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From Phone Calls to Social Media: Mapping the Evolution of Technology-Mediated Violence Against Women

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Abstract

Context: Technology-mediated violence against women has evolved from harassment by telephone and mobile phone to abuse through the Internet, social media, and digital platforms. The field has grown rapidly but remains fragmented across terminology, disciplines, technologies, and geographical contexts.

Aim: This study traces the growth, intellectual structure, collaboration patterns, and thematic evolution of research on technology-mediated violence against women from 2001 to 2025.

Approach: A bibliometric and science-mapping analysis was conducted using Scopus data. After PRISMA-guided screening, 2,990 articles and reviews from 1,256 sources were retained. Descriptive indicators, Bradford's law, author impact, country productivity and collaboration, and trend topics were analyzed using Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny, and co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks were mapped using VOSviewer.

Key Findings: The literature grew at an annual rate of 23.24% and involved 10,397 authors and 252,612 references. The United States led corresponding-author output (749 articles; 25.1%) and occupied the most central position in the international collaboration network. Research themes shifted from early psychosocial and mobile-phone concerns toward social media, online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, misogyny, and mental health.

Interpretation: Digital technologies have increasingly reshaped how, where, and through which channels violence against women is perpetrated, researched, and discussed.

Contribution: This study maps the intellectual evolution of technology-mediated violence against women and identifies key geographical, collaborative, and emerging thematic priorities for future research.

Keywords: technology-mediated violence; violence against women; social media; cyber violence; bibliometric analysis; science mapping

1. Introduction

Mobile telephones, the Internet, and social media have revolutionized interpersonal communication. While these technologies offer significant opportunities for information access, social support, empowerment, and personal safety, they can also be used to harass, surveil, coerce,

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stalk, sexually abuse and otherwise cause harm to women. Technology-facilitated violence and abuse (TFVA) is thus defined as harmful behaviors, both online and offline, enabled by technologies that span from text messaging, email and social media, to GPS tracking, connected devices and artificial intelligence (AI) (Bailey et al., 2021).

Digital technologies do not constitute a new type of violence; rather, they extend existing patterns of gender-based violence while enabling new behaviors that would otherwise be impossible or very different in scale, duration, scope, and visibility. Examples range from cyberbullying, doxing, image-based sexual abuse, cyberstalking, and sexual harassment to hate speech (Bansal et al., 2024). This continuity is particularly apparent in intimate relationships. Boethius et al. (2023), in interviews with 21 Swedish women who had experienced intimate partner violence, described digital technology as a "double-edged sword." While perpetrators used digital technologies to threaten, harass, monitor, and exercise coercive control even after separation, victim-survivors used the same technologies to seek support and information, preserve evidence, monitor perpetrators for safety, and maintain social connections. Thus, technology could both extend perpetrators' capacity for abuse and provide women with resources for protection and resistance.

The implications extend beyond personal privacy and security to women's psychological and social well-being. A recent systematic review of 21 studies from 11 countries linked technology-facilitated sexual violence to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, negative body image, shame, social isolation, and relational difficulties (Benítez-Hidalgo et al., 2026). Likewise, 46.1% of 455 female university students in Bangladesh had experienced technology-facilitated sexual harassment, and those exposed were more likely to report anxiety (AOR = 3.80), depression (AOR = 3.32), and suicidal thoughts (AOR = 4.86) (Jannite et al., 2025). Despite growing scholarly interest, the knowledge base remains fragmented across terminology, disciplines, technologies, forms of victimization, and geographical contexts. Research has historically focused on Western contexts, and recent evidence reveals substantial gaps in non-Western contexts (Quilty & Flynn, 2026). Meanwhile, inconsistent understanding of the content, scope, and prevalence of such violence hinders adequate monitoring and policy responses (Rigotti & McGlynn, 2022). In library and information science, bibliometric studies provide a comprehensive overview of research growth, publication and citation trends, national and international collaboration, funding, leading authors and institutions, and major publication sources. They help assess the research landscape, identify existing gaps, and highlight future research directions (Seifi et al., 2026).

The present study analyzes the evolution of this research field using bibliometric and science-mapping methods. In particular, it traces publication growth, influential authors and sources, international collaboration, keyword co-occurrence, and temporal trends in research topics. The study aims to consolidate a fragmented knowledge base, identify emerging themes and understudied areas, and offer an evidence-based map for future research on technology-mediated violence against women.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study aims to:

- Map the annual growth, productivity, and citation performance of publications on technology-mediated violence against women from 2001 to 2025.
- Identify the core journals sustaining this literature using Bradford's Law.

- Assess the local impact of leading authors through h-, g-, and m-indices.
- Examine country-level productivity and the structure of international co-authorship networks.
- Trace the temporal evolution of research themes through keyword co-occurrence and trend-topic analysis.
- Highlight geographic, conceptual, and thematic gaps to inform future research directions.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptualizing Technology-Mediated Violence Against Women

Technology-mediated violence against women has become a wide-ranging conceptual area that refers to the use, misuse, or repurposing of digital technology to perpetrate, facilitate, intensify, or extend abusive behavior. The current literature uses the term technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) for abuse that uses technological tools to harm, harass, threaten, coerce, exploit, or violate another person (Vogler et al., 2023; Koukopoulos et al., 2026). This is a broad concept, as technology does not necessarily produce new forms of violence; rather, it can facilitate new ways in which existing patterns of harassment, surveillance, sexual violence, coercion and control are perpetrated and intensified. The types of digital technology used in this abuse include mobile phones, social media, messaging applications, online accounts, GPS systems, smart-home technology and other connected technology (Boxall et al., 2025; Koukopoulos et al., 2026).

The terminology for these practices remains varied. The terms “technology-facilitated abuse,” “technology-facilitated intimate partner violence,” “technology-facilitated gender-based violence,” “digital abuse,” “cyber violence,” and “technology-facilitated violence against women” overlap, but not in the same way or with the same disciplinary focus. In a global Delphi study, 316 academics, practitioners, and policymakers identified “technology” and “facilitated” as the most preferred terminological components, although opinions were mixed on whether an explicitly gendered term should be part of a universal definition (Koukopoulos et al., 2026). In the final terminology-ranking exercise, “gender-based” was the most highly ranked descriptor of the violence dimension, and “against women and girls” and “against women” also garnered significant support (Koukopoulos et al., 2026).

This lack of consensus is critical because different definitions and measurements can yield significantly different estimates of the extent of technology-facilitated violence. In the context of violence against women (VAW), technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is not simply harmful behavior that occurs online; it results from the interplay between technology-enabled opportunities and prevailing gendered power dynamics. Boxall et al. (2025), for instance, define technology-facilitated intimate partner violence as the use of technologies to commit an act and/or sustain a pattern of abusive behavior toward a current or former intimate partner. Such behaviors include threatening communications, online harassment, account intrusion, surveillance and stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate material. Importantly, women are more likely to be subjected to coercive control, continued harassment, and online stalking within broader systems of gendered domination (Boxall et al., 2025). The issue is therefore not only the device or platform but also how technology enhances perpetrators’ capacity to maintain power, access, visibility, and control.

