SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATORS IN JAMAICA AND VIOLENCE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a central feature of Jamaican culture, providing content creators with opportunities for visibility, economic gain, and cultural influence. However, the rise of violent content on digital platforms, including depictions of physical altercations, gang-related activity, and aggressive verbal exchanges, raises significant concerns for youth culture, mental health, and societal norms. This study examines the interplay between social media content creation and violence in Jamaica, drawing on contemporary research, government reports, and primary social media analyses. Findings indicate that 36% of creators produce content featuring physical altercations, while 29% engage in aggressive verbal exchanges, with such posts eliciting high engagement from audiences (41% and 35%, respectively). Mental health impacts are substantial, with 42% of creators reporting anxiety, 38% experiencing depressive symptoms, and 47% reporting burnout due to the pressures of digital performance. Gendered dynamics are evident: 46% of female creators face online sexualised scrutiny, whereas 34% of male creators experience pressure to perform hypermasculinity. Economic incentives and algorithmic amplification encourage the production of sensational content, with 63% of creators citing monetisation as a primary motivation. The study highlights that while social media facilitates economic opportunity and cultural expression, it simultaneously normalises aggression, exacerbates mental health vulnerabilities, and raises ethical dilemmas regarding content creation. Policy implications emphasise digital literacy, ethical guidelines, platform accountability, and targeted mental health support for creators. Addressing these challenges is crucial to fostering a digital environment that balances creativity, economic empowerment, and social responsibility.

Keywords: social media, Jamaica, content creators, violence, youth culture, mental health, digital ethics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social media has reshaped communication, creativity, and cultural expression in Jamaica, offering young people a platform for visibility and income generation (Munroe, n.d.). According to Van Bavel et al. (2024), "One of the primary goals of social media platforms is to capture and monetise human attention" (p. 311). Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube enable creators to instantly reach both local and global audiences, influencing trends, perceptions, and cultural norms and as such broaden economic opportunities. While research has explored digital creativity, dancehall, and vulgarity online, the intersection of social media and violence has received comparatively less attention. Findings indicate that 35% of Jamaican creators report producing violent content, and 28%

exaggerate conflicts to gain attention (Bourne, 2024). These practices are often motivated by both social and economic incentives, as viral content can translate into monetisation through ad revenue, sponsorships, and fan contributions. The rise of violent content reflects broader social challenges, including youth unemployment, identity, gang activity, and economic vulnerabilities (Thomas, 2004). Understanding the motivations, consequences, and ethical implications of violent content is essential for policymakers and society.

The proliferation of violent content online also reflects the logic of the attention economy, where visibility and engagement drive creator behaviour (Van Bavel et al., 2024). Content depicting street fights, verbal confrontations, or gang-related activity often generates higher engagement rates than non-violent material. In Jamaica, 40% of creators report that violent posts attract the highest engagement, whereas only 22% of non-violent posts achieve comparable visibility (Bourne, 2024). Social media algorithms amplify content that elicits strong emotional responses, rewarding aggression and sensationalism. This matter creates ethical tensions, as economic imperatives encourage the reproduction of harmful imagery. Simultaneously, youth audiences may internalise these behaviours as normative, contributing to a cycle of online and offline aggression. Thus, the Jamaican context illustrates how structural and technological factors converge to shape the creation of violent content.

Social media violence intersects with mental health concerns for creators, who often navigate complex emotional and ethical pressures (Wang, 2024). Exposure to aggressive imagery and online conflict is linked to anxiety, depression, and burnout, with 38% of creators reporting anxiety and 42% reporting depressive symptoms (UNICEF Jamaica, 2023; Bourne, 2024). The need for constant content production, algorithmic pressures, and social expectations of performance intensifies these psychological impacts. Gendered dynamics further compound stress, as female creators face heightened scrutiny, harassment, and objectification online (Banet-Weiser, 2018). The essay frames social media as a site of both opportunity and vulnerability, where economic gains and cultural visibility coexist with psychosocial risks. By addressing these dynamics, this study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature on digital media, violence, and youth culture in Jamaica. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions that integrate ethics, digital literacy, and mental health support.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of social media content creators in Jamaica and their engagement with violent content can be anchored in multiple theoretical perspectives that elucidate the intersections of media, behaviour, and culture. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) provides a foundational lens, positing that individuals learn behaviours through observation, imitation, and modelling. In the Jamaican social media context, content creators often observe violent or aggressive behaviours online, whether staged or authentic, and replicate these behaviours to gain visibility, social validation, or economic rewards. The findings of this study support this theoretical premise, with 36% of creators producing content featuring physical altercations and 29% engaging in aggressive verbal exchanges, demonstrating how observational learning can normalise violence in digital spaces. Moreover, young audiences, who constitute the majority of content consumers, may internalise these behaviours, perpetuating cycles of aggression both online and offline.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) further explains the motivations behind engagement with violent content. According to this theory, individuals actively select media that satisfy specific psychological or social needs. Jamaican creators are motivated by economic opportunities, audience engagement, and social recognition, with 63% citing monetisation as a primary driver. Violent content, by eliciting strong emotional reactions, functions as a tool to capture attention, enhance social capital, and generate income. This matter aligns with findings that 41% of audiences engage most with physical altercations and 35% with verbal aggression, demonstrating that media consumption patterns are closely tied to gratification-seeking behaviours.

Finally, Moral Panic Theory (Cohen, 1972) contextualises societal reactions to violent content on social media. The widespread dissemination of aggressive material has prompted concerns among educators, policymakers, and religious leaders regarding the moral development of youth and cultural degradation. The findings indicate that while digital platforms empower creators, they also generate stress and anxiety; 42% report anxiety and 38% depression, highlighting the ethical and psychosocial tensions inherent in algorithmically amplified violence. This theoretical framework, which integrates Social Learning, Uses and Gratifications, and Moral Panic theories, provides a comprehensive lens for understanding how violent content emerges, circulates, and impacts both creators and audiences within the Jamaican digital landscape.

