

Support in Short Form: Investigating TikTok Comments on Videos with #Harassment

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the dynamics of public discourse on social media reveals critical insights into how topics like harassment are perceived, discussed, and handled within online communities. To understand these dynamics within multimodal short-form video-based communities, we conducted topic modeling on 145,515 comments of videos tagged with #harassment on TikTok. We identified nine topics, including community responses to harassment and threats, law enforcement responses to harassment, and discussions around self-defense strategies. Our findings revealed the diverse nature of online discussions about harassment, containing empathy, polarization, frustration, and humor. These various topics underscore the significant role of TikTok as a platform for shaping public opinions on critical social issues and amplifying the voices of victims. This paper contributes to understanding how public discourse on harassment unfolds in TikTok to inform future research and policy-making to ensure safer online communities. **Content Warning:** This paper includes sensitive topics such as harassment, reader discretion is advised.

CCS CONCEPTS

• Human-centered computing → Empirical studies in HCI.

KEYWORDS

Public Discourse, Harassment, Social Media, TikTok, Topic Modeling, Online Safety, Interpersonal Harm, Cyberbully

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1 INTRODUCTION

TikTok, known for its extensive user engagement and short-form video content [53], is a popular platform for raising awareness and sharing personal stories. Furthermore, research indicates that TikTok discussions are powerful enough to influence public sentiment and discourse [10, 38]. Given the platform's influence and engagement, it is important to understand the content of the exchanges that shape users' opinions and actions. Previous studies on other social media platforms suggest that online interactions profoundly impact mental well-being [5, 28]. However, the semantic patterns and nuances of discussions specifically related to harassment and how online communities use humor, express solidarity, and navigate complex discussions on multi-modal platforms like TikTok remain unexplored. To address this gap, we asked the following research question (RQ): *What are the patterns and themes in the discussions of harassment among TikTok users?*

To answer our RQ, we performed topic modeling on 145,515 comments from TikTok videos tagged with #harassment. We found a wide range of topics discussed in these comments, including sharing personal experiences and providing support. We also uncovered themes around online disclosure of sexual victimization and the community's perceptions of sexual harassment. Our findings demonstrate the complex nature of harassment-related discourse on TikTok and the various factors contributing to users' comments. The significance of this investigation lies not only in its contribution to academic literature about digital communication and social behavior but also in its implications for policy. Digital interactions can have profound real-world consequences, affecting individuals' mental health, shaping societal norms, and influencing the legal and ethical frameworks governing digital conduct. By identifying and analyzing semantic patterns in harassment-related discourse on TikTok, our study seeks to inform the development of targeted interventions and policies to enhance online safety and well-being. In summary, this work makes several novel research contributions:

- Our in-depth analysis of public discourse on harassment, which provided valuable insights into how harassment is perceived and discussed within the TikTok community.
- Our findings pointed to key themes and topics in these discussions, such as aspects of community response, polarization, and the use of humor.
- We highlighted how users engage with and respond to harassment narratives, offering a better understanding of public

discourse on TikTok and its implications for users, the design of short-form video-based platforms, and future research.

2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Public Discourse in User Comments

Social media platforms have revolutionized public discourse [49], providing a unique space for individuals and communities to discuss various topics. These platforms allow a variety of voices and perspectives to be heard [36] while making the creation and sharing of content more accessible to everyone with their widespread nature and immediacy [22]. The unique features of social media platforms also shape the interactions within these discussions. Hashtags, for instance, allow the aggregation of content around specific topics and make it easier for users to find and engage in relevant conversations [52]. Sharing content also shapes how topics evolve and spread across social media. Viral posts or tweets can significantly influence public opinion and lead to widespread engagement in discussions like politics [27]. Furthermore, user interaction, including commenting, liking, and sharing, adds depth to these conversations. These interactions reflect users' engagement with the content and provide insights into the public sentiment around various themes [21]. Prior research on video-based social media platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, has used comment analysis to understand the dynamics of users' discussions in response to videos. These studies examined the spread of toxic content [37], discussions around mental health [10], and public perceptions on specific topics like Autism Spectrum Disorders [8], to name a few. We leverage the power of comment analysis in our study to understand public trends and attitudes on TikTok as an influential platform.