This offline–online connection is especially evident in intimate and family relationships. Storey and Pina (2025) define technology-facilitated intimate partner violence (IPV) as IPV in which current or former partners use technology to physically, sexually, financially, or

psychologically abuse or coerce the victim. Such abuse can cause fear and intimidation, invasions of privacy, image-based offenses, unwanted sexual attention, and other harms. Powell and Stockley (2026) similarly conceptualize TFA in family violence as a continuum of tactics rather than a single discrete act, with different technological practices carrying varying implications for victim-survivors' risk and safety. This digital continuum operates alongside, rather than in place of, physical and non-digital forms of abuse. Technological advances also influence the timing and location of violence. Digital connectivity enables perpetrators to contact victim-survivors regardless of geographic boundaries and extends surveillance and coercive control into private spaces that were traditionally harder to reach. Gullon-Scott (2026) argues that social media, mobile technologies, messaging systems, and surveillance tools enable coercive power to extend beyond the physical realm, and that constant connectivity erodes the boundary between public and private life. In this way, technology can enhance the persistence, scalability, visibility, anonymity, and reach of abusive actions. Harm can continue beyond physical separation and spread across various platforms, devices, audiences, and geographic areas.

The concept also extends beyond romantic relationships. Koukopoulos et al. (2026) report strong expert support for a broad definition that incorporates abuse perpetrated or suffered by individuals, groups and communities. Likewise, technology-facilitated violence against women can include hate speech, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, doxing, impersonation, threats, non-consensual dissemination of images, and more. TFGBV has been defined as deliberate acts of harm, threats, coercion, or silencing of women, including through trolling, impersonation, targeted threats, stalking, sexualized abuse, and doxing, among politically active women (Koch et al., 2025). Such conceptualizations show that technology-mediated violence has consequences beyond personal safety and extends to women's roles in professional, political, and public life.

Intersectionality presents an additional conceptual challenge. Technology-mediated violence is gendered, but it is not experienced in the same way by all women. Race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, age, disability, and other social positions can shape exposure, types of victimization, and consequences. Using a nationally representative sample of 2,752 young adults in the United States, Vogler et al. (2023) reported that sexual-minority young adults were more likely than heterosexual cisgender young adults to experience TFA, and that sexual-minority cisgender women were more likely than heterosexual cisgender women to do so. Carlson (2026) builds on this by arguing that technology-facilitated abuse experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women must be understood as "gendered, racialised, and embedded in settler-colonial structures", as online harassment, surveillance, and abuse can extend existing racial and gendered oppression. Although enabled by digital technology, technology-mediated violence is therefore not a distinct type of violence but an evolving socio-technical extension and transformation of gendered violence.

Technologies offer new avenues, tools, and contexts for perpetuating or exacerbating the existing dynamics of oppression including relations of power, coercion, sexual violence, harassment, surveillance and discrimination. At the same time, new technologies continually create new avenues and vocabularies for abuse. A comprehensive conceptual framework of violence against women therefore needs to capture continuity with existing violence against women, as well as the unique affordances of digital technology, while reflecting the context of relationships, forms of harm, consent, gender power dynamics and intersecting vulnerabilities, as noted above (Boxall et al., 2025; Koch et al., 2025; Koukopoulos et al., 2026).

2.2 From Telephone Harassment to Social Media

Violence against women in the digital sphere is not a new phenomenon but a technological elaboration and escalation of existing patterns of harassment, intimidation, surveillance, and control. Scholarship has long documented how earlier communication technologies were used to perpetrate gendered harassment. For instance, using Canadian national survey data, Smith and Morra (1994) studied obscene, threatening, and silent telephone calls to women. Of the 1,990 women interviewed, 66.5% reported receiving a telephone call that was obscene or threatening at some point in their lives and 36.2% reported receiving such calls in the past year. The study also showed that such calls were not merely disruptive but could serve as instruments of fear and social control (Smith & Morra, 1994). Macmillan et al. (2000) similarly examined obscene telephone calls alongside street and stranger harassment, showing that such harassment occurred in both public and private settings and shaped women's perceptions of safety.

The advent of mobile phones altered both the spatial and temporal dimensions of harassment. Because mobile phones accompany users everywhere, they provide constant channels of contact, monitoring, intimidation and unwanted communication because of their ubiquity in everyday settings. Cardoso et al. (2019) highlight the importance of this shift in their review of emerging technologies and women's safety, noting that mobile phones and e-mail were particularly linked to perpetration, while GPS and computer software could also enable stalking, monitoring, and control. The analysis also revealed threats perpetrated via SMS and social media, and the sharing of private photos and videos without consent, as significant technology-related harms. Technological progress thus expanded the scope of abuse from direct voice communication to asynchronous, persistent, recordable, and increasingly networked forms of communication. The convergence of smartphones, the Internet, apps, and social media significantly expanded this opportunity structure.

Social media marked a further shift, transforming violence from an interpersonal act into a highly visible, scalable, and networked phenomenon. Harassment can now continue, be shared again, reach more people, and persist across multiple accounts and communication channels. Recent evidence illustrates this development. In a sample of 1,177 adult women in Spain, López-Barranco et al. (2025) noted that 68.2% had suffered gender-based violence on social networks and 62.7% had suffered sexual violence online; gender-based violence on social networks was also significantly related to in-person sexual violence. This research supports the view that online and offline violence are not separate spheres but interconnected dimensions of women's victimization. At the same time, digital tools have created a paradox. Technologies that enable surveillance and harassment also offer women opportunities for protection, evidence generation, communication, seeking assistance, and resistance.

As outlined by Boethius et al. (2023), digital technologies were a double-edged sword: they enabled perpetrators to exercise coercive control, but they also helped women maintain social contacts, access information and support, record abusive messages and images, and publicly challenge perpetrators. Pei et al. (2022) also demonstrate the ways in which marginalized migrant women used mobile communication to share information, create support networks, resist harassment at the workplace and engage in digital resistance, and the differential outcomes for those with less access to, and/or skills with, mobile communication. Social media has also made domestic violence easier to discuss in interpersonal and institutional settings and has enabled mass mobilization of public opinion. For example, the #MeToo movement became an important vehicle

for collective disclosure and feminist mobilization, including among women who had experienced harassment and assault in the past (Pei et al., 2022).