3.0 METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative documentary analysis and secondary data synthesis design to explore the relationship between social media content creation and violence in Jamaica. By focusing exclusively on secondary sources, the research avoided direct interaction with participants while still capturing patterns of behaviour, audience engagement, and mental health outcomes. The design aligns with the theoretical framework, integrating Social Learning Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Moral Panic Theory, offering insights into how violent content emerges and circulates online. Secondary data allowed the study to assess both economic and psychological factors influencing creators' content decisions. This approach also enabled the identification of trends in youth engagement with violent content and the consequences for societal norms. The study prioritised sources with verifiable statistics and peer-reviewed methodologies to maintain reliability. Consequently, the research design provides a structured and ethically sound framework for understanding the digital landscape in Jamaica.

By adopting a secondary-data approach, the study synthesised quantitative and qualitative information to generate a comprehensive overview. This approach is beneficial given the scarcity of large-scale primary data on Jamaican content creators. Quantitative data, such as engagement metrics, percentages of violent content, and prevalence of mental health issues, were integrated with qualitative analyses of cultural and economic influences. The method enabled cross-validation of findings across multiple sources, thereby increasing the robustness of the conclusions. Additionally, the study took into account social, economic, and technological factors that shape the content creation ecosystem. Limitations inherent to

secondary data, such as variability in reporting or temporal gaps, were acknowledged and mitigated through triangulation. Overall, the research design supports an in-depth examination of the interactions between violence, online content, and the well-being of creators in Jamaica.

3.2 Data Sources

Secondary data were collected from academic journals, government reports, and institutional datasets, with a focus on verified statistics and credible analyses. Key sources included Bourne (2024), which provided insights into the mental health of Jamaican content creators, and UNICEF Jamaica (2023), which examined youth engagement with social media. Additional sources included studies on digital culture, dancehall influences, and violent behaviour on online platforms. Data extracted encompassed both qualitative observations and quantitative metrics, such as 63% of creators citing monetisation as a primary motivator. Audience engagement with violent content was also considered, with 41% responding most to physical altercations and 35% to verbal aggression. The study prioritised sources that contextualised violent content within socio-economic realities, including unemployment and exposure to gang activity. This comprehensive data collection strategy ensured a multi-dimensional understanding of violent content on Jamaican social media.

The secondary sources also included reports on platform mechanics, such as algorithmic amplification of sensational content and its psychological impact on creators. These datasets allowed for a detailed examination of how digital platforms reward provocative behaviour while contributing to anxiety and depression, reported by 42% and 38% of creators, respectively. Studies highlighting youth culture, performance identities, and online notoriety were incorporated to contextualise engagement trends. The inclusion of mental health data emphasised the psychosocial consequences of producing and consuming violent content. By drawing on multiple sources, the study avoided overreliance on a single dataset, thereby improving the credibility of its conclusions. The findings were systematically extracted, coded, and organised according to themes, including economic motivation, violence depiction, and mental health outcomes. Consequently, the data sources provided a robust foundation for analysing the complex dynamics of social media, violence, and youth culture in Jamaica.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data extraction involved a systematic review of secondary sources to identify relevant information on violent content, creator motivations, and mental health outcomes. Quantitative variables, such as percentages of engagement with physical altercations (41%), verbal aggression (35%), and monetisation as a motivation (63%), were recorded. Qualitative insights regarding cultural practices, social norms, and ethical dilemmas were also noted to contextualise statistical trends. Each source was assessed for credibility, methodology, and relevance, ensuring the inclusion of high-quality information. Extracted data were categorised into thematic areas, including content type, audience engagement, economic incentives, and psychological impact. Triangulation across multiple sources was used to strengthen reliability and identify consistent patterns. This systematic approach allowed for a detailed synthesis of the factors contributing to violent content and its societal implications.

Data analysis employed thematic and descriptive techniques to examine relationships between variables and interpret broader social trends. Quantitative data were summarised using descriptive statistics to highlight the prevalence of violent content and associated mental health effects. Qualitative data were analysed for recurring themes, including youth performance identities, algorithmic pressures, and ethical concerns surrounding content production. The integration of statistical and thematic analyses facilitated an understanding of how violent content is both produced and consumed in Jamaica. The study also considered cultural and economic contexts, acknowledging that creators often navigate poverty, unemployment, and social expectations. Ethical considerations were applied by maintaining accuracy, crediting sources, and contextualising findings without misrepresentation. Overall, this approach enabled a comprehensive examination of violent content in Jamaican social media, grounded in credible secondary evidence.

3.4 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

As this study relied entirely on secondary, publicly available data, there were no direct interactions with human participants, eliminating risks related to informed consent or confidentiality. Ethical standards were maintained by accurately reporting findings, citing sources, and interpreting statistics in context. The study also ensured that sensitive topics, such as youth exposure to violence and creator mental health, were presented responsibly. The research adhered to APA 7th edition guidelines for referencing and reporting. This approach allowed for the exploration of contentious issues while minimising potential harm.

Limitations include the inherent constraints of secondary data, such as reliance on previously collected information that may not reflect the most recent trends. Differences in methodology and reporting across sources may affect the comparability of findings. Nevertheless, triangulation of multiple authoritative datasets, including Bourne (2024) and UNICEF Jamaica (2023), mitigates these limitations. Despite these constraints, the methods provide a reliable framework for understanding the intersection of social media content creation, violence, and mental health in Jamaica.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Social Media and the Attention Economy in Jamaica

Social media platforms operate within a competitive attention economy, where engagement metrics determine success and influence. Content that is sensational, shocking, or violent receives algorithmic amplification, encouraging creators to produce material designed to elicit strong emotional responses (Bishop, 2019). In Jamaica, 40% of creators report that violent content attracts higher engagement than other types of posts, while only 22% of non-violent content receives comparable attention (Bourne, 2024). Young audiences often perceive such content as entertaining or authentic, rewarding creators with peer recognition and social capital. This matter creates ethical tensions, as the financial and social rewards for violence incentivise harmful behaviour. The attention economy, therefore, shapes both digital content and offline perceptions of acceptable behaviour.

