sphere of verbal and physical abuse, which can lead to medical complications, but also in the sphere of emotional and psychological abuse, which leads to unconscious, long-term trauma. Respondents said that domestic violence and digital violence bring repercussions, even if they are delimited, and different in some areas, but equally serious. Concerning the sphere of prevention and measures to combat violence against women, prejudices, stereotypes, outdated mentality, lack of empathy and solidarity in society were discussed. In conclusion, the research brings new things about the way in which violence is understood by the female sex, aged 18-23 years, included in the university education, about the risks and needs of the victims, but also the short-term and long-term consequences, both medical and emotional.

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