Choi et al. (2026) show how hashtags, hyperlinks, issue framing, and information mobilization around the Violence Against Women Act emerged on social media, demonstrating that social media is not only a site of victimization but also a platform for policy advocacy and social mobilization. The latest phase extends beyond social networking into data-rich, AI-powered environments. As growing volumes of information about violence against women are generated and shared through online forums and social media, machine learning and other big-data tools offer opportunities to detect complex patterns that traditional methods may miss. Digital technologies are also becoming part of survivor support: Lombard et al. (2026) explore how chatbots can support women experiencing domestic violence and abuse while addressing their safety and privacy concerns.

2.3 Types of Online and Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) encompasses a range of distinct and often overlapping forms of violence against women perpetrated through social media, messaging apps, mobile devices, online platforms and other electronic technologies. The literature does not refer to one particular behavior but to a continuum of behaviors, such as online sexual harassment, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, image-based sexual abuse, sexual coercion, misogynistic abuse, surveillance and technology-facilitated coercive control. In intimate relationships, these behaviors can be direct (e.g., harassment, intimidation, or monitoring) or indirect (e.g., using public or social platforms to damage the victim's reputation) (Storey & Pina, 2025). Using a typology, Storey and Pina (2025) distinguished four broad categories of abuse: cyberstalking and coercive control, harassment, image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), and indirect nonsexual abuse.

Online sexual harassment is particularly common and can involve unwanted sexual messages, sexist comments, sexual solicitation, unsolicited explicit images, and persistent unwanted attention. Of the 381 university-aged women studied by Salerno-Ferraro et al. (2022), 84% experienced sexually inappropriate messages, 74% received sexist comments, 70% found themselves targeted with seductive advances, and 64% received unwanted sexual attention. Blocking perpetrators did not always stop the harassment, which in some cases escalated into ongoing digital stalking. Similar patterns occur in specific digital environments. Among 182 North American women who played online games, 56.6% reported experiencing at least one form of sexual harassment, while 45.6% had witnessed sexual harassment directed toward other women (Zhou & Peterson, 2025). Dey (2024) further identifies image-based abuse, online chat-room harassment, and trolling as interconnected forms of online sexual harassment within Indian universities and conceptualizes them as continuous with offline sexual and gender-based violence.

A particularly serious form is image-based sexual abuse, which includes the non-consensual creation, taking, distribution, or threatened distribution of intimate images and videos, including manipulated material (Rigotti & McGlynn, 2022). Two important manifestations are sextortion, in which sexual images are threatened with distribution to coerce the victim, and non-consensual sexting, involving the distribution of sexual images without the depicted person's consent (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2022). In their study of 1,820 Spanish adolescents, Gámez-Guadix et al. (2022) reported victimization rates of 2.6% for sextortion and 3.4% for non-consensual sexting; girls experienced non-consensual sexting victimization at twice the rate of boys (4.6% versus 2.2%).

Another important dimension is cyberbullying and other contact-based online harms. Digital environments enable intentional aggression to be enacted via social media, messaging applications, and online forums with anonymity and constant connectivity potentially extending perpetrators' reach (Yu et al., 2026). These experiences are influenced by gender, too. In the study by Enock et al. (2026), which drew on a nationally representative sample of the UK adult population (N = 1,992), overall exposure to harmful online content did not differ greatly between men and women, but women were more likely to experience contact-based harms, including image-based abuse, cyberstalking, and cyberflashing, and to report psychological burden and safety concerns. TFGBV therefore extends beyond overt harassment to encompass privacy violations, digital monitoring and tracking, and coercive control.

Kamarudin et al. (2026) conducted a systematic review of 34 studies to classify women's risks in the cyber domain into three interconnected categories: interpersonal cyber abuse, data-privacy and surveillance vulnerabilities, and technology-facilitated coercion and control. These categories frequently overlap rather than remaining distinct. Consequently, TFGBV is best understood as a continuum of digitally mediated practices through which sexual harassment, stalking, image-based abuse, intimidation, surveillance, and coercive control can reinforce existing gendered inequalities across both online and offline environments.

2.4 Impacts, Vulnerabilities, and Experiences of Victimization

The psychological, social, academic and safety impacts of technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) can be significant, and these impacts can differ in severity by gender, sexuality, age, and social context. Evidence consistently links TFA with depression, anxiety, psychological distress, traumatic stress, and reduced well-being. Among 455 female university students in Bangladesh, 46.1% had experienced technology-facilitated sexual harassment. In this sample, 47.7% reported moderate-to-severe distress, 78.2% stress, 36.9% anxiety, 59.8% depression, and 34.9% suicidal thoughts. Women exposed to such harassment had significantly higher odds of anxiety (AOR = 3.80), depression (AOR = 3.32), and suicidal thoughts (AOR = 4.86) than non-victims (Jannite et al., 2025).

Comparable effects emerge among university populations. McMillan et al. (2025) examined 1,543 college students and found that 35.5% reported TFA experiences. Greater exposure was associated with increased academic consequences and poorer mental health, while sexual-minority students reported significantly greater exposure, depression, anxiety, and traumatic stress than heterosexual students. Moreover, each increase in TFA exposure was associated with increased anxiety and traumatic stress, with cisgender women and transgender/gender-diverse students reporting greater levels than cisgender men (McMillan et al., 2025).

Vulnerability is also intersectional. In a nationally representative U.S. study of 2,752 adults aged 18–35, including 504 sexual and gender minority (SGM) participants, SGMs experienced higher rates of TFA and nearly all measured forms of abuse compared with non-SGMs (Vogler et al., 2023). Gendered differences are similarly evident in Australia: although overall lifetime TFA prevalence was not exclusively gendered, women were more likely to experience sexual coercion, intimate-partner abuse, and multiple co-occurring forms of abuse from the same perpetrator (Powell & Flynn, 2023).

Victimization can also restrict women's professional and public participation. According to the systematic review by Koch et al. (2025), which included 48 studies, 81% of politically engaged women exposed to TFGBV reported psychological distress, anxiety, or fear; 31% reported (re)traumatization; 39% reported reduced online activity; and 20% reported withdrawal from political roles. These findings highlight that technology-mediated victimization is not limited to

online interactions but can affect women's mental health, safety, education, relationships, and participation in public life.

2.5 Research Development, Gaps, and the Need for Bibliometric Mapping

Research on technology-mediated violence against women has expanded alongside the diffusion of mobile communication, Web 2.0, social media, and other digital technologies; however, the literature remains conceptually and methodologically fragmented. Backe et al. (2018) reviewed more than 200 publications on cyberviolence and found no consensus on definitions or on theoretical and methodological approaches, with research geographically concentrated in the United States, Canada, and Australia. They also noted that cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and image-based abuse were frequently studied in separate disciplinary silos. Subsequent reviews have identified similar limitations.

