Cosmopolitan warriors of the keyboard: cyberbullying as symbolic violent extremism

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R e s e a r c h   H i g h l i g h t s

One can become a victim of cyberbullying when one does not maintain one's online privacy. Using Bourdieu's framework of the "theory of practice", it is found that anonymity is the key to avoiding cyberbullying. In other words, an invisible "keyboard warrior" is an invincible "keyboard warrior".

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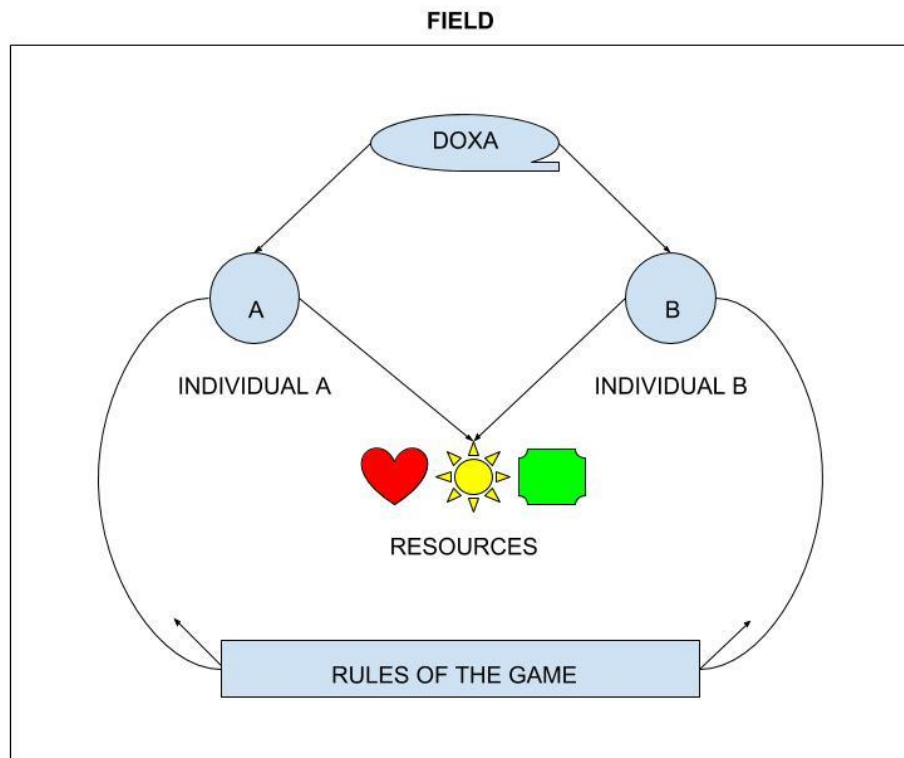# G r a p h i c a l   A b s t r a c t (optional)

Figure 1. Bourdieu's "theory of practice" visualised (Chan, 2018)

Research Objectives

I attempt to flesh out the reasons for cyberbullying by imagining the site of interaction as a "field" of activity within Bourdieu's "theory of practice" paradigm. By doing so, it is hoped that the picture of cyberbullying becomes clearer, in the way one might be able to identify a bully in a playground.

Methodology

The method used for this paper is a literature review. The search for literature on cyberbullying was performed using Google Scholar. Cyberbullying was found to be a relatively recent

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phenomenon, thus most of the literature does not date back very far. My review thus included most of the existing studies on cyberbullying in Malaysia, comparing these to the larger bulk of research on cyberbullying elsewhere around the world. A pattern that I noticed was that most of these studies were conducted using an information technology or psychology paradigm. I thus aim to contribute to this corpus of work through the sociological paradigm, applying Bourdieu's framework of capital to explain the phenomenon.

Results

Bourdieu conceptualised the "field" as an arena in which a game takes place between its players (Harrington et al., 2015). In the case of cyberbullying, the "field" is the type of Internet platform where the victim and bully interact, for example, social media such as Facebook. The victim, the bully, and the other individuals are competing for resources or "capital" which in this case is popularity. The "rules of the game" would be the internal logic of how the meme operates, as well as how to get more Facebook "likes". Bullying, or "symbolic violence", comes into the picture when "dominance" occurs. "Dominance" is the use of power over others to make them do something against their will. It is observed that the "doxa" (knowledge of how to use the formal rules to one's advantage) that Internet users should best employ is the one that minimises personal information as much as possible, to avoid becoming a cyberbully victim.

Findings

In conclusion, the forms of cultural capital that may be relevant to competition in the offline "field" do not provide advantage in the virtual "field". The most useful cultural capital is that of anonymity. In other words, an invisible "keyboard warrior" is an invincible "keyboard warrior".

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Pendekatan 'Top-down' dan 'Bottom-up' dalam mendepani cabaran kesepaduan sosial; and DCP2017-009/1 Etnisiti dan Ektremisme**.**

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