



Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: An Integrated Theoretical Framework of Digital Affordances, Abuse Mechanisms, and Victim Impact

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Abstract: Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is a multidimensional form of gender-based violence in which digital technologies enable, facilitate, amplify, or mediate harmful practices. Existing research has examined technological affordances, specific abuse mechanisms, manifestations of TFGBV, and consequences for victim-survivors, but these dimensions are often studied separately. This paper proposes an integrated theoretical framework that connects four analytical layers: Digital Affordances, Abuse Mechanisms, TFGBV Manifestations, and Victim Impact. The framework is developed through a structured narrative synthesis of recent TFGBV literature, complemented by a foundational study of technological mediation. It conceptualises TFGBV as a context-dependent pathway in which technological possibilities may be operationalised through abusive mechanisms, expressed through different manifestations, and associated with psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related impacts. The framework does not assume that technology itself causes violence or that the proposed relationships are deterministic. Instead, contextual factors—including socio-cultural norms, gender inequality, institutional responses, and platform governance—are treated as conditions that may shape the relationships among the four layers. The principal contribution is therefore integrative: the framework provides a TFGBV-specific conceptual architecture for linking what technology makes possible, how those possibilities may be operationalised for abuse, how abuse is manifested, and what consequences may follow. The framework and propositions provide a basis for future empirical validation across technologies, populations, and cultural contexts.

Key Word: Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV); Digital Affordances; Abuse Mechanisms; Online Gender-Based Violence; Victim Impact; Technology-Facilitated Abuse; Theoretical Framework; Digital Violence.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development and widespread adoption of digital technologies have transformed contemporary social interaction, communication, and participation. Digital platforms and technology-mediated environments have created new opportunities for connectivity and information exchange, while also creating pathways through which harmful behaviours can be initiated, facilitated, amplified, or sustained. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) represents an important extension of gender-based violence into digital and technology-mediated environments. Recent research demonstrates that technology-facilitated violence occurs across online communities, intimate relationships, occupational settings, and other technology-mediated interpersonal contexts [1]–[5], [10]–[12].

TFGBV is increasingly recognised as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than a single form of online abuse. Existing studies examine gendered online harms, technology-facilitated sexual violence, technology-facilitated intimate-partner violence, cyberbullying, regional patterns, and victim health [2]–[5], [7]–[14], [17]–[20]. Research has also documented consequences that extend beyond the digital environment, including fear, psychological distress, changes in online participation, social disruption, and health-related effects [2], [8]–[10], [14], [16]. These developments demonstrate the need to understand TFGBV not only in terms of what forms of abuse occur, but also how technological characteristics and contextual conditions may shape abusive practices and their consequences.

The increasing diversity of technologies, abusive practices, and victim experiences creates a theoretical challenge. Existing studies provide valuable knowledge about individual manifestations, contexts, and consequences of TFGBV, yet these dimensions are often examined through different conceptual lenses. Consequently, there is a need for an integrated perspective that connects technological possibilities with the mechanisms through which abuse is operationalised and with the impacts subsequently experienced by victim-survivors. This study addresses that conceptual need by proposing the pathway Digital Affordances → Abuse Mechanisms → TFGBV Manifestations → Victim Impact.

The proliferation of digital technologies in everyday communication and social interaction has generated new spaces of participation and connection. At the same time, these technologies can extend gender-based violence beyond physical settings by enabling contact, monitoring, information sharing, public exposure, and persistent interaction. TFGBV has therefore emerged as an important form of gender-based violence occurring through or with the use of digital technologies [1]–[5], [11].

TFGBV encompasses a broad spectrum of technology-facilitated conduct, including sexual violence, intimate-partner abuse, cyberbullying, harassment, surveillance, and image-based abuse [3], [5], [7], [10], [11], [17], [18]. Research across youth, intimate relationships, workplace and occupational settings, and different geographical regions demonstrates that TFGBV is not restricted to a single platform, relationship type, or manifestation [3], [4], [10]–[12], [15], [17], [18]. Its expression depends on the interaction between technological environments, perpetrator behaviour, victim-survivor circumstances, and social context.

The impacts of TFGBV can extend beyond the immediate digital interaction. Research has identified fear, safety-related behaviours, reduced online participation, psychological distress, mental-health consequences, and broader health impacts [2], [8]–[10], [14]. Recent work also highlights the importance of social and cultural context, including gender norms, institutional responses, and barriers to reporting and support [12], [17], [19]. These findings reinforce the need for a framework that considers both mechanisms of abuse and the consequences associated with them.

Despite this growing literature, technological characteristics, abusive behaviours, specific manifestations, and victim consequences are often examined as partially separate dimensions. The conceptual challenge is therefore not simply to list forms of TFGBV, but to explain how technological possibilities may be operationalised as abuse, how those mechanisms are expressed through particular manifestations, and how they may be associated with different domains of victim impact.

The literature on TFGBV remains conceptually diverse. Research has addressed online harms, sexual violence, intimate-partner violence, cyberbullying, health consequences, regional contexts, and prevention or response [2]–[5], [7]–[20]. This diversity provides a substantial empirical foundation, but it also makes it difficult to see how technological affordances, abuse mechanisms, manifestations, and victim impact relate to one another. The present study therefore focuses on conceptual integration rather than on estimating prevalence or testing causal effects.

The primary objective of this study is to develop an integrated theoretical framework for understanding TFGBV by connecting digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, and victim impact.

The specific objectives are: (1) to identify digital affordances relevant to TFGBV; (2) to conceptualise how such affordances may be operationalised through abuse mechanisms; (3) to organise major TFGBV manifestations within an integrated structure; (4) to connect abuse mechanisms and manifestations with domains of victim impact; and (5) to formulate a framework and propositions that can be empirically evaluated in future research.