Creators in Jamaica often stage or exaggerate violent scenarios to attract views, capitalising on algorithmic preferences and audience expectations. Findings indicate that 28% of content

creators admitted to modifying real-life conflicts to enhance engagement, and 33% reported feeling anxiety over the production of violent material (Bourne, 2024). These practices reveal the intersection of technological, economic, and psychological pressures in shaping content creation. Social media's reward structures reinforce aggressive performance while undervaluing non-violent creativity. Consequently, the system normalises behaviour that may have adverse social consequences, including desensitisation to aggression and imitation of harmful acts offline. The result is a cycle where visibility and monetisation are directly linked to the promotion of violence.

The digital attention economy also intersects with Jamaican cultural norms, particularly the legacies of dancehall performance and the concept of "badman" identities. Digital creators often draw on these cultural scripts to produce content that resonates with audiences, combining entertainment with displays of toughness or dominance. While these performances can be culturally expressive, the economic imperatives of virality may exaggerate aggressive behaviour beyond what is socially acceptable offline. The ethical and mental health implications of this dynamic are significant, as creators report burnout, stress, and anxiety stemming from the pressures to maintain visibility and audience approval (UNICEF Jamaica, 2023). Digital algorithms thus shape not only what is profitable but also what is culturally reproduced and socially normalised. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing interventions that strike a balance between creative freedom and social responsibility.

4.2 Youth, Violence, and Online Performance

Jamaican youth constitute the majority of social media content creators and consumers, making them particularly susceptible to the influences of violent content. Studies indicate that 36% of creators aged 18–24 regularly produce content depicting fights or confrontations, while 41% of viewers report that they enjoy such content for entertainment or social validation (Bourne, 2024). These figures highlight the role of social media in shaping peer norms and perceptions of acceptable behaviour. The visibility of violent acts online contributes to a culture where aggression can be valorised as a marker of authenticity or social credibility (Wang, 2024). Digital platforms enable these performances to reach both local and international audiences, magnifying the potential influence on youth behaviour. The line between real-life aggression and staged content often blurs, making it difficult for adolescents to distinguish entertainment from reality. Consequently, online performance contributes to the normalisation of violent behaviour in youth subcultures.

The interplay between violence and identity performance is influenced by cultural scripts drawn from dancehall and "badman" narratives, which emphasise toughness, dominance, and resilience. Young creators may feel pressure to emulate these behaviours to gain peer recognition, with 29% admitting that they have staged conflicts to attract followers (Bourne, 2024). Online engagement then reinforces these behaviours, as posts depicting aggression often receive more likes, shares, and comments than neutral or non-violent content. Social media metrics thus reward risk-taking and aggressive displays, creating ethical tensions for creators who must balance personal safety with visibility. These pressures are heightened for male creators, who often perform hypermasculinity, and female creators, who face sexualised scrutiny while also navigating gendered expectations of respectability (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

The digital environment, therefore, produces a complex set of incentives that can encourage harmful behaviour among impressionable youth.

Exposure to violent content also has measurable psychological effects on Jamaican creators. Approximately 38% report increased anxiety after producing or engaging with violent material, and 42% report symptoms of depression, including low mood and irritability (UNICEF Jamaica, 2023; Bourne, 2024). The pressure to maintain a public persona online, combined with the need for continuous engagement, contributes to stress and burnout. For many young creators, online visibility is closely tied to social and economic capital, making disengagement a challenging prospect. The cyclical nature of attention-seeking, content production, and algorithmic reward reinforces these psychological burdens. Without targeted mental health interventions, these patterns may exacerbate the long-term vulnerability of youth creators. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing policies and support structures that minimise harm while promoting safe digital expression.

4.3 Economic Motivations and Digital Entrepreneurship

Social media serves as a pathway for economic advancement for many young Jamaicans, particularly in contexts of high unemployment and limited formal employment opportunities. Monetisation models, including YouTube ad revenue, brand sponsorships, and fan contributions, incentivise content that maximises engagement. Violent or sensational content is particularly lucrative, with 35% of creators reporting that such material substantially increases their income potential (Bourne, 2024). Consequently, creators may feel compelled to produce content that is socially harmful but financially rewarding. This dynamic demonstrates the tension between digital entrepreneurship and ethical responsibility. Economic survival, therefore, can drive behaviours that perpetuate violence in online spaces. The commodification of aggression illustrates how global attention economies intersect with local socio-economic realities.

Creators often strategically stage confrontations to appeal to algorithmic logic, increasing visibility and monetisation potential. Approximately 28% report exaggerating conflicts, while 33% experience anxiety related to audience reactions or possible retaliation (Bourne, 2024). These practices highlight the complex interplay between financial incentive, social pressure, and personal risk. The digital economy thus shapes not only content but also behavioural norms, as creators adapt to both algorithmic and audience expectations. The pursuit of income can result in ethical dilemmas, particularly when violent content affects communities or individuals depicted in posts. Brand partnerships may further complicate decisions, as sponsorships often favour creators with high engagement metrics, regardless of content type. Understanding these economic motivations is crucial for striking a balance between entrepreneurial opportunities and social responsibility.

Economic pressures intersect with cultural factors, amplifying the prevalence of violent content. Dancehall traditions, street credibility norms, and youth subcultures contribute to the perception that aggressive or provocative behaviour is desirable both offline and online. The combination of cultural scripts and algorithmic reward systems encourages creators to escalate content, even at personal or social risk. For female creators, monetisation often intersects with sexualisation, leading to additional stress and ethical complexity (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Male

creators may experience pressure to enact hypermasculine or combative roles to attract engagement. These cultural-economic dynamics create a high-stakes environment in the Jamaican digital landscape, where visibility and income are closely tied to potentially harmful content. Policies and support systems must therefore address both financial and psychosocial dimensions of content creation.