2.2 Harassment and Social Media

Harm and abuse are not uncommon on social media. As such, many members of the SIGCHI research community investigate online discourse to understand, for example, online harassment and its remedies [20, 46], personal accounts of sexual abuse [7, 17, 41], movements like #MeToo [34, 35], and effective detection methods [29, 40]. Within this body of literature, there is a significant focus on detecting harassment [15, 24, 25, 29, 42] and highlighting the psychological and societal impacts of harassment-related content [26, 30]. Previous studies have also used topic modeling to identify trends and themes in discussions. For example, Goel and Sharma [16] performed an in-depth analysis of the #MeToo movement on Twitter with Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to extract ten distinct topics from tweet texts. However, there is a noticeable gap in research focusing on understanding the themes of online discussions around different types of harassment, which our study aims to fill by exploring the topics discussed around harassment on social media. Addressing this gap is crucial because understanding these dynamics can inform the development of more effective strategies for online community management, policy-making, and support systems to reduce the potential harm caused by online harassment.

2.3 The Role of TikTok in Public Discourse

TikTok has over a billion users, mostly under the age of 30 [45], and stands out for its unique features, like algorithm-driven content distribution on its "For You" page and engaging visual stories.

TikTok's content discovery is automated and suggests videos based on user behavior and preferences [13], thereby algorithmically connecting users to broader communities of similar interests. This feature is particularly influential in forming communities around specific hashtags and viewing habits. Prior research has explored how TikTok impacts online discussions around critical topics by examining users' perceptions of and engagement with content related to mental health [33, 57] and exploring political debates [32, 50]. For example, Milton et al. discussed TikTok's "permeability" - the concept of flexible boundaries and easy access to a variety of content. They highlight how this openness allows users to freely find and share support and experiences. Unlike traditional communities with fixed boundaries, TikTok has blended spaces where identities and community interests can intersect [33]. However, there's a notable gap in exploring discussions about harassment on TikTok. This means we do not yet understand how harassment-related discourse in comments is shaped and evolves.

3 METHODS

Our study utilized topic modeling to identify the prevalent themes, discourse nature, and community responses to harassment on TikTok. Topic modeling has emerged as a powerful tool for analyzing and uncovering various topics within an extensive collection of text [11]. Our methodology involved collecting and preprocessing comments from TikTok videos tagged with #harassment, followed by using Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) [14] and K-Means algorithms [54] for topic detection. Although the videos themselves and their descriptions were not directly analyzed during the topic modeling process, to provide context in our findings section, we later reviewed the videos to understand the nature of the content that elicited the comments. This approach allowed us to focus on the discourse within the comments while still acknowledging the context provided by the videos, even though decisions around the inclusion or exclusion of specific videos were based solely on the presence of the #harassment hashtag in the description.

We used an open-source TikTok scraper ¹ to collect a dataset of 216,213 comments from 744 TikTok videos tagged with #harassment. The data gathered for each video includes the post's unique ID, URL, caption text, creation timestamp, author's username, and number of likes. The data was collected on September 26, 2023. All content collected is considered public information, as a human does not need to log in to the website to access it. We made sure that no identifiable information (PII) was presented in our findings.

After collecting the data, we undertook several preprocessing steps to prepare the data for further analysis. First, we removed duplicates to eliminate redundancy and ensure each comment contributes unique information. We also excluded non-English comments to maintain consistency in language analysis, acknowledging that this limits our insights to English-speaking segments of the TikTok community. This left us with 145,515 comments. Then, we tokenized the comments, converted all characters to lowercase for standardization, and applied a regular expression filter to retain only alphanumeric characters and standard punctuation. Next, we fed our data through the DistilBERT model [44], a lighter, faster

¹<https://github.com/davidteather/TikTok-Api>

variant of BERT known for its balance between speed and performance, and K-Means algorithms to identify clusters of similar words in our data for further analysis.