Watson (2024) identified 61 studies on the online abuse of women published between 2000 and 2020 and highlighted the interdisciplinary and fragmented nature of the evidence; 52 of these studies framed online abuse as a structural problem related to gender-based violence. Geographic disparities are also pronounced. Bansal et al. (2024) screened 2,042 records and analyzed 97 sources on technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Asian low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), finding no studies from Central Asia or the Pacific Islands. The review also identified inconsistent terminology, inconsistent prevalence data, and weak reporting mechanisms. Previous bibliometric research has demonstrated the value of science mapping, but it has mostly focused on narrower aspects of the field.

In their bibliometric analysis of 641 publications on sexting published between 2009 and 2019, Rodríguez-García et al. (2023) identified cyberbullying and adolescents among the primary themes. Likewise, a recent bibliometric analysis of online gender-based violence (OGBV) covering 2016–2025 found that cyberviolence, cyberbullying, online harassment, and social media formed significant clusters, whereas prevention remained relatively underdeveloped (Rakhmawati et al., 2025). These patterns warrant a more extensive longitudinal bibliometric analysis that tracks the literature from earlier communication technologies, such as the telephone, mobile phone, text messaging, and e-mail, to the Internet and contemporary social media. Such mapping can integrate publication growth, influential sources and authors, international collaboration, citation impact, thematic structure, and emerging topics within a single framework and reveal how the intellectual landscape of technology-mediated violence against women has changed over time.

3. Research Methodology

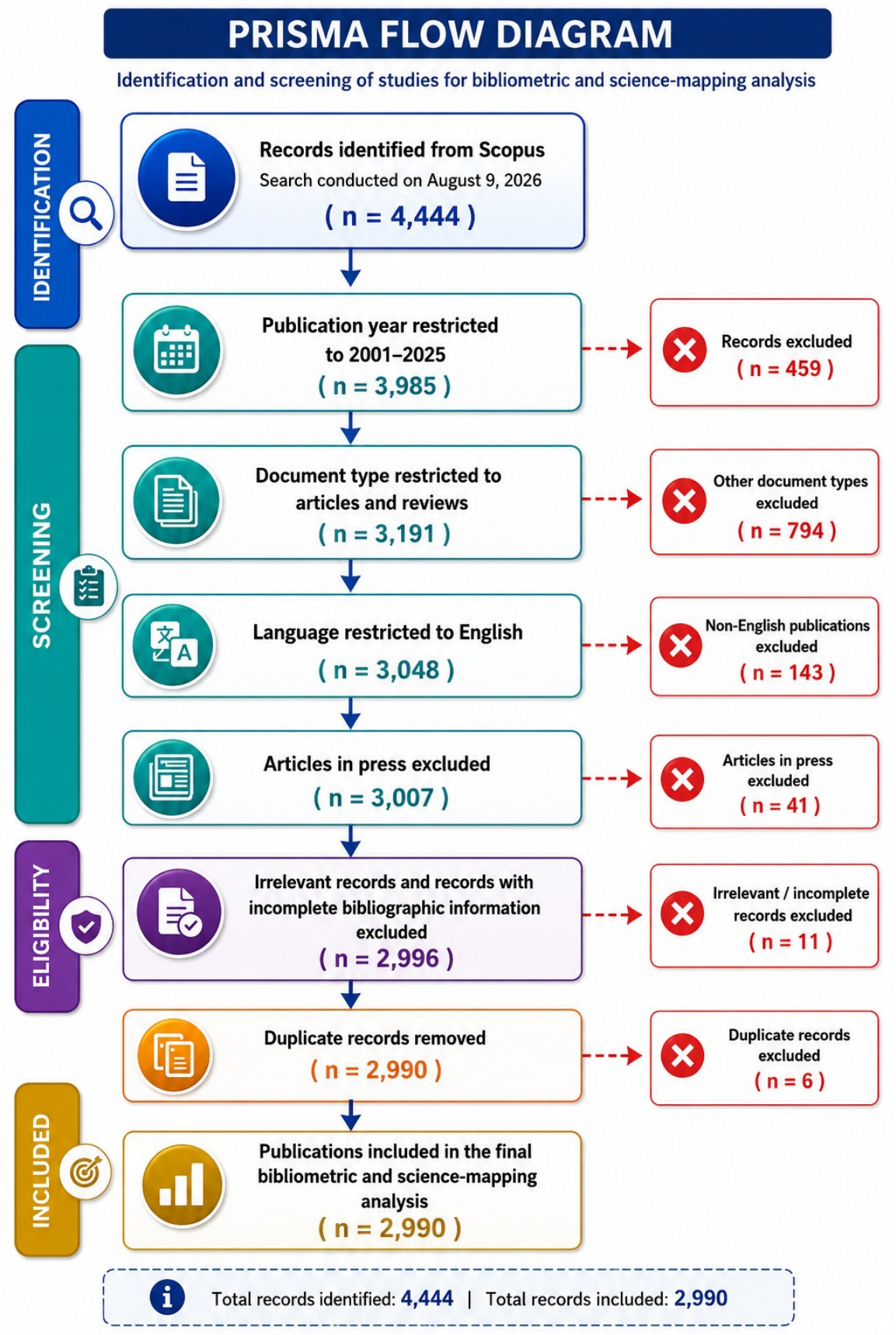
3.1 Study Design and Data Source

This study used a bibliometric and science-mapping design to examine the evolution of research on technology-mediated violence against women from 2001 to 2025. Scopus was selected as the bibliographic source because it provides standardized publication, citation, author, affiliation, and keyword metadata. The analysis encompassed publication growth, citation impact, influential journals and authors, geographical contribution, international collaboration, and the evolution of research themes over time. The final analytical sample consisted of 2,990 documents from 1,256 sources.

3.2 Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted in Scopus using the TITLE-ABS-KEY search field. The search strategy combined three principal concept groups (communication technologies, women, and forms of violence or abuse) using Boolean operators (see Appendix A).

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Publication Screening and Selection for Bibliometric Analysis (2001–2025)



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the Scopus search and screening process.

As shown in Figure 1, the Scopus search identified 4,444 records. After applying publication-year, document-type, language, publication-stage, relevance/completeness, and duplicate-removal criteria, 2,990 publications were retained for the final bibliometric and science-mapping analysis. This systematic screening process ensured that the final dataset consisted of relevant, English-language articles and reviews published between 2001 and 2025.

3.3 Bibliometric Analysis

Descriptive bibliometric indicators included annual scientific production and growth, citations, sources, authorship, document types, and collaboration patterns. Bradford's Law was used to identify core publication sources, while author-level h-, g-, and m-indices were examined to assess local scholarly impact. Country productivity was evaluated using corresponding-author affiliation, single-country publications (SCP), multiple-country publications (MCP), and international co-authorship. Keyword and temporal analyses were used to identify major themes and changes in research emphasis across the study period.