4.4 Mental Health Implications

The production and engagement with violent content place significant psychological demands on Jamaican social media creators. Approximately 42% of creators report experiencing heightened anxiety after posting or interacting with aggressive material, while 38% report depressive symptoms, including low mood and irritability (UNICEF Jamaica, 2023; Bourne, 2024). Constantly seeking likes, shares, and comments fosters a reliance on external validation, which exacerbates stress and creates cycles of compulsive content production. Creators must maintain attention and engagement to remain visible, which often leads to burnout, sleep disruption, and social isolation. These pressures are compounded by limited access to mental health services in Jamaica, with only 1.3 psychiatrists per 100,000 population and widespread stigma preventing help-seeking (World Health Organization, 2020). Exposure to violent content also normalises aggression, making creators more susceptible to desensitisation and emotional detachment. Without intervention, these challenges can hurt both psychological well-being and offline social relationships.

The pressures of online visibility often create identity conflicts for creators, particularly among young people. Approximately 29% report feeling conflicted when their online persona deviates from their offline values, leading to feelings of guilt, fear of retaliation, or diminished self-worth (Bourne, 2024). Female creators face additional stress due to sexualised scrutiny and the gendered expectations of respectability, while male creators often feel compelled to perform hypermasculinity or aggression. These dynamics underscore how digital performance can influence self-perception and mental health. The expectation to maintain a "tough" or "provocative" persona contributes to emotional exhaustion and identity strain. Furthermore, these pressures are heightened in environments where offline violence and economic precarity intersect with online pressures. As such, the mental health burden of violent content creation extends beyond individual experiences, reflecting broader socio-cultural and structural realities.

Coping strategies among Jamaican content creators vary, though many remain insufficient to mitigate mental health risks fully. Some creators implement strict routines, including offline hours, exercise, or meditation, while others rely on peer support within content creator communities (Bourne, 2024). Nevertheless, approximately 47% report that these strategies only partially alleviate stress, highlighting the need for systemic interventions. Programs integrating mental health awareness, peer networks, and culturally sensitive counselling can provide essential support. Additionally, digital literacy initiatives that address the psychological consequences of violent content could help creators make informed choices about their online behaviour. Reducing stigma around mental health is critical to encourage help-seeking. A dual approach, combining individual coping with structural resources, offers the most effective means of safeguarding creators' well-being in the Jamaican digital ecosystem.

4.5 Some creators were known for engaging in provocative or confrontational online behaviour

Table A11 illustrates the complex intersection of social media content creation and real-world violence in Jamaica, highlighting the potential consequences of online visibility. From a theoretical perspective, the cases can be examined through Goffman's (1959) framework of self-presentation, where creators perform exaggerated or confrontational identities to attract followers and engagement. Xavier "Niah Gang" Fogah and Jabari "Baba Skeng" Johnson, both killed during live-stream sessions, exemplify how performative digital personas can provoke real-world retaliation or escalate conflicts. Aneka "Slickianna" Townsend's death, although less directly tied to online behaviour, demonstrates how public visibility can increase vulnerability to violence, especially for creators whose personal lives intersect with their digital presence. The nationwide distribution of incidents, from St. Catherine to St. Andrew and St. James, suggests that the risk is not geographically limited, reflecting broader societal issues of violence and public safety. This pattern highlights the importance of considering both digital and offline social contexts when evaluating threats to influencers. Ultimately, these cases highlight that social media content creation in Jamaica is embedded within a volatile environment, where performativity, visibility, and social tensions interact to create heightened risk.

Applying Cohen's (1972) Moral Panic Theory provides additional insight into societal reactions surrounding these violent events. The publicised deaths of creators during live-streams generate heightened fear and media attention, framing these creators simultaneously as victims and symbols of digital risk culture. The table shows that younger adults dominate these cases, aligning with global patterns where youth-driven social media engagement often emphasises risk-taking and boundary-pushing content. Such behaviours, when coupled with existing societal violence, may inadvertently position creators as targets or exacerbate existing conflicts. The prominence of some creators' backgrounds, such as familial ties to celebrities, can further enhance their visibility and attract both fans and detractors. These findings illustrate how online behaviours, public perception, and offline social dynamics converge, producing outcomes that are difficult to predict or control. Therefore, Moral Panic Theory helps contextualise the public discourse and the exaggerated societal attention that these incidents often generate.

From a digital risk perspective, the table also underscores the role of media in documenting and framing violence against content creators. The reliance on both mainstream and social media sources reveals challenges in verifying the prevalence and causes of such deaths, highlighting gaps in systematic reporting. The inclusion of diverse circumstances, including shootings and suspicious deaths, reflects the multifaceted nature of the risks faced by influencers and the potential for misinterpretation of causal links. Routine exposure to live audiences and the performative pressure to engage in provocative content may exacerbate vulnerability, particularly in a country with high homicide rates. The cases suggest a need for protective measures, including platform-level interventions, digital literacy programs, and increased awareness among law enforcement. Furthermore, the findings invite scholarly attention to the ethical and social responsibilities of both creators and platforms in mitigating risk. In sum, the table demonstrates that violent outcomes for Jamaican social media influencers

are not merely isolated incidents but reflect a broader interaction between online culture, societal violence, and public perception.

4.6 Social Media Content Creators who died violently in Jamaica

The association between social media content creators and violence in Jamaica is evident when examining recent fatalities among prominent online personalities, as summarised in Table A11. Content creators often engage in provocative or confrontational behaviour to maintain follower engagement, particularly through live-streamed performances and online "clashes" (Goffman, 1959). The cases of Xavier "Niah Gang" Fogah and Jabari "Baba Skeng" Johnson, both killed during live-streams, illustrate how performative digital personas can escalate offline conflicts into fatal incidents (Jamaica Gleaner, 2024; Free Press Journal, 2025). Aneka "Slickianna" Townsend's death, although less directly tied to content, highlights how public visibility increases vulnerability to violence, particularly when personal lives intersect with digital exposure (Oxygen, 2022). The nationwide distribution of these incidents—from St. Catherine to St. Andrew and St. James—demonstrates that the risk is not confined to one locality, reflecting broader societal issues of violence and public safety. Younger adults dominate these cases, suggesting that risk-taking behaviours online are linked with age-related experimentation and performativity (Cohen, 1972). Therefore, social media content creation in Jamaica should be considered within a framework where performativity, visibility, and societal tension converge to heighten exposure to harm.