A novel aspect of our methodology is applying positional encoding from transformer architecture [51] after getting the embeddings from the BERT model. In transformers, each position in a sequence is mapped to a vector, creating a matrix where each row represents an encoded object summed with its positional information. We adapted this technique to add a unique bias to the comment embeddings for each video, making comments from the same video closer to each other in the embedding space. We employed sine and cosine functions used in transformers [51] to generate a unique vector for each video. We then added these vectors to the embeddings of the video's comments, ensuring the model considers both textual content and video context for a nuanced analysis. We applied the Elbow Method (see Figure 1) to determine the optimal number of topics for the K-means clustering algorithm [48] and found that nine topics provided the most coherent results. We further analyzed the topics identified using qualitative interpretations [6]. First, we analyzed the top words in each topic using WordCloud (as shown in Figure 2). Then, we delved into each topic's top 50 ranked comments, employing an iterative and inductive qualitative content analysis approach [19]. This method involved reading and interpreting the comments to uncover deeper contextual meanings.

4 RESULTS

We identified nine topics in the comments from TikTok videos tagged with #harassment (see Table 1). In this section, we describe each topic in further detail with example quotes throughout.

4.1 Community Response to Threats

This topic addressed harassment and threats, highlighting significant videos such as a woman's reports of online threats being ignored and a neighbor's aggressive behavior. Comments revealed frustration with police handling of online harassment, likening it to victim-blaming: "Saying you should expect that type of behavior is giving me 'Well look what you're wearing, what did you expect?!'". There were calls for escalating matters to higher sovereignty or taking personal action: "If the cops won't do anything, can it be escalated to federal???" Discussions also focused on the potential for legal action against harassers, "Sue!! You were threatened, harassed, and asked to work in the same conditions. They basically did nothing and there are employment laws on this shit!!". Additionally, there was noticeable skepticism about the authenticity of incidents, with calls for more evidence or details: "we're only getting half the story here for sure".

This topic uncovered the community's deep concern and varied reactions to threats, highlighting a demand for more effective law enforcement intervention. While frustration over perceived inaction and victim-blaming attitudes was evident, there was also a proactive push among users for legal action.

4.2 Polarized Debates on Social Media

This topic depicted how comments often challenge the truth of stories, leading to polarized debates. Notable examples included a

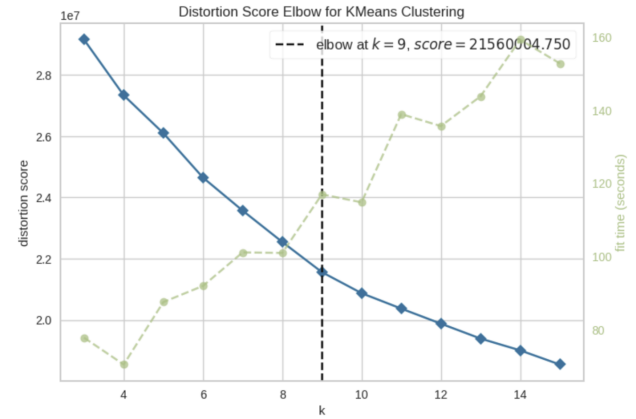


Figure 1: The Elbow curve with the scoring parameter metric of distortion which computes the sum of squared distances from each point to its assigned center. The x-axis, which is k, shows the number of clusters. The graph illustrates the distortion score for all the k values obtained for the k-means algorithm.