This study addresses the following research questions: RQ1: What digital affordances are relevant to the occurrence and facilitation of TFGBV? RQ2: How can digital affordances be conceptually linked to the abuse mechanisms through which TFGBV is perpetrated? RQ3: How can major manifestations of TFGBV be positioned within an integrated theoretical framework? RQ4: How are abuse mechanisms and TFGBV manifestations conceptually related to victim impact? RQ5: How can these dimensions be integrated into a coherent TFGBV-specific framework?

The study makes four main theoretical contributions. First, it integrates digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, manifestations, and victim impact within one TFGBV-specific conceptual architecture. Second, it distinguishes technological possibilities from the abusive mechanisms through which those possibilities may be operationalised. Third, it connects mechanisms and manifestations with psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences. Fourth, it provides propositions and a mapping structure that can guide future empirical research without claiming that the proposed relationships are already causally validated.

Overall, the framework seeks to provide a more connected theoretical explanation of TFGBV rather than treating technological characteristics, abusive practices, manifestations, and victim consequences as independent dimensions.

II. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Understanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence requires clarity about the concepts that form the basis of the proposed theoretical framework. TFGBV is connected to the broader concept of gender-based violence while also involving specific technological conditions and mechanisms of abuse. Therefore, this section establishes the conceptual foundations of the study by discussing gender-based violence, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, and victim impact. These concepts are subsequently integrated to develop the proposed theoretical framework.

2.1 Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers broadly to violence rooted in gender inequality or directed against a person because of gender. For the purposes of this study, GBV is understood as encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and other forms of harm, including threats, coercion, and controlling behaviours [21].

2.2 Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is a manifestation of gender-based violence in which digital technologies or digital media are used to commit, assist, aggravate, or amplify gender-related harm. The literature reviewed in this study includes online harassment, technology-facilitated sexual violence, cyberbullying, surveillance, image-based abuse, and technology-facilitated intimate-partner violence [1]–[5], [7], [10], [11].

2.3 Digital Affordances

Digital affordances refer to action possibilities made available by a technological environment. Wood et al. distinguish technological affordances from invitations and other forms of technological mediation, emphasising that technologies can shape how harmful ends are translated into action [1]. In the present framework, affordances such as accessibility, visibility, persistence, communication, information sharing, monitoring, anonymity, and cross-platform connectivity are treated as technological possibilities rather than inherently abusive behaviours.

2.4 Abuse Mechanisms

Abuse mechanisms refer to the abusive processes or strategies through which technological possibilities may be operationalised for harmful purposes. They are distinct from TFGBV manifestations: mechanisms describe how abuse is enacted, whereas manifestations describe the recognisable forms in which that abuse appears. Examples include repeated unwanted contact, threatening or coercive communication, surveillance and coercive monitoring, persistent targeting, public exposure, and dissemination of harmful content [3], [5], [11], [12]. The mechanism layer therefore provides the conceptual bridge between what technology makes possible and the observable form of TFGBV that may result.

2.5 Victim Impact

Victim impact encompasses the range of consequences associated with experiences of TFGBV, including psychological distress, fear, social disruption, changes in digital participation and safety behaviour, reputational harm, and health-related consequences [2], [8]–[10], [14]. The nature and intensity of these consequences may vary with the type, frequency, duration, severity, and social context of the abuse.

2.6 Literature Synthesis Approach

This study uses a structured narrative synthesis rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis. The substantive research corpus comprises 20 research sources: 19 recent TFGBV studies published in 2025–2026 and one foundational 2023 study on technological mediation [1]–[20]. An additional authoritative World Health Organization source [21] is used for the definition of gender-based violence. A study was retained when it directly informed at least one framework dimension—digital affordances or technological mediation, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, victim impact, or contextual and institutional conditions. The selection was relevance-driven rather than exhaustive, and a database-specific search and screening protocol was not prospectively documented. Accordingly, the present study does not claim systematic or exhaustive retrieval. The synthesis proceeded through four stages: relevance-based selection, thematic classification, cross-study comparison, and conceptual integration. These stages were used to identify recurring concepts, relationships, and gaps that informed the proposed framework and mapping tables. Because this is a conceptual framework study rather than an evidence-synthesis study, the literature is used to support theoretical integration rather than statistical representativeness. Future research should extend this work through a preregistered systematic or scoping review with explicit database searches, eligibility criteria, screening records, and a PRISMA-style flow diagram.

Figure 1 summarises the narrative synthesis procedure. It is a conceptual representation of how the selected literature was organised and synthesised; it is not a PRISMA or systematic-review screening flowchart.

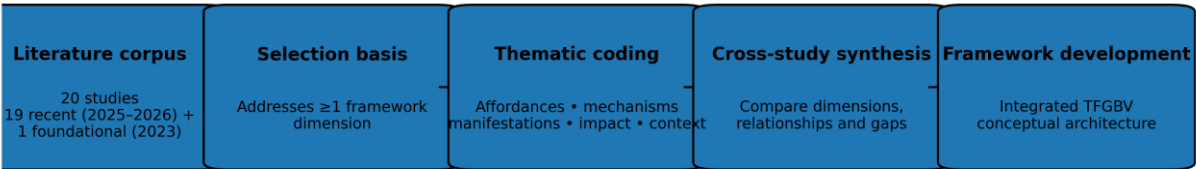


Fig. 1. Structured narrative synthesis procedure used to develop the proposed TFGBV framework.

