Troll Culture in Bangladesh: A Study on Social Media

Bushra Anwar[*]

Abstract: Bangladesh's rapid proliferation of online communication platforms has given rise to a pervasive and impactful phenomenon, troll culture. This paper is written on the characteristics of troll culture in our country as online trolling become a new trend in our country, especially on social networking sites. It aims to explore the characteristics of troll culture in the country, shedding light on its various manifestations, the underlying behavioral patterns, and the consequential societal impact. Troll culture has become an integral part of online communication in Bangladesh. This study aims to explore the different types of trolls in Bangladesh, their behavior, and the impact of troll culture on society. Social Media has revolutionized the way people communicate, behave, and interact within this virtual landscape people connect with others. These days online trolling gains momentum, particularly on social networking sites, and its nuances become imperative for both academic discourse and societal well-being. The researcher adopted a mixed-methods design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The quantitative aspect involves the use of surveys and data analytics to quantify the prevalence of trolling and its various forms. On the qualitative part content analysis is utilized to gain a nuanced understanding of troll behavior. Utilized some random sampling techniques to ensure a representative dataset and conducted frequency analysis to quantify the prevalence of trolling and identify patterns. The findings reveal that there are various types of trolls in Bangladesh, including political trolls, social media trolls, and cyberbullies. The study also found that troll behavior is mainly driven by group identity, anonymity, and the desire for attention and validation. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of troll culture by examining both overt and covert scenarios and their implications for the cultural fabric of Bangladesh.

Keywords: troll, virtuality, degradation, degeneration, modernity, sterility.

Introduction

With the rise of social networking sites and new media, the concept of "trolling" has emerged. In internet slang, a troll refers to a person who disrupts online communities by posting inflammatory, off-topic messages to provoke an emotional response from viewers. In the context of Bangladesh, the prevalence of online trolling has become a noteworthy aspect of this digital transformation. This study identifies the need to dissect the different types of trolls, focusing on political trolls, social media trolls,

[*] Lecturer, Department of English, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
 Correspondence to: sbushraanwar101@gmail.com

and cyberbullies. It aims to uncover the driving forces behind troll behavior, including group identity, anonymity, and the pursuit of attention and validation

Troll culture refers to a form of online communication characterized by the deliberate posting of provocative or offensive content to incite emotional responses from others. Trolling has become a popular online activity in Bangladesh, particularly on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Trolls in Bangladesh engage in various forms of behavior, including spreading rumors, engaging in cyberbullying and posting hate speech. The prevalence of troll culture in Bangladesh raises concerns about its impact on society, particularly in terms of free speech, democracy, and social cohesion. While trolling is not a new phenomenon, it has evolved with the changing technology. This paper views trolling as a part of culture because it has become ingrained in people's online behavior. Although trolling is often seen as a negative practice, it can also be used as a means of critiquing ongoing issues. Moreover, the research shows that troll culture has a significant impact on society, leading to the spread of hate speech, cyberbullying, and misinformation. This paper examines the positive and negative aspects of trolling in Bangladesh and its impact on culture. The focus is on the common characteristics and features of trolling, as well as its potential consequences.

Background

Nowadays people become digital natives in cyberspace and spontaneously use the internet the way they want. Trolls became very popular within the cyber culture in Bangladesh. Troll is a noise on the internet, that makes users and viewers excited to some extent. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. also in comment sections. Troll is becoming much more prevalent within communities. It invokes public interest in different issues. In our country youths are much accustomed to trolling. Online trolls evoke public interest. It can be funny, insulting, off-topic, nonsensical, etc. and in the comment section, trolls can be deliberately trying to entertain, disrupt, criticize, attack, offend, or cause trouble within the community. Given the growing importance of social media in Bangladesh and the significant impact of trolling online discourse, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This research paper aims to explore the nature of troll culture in Bangladesh, its characteristics and features, and its potential consequences for society. The study will draw on a range of methods, including qualitative analysis of online content, and surveys of social media users. The findings of this research will contribute to a broader understanding of the impact of social media on society and inform strategies for addressing the negative effects of troll culture in Bangladesh.