Figure 2: Word cloud of topics created from comments on the TikTok videos with #harassment

man alleging his girlfriend's harassment by a celebrity neighbor and another man debating horseback riders in a park, triggering discussions about animal rights and public safety. Comments often questioned these stories' authenticity, accusing individuals of meddling in unrelated matters or seeking attention, illustrated by remarks such as: "I'm wondering why in the world you're sticking your nose in something that doesn't concern you" and "Anything to start an argument. And be in tik tok." These discussions demonstrated the polarization of online debates, with varying opinions. For the horseback rider video, comments ranged from supportive (e.g., "No agreeing with this guy but they should at least have a plan if it does") to critical (e.g., "A kid should be taught by their parent to

Topic	# Comments	Top Ten Words
Community Response to Threats	13053	'police', 'threat', 'story', 'well', 'anything', 'mental', 'threats', 'uttering', 'jail', 'lol'
Polarized Debates on Social Media	12394	'horse', 'people', 'horses', 'know', 'kids', 'agree', 'yet', 'one', 'wrong', 'want'
Self-Defense Discourse	18703	'fangs', 'yes', 'want', 'make', 'one', 'need', 'asking', 'thank', 'say'
Community Empowerment and Protective Humor	11823	'help', 'reason', 'will', 'mom', 'rbf', 'people', 'give', 'lol', 'person', 'short'
Police Response and Gender Biases	18558	'job', 'annoyed', 'call', 'way', 'crying', 'wolf', 'calling', 'police', 'stop', 'new'
Fame and Public Scrutiny	18406	'part', 'tom', 'never', 'people', 'hate', 'mean', 'please', 'literally', 'love', 'stop'
Personal Experiences of Sexual Assault and Harassment	18573	'sa', 'friend', 'story', 'comments', 'one', 'men', 'pls', 'taking', 'bus', 'lol'
Public Perception and Reactions to Harassment	18552	'away', 'men', 'women', 'thought', 'drive', 'shit', 'first', 'one', 'idk', 'freeze'
Entitlement in Society	15453	'people', 'calm', 'badge', 'old', 'entitled', 'walk', 'blue', 'police', 'disabled', 'space'

Table 1: Distribution of each topic's comments and top ten words.

NOT randomly pet animals.”). Similarly, in the harassment allegation video, responses varied from supportive (e.g., *“ITS LOVELY TO SEE A MAN STANDING UP FOR HIS PARTNER IT’S ABOUT TIME !!!”*) to skeptical (e.g., *“I’m sorry but frankly, my dude doesn’t have the looks to be dating a Hollywood Celebrity’s Ex.”*). This variety of responses underscores social media discourse’s contentious and polarized nature.

In summary, this topic showcased the dynamic and often controversial nature of social media discourse, where the authenticity of claims is frequently questioned, leading to polarized debates.

4.3 Self-Defense Discourse

This topic explored a mix of humor and serious discussion around personal safety and self-defense. It was driven by videos of a woman proposing approaches to deal with harassment, prompting diverse reactions from *“Damn you have to be hella creative for these”* to considering ‘fangs’ for self-defense as she suggested *“seriously debating asking my dentist if that’s something they can do for me.”* Community members also shared their own rejection strategies in uncomfortable situations, like *“See my response is to look them in the eye, then look them up and down, say “ew” and walk off. So far it’s worked pretty well.”* Additionally, imaginative approaches to awkward encounters were highlighted, such as *“No I’m sorry I promised myself no more murder and you’d just be enabling me,”* demonstrating the community’s creativity in addressing harassment.

Overall, this topic illustrated the unique intersection of humor and serious discussion in online communities, especially regarding personal safety and self-defense. The creative approaches shared, particularly those advocating for assertive and unconventional methods, showed that the community actively engages with the concept of self-protection.