Within the selected recent corpus, 6 studies were published in 2025 and 13 in 2026. This distribution describes the recency of the studies included in the narrative synthesis and should not be interpreted as a systematic estimate of the entire TFGBV literature.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS

3.1 Digital Affordances in TFGBV

Digital technologies provide possibilities for communication, visibility, access, persistence, monitoring, information sharing, and movement of content across platforms. These affordances can support legitimate interaction but may also be appropriated for harmful purposes. Research on technological mediation emphasises that the role of technology should not be reduced to simple technological determinism; rather, technology, user intentions, design, and context can interact in producing technology-facilitated harm [1].

3.2 Technology-Facilitated Abuse Mechanisms

The reviewed literature identifies abuse mechanisms such as repeated unwanted contact, threatening or coercive communication, surveillance and coercive monitoring, persistent targeting, public exposure, and dissemination of harmful content [3], [5], [11], [12]. These mechanisms vary across intimate relationships, youth digital cultures, occupational settings, and regional contexts [3], [4], [11], [12], [17]. Treating these as mechanisms rather than manifestations helps distinguish the abusive strategy from the broader, recognisable form of TFGBV through which it may be expressed.

3.3 TFGBV Manifestations

TFGBV includes multiple manifestations, including technology-facilitated sexual violence, cyberbullying, online harassment, image-based abuse, and technology-facilitated intimate-partner violence [3], [5], [7], [10], [11], [17], [18]. Recent studies also show that manifestations and victim experiences vary across populations and contexts, challenging a one-size-fits-all conceptualisation of TFGBV [11], [12], [17].

3.4 Victim Impact

The consequences of TFGBV extend beyond the digital interaction. Studies identify psychological distress, fear, mental-health impacts, social and reputational consequences, changes in online participation, and health-related effects [2], [8]–[10], [14]. Recent evidence also shows that contextual conditions can influence reporting, help-seeking, and the ability of victim-survivors to disengage from or safely use technology [12], [17].

3.5 Critical Synthesis

The literature demonstrates that TFGBV involves interacting technological, behavioural, social, and victim-related dimensions. Technological affordances may create opportunities for contact, visibility, persistence, monitoring, or information distribution; perpetrators may operationalise these opportunities through harassment, surveillance, coercion, or dissemination of harmful content; and these practices may appear as different TFGBV manifestations with overlapping consequences [1], [3], [5], [11], [12]. The main theoretical gap identified in this synthesis is therefore one of integration: the literature provides evidence about individual dimensions, but the relationships among them are not consistently represented within one TFGBV-specific explanatory architecture.

Accordingly, the theoretical contribution proposed here is an integrative one: Digital Affordances → Abuse Mechanisms → TFGBV Manifestations → Victim Impact. The pathway is conceptual rather than deterministic, and contextual factors may modify or interrupt relationships between layers.

The selected studies were comparatively examined according to their primary research focus and relevance to the proposed framework. Table I presents representative studies rather than an exhaustive bibliography. The table is intended to demonstrate how different strands of TFGBV research inform different layers of the proposed framework.

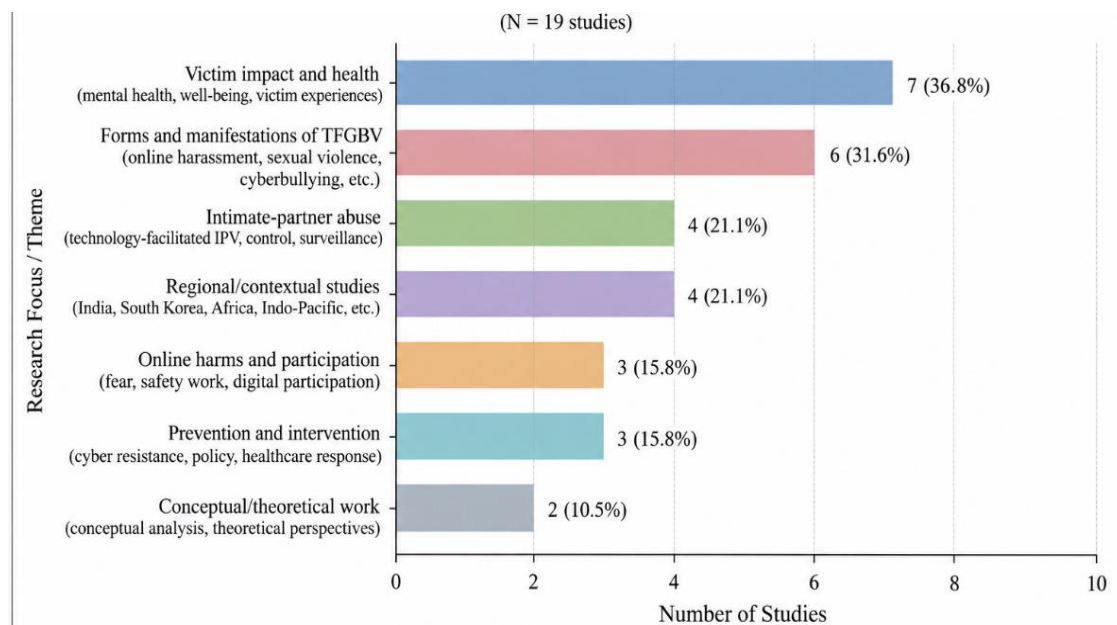


Fig. 2. Thematic distribution of the 19 recent TFGBV studies (2025–2026) included in the narrative synthesis; the foundational 2023 study is excluded from this count. Studies may contribute to more than one thematic category.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the selected literature spans multiple research themes rather than concentrating on a single dimension of TFGBV. Victim impact and health, forms and manifestations, intimate-partner abuse, regional and contextual perspectives, online harms, prevention, and conceptual approaches are represented across the reviewed studies. This thematic diversity supports the argument that TFGBV is multidimensional. At the same time, it shows why a framework that connects technological possibilities, mechanisms, manifestations, and consequences may be useful.