3.4 Science Mapping and Network Visualization

Bibliometric performance analysis was conducted using the Bibliometrix package in R through the Biblioshiny interface. Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny was used to generate descriptive bibliometric indicators, including annual scientific production and growth, citation trends, source productivity, Bradford's Law, author impact metrics (h-, g-, and m-indices), country productivity, and international collaboration indicators, including single-country publications (SCP) and multiple-country publications (MCP). VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) was subsequently used for science mapping and network visualization, including country co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence analyses. The complementary use of Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny and VOSviewer enabled the integration of bibliometric performance analysis with network-based science mapping.

4. Results

Table 1. Main Characteristics of the Bibliometric Dataset (2001–2025)

Category	Indicator	Value
Dataset	Timespan	2001–2025
	Sources	1,256
	Documents	2,990
	Annual growth rate (%)	23.24
	Average document age (years)	5.2
	Average citations per document	30.82
	References	252,612
Document content	Keywords Plus	7,080
	Author keywords	6,048
Authors	Total authors	10,397
	Authors of single-authored documents	427
Collaboration	Single-authored documents	451
	Co-authors per document	4.05
	International co-authorships (%)	22.24

Document type	Articles	2,838
	Reviews	152

Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Table 1 summarizes the key features of the bibliometric dataset for 2001–2025. The analysis covered 2,990 documents published in 1,256 sources, with an annual growth rate of 23.24%, showing that research in this area has expanded considerably. The documents received an average of 30.82 citations and contained 252,612 references. The dataset included 10,397 authors, with an average of 4.05 co-authors per document, indicating a clear tendency toward collaborative research. International co-authorship accounted for 22.24% of publications, and only 451 documents were single-authored. Articles (2,838) far outnumbered reviews (152). The 7,080 Keywords Plus and 6,048 author keywords also reflect the thematic diversity of the literature.

Table 2. Annual Citation Impact of Publications (2001–2025)

Year	Mean citations per article	Documents (n)	Mean citations per year	Citable years
2001	81.67	3	3.14	26
2002	64	1	2.56	25
2003	45	4	1.88	24
2004	90	6	3.91	23
2005	101.6	10	4.62	22
2006	159.33	3	7.59	21
2007	178.91	11	8.95	20
2008	465.43	14	24.5	19
2009	126.21	14	7.01	18
2010	203.23	13	11.95	17
2011	81.25	20	5.08	16
2012	67.76	29	4.52	15
2013	88.36	47	6.31	14
2014	71.62	69	5.51	13
2015	70.12	88	5.84	12
2016	52.34	73	4.76	11
2017	55.22	91	5.52	10
2018	55.43	166	6.16	9
2019	38.67	173	4.83	8
2020	35.38	242	5.05	7
2021	30.02	332	5	6
2022	16.86	338	3.37	5
2023	12.58	346	3.14	4
2024	7.07	445	2.36	3
2025	3.12	452	1.56	2

Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Table 2 shows the annual citation impact of the publications from 2001 to 2025. Citation performance varied considerably across the study period. Publications from 2008 had the greatest impact, with an average of 465.43 citations per article and 24.50 citations each year. High citation averages were also observed for 2007 and 2010. In contrast, more recent publications, especially those from 2024 and 2025, have lower citation averages, mainly because of their short citation windows. Meanwhile, annual output increased sharply, from only a few documents in the early 2000s to 452 publications in 2025. These results indicate a marked increase in research output, while older publications have had more time to accumulate citations.

Table 3. Core Journals Identified by Bradford's Law

Rank	Source	Documents (n)	Cumulative documents	Bradford zone
1	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	90	90	Zone 1
2	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	87	177	Zone 1
3	PLOS ONE	73	250	Zone 1
4	Child Abuse & Neglect	59	309	Zone 1
5	Feminist Media Studies	59	368	Zone 1
6	Computers in Human Behavior	49	417	Zone 1
7	Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking	45	462	Zone 1
8	Violence Against Women	35	497	Zone 1
9	BMC Public Health	28	525	Zone 1
10	Frontiers in Psychology	28	553	Zone 1

Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Table 3 shows the core journals identified by Bradford's law. The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health led with 90 publications, followed by the Journal of Interpersonal Violence (87) and PLOS ONE (73). Child Abuse & Neglect and Feminist Media Studies each published 59 papers. Together, the ten leading journals published 553 papers (18.5% of the dataset), indicating that a substantial share of the research is concentrated in a small number of journals. All ten journals fall within Bradford Zone 1, confirming their status as core journals in this research area. The diversity of these journals, spanning public health, interpersonal violence, psychology, media studies, and human–technology interaction, underscores the interdisciplinary nature of research on technology-mediated violence against women.

Table 4. Local Impact of the Most Influential Authors

Author	h-index	g-index	m-index	Total citations	Publications (n)	First publication
Finkelhor D	13	16	0.565	1,799	16	2004
Mitchell KJ	11	16	0.524	1,670	16	2006
McCauley HL	8	8	0.615	529	8	2014
Ullman SE	8	10	0.308	428	10	2001
Ybarra ML	8	9	0.381	1,314	9	2006
Aizenkot D	7	7	0.778	268	7	2018
Chen Y	7	10	0.538	176	10	2014
Li Y	7	10	0.5	208	10	2013
Ponnet K	7	7	0.636	393	7	2016
Powell A	7	7	0.583	1,494	7	2015

Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Table 4 presents the local impact of the leading authors in the dataset. Finkelhor D demonstrated the greatest overall scholarly impact, as evidenced by the highest h-index (13) and the largest number of citations (1,799). Mitchell KJ followed with an h-index of 11 and 1,670 citations. Although Powell A published only seven documents, these works accumulated 1,494 citations, indicating substantial influence in terms of citation count. Aizenkot D achieved the highest m-index (0.778), reflecting strong impact relative to the length of the author's publication record within the dataset. Finkelhor D and Mitchell KJ also produced the highest number of publications, with 16 documents each. Overall, the results indicate a combination of well-established, highly cited scholars and more recent authors who have achieved notable research impact in the field.