Rationale

This research endeavors to contribute valuable insights into the characteristics of troll culture in Bangladesh, its behavioral drivers, and the far-reaching consequences it imposes on society. It will help to pave the way for informed discussions and potential interventions to mitigate its adverse effects on the cultural landscape. By conducting this research, I hope to contribute to a broader understanding of the impact of social media on society and inform strategies for addressing the negative effects of troll culture in Bangladesh. This study will be valuable for policymakers, social media platforms, and individuals seeking to promote healthy and productive online discourse. I aim to develop a better understanding of the complex relationship between technology, culture, and society in the context of Bangladeshi trolling. By mapping and analyzing trolls and their behaviors, it is possible to point out ongoing trends in mainstream culture.

Objectives

- To explain the casual observation of trolls in Bangladesh.
- To explore the types and contents of trolls such as - text-based, visual, photographic, video, funny, insulting, ideological or non-ideological, etc.
- To identify the different types of trolling behaviour with their prevalence on social media platforms.

- To examine the motivations behind trolling, including its use as a form of activism or personal expression.
- To investigate the potential consequences of troll culture in Bangladesh.

Research questions:

1. What are the common characteristics of troll culture in Bangladesh?
2. What are the most prevalent types of trolling behaviour on social media platforms in Bangladesh?
3. How do individuals get engaged in trolling behaviour in Bangladesh, and how do these motivations vary across different contexts?
4. What are the potential consequences of troll culture?
5. How are these consequences manifested in online and offline contexts in Bangladesh?

Methodology

The researcher used a mixed method for this research. All these will be explained according to the academic way. The discipline of Cultural Study can include the topic and the explanation as well. As it is related to Cultural Studies, several ideas of various critics will be discussed to make the paper significant.

Research Design: This study will use a qualitative research design to explore troll culture in Bangladesh. The purpose of the study is to understand the popular traits and typical features of trolling behaviour in Bangladesh and its eventual consequences on the country's culture. To achieve this goal, the study will employ in-depth interviews and content analysis.

Sample: The sample will be drawn from social media platforms in Bangladesh, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. As the research work is connected with the area of social media, there are no particular books or papers which can elaborate on the contents, I have to follow the internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc. Besides, image analysis will be there to elaborate the discussion. Most of the elements are collected from the internet and social networking sites. Some selected sites are to be followed. Contextual images and facts are found on the sites. Some photos are used for better analysis which are also taken from the Internet.

Data Collection: The researcher has conducted a content analysis of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to identify examples of trolling behavior in Bangladesh. The content analysis will involve collecting data on trolling behavior from social media platforms by examining posts, comments, and other online interactions. We use social networking sites to categorize and analyze the data based on the research questions and objectives of the study.

Data analysis: The data collected through online posts and comments will be analyzed using a thematic analytical approach. By analyzing some graphic photos and comic strips from Facebook and videos from youtube. This involves identifying recurring patterns, themes, and concepts in the data and organizing them into categories.

Theoretical Framework

As this paper is written on pop culture, John Storey (2009) defined popular culture that goes with troll culture such as troll is well-liked by people, it originated from common people as popular culture. According to Pramod K. Nayar's (2009) contemporary culture, studies take everyday life seriously and trolls are simultaneously local as well as global. He says that popular culture is the culture of the masses; it is the culture of the everyday life of a larger number of people. Popular culture is the set of practices, artefacts, and beliefs shared by the masses and constituted by every day of the masses[1].

The ongoing popularity of trolls is related to Jean Baudrillard's "Hyperreal" and "imaginary" worlds, which are created by virtual networking sites. Nowadays people are getting attached to virtual reality and it is becoming a part of their lives. Cyberculture is a hyperreal and imaginary world with social

networking sites and social media sites. Baudrillard's concept of "hyperreality" is closely linked to his idea of "Simulacrum", which he defines as something which replaces reality with its representations. Baudrillard observes that the contemporary world is a simulacrum as social media represents.[2]

In the practical context of literature, the era is defined as the postmodern period. In this particular period, postmodern virtuality is a significant part of most of the study. The positive effect of postmodern virtuality as well as the curse of it is discussed here. Different Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube bring virtualization among the present generation. Social Networking sites are used all over the world. That is why virtuality and its characteristics are spread all over the world.