4.4 Community Empowerment and Protective Humor

This topic explored solidarity, care, and support in public safety, with comments expressing a strong willingness to intervene and help those threatened, such as *“I would 100% throw down for a random person.”* Central to these discussions were videos that focus on help-seeking from strangers, mainly aimed at preventing men from intruding upon women’s personal boundaries and supporting proactive actions against harassers: *“Man I would be thrilled to help out I am old and give zero f-cks.”* Community members used identity markers like motherhood or cultural background as symbols of empowerment against aggression, as seen in comments like *“Find a short Irish Italian or German Woman with gray hair. We are mean as shit and will use these jerks as chew toys.”* Humor and sarcasm

also played a role in these discussions, lightening the conversation around uncomfortable situations (*“Lol as a mom I was like “come find me.”*”).

In summary, this topic highlighted a strong sense of community solidarity and empowerment, with a focus on public safety and mutual support. The willingness of individuals to intervene and protect others underscores a collective commitment to fostering safer environments.

4.5 Police Response and Gender Biases

This topic delved into the community’s frustration with police responses to harassment and perceived gender biases. Key examples included videos of police exceeding boundaries, like entering private property without permission, and varying responses to harassment reports, as shown in comments such as *“It’s good the you confronted them not to be snaking in houses. They should have permission or they can be in trouble.”* A notable theme is the community’s dissatisfaction with police actions, evidenced by comments like *“what’s annoying is the fact they can’t or don’t do anything to help.”* and the disparity between expected and actual responses (*“so the police officers bright idea to stop being harassed is to text them “hey can you please stop”*”). Gender biases in police interactions were also highlighted, with comments like *“The difference is that you’re a woman so you’re being overly emotional and he’s just being a guy do better Akron pd”* indicating a tendency to downplay women’s experiences. Sarcasm was often used to critique these issues, as seen in *“She looks like someone acting as a cop in a bad movie.”*

To conclude, this topic underscored the widespread frustration and concern regarding the police response to harassment, especially when it intersects with gender biases.

4.6 Fame and Public Scrutiny

This topic addressed the treatment and rumors about celebrities like Tom Felton and Hillary Clinton, prompting strong support and sympathy from fans. Comments expressed admiration and critique of the dehumanization of public figures, with statements like *“I am an absolute soldier for HC. Fuck the haters”* and *“I just wanna give him a huge hug he’s literally so sweet and kind, he doesn’t deserve any of this.”* The gendered aspect of public scrutiny was also a frequent theme, with comments like *“I love her pantsuits & I don’t think a woman’s hair & clothes should be scrutinized because a man’s wouldn’t!”* Some comments were pointing out the misogyny against female figures: *“i think so much of her criticism is just misogyny.”* Furthermore, videos about Lizzo’s former dancers broaden the discussion to harassment and bullying within the entertainment industry, which drew varied responses, from supportive (*“We*

believe you ! I'm so sorry !") to skeptical ("Not even a fan of Lizzo but I smell bullshit"). Another notable theme was the audience's demand for more content ("part 2 please"), indicating significant engagement and interest in these topics.

In summary, this topic focused on the impact of fame and the scrutiny it brings. The comments reflected strong empathy for public figures. Moreover, comments on allegations against figures furthered the discourse on harassment within the entertainment industry, which reveals a spectrum of public reactions.

4.7 Personal Experiences of Sexual Assault and Harassment

This topic delved into TikTok users' personal experiences of harassment. User stories revealed the harsh reality of harassment, as seen in comments like *"I was SAD in a movie theater. One of the tiny dollar theaters. A group of guys leaving high five him on their way out."* and *"At 14 a guy I had known for years had taken SA'd me after I kept saying no when he begged it was in my own bedroom in my safe space."* One user's call to share experiences through a video significantly shaped this topic.

Numerous videos contributing to this topic highlighted how individuals, especially women, deal with unwanted attention in public, such as invasive stares or requests, illustrating a sense of entitlement some feel to intrude upon others. The difficulty women face in asserting their boundaries and rejecting such advances was evident: *"he only asked for a number" ok he was most likely aggressive threatening or wouldn't take no for an answer.* Comments frequently mentioned the regular occurrence of sexual assault: *"I have a couple stories lol."* There was also a discussion on defining harassment: *"Pls elaborate on harass,"* indicating a need for clarity and understanding in these conversations.