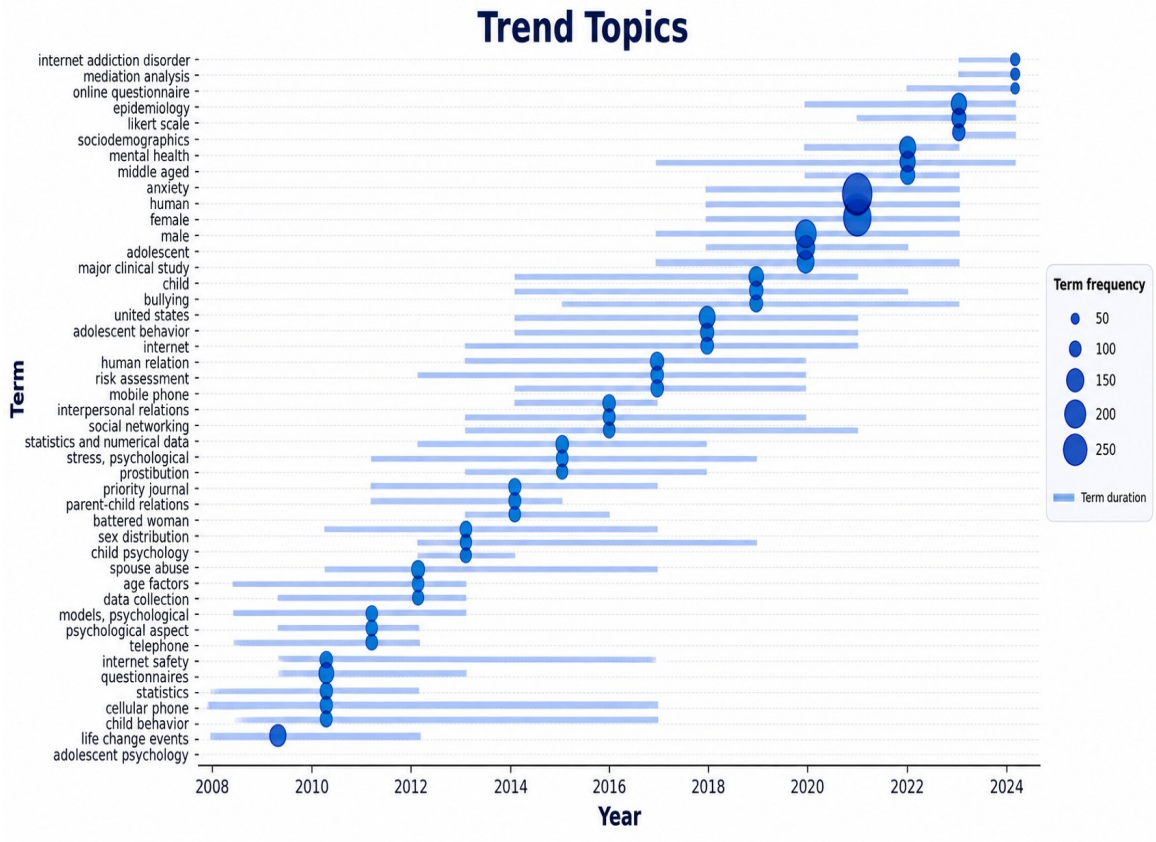
Table 5. Leading Countries by Corresponding Author

Country	Articles (n)	Articles (%)	SCP (n)	MCP (n)	MCP (%)
USA	749	25.1	631	118	15.8
United Kingdom	236	7.9	169	67	28.4
Canada	178	6	135	43	24.2
Australia	151	5.1	119	32	21.2
Spain	151	5.1	116	35	23.2
China	96	3.2	67	29	30.2
Italy	79	2.6	67	12	15.2
India	77	2.6	70	7	9.1
Germany	63	2.1	40	23	36.5
Türkiye	63	2.1	54	9	14.3

Note: SCP = Single-Country Publications; MCP = Multiple-Country Publications.
Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Table 5 shows that the United States was the leading contributor with 749 articles (25.1%), followed by the United Kingdom (236; 7.9%) and Canada (178; 6.0%). Australia and Spain ranked jointly fourth, with 151 articles (5.1%) each. Germany had the highest proportion of multiple-country publications (36.5%), followed by China (30.2%) and the United Kingdom (28.4%), indicating comparatively stronger international collaboration in these countries.

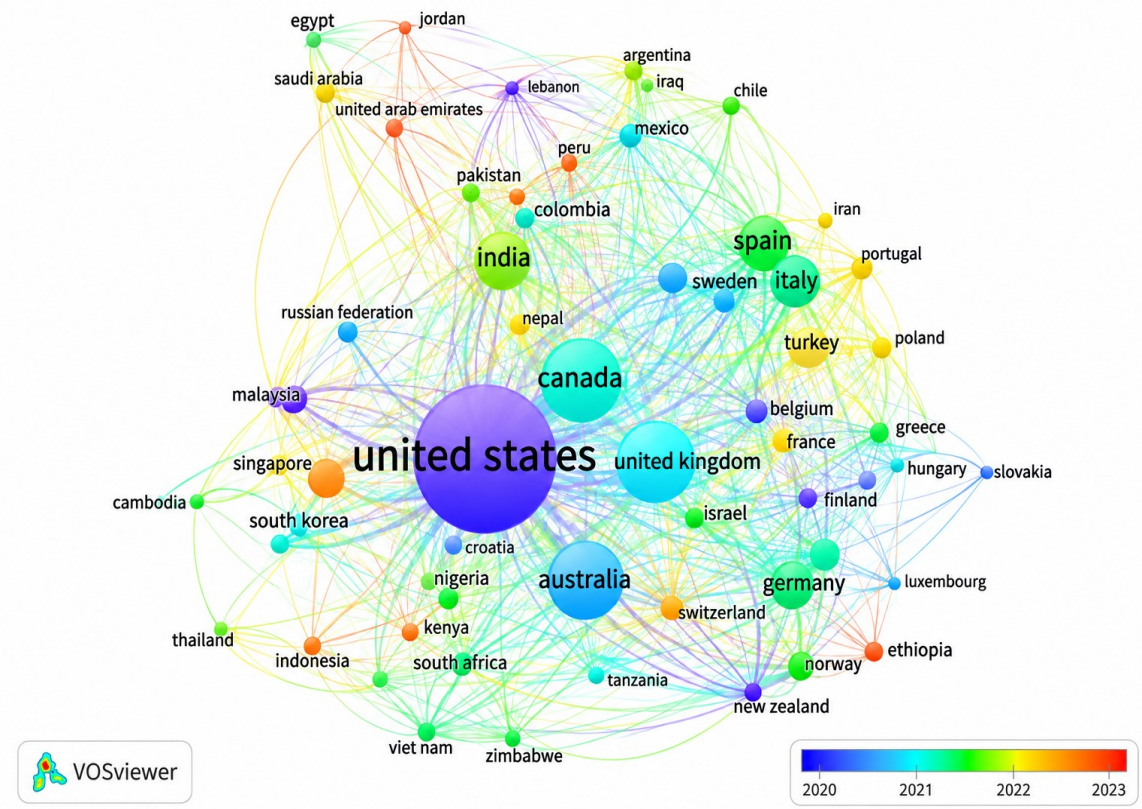
Figure 2. Evolution of Research Trend Topics (2001–2025)



Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data.