This Paper is related to Fredric Jameson's "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" in which Jameson clarified the concept of postmodernism. A key feature of postmodernism is the lines between high and popular culture. The contents of the troll are according to Fredric Jameson's definition of 'Parody' and 'Pastiche'. Both pastiche and parody, are intertextual. Several videos are based on parody, pastiche, mimicking, copying, etc. Some videos are made for fun by remaking a new version of an existing video.[3]

Literature review

In a book titled *Online Trolling and its Perpetrators: Under the Cyber Bridge* Pnina Fichman and Madelyn Sanfilippo (2006) described several aspects of online trolling. The book delves into the motivations, characteristics, and patterns of behaviour of online trolls, shedding light on this pervasive and often harmful online phenomenon. Fichman and Sanfilippo provide a comprehensive analysis of trolling, which refers to the act of deliberately provoking or harassing others online, often intending to incite emotional responses or disrupt online communities. The book examines the social, psychological, and cultural factors that contribute to trolling behaviour, and delves into the different forms of trolling, including cyberbullying, hate speech, and harassment.

The authors also investigate the various types of individuals who engage in trolling, ranging from individuals who troll for fun or attention-seeking purposes to those who troll for ideological or malicious reasons. They explore the demographics, personality traits, and online environments that may be conducive to trolling, and examine the impact of trolling on victims, online communities, and society at large.

A book Named *Reading the Comments* by Joseph M. Reagle Jr. provides some ideas about online comment sections. He continuously asked the question, "Who gets to be the critic?" he pointed out that commenting is nothing new in the web sphere. Comments have always been around before the internet. It is like Habermas' notion of the public sphere.

Overall Observation of Trolls

Troll is made for fun. But as it becomes widespread, several issues act with it. A popular thing for newbies on social networking sites.

Advancing popularity

Trolls are designed for openness. There are no ethical rules or limitations to it. That's why people don't consider their role and use it deliberately as they want. As trolling gained immense popularity among youths and teenagers they are actively engaging in such activities. They are continuously liking and following Facebook, and Twitter troll pages and also subscribing to YouTube channels as a part of their online activities. A culture of mentioning, tagging, and sharing become available on several networking sites. People use trolling mainly for fun and laughter. Mischievous, funny, poking jokes are more popular. When one watches a troll, he wants to share the merriment with online friends by mentioning, sharing, and tagging them. It increases the visibility of that post. It also gets feedback and

appreciation from likes, followers, and comments. There is also a tendency to go viral among young generations. This is another cause of uploading videos on troll pages. Some users want publicity in the internet realm. This is also a reason for following the troll pages. Troll content remains prevalent for a little time. Its limitation is that it becomes obsolete rapidly. It survives for a few times in the virtual realm then everyone forgets about it and comprehends a new one. From the viewpoint of popularity, it is related to popular culture. According to Pramod K. Nayar's theory of "Popular Culture" - contemporary cultural studies take everyday life very seriously, especially in metropolitan cultures.

Types

There are several types of trolls written text, text-based images, video, etc. Text-based applications are more popular. Sometimes written text uses '@' or '#' etc. to tag on public posts. Some bloggers and vloggers are highly manipulated to seek the attention of people. Others are visual images with something written on it. The image is sometimes an archetypal meme face that's are widely used everywhere. It also uses celebrity faces to

attract the viewers' attention. Those memes are used to make jokes for fun, argue on some points, and also to connect with friends together.

There are also troll videos of celebrities and famous persons. By criticizing, mimicking, or making fun of their acts. The videos are mainly based on parodies or pastiches. Some videos are on off-topic issues merely for fun.

Fredric Jameson claimed that "the general effect of parody is, whether in sympathy or with malice, to cast ridicule." For Jameson, "pastiche means to combine multiple elements. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of postmodern society."

As Mark Poster wrote, Boiler understands the new media entirely within the framework of modern social institutions. An information superhighway is a transparent tool that brings new efficiencies but itself changes nothing. (Poster M. Postmodern Virtualities 1995) The media merely redound from familiar institutions, such as- the family, the community, the state, etc. so, the videos that went viral mostly are nonsense and some insane activities by people. It is also a hint that people who share, tag, and comment are fickle-minded too, as this generation goes on these issues regularly.

