

Introduction

Cyber convivencia as a social scenario: Ethics and emotions

La ciberconvivencia como escenario social: Ética y emociones

Guest-edited special issue:

Dr. Eva M. Romera-Félix, University of Córdoba (Spain)

Dr. Rosario Ortega-Ruiz, University of Córdoba (Spain)

Dr. Peter Smith, Goldsmiths, University of London (United Kingdom)



Human beings are social creatures, and they have a strong motivation to maintain high-quality social and interpersonal relationships and to feel they belong to different social groups (Silke et al., 2018). The communication links established on the Internet, increasingly meet most of these needs for social motivation, especially when direct social contact is complex. The Internet has therefore become the ideal context for communication, where information can be exchanged, affective bonds upheld and group cohesion attained. People are attracted to this type of online interaction because it also allows support networks to be built, regardless of physical or even geographical distance.

In the case of young people and adolescents, whose sociability is still closely linked to school, this social motivation is increasingly expressed through messaging or social media, and Internet has become one of the settings for their social convivencia. Through social networks, youngsters not only exchange information, but also establish systems of social and interpersonal relationships between them, which form communication networks that impact their learning and their social and moral development (Ortega-Ruiz, 2020).

The very nature of online communication can also lead to risky online behaviour. The Internet has opened up the possibility of communicating with a much larger audience; it is available 24/7, and the authors of messages or content posted online can remain anonymous (Dennehy et al., 2020). In this context, responsible communication and well-being can be easily disregarded. In addition, the impersonal nature of the screen, the absence of non-verbal communication and the lack of personal proximity in the interactions, which are so important to maintain quality social relationships, can lead minors to end up bullying their peers online without any feelings of remorse about doing so, thus damaging the integrity of the online convivencia, the socializing process and moral sensitivity (Falla et al., 2021). Thus, the widespread use of digital devices can trigger unjustified aggression in young people, not only through cyberbullying and cyber-victimization (Álvarez-García et al., 2017), but also through other forms of aggression such as cyber-ostracism, online exclusion (Schneider et al., 2017) or cyber-hate (Blaya, 2019), among other online risks.

Therefore, it is crucial to analyse how emotions are managed online and explore whether online communication reduces moral sensitivity in order to understand the true impact that this form of online socializing has on the cognitive and emotional development of young people. Through their online experiences, youngsters should learn about and improve their social competence, forming a sustainable ethical code to guide them towards ethical, well-balanced Internet use and online convivencia. In other words, we are currently facing a new challenge represented by finding ways to manage online social interactions. This article focuses precisely on this novel challenge and aims to describe and delve deeper into the dynamics of online interaction, with the aim of improving online convivencia. From this perspective, the selected works show the wide variety of approaches that are currently applied to attempt to

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comprehend the complexity of online social interactions, all of which focus on adolescents and young people, the group that is the most vulnerable to the influence and effects of social media.

The first work, entitled “Cyberostracism: Emotional and behavioral consequences in social media interactions” (Galbava et al., 2021), examines how young people react to experiences of cyberostracism. The results highlight that the more subtle forms of cyberostracism lead to reduced satisfaction in the social needs of belonging, self-esteem, meaningful existence and control, as well as a worsened mood, and that this effect is resistant to the moderating influence of social anxiety. In addition, young people

caught up in situations of social cyberostracism opt for using anti-social responses more frequently than those who do not experience this type of social exclusion on social media.

The second work, entitled “Youths’ coping with cyberhate: Roles of parental mediation and family support” (Wright et al., 2021), explores whether the type of parental mediation, based on restrictive or instructive strategies, influences the likelihood of adolescents implementing coping strategies towards cyberhate, while describing the moderating role of family support. The results indicate that there is a positive relationship between instructive parental mediation, focused on education, and the development of coping strategies in the adolescents. In contrast, a restrictive type of parental mediation focused on protection leads to a less frequent use of coping strategies. In particular, the degree of family support, based on a perception of warmth and support from parents, can enhance or reduce the strength of these relationships, which is why it has been identified as a key element in family dynamics to ensure that adolescents cope effectively with the risks associated with the use of social media.

The third work, “Motivation and perception of Hong Kong university students about social media news” (Kong et al., 2021), analyses the nature, motivation and level of media literacy of university students’ selection of the news they read on social media. The work concludes that the main motivating factors among students for using news reports on social media includes searching for information and socialising. Motivation for socialisation is the stronger motivation, although this varies according to the level of media literacy, and is higher in those with higher levels of literacy. Therefore, the greater the literacy in media news, the more concerned the university students were about their social interactions, which had a direct impact on their quality.

The fourth work, “Anxiety and self-esteem in the cyber-victimization profiles of adolescents” (Núñez et al., 2021) had a two-fold objective: on the one hand, to identify the victimization profiles occurring in adolescence, dealing with victimization and cybervictimization separately; and, on the other, to describe the association of these profiles with two of the individual’s characteristics: social anxiety and self-esteem. The results indicate that profiles of victimization and cybervictimization differ, although in some aspects there is co-occurrence of both forms. Higher levels of social anxiety were found in the three victimization profiles, together with lower levels of self-esteem. In both cases, it was highlighted that students with cyber-victimization profiles present significantly lower levels of social anxiety and higher self-esteem than the other two types of victimization profiles (co-occurrence and traditional



victimization). This highlights the importance of including both types of victimization in prevention and intervention programs.

Finally, the work entitled “Cyber-gossip, cyberaggression, problematic use of the Internet and family communication” (Romera et al., 2021), looked into the effect of filial disclosure on the phenomenon of cyberbullying, and the mediating role of two types of online behaviour: cyber-gossip and problematic Internet use. The main conclusions of the study highlight the protective effect of family communication on the involvement in cyberbullying, which is mediated by the length of time young people spend on social media and the normalization of cyber-gossip behaviour within the peer group. In addition, significant differences were found in the age of the schoolchildren, which highlights the importance of promoting educational strategies from an early age.

In conclusion, the works summarised in this article have contributed both to further our knowledge of the individual and contextual characteristics, antecedents and consequences of different online social dynamics, and to provide valuable guidelines to develop effective interventions to cope with the risks associated with social media use. They also underline the importance of setting up prevention programs at different levels and with target populations, such as parents, schoolchildren and teachers.

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