Figure 2 shows the evolution of trend topics over time, revealing a clear shift from earlier communication and psychosocial themes to digital-technology themes. Early research focused on adolescent psychology, child behavior, cell phones, questionnaires, and psychological factors. The Internet, social networking, mobile phones, bullying, interpersonal relations, and risk assessment were prominent between 2015 and 2020. Human (n = 1,817), female (n = 1,787), male (n = 1,461) and adolescent (n = 917) were the most frequently encountered keywords, indicating a strong focus on demographic and population-based research. Since 2021, topics such as mental health, anxiety, epidemiology, and sociodemographic factors have become more prominent. In more recent research, Internet addiction disorder, mediation analysis, and online questionnaires have become important, reflecting a shift toward digitally mediated behaviors, advanced analytical methods, and online research techniques.

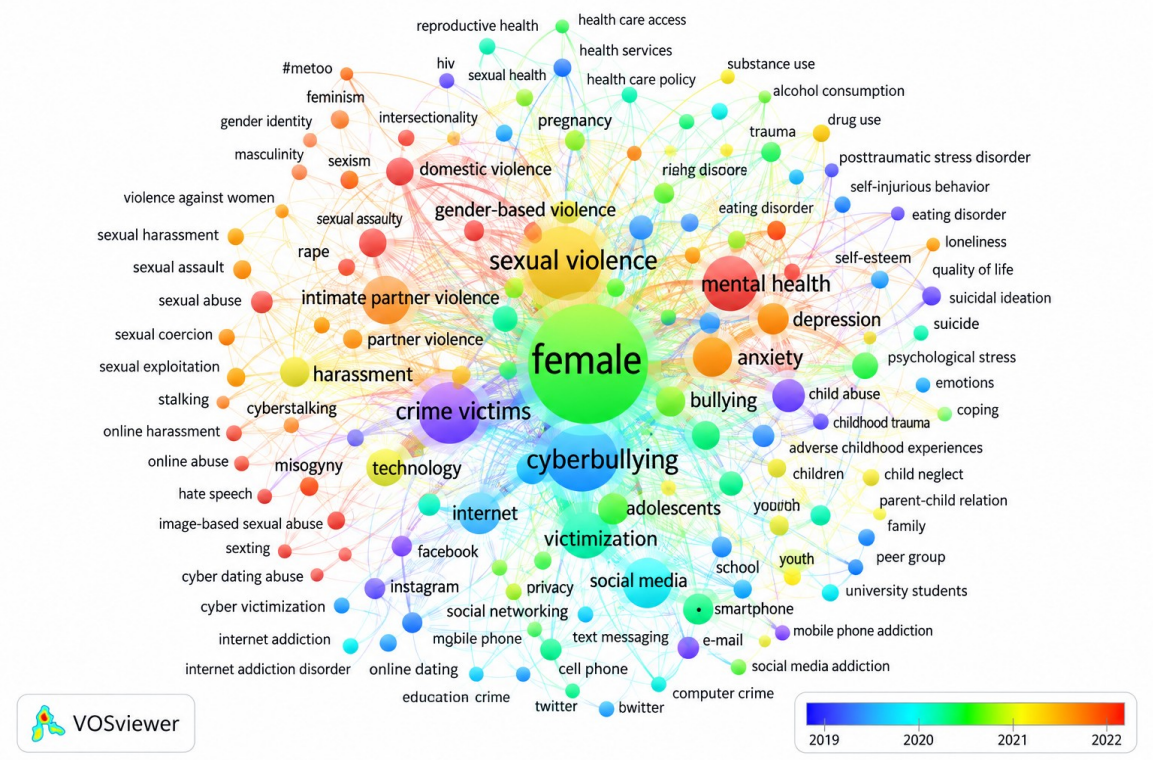
Figure 3. Country Co-authorship Network and Temporal Progression of International Collaboration



Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data using VOSviewer.

Figure 3 shows the structure and temporal evolution of international research collaboration. With 1,027 documents and 40,328 citations in the collaboration network, the United States had the highest total link strength (497), placing it at the center of the network. It was followed by the United Kingdom (375 documents; total link strength 373) and Canada (258 documents; total link strength 212). Other key interconnected nodes include Australia, Germany, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and India. The dense links among these countries indicate substantial international collaboration rather than isolated national research activity. Overlay colors further indicate temporal changes in participation, with some countries becoming more active in recent years. Overall, the network depicts a globally connected research field with strong collaborative leadership by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Figure 4. Keyword Co-occurrence and Temporal Evolution of Research Themes



Source: Authors' analysis based on Scopus data using VOSviewer.

Figure 4 presents keyword co-occurrence and the temporal evolution of research themes on technology-mediated violence against women. Larger nodes indicate more frequently occurring keywords, and thicker links indicate stronger co-occurrence relationships. "Female" was the most prominent node in the keyword network, closely linked with sexual violence, cyberbullying, mental health, crime victims, anxiety, intimate partner violence, social media, the Internet, and victimization. Earlier research mainly linked these themes to cyberbullying, victimization, Internet use, and demographic and psychosocial issues, whereas recent studies focus on sexual violence, gender-based violence, online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, misogyny, mental health, anxiety, and other forms of technology-mediated abuse. As technology platforms become increasingly interconnected, so do issues of gender-based violence, victimization, and psychological outcomes, reflecting a shift from traditional to digitally mediated forms of gender-based violence.

5. Discussion

This study provides a longitudinal analysis of the evolution of scholarship on technology-mediated violence against women from 2001 to 2025. A key finding is the rapid growth of research in this field. The analysis identified 2,990 publications across 1,256 sources, with an annual growth rate of 23.24%. Annual scientific production increased substantially, from only 3 publications in 2001 to 452 publications in 2025, demonstrating growing scholarly attention to the topic. This trend aligns with increasing awareness that digital technologies can exacerbate existing gender-based violence, making it more persistent, pervasive, visible, and scalable (Bailey et al., 2021; Backe et al., 2018).

The citation patterns indicate that a body of foundational research has shaped the field. Average citation impact was highest for 2008 (465.43 citations per article), whereas recent publications had lower averages because they have had less time to accumulate citations. The field's multidisciplinary nature is reflected in its core journals, which span interpersonal violence, public health, psychology, media studies, child protection, and human–technology interaction.

This is consistent with previous research showing that scholarship on technology-facilitated violence is spread across several disciplines rather than forming a single, coherent research tradition (Backe et al., 2018; Watson, 2024). Geographically, most research activity remains concentrated in high-income countries. The United States led corresponding-author output (749; 25.1%), followed by the United Kingdom (236; 7.9%) and Canada (178; 6.0%). Among the top ten countries, Germany had the highest share of international collaboration (36.5%). This persistent geographical imbalance reflects ongoing concerns about the underrepresentation of non-Western contexts, especially low- and middle-income regions (Bansal et al., 2024; Quilty & Flynn, 2026).