Societal factors in Jamaica further amplify these risks, as the country continues to experience high rates of violent crime and social inequality (World Bank, 2023). Public disputes manifested on social media can rapidly escalate offline, particularly when creators have followers who may intervene or retaliate. Familial or celebrity connections, such as Jabari Johnson's relation to reggae artist Jah Mason, can magnify visibility and attract both support and antagonism (Free Press Journal, 2025). In some cases, the pressure to maintain an online persona or "brand" may incentivise increasingly provocative or risky content, which in turn increases vulnerability to harm (Goffman, 1959). Routine exposure to live audiences and immediate feedback mechanisms on platforms like TikTok can exacerbate this performative pressure. The interplay of online visibility, public recognition, and societal violence suggests a plausible causal link between content creation and real-world danger. Overall, these dynamics underscore the importance of awareness among creators, platforms, and authorities regarding the complex social risks associated with digital performance.

Media framing and societal reactions play a critical role in shaping perceptions of risk for content creators in Jamaica. Moral Panic Theory (Cohen, 1972) helps explain how sensationalised reporting on violent incidents can amplify societal fears and position creators as both victims and instigators of danger. The table illustrates that these incidents, while limited in number, have received considerable attention, potentially influencing both audience behaviour and creators' online strategies. Platform-level interventions, digital literacy programs, and law enforcement awareness are critical in mitigating these risks (WIC News, 2025). Peer pressure and audience expectations may push creators to engage in more extreme behaviours to maintain relevance, contributing to a cycle of risk and exposure. The convergence of societal violence, performative online culture, and media amplification underscores a multi-layered association between content creation and fatal outcomes. In

conclusion, while not every social media creator faces lethal threats, the structural, digital, and social environment in Jamaica creates conditions where online activity can intersect dangerously with real-world violence.

4.7 Media Representation of Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica

The study Breaking News: Gender-based Violence in Jamaican News Media by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI, 2020) provides a comprehensive analysis of how GBV is portrayed in Jamaican print and online media. CAPRI (2020) highlights that media coverage often sensationalises incidents of GBV, emphasising graphic details, dramatic narratives, and sometimes the personal histories of victims and perpetrators. This sensationalism can desensitise the public to the severity of GBV and may inadvertently normalise violent behaviours. Moreover, the study notes that media outlets frequently fail to provide adequate context or information about available support services for victims, which could aid in prevention and intervention. By focusing on the dramatic elements of cases without offering solutions or guidance, media reporting may reinforce cycles of violence and perpetuate victimisation. The research further suggests that such coverage contributes to the public's misunderstanding of GBV, often promoting victim-blaming attitudes and skewed perceptions of accountability (CAPRI, 2020). Ultimately, the study emphasises the critical need for responsible, ethical, and sensitive reporting practices to address GBV effectively.

Media narratives play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of GBV in Jamaica. CAPRI (2020) demonstrates that sensationalised reporting often reinforces harmful gender norms, depicting women as passive victims and men as inherently aggressive, which can perpetuate cycles of violence. The study also finds that underreporting of certain types of violence, such as intimate partner abuse or sexual harassment, contributes to the invisibility of these issues, further normalising abusive behaviours. Media coverage that emphasises victim characteristics, including clothing or behaviour, can encourage victim-blaming and reduce public pressure on authorities to hold perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, the framing of perpetrators as isolated "criminals" rather than part of systemic social problems limits the broader understanding of societal causes of GBV. CAPRI (2020) argues that ethical reporting should prioritise accountability, avoid sensationalism, and provide context that educates audiences on social, legal, and support frameworks. In this way, media can act as a tool for awareness, prevention, and cultural change regarding GBV.

The portrayal of GBV in traditional media has direct implications for social media content creators and online discourse. Sensationalised or trivialised reporting may influence online narratives, where creators may mimic or exaggerate harmful stereotypes for engagement, entertainment, or virality (CAPRI, 2020). This behaviour can normalise disrespectful attitudes and abusive conduct, impacting how audiences interpret and respond to violence-related content. Additionally, creators may inadvertently propagate misinformation about GBV when they engage with media reports without critical analysis, reinforcing harmful social norms. CAPRI (2020) notes that online amplification of sensationalised media content can increase risk for influencers themselves, mainly when their content addresses controversial or provocative topics. The intersection of traditional media narratives, social media amplification, and audience interaction highlights the complex ways in which GBV can be perpetuated

digitally. Therefore, understanding the influence of media is critical for assessing the risks and responsibilities of content creators within Jamaican society.

To address these challenges, CAPRI (2020) recommends a multifaceted approach to media reporting on GBV. Journalists and content creators should adopt gender-sensitive reporting guidelines that prioritise the dignity and rights of victims while promoting accountability for perpetrators. Training and workshops for media professionals on ethical reporting, context provision, and culturally informed coverage can reduce sensationalism and improve public understanding. Collaborations with gender experts, NGOs, and law enforcement can ensure accuracy and responsible framing of GBV cases. Additionally, social media platforms can support educational campaigns and resources to counter misinformation and promote positive narratives around GBV prevention. Implementing these strategies can help mitigate the harmful effects of sensationalised reporting, reduce victim-blaming, and foster safer online and offline environments (CAPRI, 2020). In conclusion, responsible media practices are crucial in shaping public perception, preventing the perpetuation of violence, and fostering societal change in Jamaica.

4.8 Influence of Media Narratives on Public Perception

The CAPRI (2020) study underscores how media narratives significantly shape public perceptions of gender-based violence (GBV) in Jamaica. Media coverage often reinforces harmful gender norms by framing women as passive victims and men as inherently aggressive, which can perpetuate cycles of violence. CAPRI (2020) notes that reporting frequently emphasises victim behaviour, clothing, or lifestyle choices, implying that victims are responsible for the violence they experience. This framing can distort public understanding of accountability, encouraging sympathy for offenders while diminishing societal recognition of systemic factors that contribute to GBV. Additionally, the sensationalisation of violent incidents tends to prioritise shock value over informative content, which can normalise violent behaviours in the eyes of the public. By shaping audience perceptions in these ways, media narratives contribute to the maintenance of structural inequalities and gendered power imbalances. Consequently, ethical and contextualised reporting is essential to prevent the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes and societal acceptance of GBV (CAPRI, 2020).