Contents

The vital content of trolls is current popular issues which are currently hitting on. The matter of content is sometimes funny, insulting, and jokes, etc. that cover public interests. It deals with off-topic issues too. Sometimes the subject matters include sexiest, racism, and pornography. Adult jokes on some pages are inappropriate for some users. Sometimes jokes are given by porn actors' pictures. The content of trolls is promoting porn too. These types of posts are tempting for teenagers. Leaked, irrelevant, uncut videos are sometimes can be seen as scandalous news on troll pages. Racist contents are predominant nowadays on many trolls, such as an image of a black person and making fun of their appearance. Mainly those people are targeted who are black-skinned, fat, transgender, etc. For example, a photo of a black girl written that "Mention your cute friend, who wants to marry her". Some are based on political or religious ideology to criticize or undermine the opposition. Many YouTubers make troll videos on popular issue and controversial issues that gets much attention and more views rapidly.

Effects and motivation behind trolling

Trolling behavior is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can be motivated by a variety of factors. In Bangladesh, several factors may motivate individuals to engage in trolling behavior, including social and political tensions, anonymity online, and a desire for attention or entertainment.

One of the main motivations for trolling in Bangladesh is the high degree of social and political tension in the country. Bangladesh has a long history of political unrest, and tensions between different religious and ethnic groups are common. These tensions can spill over into online spaces, where individuals may use trolling as a way to vent their frustrations or promote their political or social views.

Another factor that may motivate trolling in Bangladesh is the anonymity afforded by online spaces. Many individuals who engage in trolling behaviour may feel emboldened by the fact that they can hide behind a screen name or avatar, allowing them to express opinions and engage in behaviours that they might not feel comfortable doing in real-life interactions.

Additionally, some individuals may engage in trolling behaviour in Bangladesh simply for attention or entertainment. In some cases, trolling may be seen as a way to gain recognition or notoriety within online communities, while in other cases, it may be viewed as a form of harmless fun.

It is important to note that the motivations for trolling behaviour can vary widely depending on the context in which it occurs. For example, trolling behaviour in the context of a political debate may be motivated by a desire to push a particular agenda or to discredit opponents, while trolling behaviour in the context of a gaming community may be motivated by a desire for social interaction and entertainment.

Overall, the motivations for trolling behaviour in Bangladesh are complex and multifaceted and can be influenced by a wide range of factors. Understanding these motivations is important for developing effective strategies for combating trolling and promoting healthy online communities. Everyone is allegedly equal in cyberspace and users are free to flow. They never ponder over their activities on networking sites. The entrance of slang has become popular; the slang words are presented as a part of a representation of the psychology of some particular people who exercise this largely. In electronic media, the over-exposure of the public reaction can be found and uncontrolled behaviour is exercised through the comment section. Trolls are made just for fun while it is personally hurting individuals. Online harassment and cyberbullying are caused by trolling. As the real identity is blurred, the troll persona possesses pseudonymity. Some bloggers also face bullying in the comment section. Troll aims to frustrate, insult or degrade one's image as tagging and targeting a user online is much easier. Sometimes people can spread fake news for their enjoyment. On the other hand, a troll's positive aspect is that it's a source of entertainment. Sometimes your tubers can be earned by trolls if the subscribers hit the channel. Online troll videos can be profitable in many ways. If a video is watched by millions, that channel gets feedback. Some YouTubers can earn money by making troll videos. Even nowadays many Youtubers tend to make troll videos for profit. It is a kind of leisure activity for them. People like to share funny videos rather than informative educational videos. By sharing more and more those videos got more views.

Analyzing troll culture

Overview of the several types of trolls in Bangladesh in this section. Based on the limited research available, several types of trolls can be found in Bangladesh. These include:

   a. Political trolls: These trolls are often motivated by political affiliations and use trolling as a means to express their views and attack those who oppose their beliefs. This category is common in all countries.

    b. Ideological trolls: These trolls use trolling to promote their ideological views and attack those who have different beliefs. This can range from religious ideologies to cultural and social beliefs. These trolls are motivated by specific ideologies, such as nationalism or feminism, and use social media to promote their ideologies and attack those who do not agree with them.

    c. Attention-seeking trolls: These trolls use trolling as a means to gain attention and provoke reactions from others online. They may post inflammatory comments or content to elicit a response and feed off the attention they receive. These types crave attention and use social media to gain attention and recognition, often by making controversial statements or engaging in provocative behaviour.

    d. Socio-psychopathic trolls: These trolls exhibit behaviour consistent with psychopathy, including a lack of empathy, impulsivity, and callousness. They may engage in trolling behaviour as a means to satisfy their sadistic tendencies and derive pleasure from causing harm to others.

    e. Religious trolls: These trolls are motivated by religious beliefs and use social media to attack individuals or groups who they perceive as a threat to their religion.

    f. Cyberbullying trolls: These trolls engage in cyberbullying and use social media to harass and intimidate their victims, often for personal or sadistic reasons.