The thematic analysis reveals technological and conceptual changes in the field. Early studies focused on adolescents, psychology, cell phone use, and conventional psychosocial problems. Later research added the Internet, social networking, mobile phones, bullying, and interpersonal relationships. In recent years, scholarship has increasingly addressed sexual violence, gender-based violence, online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, misogyny, mental health and anxiety in recent years. This progression implies that digital violence is not a "new" type of violence but a technological extension and transformation of traditional violence against women (Boethius et al., 2023; Rigotti & McGlynn, 2022). The field has shifted from an emphasis on communication technologies to the multifaceted socio-technical processes that facilitate harassment, surveillance, sexual violence, coercion and victimization.

5.1 Study Implications

This study extends previous reviews and bibliometric research by providing a longitudinal analysis of technology-mediated violence against women from 2001 to 2025, integrating bibliometric performance analysis and science mapping to examine publication trends, scholarly impact, international collaboration, and the thematic evolution of the field. The rising prominence of online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, misogyny, and surveillance calls for prevention strategies that keep pace with technological change. For practitioners, technology-mediated violence should be viewed not merely as an online-safety issue but as part of the broader landscape of violence against women. The findings also emphasize the need to strengthen international and interdisciplinary cooperation and to expand research beyond the countries that have dominated the literature.

5.2 Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, relying solely on Scopus may have excluded relevant publications indexed only in other databases. Second, limiting the analysis to English-language articles and reviews may have underrepresented research from non-English-speaking regions. Third, citation-based indicators favor older publications, which have had more time to accumulate citations. Fourth, although keyword harmonization improves network clarity, it involves a degree of researcher judgment. Finally, bibliometric analysis maps the structure and development of scholarly output but cannot evaluate the methodological quality of individual studies or the effectiveness of the interventions they describe.

5.3 Future Research Directions

The geographic and conceptual gaps identified in this mapping warrant further research, particularly on technology-mediated violence in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other underrepresented regions. Comparative research at the national level is also needed. Studies should adopt intersectional approaches that examine how gender interacts with sexuality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and age. As emerging technologies such as generative artificial intelligence, deepfakes, smart devices, algorithmic systems, location tracking, and advanced surveillance tools may facilitate new forms of gendered abuse, these areas warrant particular focus. Longitudinal studies should examine how victimization moves between offline and online environments and extends across multiple platforms, rather than analyzing each

technology in isolation. Greater emphasis is needed on prevention, reporting systems, platform accountability, legal responses, digital safety measures, and survivor-centered technology design. Additionally, increased standardization of concepts and measurements would improve the comparability of studies and support the evolution of terminology alongside emerging forms of technology-facilitated violence.

6. Conclusion

This bibliometric study shows that research on technology-mediated violence against women has evolved from a small area focused on traditional communication and psychosocial issues into a rapidly growing, multidisciplinary field centered on digital platforms and gendered harms. The analysis identified 2,990 publications from 2001 to 2025, with an annual growth rate of 23.24%. The intellectual focus has shifted from early concerns about cell phones and the Internet to social media, cyberbullying, online harassment, sexual violence, image-based sexual abuse, misogyny, mental health, and other aspects of digitally mediated victimization. However, the geographic distribution remains uneven, with a large share of publications originating in the United States and other high-income countries. Taken together, the findings suggest that technology has not created an entirely new type of violence but has altered how violence against women is perpetrated, extending its reach, duration, and visibility. As communication continues to evolve from phones and social media toward AI-enabled and increasingly interconnected environments, research, policy, prevention, and survivor support must evolve accordingly.

Declarations

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions (CRediT)

Amreen Taj: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Validation, Writing – Original Draft.

Thilak Raj: Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Adam Nizam: Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Ethics Approval and Informed Consent

Not applicable. This study relies solely on bibliographic data obtained from Scopus and did not involve human participants or animals.

Data Availability

The bibliographic data were retrieved from Scopus and are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to Scopus licensing restrictions.

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Appendix A. Scopus Search String

TITLE-ABS-KEY ((("social media" OR "social networking site*" OR "social network*" OR "online platform*" OR "digital platform*" OR "instant messaging" OR "messaging app*" OR "mobile messaging" OR "online messaging" OR "private messaging" OR "direct message*" OR WhatsApp OR Telegram OR Messenger OR Snapchat OR "online chat*" OR "chat room*" OR "internet chat*" OR "video chat*" OR "video call*" OR email OR e-mail OR "electronic mail" OR SMS OR "text messag*" OR texting OR "mobile phone*" OR "smartphone*" OR "phone call*" OR "mobile communication" OR Facebook OR Instagram OR TikTok OR Twitter OR "X platform" OR "dating app*" OR "online dating" OR "mobile dating" OR "dating website*" OR "dating platform*" OR Tinder OR Bumble OR OkCupid OR "online communication" OR "digital communication" OR "computer-mediated communication" OR "internet-mediated communication" OR "technology-mediated communication") AND (woman OR women OR female* OR girl*) AND ("violence against women" OR "gender-based violence" OR "online violence against women" OR "digital violence against women" OR "cyber violence against women" OR "technology-facilitated violence" OR "technology-facilitated abuse" OR "technology-facilitated gender-based violence" OR "technology-facilitated sexual violence" OR "online abuse" OR "digital abuse" OR "cyber abuse" OR "online harassment" OR "cyber harassment" OR "digital harassment" OR "sexual harassment" OR "online sexual harassment" OR "gender-based harassment" OR "sexual violence" OR "sexual abuse" OR "sexual assault" OR "sexual aggression" OR "sexual coercion" OR "sexual victimization" OR "sexual victimisation" OR cyberstalking OR "cyber stalking" OR "online stalking" OR "digital stalking" OR "electronic stalking" OR "cyber dating abuse" OR "digital dating abuse" OR "online dating abuse" OR "image-based sexual abuse" OR "image-based abuse" OR "non-consensual intimate image*" OR "nonconsensual intimate image*" OR "revenge porn*" OR sextortion OR cyberflashing OR "online misogyny" OR "digital misogyny" OR "cyber misogyny" OR misogyn* OR "online threat*" OR "digital threat*" OR "death threat*" OR "rape threat*" OR "threatening message*" OR "abusive message*" OR "offensive message*" OR "unwanted message*" OR "unwanted sexual message*" OR "unsolicited sexual message*" OR "unsolicited sexual image*" OR "coercive control" OR "digital coercive control" OR "technology-facilitated coercive control" OR "digital surveillance" OR "electronic surveillance" OR "online surveillance" OR "location tracking" OR "GPS tracking" OR spyware OR doxxing OR doxing OR impersonation OR "identity abuse" OR "identity theft" OR "privacy violation*" OR "romance fraud" OR "romance scam*" OR "online dating scam*" OR cyberbullying OR "online bullying" OR "digital bullying").