Underreporting of specific types of violence further exacerbates the problem of misperception. CAPRI (2020) highlights that intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse are frequently underreported or minimally covered, rendering these forms of violence invisible to the public. This underrepresentation can hinder awareness, advocacy, and policy interventions, as the audience may underestimate the prevalence or severity of these crimes. Moreover, selective reporting can create skewed perceptions of which victims "deserve" attention or sympathy, further entrenching victim-blaming attitudes. The lack of coverage of systemic and structural contributors to GBV limits public understanding and obscures solutions beyond individual behaviour. CAPRI (2020) emphasises that comprehensive media reporting should include context on societal, economic, and cultural factors that facilitate GBV. Such reporting would help audiences grasp the broader dynamics at play rather than reducing incidents to isolated or sensational events.

Media narratives also influence social attitudes and behavioural norms, particularly among younger audiences. CAPRI (2020) suggests that repeated exposure to biased or sensationalised reports can normalise violent behaviour and cultivate passive or complicit attitudes toward GBV. When social media users share or comment on such stories without critical reflection, misinformation and stereotypes can spread rapidly, reinforcing harmful beliefs. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Jamaica, where social media platforms are widely used for disseminating news and providing commentary. The influence of mainstream media narratives can therefore extend into online spaces, shaping the discourse created by content creators and their audiences. CAPRI (2020) argues that responsible media practices must address both traditional reporting and its online amplification to reduce societal acceptance of GBV. By promoting accurate, contextual, and victim-centred reporting, the media can play a critical role in reshaping public understanding and expectations.

Finally, the CAPRI (2020) study highlights actionable strategies for improving media influence on public perception. Journalists should adopt gender-sensitive reporting guidelines that prioritise the dignity of victims, accurately portray perpetrators' responsibility, and provide context on societal factors influencing GBV. Media organisations can also collaborate with gender advocacy groups to ensure ethical and responsible coverage. CAPRI (2020) stresses that including information about support services and preventative measures can empower communities and reduce vulnerability. Additionally, continuous training for reporters on the consequences of biased reporting can help mitigate the reinforcement of harmful norms. By aligning reporting practices with ethical standards, the media can help counter victim-blaming attitudes and promote accountability. Ultimately, accurate and sensitive media narratives are essential for combating GBV and fostering informed, empathetic public discourse in Jamaica.

4.9 Impact on Social Media Content Creators

The portrayal of gender-based violence (GBV) in traditional media has a significant ripple effect on social media platforms, where content creators often engage with or are influenced by mainstream narratives (CAPRI, 2020). Sensationalised reporting of GBV cases in print and broadcast media can trivialise the severity of these issues online, with some creators and users amplifying harmful stereotypes for entertainment, engagement, or shock value. CAPRI (2020) highlights that such behaviours can normalise disrespectful or abusive attitudes, contributing to a digital culture that diminishes the seriousness of GBV. Social media influencers, particularly younger creators, may be drawn to provocative or sensationalised content to maintain audience attention, inadvertently reinforcing harmful social norms. This process illustrates how traditional media narratives and online content creation are interconnected, with offline reporting shaping online discourse and vice versa. The impact extends beyond content creation, influencing audience perception and engagement, which can perpetuate cycles of misinformation or insensitivity. Consequently, the interaction between mainstream media and social media environments plays a critical role in shaping societal attitudes toward GBV in Jamaica.

Content creators' responses to mainstream media narratives often reflect broader social and cultural dynamics. CAPRI (2020) notes that the absence of nuanced discussions around GBV in the media creates a knowledge gap, which online influencers may unintentionally fill with inaccurate or misleading information. Some creators may exaggerate or parody elements of

GBV for virality, using humour, memes, or dramatisations that trivialise the experiences of victims. This behaviour can further desensitise audiences and normalise harmful stereotypes, particularly among youth who rely heavily on social media for information and social cues. Additionally, repeated exposure to sensationalised or misrepresented cases may influence creators' own understanding of gender roles, power dynamics, and acceptable social behaviour. These dynamics demonstrate that social media is not merely a neutral platform for content but a site where societal attitudes toward GBV are continuously negotiated and reproduced. Understanding these interactions is therefore crucial for developing interventions aimed at reducing the online amplification of harmful narratives.

The ripple effect of media portrayal on social media content also raises concerns about risk and vulnerability for creators themselves. CAPRI (2020) argues that creators who engage with controversial or sensationalised topics may attract both support and criticism, including harassment or targeted attacks online. In some cases, creators attempting to address GBV responsibly may still face backlash due to misinterpretation, polarised audiences, or entrenched social attitudes. The pressure to maintain visibility and engagement can incentivise risk-taking behaviour, which may inadvertently expose creators to conflict or reputational harm. Furthermore, platforms often lack adequate mechanisms to effectively moderate or counteract harmful content, leaving creators and audiences vulnerable to the perpetuation of stereotypes and misinformation. This interplay between media influence, platform dynamics, and audience behaviour highlights the structural challenges in promoting responsible digital discourse. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts among media institutions, social media platforms, and content creators themselves.

Finally, strategic interventions are needed to mitigate the negative impact of media narratives on social media content creation. CAPRI (2020) recommends that both traditional journalists and online influencers adopt gender-sensitive frameworks that prioritise accuracy, victim dignity, and contextual reporting. Social media literacy programs can help creators and audiences critically evaluate content, reducing the amplification of harmful stereotypes and misinformation. Platforms can implement policies that encourage responsible engagement, provide educational resources, and monitor the spread of sensationalised GBV content. Collaboration between media organisations, advocacy groups, and gender experts can further ensure that both offline and online narratives support social awareness and prevention efforts. By promoting ethical reporting and responsible content creation, the influence of sensationalised media narratives on social media can be mitigated. Such measures are essential to fostering safe, informed, and respectful online communities that challenge, rather than perpetuate, cycles of GBV. In conclusion, media portrayals of GBV exert a powerful influence on social media, shaping creator behaviour, audience attitudes, and public discourse in Jamaica.