Ref.	Study Focus	Context / Population	Main TFGBV Dimension	Key Contribution	Relevance to Proposed Framework
[1]	Technological mediation	Technology-facilitated violence	Affordances and harm translation	Develops a theoretical account of how technological mediation can shape harmful action	Digital Affordances / Abuse Mechanisms
[2]	Gendered online harms	UK adults	Online harms, fear, safety work	Examines gender differences in exposure, psychological impact, safety work, and online participation	Victim Impact / Context
[3]	Digital intimate cultures	British teens / Snapchat	Technology-facilitated violence	Connects platform features and affordances with youth intimate practices and technology-facilitated violence	Digital Affordances / Manifestations
[4]	Sexual abuse	Women ridesharing drivers	Technology-facilitated sexual violence	Categorises technology-facilitated sexual abuse reported by ridesharing drivers	Mechanisms / Manifestations
[5]	Healthcare response	Healthcare context	Technology-facilitated violence	Highlights the role of health-care providers in identifying and responding to TFV	Victim Impact / Response
[7]	Cyberbullying	Online communities	Cyberbullying	Presents an automated cyberbullying detection approach using BiLSTM	Manifestations / Prevention
[8]	Regional TFGBV	Women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa	Multiple TFGBV forms	Synthesises mechanisms and consequences across the regional literature	Mechanisms / Manifestations / Impact
[9]	Obstetric and gynaecologic concern	Women	TFGBV and health	Highlights health-care relevance of technology-facilitated violence against women	Victim Impact
[10]	Mental health	Tunisian women	TFGBV and mental health	Examines mental-health impacts associated with TFGBV	Victim Impact
[11]	Technology-facilitated IPV	Australian women	Stalking, monitoring, IBSA, online aggression	Demonstrates variation across TFIPV subtypes and risk profiles	Abuse Mechanisms / Manifestations

Ref.	Study Focus	Context / Population	Main TFGBV Dimension	Key Contribution	Relevance to Proposed Framework
[12]	Practitioner perspectives	Nine Pacific Island countries	TFGBV and contextual response	Shows how cultural and social norms shape disclosure, help-seeking, and response	Context / Victim Impact
[14]	Sexual violence and health	Women aged 16+	Technology-facilitated sexual violence	Systematically reviews mental and physical health impacts	Victim Impact
[15]	Comparative analysis	India and South Korea	TFGBV	Compares conceptual, legal, and institutional responses to TFGBV	Context / Response
[20]	Epistemic and research context	Marginalised communities	Technology-facilitated abuse	Highlights power, knowledge-production, and representation issues in TFAB research	Context / Research Ethics

Table I. Representative Literature Informing the Proposed TFGBV Framework

Note: Table I presents selected representative studies; references not displayed in the table are incorporated into the narrative synthesis and/or framework development.

Table I demonstrates that the existing literature contributes strongly to individual dimensions of TFGBV but differs in its primary analytical emphasis. Some studies focus on technological mediation or affordances, others on specific abuse mechanisms and manifestations, and others on victim impact or contextual response [1]–[20]. This distribution supports the need for conceptual integration while also showing that the proposed framework should be understood as an organising synthesis rather than as a claim that its individual concepts are entirely new.

3.6 Synthesis of the Literature and Framework Requirements

The literature synthesis yields four requirements for the proposed framework. First, technological possibilities should be distinguished from abusive behaviour. Second, abuse mechanisms should explain how technological possibilities are operationalised in specific contexts. Third, manifestations should remain broad enough to accommodate different forms of TFGBV. Fourth, victim impact should be represented as multidimensional and potentially overlapping. These requirements are reflected in the four-layer framework developed in the next section.

IV. RESEARCH GAP AND THEORETICAL PROBLEM

The literature indicates that TFGBV involves technological possibilities, abusive practices, observable manifestations, and consequences for victim-survivors. These dimensions are empirically connected in the literature but are often studied through different research questions, populations, and disciplinary perspectives. The theoretical problem addressed in this paper is therefore conceptual fragmentation: there is a need for a framework that specifies how these dimensions can be related without assuming a simple or deterministic causal chain.

4.1 Conceptual Fragmentation

Existing research examines online harms, sexual violence, intimate-partner violence, cyberbullying, health effects, regional contexts, and institutional responses [2]–[20]. These studies provide complementary evidence, but they do not all use the same conceptual vocabulary or level of analysis. The proposed framework addresses this fragmentation by treating the different dimensions as analytically connected rather than interchangeable.

4.2 Affordance–Abuse Mechanism Gap

Digital technologies provide possibilities such as access, visibility, communication, persistence, monitoring, and information sharing. These possibilities are not inherently abusive. The theoretical problem is to explain how an affordance can become relevant to abuse through perpetrator intentions, social conditions, and specific mechanisms. This distinction is consistent with research that treats technological mediation as an interaction between technological properties, user intentions, and harmful ends [1].

4.3 Abuse Mechanism–Victim Impact Gap

Research has documented psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences of TFGBV [2], [8]–[10], [14]. However, victim impact is not always analytically connected to the particular mechanism or manifestation through which abuse occurs. The proposed framework therefore treats victim impact as a distinct analytical layer while recognising that different manifestations may produce overlapping outcomes.

4.4 Need for an Integrated Conceptual Pathway

The identified gaps support a framework that brings together four analytical dimensions: digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, and victim impact. The framework treats these dimensions as related but not necessarily linear. Contextual conditions may strengthen, weaken, redirect, or interrupt relationships between layers, and future empirical studies are needed to test the proposed propositions.