Gender and Trolling

"Gendertrolling" is a phrase coined by Karla Mantilla. She criticized the cultural phenomenon of internet trolling and how women are harassed by a new idiosyncratic practice that started with the internet. She talks about gender-based insult trolls that attack verbal abuse on some posts using slang language. Sometimes a woman gets rape threats online. Women feel nowhere safe and sound in the comment section

When a girl is talking about herself or her viewpoint regarding some issues, any male person will comment on that issue which is verbally abusive. Women are harassed online as they are teased outside. The phenomena are the same, nothing has changed at all. For example, if any woman talks about online harassment or any other female issue, some men will negate her view by judging her character, her physiognomy, her position, etc. to degrade her voice. But no men go through these gender-based justifications.[7]

Racism and Trolling

Racism is an ideology of practising aversion to other people and their culture. In several troll pages, racism is an important issue, because many types of fun videos are made by portraying racism. Posting pictures of black people in people in some troll pages is a matter of joke. In our country, these photos are widely liked, shared, and tagged by many people on social networking sites. The representation of the black community is seen here as degraded and valueless. People are looking at those pictures and belittling them unfairly. It's a reflection of the cultural traits, that in this post-modern era, we are still stereotyped about race.

In Stuart Hall's critical essay, The Spectacle of The 'Other' a 'racialized regime of representation' we can see now a day too, where black skin is a matter of shame. Clumsy people are called Rohingya, but we know Rohingya or stateless people are not a topic of laughter. These can be considered as a direct attack on subcultures, that are detached from mainstream culture. According to Stuart Hall's theory "Spectacle of the Others" we get the notion of "race" and "representation" which that how a particular person is represented, ideologically.[8]

Psychology Behind Trolling

Intentions behind trolling: "Trolling was differentiated from other antisocial behaviours because it was associated with a lack of goals or intentions. Trolling was perceived as acting while having no purpose. (Krappitz, 2012)

There are four reasons called 'The Dark Tetrad' Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and everyday Sadism. Troll is unplanned, it is situational. Sometimes trolling depends on a person's mood.[11] When an individual sees a post, he/she gets a feeling most probably in a negative mood they like to troll someone else. A provocative comment acts as a troll in a discussion and it can influence others to troll on that topic. Anti-social people are accustomed to trolling much more. They try to seek attention badly. By commenting on heated debates they get readers' attention, and sometimes they get approval too. These symptoms are found in the narcissist's behaviour. Narcissistic people have no connection with reality and they cannot connect the real self with the imagery self.[10] There are also other reasons behind trolls like invisibility and anonymity. As the identity is blurred, it is easy for a user to ride on the networking sites. [9]

Conclusion

By combining quantitative surveys with in-depth interviews and content analysis, this research explores the intricate layers of online trolling and its impact on Bangladeshi society. The quantitative findings analyzed the prevalence of trolling in its various forms across social networking sites. several frequencies of trolling incidents and identified distinct types of trolls, including political trolls, social media trolls, and cyberbullies are explained. This quantitative dimension provided a statistical overview and allowed an understanding of the scope and patterns associated with troll culture. It can invoke public interest in different issues. It is a popular medium for newbies. Several issues arise with it such as mischievous fun, insulting criticism, verbal bullying, etc. By analyzing trolls and their behaviors, some ongoing trends of the mainstream culture are marked such as gender and trolling, racism and trolling. In this postmodern arena, people are still prejudiced about some serious issues, this point must be noted. Future research could delve into the psychological profiling of trolls, assess the long-term societal impact of trolling, and evaluate technological solutions. By addressing these issues, scholars and policymakers can explain a more comprehensive understanding of online communication, digital culture, and effective strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of trolling within the unique context of Bangladesh's digital society.

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