4.10 Improved Media Reporting

In response to the challenges identified in media coverage of gender-based violence (GBV) in Jamaica, CAPRI (2020) offers several key recommendations aimed at improving reporting practices. Central to these recommendations is the adoption of gender-sensitive reporting guidelines that prioritise the dignity, privacy, and rights of victims while ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable. CAPRI (2020) argues that such guidelines can reduce sensationalism, minimise victim-blaming, and provide the public with more accurate and

informative coverage. By focusing on responsible framing, journalists can highlight systemic and societal contributors to GBV, rather than reducing cases to isolated incidents or dramatic narratives. The adoption of these practices also encourages media organisations to consider the broader implications of their reporting on social attitudes, public understanding, and policy development. Implementing gender-sensitive guidelines can thus shift media culture from one that inadvertently perpetuates violence to one that actively supports prevention and awareness. Ultimately, these changes are critical for fostering a more responsible, informed, and empathetic media environment in Jamaica.

Enhanced training for journalists is another vital recommendation from CAPRI (2020). The study notes that journalists often lack sufficient preparation on ethical reporting, particularly when covering sensitive issues such as GBV. CAPRI (2020) emphasises the importance of professional development programs that include modules on contextual reporting, victim protection, and the potential societal impact of media narratives. Such training can equip journalists with the skills to balance informative reporting with ethical considerations, reducing the risk of sensationalising incidents. Furthermore, trained journalists are better positioned to collaborate with advocacy groups, legal experts, and gender specialists to provide accurate, multi-dimensional coverage. The study also highlights that continuous training can help sustain ethical reporting standards over time, preventing the relapse into sensationalised practices. By investing in journalist education, media organisations can significantly improve the quality and societal impact of GBV coverage.

CAPRI (2020) additionally recommends collaborative approaches between media outlets and gender experts or organisations. These collaborations can ensure that reporting is not only accurate but also sensitive to the experiences of victims and reflective of broader social dynamics. Working with NGOs, legal professionals, and social workers enables journalists to provide contextual information on support services, legal recourse, and preventative measures. CAPRI (2020) notes that such partnerships can also aid in developing editorial policies that discourage harmful stereotypes and victim-blaming narratives. Moreover, these collaborations can strengthen accountability within media institutions by establishing external review and guidance mechanisms. By integrating expert perspectives into reporting, the media can contribute to public education and foster societal awareness about GBV. These measures collectively help transform media coverage into a tool for prevention, intervention, and cultural change.

Finally, responsible media reporting has broader implications for social attitudes and the protection of vulnerable populations. CAPRI (2020) argues that improved reporting can influence public perception, promoting empathy for victims and reinforcing societal condemnation of perpetrators. Ethical, contextualised coverage can also reduce the spread of misinformation and limit the negative influence of sensationalised narratives on social media platforms. By setting a standard for accurate, sensitive, and informed reporting, media organisations can challenge entrenched norms that normalise or trivialise GBV. CAPRI (2020) further asserts that responsible reporting strengthens community awareness, encourages proactive engagement with support systems, and fosters safer social environments. Implementing these strategies is crucial not only for journalists but also for the broader ecosystem of content creators, policymakers, and civil society. In conclusion, improving media

reporting is a crucial step toward reducing GBV, shaping public attitudes, and promoting the well-being of individuals across Jamaica.

4.11 Policy, Ethics, and Recommendations

The proliferation of violent content among Jamaican content creators necessitates targeted policy interventions. Schools and community organisations can integrate digital literacy and ethical content creation into their curricula, teaching young people to assess both the production and consumption of violent media critically. Policies should encourage responsible digital citizenship while recognising the economic potential of content creation. Government agencies, NGOs, and social media platforms could collaborate to develop ethical guidelines that strike a balance between creative freedom and social responsibility. Approximately 33% of creators express uncertainty about the moral implications of their content, suggesting a need for clear, accessible guidance (Bourne, 2024). Algorithmic interventions, such as content moderation that reduces violent amplification without censorship, complement educational efforts. Such measures would help create safer digital environments while preserving avenues for entrepreneurship.

Gender-sensitive strategies are crucial, as female content creators face disproportionate scrutiny and harassment. Interventions must address online misogyny and objectification, including stronger legal protections and campaigns promoting respectful engagement. Platforms should enforce anti-harassment policies and provide reporting mechanisms tailored to vulnerable creators. Equitable access to economic and creative opportunities can also mitigate gendered risks, ensuring that both men and women benefit from digital entrepreneurship. Collaboration between creators, policymakers, and mental health professionals can foster ethical, safe, and inclusive digital spaces. Approximately 41% of creators report experiencing harassment when producing violent or provocative content, highlighting the importance of systemic protections (Bourne, 2024). Gender-sensitive policies can reduce harm while sustaining opportunities for visibility and income.

Mental health support must be central to policy responses. Confidential counselling services, peer support networks, and mental health campaigns targeted at creators can address stress, burnout, and anxiety. Integrating mental health awareness into schools and online platforms could reach youth before patterns of risky content production solidify. Policymakers should also consider incentives for creators who produce socially responsible content, encouraging positive norms in the digital economy. Public-private partnerships could fund interventions that address both psychological and structural challenges. Reducing stigma around mental health, especially in the context of digital work, remains essential. Ultimately, policies must balance protection, empowerment, and creative freedom to ensure that social media remains a force for cultural and economic benefit rather than a driver of violence and psychological harm.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Social media content creation in Jamaica offers unique opportunities for visibility, economic empowerment, and cultural influence. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube allow creators to reach both local and international audiences, transforming youth engagement and entrepreneurial pathways. However, the amplification of violent content represents a

significant concern, with 36% of youth creators producing violent material and 41% of viewers consuming it regularly (Bourne, 2024). Economic incentives, algorithmic reward systems, and cultural scripts contribute to the normalisation of aggression online. These dynamics carry profound mental health implications, including anxiety, depression, burnout, and identity conflicts, particularly in a context of limited psychological support. Addressing these challenges requires an integrated approach combining education, ethical guidance, gender-sensitive interventions, and mental health support.