V. PROPOSED INTEGRATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The preceding synthesis indicates that TFGBV involves interconnected technological, behavioural, manifestation-level, and victim-related dimensions. However, these dimensions are frequently examined independently. To address this conceptual limitation, this study proposes an Integrated Theoretical Framework of Digital Affordances, Abuse Mechanisms, TFGBV Manifestations, and Victim Impact.

The proposed framework is a conceptual explanatory model organised around four analytical layers: Digital Affordances, Potential Abuse Mechanisms, TFGBV Manifestations, and Victim Impact. The solid arrows in Figure 5 represent the principal conceptual associations proposed by the study, while contextual and dashed reciprocal influences indicate that relationships need not be strictly linear or deterministic.

The framework does not assume that technology itself causes violence. Instead, it conceptualises how technological possibilities may be appropriated by perpetrators, translated into abusive mechanisms, expressed through different manifestations, and associated with consequences for victim-survivors. The arrows indicate proposed conceptual relationships rather than deterministic causal effects.

5.1 Framework Development

The framework is developed through conceptual synthesis of the dimensions identified across the reviewed literature. Research on technological mediation highlights the role of affordances and technology–harm relations [1]; other studies examine particular manifestations and mechanisms, including sexual violence, intimate-partner abuse, cyberbullying, and regional forms of TFGBV [3], [5], [2], [7]–[9], [14], [15]; and several studies document psychological, social, and health-related consequences [2], [4]–[7], [11]. The proposed framework integrates these strands into one TFGBV-specific architecture.

The framework therefore moves beyond a simple classification of TFGBV forms. Its purpose is to provide a common explanatory vocabulary for analysing what technology makes possible, how those possibilities may be operationalised for abuse, how abuse is manifested, and what consequences may follow.

5.2 Digital Affordance Layer

The first layer represents Digital Affordances. Relevant affordances include accessibility, visibility, persistence, communication, information sharing, observability or monitoring capability, anonymity or pseudonymity, and cross-platform connectivity. These represent technological possibilities rather than abusive behaviours in themselves.

- Accessibility
- Visibility
- Persistence
- Communication
- Information sharing
- Observability / monitoring capability

An affordance is not inherently abusive; its significance depends on how it is taken up and operationalised within a particular social, behavioural, and institutional context [1]. The same technological capability may support ordinary communication in one situation and facilitate abuse in another.

5.3 Abuse Mechanism Layer

The second layer represents Potential Abuse Mechanisms. This layer explains the abusive processes or strategies through which perpetrators may operationalise technological possibilities. Examples include repeated unwanted contact or persistent targeting, threatening or coercive communication, surveillance and coercive monitoring, public exposure or humiliation, and dissemination or amplification of harmful content [3], [5], [11], [12].

This layer provides the conceptual bridge between technology and abuse. For example, a monitoring capability may be operationalised as surveillance or coercive monitoring, while information-sharing capabilities may be used to disseminate harmful content. These mechanisms may subsequently appear as recognisable TFGBV manifestations such as online harassment, image-based abuse, cyberbullying, or technology-facilitated intimate-partner abuse [1], [3], [8].

Digital affordances describe what a technological environment makes possible; abuse mechanisms describe how those possibilities may be used for harmful purposes. This distinction is central to the framework and prevents technological features

from being treated as inherently abusive.

Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual relationship between selected digital affordances and potential abuse mechanisms. Accessibility may support unwanted contact or persistent targeting; visibility may facilitate public exposure; persistence may support repeated abuse; communication may facilitate threatening or coercive communication; information sharing may enable dissemination of harmful content; and monitoring may enable surveillance or coercive monitoring. The mapping is conceptual, many-to-many, and should be empirically examined across platforms and contexts.

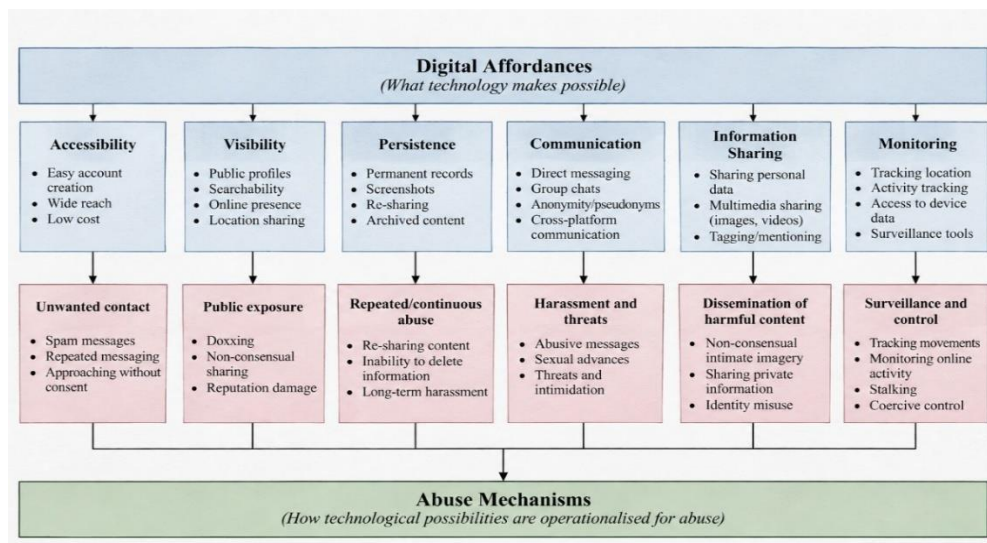


Fig. 3. Conceptual mapping between digital affordances and potential abuse mechanisms

5.4 TFGBV Manifestation Layer

The third layer represents TFGBV Manifestations: the observable forms through which technology-facilitated gender-based violence may be expressed.