In general, this topic significantly emphasized the personal experiences of harassment shared by TikTok users and underscored the common violation of personal boundaries. Moreover, the comments questioned what includes harassment, highlighting the continued efforts needed to confront these issues within the community.

4.8 Public Perception and Reactions to Harassment

This topic examined public perceptions and reactions to harassment on TikTok, focusing on how people interpret and respond to these situations. The main video contributing to this topic was about a group of men surrounding a woman's car, prompting comments like *"She should have driven over the top of them... not away... Call it car-ma..."* Other videos featured a man overtly staring at a woman, with reactions such as *"Absolutely pathetic.. yeah let's just stare and watch" smh... cowards.* Discussions revealed gender-based differences in understanding harassment, with men often suggesting simplistic solutions, not fully considering the fear involved. Some male commenters recognized their own bias and limited perspective: *"I am a male and I will admit that my first thought was 'why didn't they drive away'. I have no excuse for that and I realized after that they couldn't."*

Furthermore, victim-blaming was a prominent theme, with comments like *"put your chest away WTF why you shocked,"* countered by criticisms of such attitudes: *"Yeah let's blame the women instead*

of the men pulling down their pants to harass them. That makes sense." Additionally, the comments reflected the complexity of understanding and reacting to harassment, as seen in varied opinions on victims' responses and doubts about their sincerity: *"I mean i understand but why she was smiling... and the way she was saying 'omg' it just looks fake."*

In conclusion, this topic revealed various public perceptions and reactions to harassment. The comments on this topic showed that comprehending harassment can vary greatly, especially between genders. Some comments lacked empathy and blamed the victim, but others were more sympathetic and criticized this blaming.

4.9 Entitlement in Society

This topic examined entitlement in societal interactions, highlighted in TikTok videos where traits like age or attractiveness are seen to justify boundary-crossing behavior. For example, a video featuring an older woman confronting a disabled man over a parking spot ignited discussions on age-related entitlement, with comments like *"The older generation can be so self-entitled it's ridiculous."* Other videos showed how perceived attractiveness is used to justify intrusive behavior and prompted comments like *"idc how attractive you are, i want to be left ALONE when walking down the street."* In addition, some videos, including a video showing an undercover cop tailing a man on probation, sparked mixed reactions to authority-related entitlement. Some comments supported the police's actions (*"Thank you for protecting us Officer"*), while others criticized them as invasions of privacy (*"leave him alone man"*), highlighting concerns about overstepping authority. In summary, this topic uncovered the problematic nature of entitlement in society as expressed through TikTok videos. The comments revealed how perceived entitlement, whether due to age, attractiveness, or authority, can lead to overstepping boundaries and causing discomfort.

5 DISCUSSION

Our investigation into comments of TikTok videos tagged with #harassment revealed nine critical themes and highlighted the complexities of online harassment discourse. In this section, we discuss implications and future directions to build on our findings.

5.1 Policy Implications for Social Media

Our analysis highlighted that despite online platform rules prohibiting threatening content [39], users frequently encounter and are significantly affected by online threats. There is also significant user concern over the frequency and handling of online threats. Some comments in our dataset pointed to a gap in public knowledge regarding legal rights and actions against threats. For example, some users expressed dissatisfaction with police responses and others shared advice and suggested actions. This highlights the important role platforms play as avenues for sharing experiences, amplifying victims' voices, and increasing awareness about how to deal with harassment, as also evident in prior studies about the #Metoo movement [26]. Given the breadth of solution-oriented discourse that we identified, platform policies and governance strategies could be informed by community-driven initiatives to enhance user safety.

For example, TikTok may bring users into conversations about platform governance decisions to ensure that policies work in the best interest of those who will be affected by them.