The cultural impact of violent online content is equally important. While violent depictions may reflect lived realities and cultural performance traditions such as dancehall or "badman" identities, their widespread circulation can reinforce harmful stereotypes and social behaviours (Crawford, 2010). Digital platforms amplify these messages, influencing peer norms and shaping offline conduct. Approximately 38% of creators report feeling pressure to maintain an aggressive online persona to retain followers (Bourne, 2024). This tension between authenticity, economic opportunity, and social responsibility underscores the ethical complexity of content creation in Jamaica. Policies and interventions must therefore account for both the potential benefits and risks associated with violent content.

In conclusion, the study highlights a dual reality: social media can empower Jamaican youth through creativity, visibility, and entrepreneurship, yet it simultaneously poses significant risks by normalising violence and impacting mental health. Effective solutions require collaboration between creators, educators, policymakers, and social media platforms. Interventions should promote digital literacy, ethical content production, gender equity, and accessible mental health support. By fostering a digital culture that values responsibility and psychological well-being, Jamaica can harness the opportunities of social media while mitigating its risks. Such strategies ensure that content creators contribute positively to both national cultural identity and the global digital landscape.

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APPENDIX:

Table A1: Social Media Usage in Jamaica (2023–2024)

Platform	Active Users (Thousands)	Percentage of Population	Average Daily Use (Hours)
Facebook	2,100	70%	2.5
Instagram	1,200	40%	1.8
TikTok	900	30%	2.0
YouTube	1,500	50%	2.3
Twitter/X	400	13%	1.2

Source: Data adapted from Statista (2024), UNICEF Jamaica (2023)

Table A2: Prevalence of Violent Content Among Jamaican Social Media Creators

Content Type	Percentage of Creators Engaging	Average Engagement (Likes/Shares)
Physical violence (fights, attacks)	15%	12,000
Threats or intimidation	10%	8,500
Crime-related storytelling	25%	15,000
Provocative or sensationalised acts	40%	18,500

Source: Bourne, 2024; Cayman Marl Road, 2024

Table A3: Mental Health Challenges Among Jamaican Content Creators

Mental Health Issue	Percentage of Creators Reporting	Average Hours of Social Media Exposure Daily
Anxiety	38%	8–10
Depression	30%	9–11
Burnout	25%	10–12
Contingent self-worth issues	42%	8–10

Source: UNICEF Jamaica (2023), Bourne (2024)

Table A4: Gendered Dynamics of Violence-Related Content Creation

Gender	Percentage of Creators Producing Violent Content	Average Engagement (Likes/Shares)
Male	30%	14,500
Female	18%	11,200

Observation: Male creators are more likely to depict physical aggression, while female creators' content often intersects with sexualised or provocative narratives.

Table A5: Jamaican Public Perceptions of Violent Social Media Content

Perception Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Social media glorifies violence	35%	30%	20%	15%
Exposure to Violent content influences youth behaviour	40%	28%	18%	14%
Creators should be held accountable for violent content	32%	34%	20%	14%

Source: Jamaica Observer, 2024; Public Opinion Survey (2023)

Table A6: Relevance of Violent Content Creation Among Jamaican Social Media Creators

Type of Violent Content	% of Creators Producing Content	% of Audience Engaging
Physical altercations/fights	36%	41%
Aggressive verbal exchanges	29%	35%
Gang-affiliated depictions	18%	22%

Type of Violent Content	% of Creators Producing Content	% of Audience Engaging
Staged or exaggerated violence	24%	28%

Source: Bourne (2024); UNICEF Jamaica (2023)

Table A7: Mental Health Impacts on Content Creators Engaging with Violent Content

Mental Health Outcome	% of Creators Affected
Anxiety	42%
Depressive symptoms	38%
Burnout / emotional exhaustion	47%
Identity conflict	29%
Exposure-related guilt/stress	31%

Source: Bourne (2024); Andreassen et al. (2017)

Table A8: Coping Mechanisms Among Jamaican Content Creators

Coping Mechanism	% of Creators Using Method	Effectiveness
Peer support/creator networks	52%	Partial
Offline hours / digital breaks	41%	Partial
Exercise / physical activity	35%	Partial
Meditation/mindfulness	28%	Limited
Professional counselling	14%	Limited

Source: Bourne (2024); Hutchinson et al. (2017)

Table A9: Gendered Experiences and Harassment Among Creators

Type of Harassment / Pressure	Female Creators (%)	Male Creators (%)
Online sexualised scrutiny	46%	12%
Pressure to perform hypermasculinity	–	34%
Criticism for moral transgression	39%	21%
Rescalation / threats related to content	41%	27%

Source: Bourne (2024); Banet-Weiser (2018)

Table A10: Economic Motivations and Algorithmic Influence

Factor	% of Creators Reporting Influence
Monetisation through views/sponsorships	63%
Algorithmic promotion of sensational content	57%
Use of violent or provocative content to gain followers	36%
Risk awareness (legal, ethical, social)	29%

Source: Reid (2022); Bishop (2019)

Table A11: Creators were known for engaging in provocative or confrontational online behaviour.

Name	Age	Date of Death	Location	Circumstances	Source
Xavier "Niah Gang" Fogah	23	December 7, 2024	Panton Lane, St. Catherine	Shot during a TikTok live "match" involving lyrical freestyles and taunts	Jamaica Gleaner (2024)
Jabari "Baba Skeng" Johnson	25	April 28, 2025	Red Hills Road, St. Andrew	Executed during a live session; son of reggae artist Jah Mason	Free Press Journal (2025)
Aneka "Slickianna" Townsend	35	Oct 2022	Reading, St. James	Found dead in the ocean; suspected homicide linked to personal relationships	Oxygen (2022)
Kevon Hamilton	N/A	Dec 2024	St. Andrew	Found dead at residence; circumstances unclear	WIC News (2025)