The framework includes manifestations such as:

- Technology-facilitated sexual violence
- Cyberbullying
- Online harassment
- Technology-facilitated intimate-partner abuse
- Other forms of technology-mediated gender-based violence

Existing research demonstrates that TFGBV occurs across different populations, relationships, platforms, and geographical contexts [3], [4], [10]–[12], [15], [17], [18]. The manifestation layer therefore remains flexible and can accommodate additional forms as the literature develops.

5.5 Victim Impact Layer

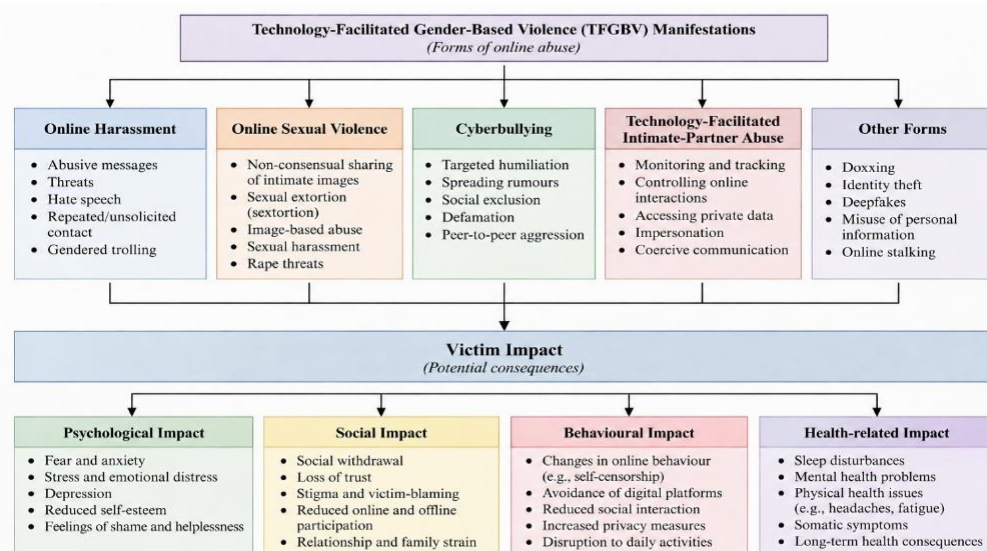


Fig. 4. Conceptual relationship between TFGBV manifestations and victim impact.

The fourth layer represents Victim Impact. It captures consequences that may arise from experiences of TFGBV.

The framework considers four broad dimensions:

- **Psychological impact:** fear, distress, and related psychological consequences.
- **Social impact:** social disruption, exclusion, or stigma.
- **Behavioural impact:** changes in digital participation and safety-related behaviour.
- **Health-related impact:** mental and physical health consequences.

Research has documented fear and changes in online participation [2], mental-health consequences [9], broader health impacts associated with technology-facilitated sexual violence [14], and social and contextual barriers to help-seeking and reporting [12], [17]. Victim impact is therefore positioned as an integral analytical layer rather than an isolated outcome.

These domains are analytically distinct but may overlap in practice. The same episode may generate psychological distress, social or reputational consequences, behavioural changes in technology use, and health-related effects. Their relative prominence may depend on the mechanism, duration and intensity of abuse, relationship context, available support, and institutional response.

Different TFGBV manifestations may be associated with different and overlapping forms of victim impact. Figure 4 maps major manifestations to four broad consequence domains. The mapping is conceptual and does not imply that every manifestation produces every outcome or that the relationships are causal.

Figure 4 illustrates that online harassment, online sexual violence, cyberbullying, technology-facilitated intimate-partner abuse, and other forms of TFGBV may be associated with overlapping psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences [2], [9], [10], [14]. Victim-survivors may modify their digital behaviour through self-censorship, platform avoidance, or increased privacy measures, while social and health consequences may extend beyond the digital interaction.

5.6 Integrated Framework

The integrated framework combines the four analytical layers into one TFGBV-specific conceptual pathway.

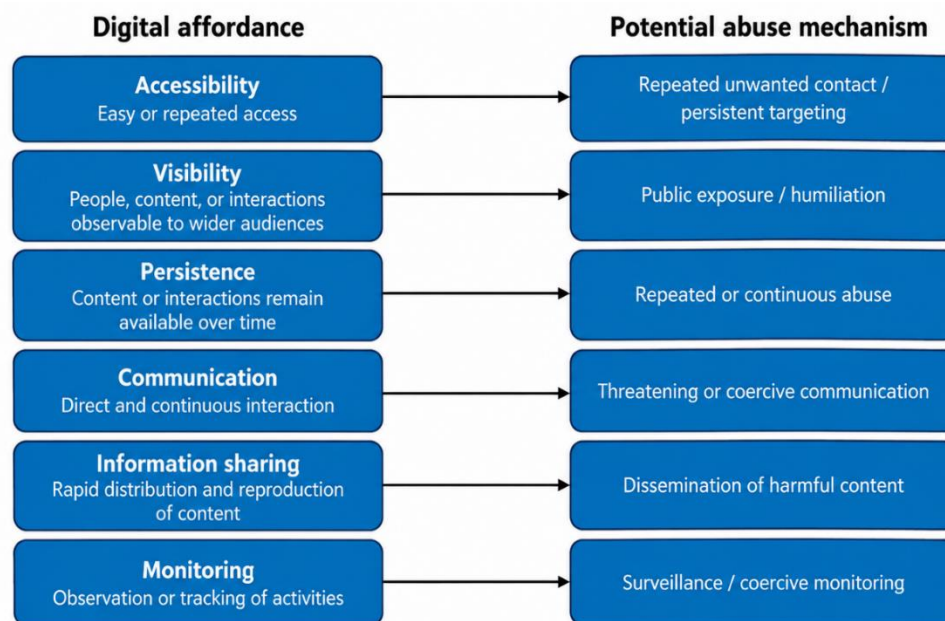


Fig. 5. Proposed integrated theoretical framework of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, showing

Principal conceptual associations, contextual conditions, and potential reciprocal influences.