5.2 Policy Implications for Law Enforcement

The nuanced discussions around law enforcement's response to online harassment uncovered in our study highlight complex relationships between communities and policing practices. Previous studies have extensively explored the intricate relationship between communities and law enforcement [9, 31]. Yet, the discussions on TikTok add a unique, real-time perspective on public opinion toward policing, which law enforcement agencies could leverage to create impactful change. Prior research suggests enhancing interactions between the minority community and law enforcement to improve mutual understanding and support [12]. Future research could focus on understanding these dynamics and exploring how community involvement in policymaking might bridge gaps between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Our study's findings suggest broader implications for social media guidelines and regulations. Policymakers can also use these insights to improve user experiences with reporting systems. Moreover, current legal approaches might not fully address online harassment complexities [1], and public discourse, such as the comments we analyzed, can help policymakers identify pain points for targeted intervention. Future research could examine the roles of various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and community organizations, in creating safer online spaces.

5.3 Opportunities for Prosocial Design

Our research reveals a wide range of public reactions to harassment on TikTok - some sympathetic and others focused on blaming victims. Victim-blaming is harmful and can intensify the trauma victims experience and contribute to a culture that downplays harassment and discourages survivors from speaking out [18, 47]. The prevalence of victim-blaming attitudes on TikTok underscores the need for interventions to improve awareness about harassment and the negative consequences of victim-blaming, and to foster a more supportive online environment. Future work could explore the design of prosocial interventions that promote positive community engagement, which is the focus of many studies within the social computing and HCI communities [2–4]. These interventions could help combat victim-blaming attitudes and promote empathy and understanding within online communities.

Our findings also provide a lens through which we can evaluate and propose enhancements to reporting mechanisms and support systems on social media platforms like TikTok, directly informed by the principles of restorative justice [56]. Additionally, features should be designed in social media for users to reflect on those potentially harmful instances that could help them learn and go through the sensemaking and healing process [43]. Moreover, the identified barriers to the use of existing reporting tools, such as skepticism regarding their effectiveness and a lack of awareness of legal rights and actions (as our findings suggest), highlight the need for platforms to not only improve the accessibility and efficiency of these tools but also to educate users about their rights and

the support available. We propose the integration of community-led initiatives into social media design. Such an approach, aligned with suggestions from [55] regarding digital platforms facilitating restorative justice, could significantly improve the platform's support for victims of harassment, ensuring a safer online environment that empowers users and harnesses community solidarity in combating harassment.

5.4 Limitations and Future Directions

A limitation of our study is that we used #Harassment to identify related videos, but this method may not extensively capture videos related to harassment. We also did not analyze emojis, which are an important part of public discourse [23]. Furthermore, at the time of this analysis, we could not collect replies to the comments. In future work, we plan to collect these data to understand discourse at multiple levels within comment threads to further understand community discussions around harassment.

Our study provides an initial window into how users respond to harassment-related content on TikTok and opens up many directions for future research. To build on our findings, future work can deepen our understanding of online harassment and contribute to developing more effective strategies for creating inclusive, supportive, and safe online environments. For example, subsequent studies might examine how digital platforms could serve as educational tools aiming to enhance legal awareness among users. Additionally, the impact of shared experiences on collective action against harassment could be explored further.

6 CONCLUSION

In this study, we analyzed 45,515 comments from 744 TikTok videos tagged with #harassment to explore patterns and themes in the discussions of harassment among TikTok users. Our findings revealed a complex interplay of empathy, polarization, frustration, and humor. We highlighted the diversity of perspectives in online discussions, ranging from the empathetic understanding of victims' experiences to the critique of societal responses, including law enforcement practices and gender biases. Our data also point to the significant role of humor in navigating sensitive topics, balancing tension alleviation with the seriousness of harassment issues. These insights not only contribute to a deeper understanding of harassment discourse in digital spaces but also point to a need for targeted educational initiatives and informed policy-making. This research paves the way for future explorations into creating safer online environments and fostering a culture of support and respect.

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