Figure 5 summarises the framework. Digital affordances represent what technology makes possible; potential abuse mechanisms represent how technological possibilities may be operationalised for abuse; TFGBV manifestations represent recognisable forms through which abuse is expressed; and victim impact represents potential psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences. The solid arrows indicate the principal conceptual associations, whereas dashed arrows indicate contextual or potential reciprocal influences. The framework is therefore an organising conceptual architecture rather than a validated causal model.

Contextual factors surround the pathway and may influence relationships across all layers. Relevant conditions include socio-cultural norms, gender inequality, institutional responses, legal and reporting environments, platform policies, and the broader social circumstances of victim-survivors [9], [14], [16], [12]. Context may also alter which affordances are available, which mechanisms are feasible, and how victim-survivors respond.

5.7 Theoretical Relationships

The framework proposes five primary conceptual relationships.

R1: Digital Affordance → Potential Abuse Mechanism. Digital affordances may provide opportunities that can be operationalised through specific abusive mechanisms, depending on perpetrator intentions and contextual conditions.

R2: Potential Abuse Mechanism → TFGBV Manifestation. Different abuse mechanisms may be expressed through different forms of TFGBV, although mechanisms and manifestations may overlap.

R3: TFGBV Manifestation → Victim Impact. Different TFGBV manifestations may be associated with psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences, with outcomes varying across victim-survivors and contexts.

R4: Potential Abuse Mechanism → Victim Impact. The characteristics, persistence, intensity, and context of an abuse mechanism may be associated with the nature and extent of victim impact, independently of the broader manifestation in which the abuse is expressed. **R5:** Integrated pathway. The explanatory value of the framework lies in analysing affordances, mechanisms, manifestations, victim impact, and contextual conditions jointly rather than treating them as isolated dimensions.

5.8 Theoretical Novelty and Contribution

The theoretical contribution lies primarily in integration rather than in claiming that any individual component is new. Existing research has already examined technological mediation and affordances, different forms of TFGBV, abuse mechanisms, and victim impact. The novelty proposed here is the systematic integration of these distinguishable dimensions into a single TFGBV-specific explanatory architecture.

The framework particularly contributes a clear conceptual distinction between digital affordances and abuse mechanisms. Affordances describe what a technological environment makes possible, whereas abuse mechanisms describe how perpetrators may operationalise those possibilities for harmful purposes. This distinction creates a theoretically meaningful bridge between technological conditions and abusive behaviour [1].

A second contribution is the explicit connection of abuse mechanisms and manifestations with victim impact. The framework therefore extends beyond explaining how technology may facilitate abuse and provides a structure for examining how abuse is expressed and how different forms of harm may follow.

Accordingly, the framework should be understood as an integrative extension and TFGBV-specific conceptualisation, not as a claim that affordance theory or technology-facilitated violence frameworks have not previously been proposed. Its contribution is the systematic organisation of what technology enables, how abuse is operationalised, how it manifests, and what consequences may follow within one coherent structure.

Table II specifies the proposed mapping among digital affordances, their possible operationalisation, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, and potential victim impact. The mapping is intended to clarify conceptual relationships rather than establish direct causal effects.

Digital Affordance	How It May Be Operationalised	Potential Abuse Mechanism	Possible TFGBV Manifestation	Potential Victim Impact	Supporting Literature
Accessibility	Enables repeated or easy access to a target	Unwanted contact; persistent targeting	Online harassment; unwanted sexual communication	Fear, anxiety, psychological distress	[1], [3], [11]
Visibility	Makes individuals, content, or interactions observable to wider audiences	Public exposure; humiliation	Online shaming; public harassment	Stigma, reputational harm, social withdrawal	[1], [2], [15]
Persistence	Allows harmful content or interactions to remain accessible over time	Repeated or continuous abuse	Persistent online harassment; repeated dissemination	Stress, fear, emotional distress	[1], [2]
Communication	Enables direct and continuous interaction	Harassment; threats; coercive communication	Online harassment; threatening messages	Fear, anxiety, psychological distress	[1], [3], [4]
Information Sharing	Enables rapid distribution and reproduction of information or content	Dissemination of harmful content	Image-based abuse; sexual-content dissemination; public exposure	Psychological, social, and reputational harm	[3], [7], [18]
Monitoring	Enables observation or tracking of activities	Surveillance / coercive monitoring	Technology-facilitated intimate-partner abuse	Loss of autonomy, fear, behavioural changes	[1], [11], [17]

Digital Affordance	How It May Be Operationalised	Potential Abuse Mechanism	Possible TFGBV Manifestation	Potential Victim Impact	Supporting Literature
Anonymity / Pseudonymity	Can obscure or reduce identification of the actor	Concealed harassment; threats	Online harassment; abusive communication	Fear, reduced participation, psychological distress	[1], [7]
Cross-Platform Connectivity	Allows content or abusive interactions to move between digital environments	Amplification; repeated dissemination	Coordinated or persistent online abuse	Extended exposure, social disruption, psychological distress	[3], [18]

Table II. Mapping Digital Affordances to Abuse Mechanisms, TFGBV Manifestations, and Victim Impact

Note: The relationships presented in Table II are conceptual rather than causal or empirically validated. Affordances, mechanisms, manifestations, and impacts may interact differently depending on technological, social, cultural, and institutional conditions.

Table II illustrates the central theoretical logic of the framework. A technological affordance does not inherently constitute abuse; rather, it may provide an opportunity that can be operationalised through one or more abuse mechanisms. Conversely, a single mechanism may draw on multiple affordances. Mechanisms may then appear through multiple manifestations and may be associated with overlapping psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences. Future empirical studies should test these many-to-many mappings and identify moderators, mediators, and feedback relationships.

VI. THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

The framework generates propositions linking digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, and victim impact. These propositions are conceptual statements intended to guide empirical testing; they should not be interpreted as empirically established causal hypotheses.

P1: Digital affordance–abuse mechanism proposition. Digital affordances may provide opportunities that perpetrators can operationalise through specific abuse mechanisms, with the relationship conditioned by user intentions and contextual factors.

P2: Abuse mechanism–manifestation proposition. Different abuse mechanisms may be expressed through different forms of TFGBV, and the relationship may vary according to the technology, relationship context, and social environment.

P3: Manifestation–victim impact proposition. Different TFGBV manifestations may be associated with different types and degrees of psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related impact, with substantial overlap possible across outcome domains.

P4: Integrated pathway proposition. The explanatory value of the framework may be enhanced when digital affordances, potential abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, victim impact, and contextual conditions are analysed jointly rather than as isolated dimensions.

P5: Contextual influence proposition. The relationships among digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, manifestations, and victim impact may differ according to socio-cultural norms, gender inequality, institutional responses, legal environments, platform governance, and other contextual conditions.

Together, these propositions position TFGBV as a connected process rather than a set of isolated events. They provide a basis for empirical studies that can examine whether the proposed relationships hold across technologies, populations, and cultural settings.

VII. DISCUSSION

The proposed framework provides an integrated theoretical explanation of TFGBV by connecting technological possibilities with abusive practices, their manifestations, and potential victim consequences. Its purpose is to complement—not replace—existing theories and empirical findings by providing a common conceptual architecture.

7.1 Theoretical Contribution

The primary theoretical contribution is the integration of digital affordances, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, and victim impact into one TFGBV-specific structure. Existing studies examine these dimensions across online harms, sexual violence, intimate-partner violence, cyberbullying, health, and regional contexts [2]–[12]. The framework connects these strands while preserving the distinction between technological possibilities and abusive practices.

A key contribution is the distinction between digital affordances and abuse mechanisms. Affordances describe what a technological environment makes possible, whereas abuse mechanisms explain how those possibilities may be used for harmful purposes. This distinction is consistent with research emphasising technological mediation and harm translation [1].

7.2 Relationship to Existing Research and Theoretical Positioning

The framework builds on existing research rather than replacing established approaches. Within the reviewed literature, technological mediation and affordance-oriented work primarily informs the distinction between technological possibilities and harmful action [1]. Studies of TFGBV manifestations and abuse mechanisms focus on specific forms and processes, including

sexual violence, intimate-partner abuse, cyberbullying, harassment, surveillance, and harmful-content dissemination [3], [5], [7]–[12], [17], [18]. Victim-impact studies emphasise psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences [2], [9], [10], [14]. The proposed framework contributes by placing these analytically distinct strands within a single TFGBV-specific architecture.

The framework differs from these strands primarily in scope and organisation. It does not introduce affordances, abuse mechanisms, TFGBV manifestations, or victim-impact domains as wholly new constructs. Instead, it specifies how they can be related while preserving their conceptual distinctions. Technological mediation helps explain how technological possibilities may be translated into harmful action; TFGBV research identifies forms and contexts of abuse; and victim-impact research documents consequences. The present framework connects these strands and explicitly places contextual conditions across the pathway. Because the relationships are conceptual rather than causally validated, the framework also provides a basis for testing moderators, mediators, and reciprocal pathways in future empirical research.

The framework provides a TFGBV-specific conceptual structure through which future research can examine how technological possibilities may be translated into abusive practices, how those practices are manifested, and how different manifestations relate to victim impact. It also creates opportunities to test moderators and feedback pathways that are not specified in the current linear representation.

The value of this integration is theoretical as well as organisational. Separating technological affordances from abuse mechanisms allows future research to examine why similar technological capabilities may be associated with different forms of abuse under different relational and social conditions. Linking mechanisms and manifestations to victim impact also creates a basis for examining why apparently similar forms of technology-facilitated abuse may produce different consequences across populations, platforms, and contexts. Thus, the framework is intended to generate testable questions about pathways, moderators, mediators, and feedback processes rather than merely classify existing forms of abuse.

Existing approach / strand	Primary focus	Limitation for integrated TFGBV analysis	Contribution of the proposed framework
Technological mediation / affordance-oriented research [1]	How technological properties and affordances shape or mediate harmful action.	Primarily explains technology–harm relations rather than integrating manifestation and victim-impact layers.	Uses affordances as the technological starting point and explicitly links them to abuse mechanisms, manifestations, and impact.
TFGBV manifestation and abuse research [3], [5], [7], [11], [17]	Specific forms and processes such as sexual violence, cyberbullying, intimate-partner abuse, harassment, and surveillance.	Often focuses on particular forms, populations, or contexts, making cross-form integration difficult.	Places different manifestations within a common mechanism-based architecture while preserving their contextual differences.
Victim-impact and health research [2], [9], [10], [14]	Psychological, social, behavioural, and health consequences of technology-facilitated abuse.	Consequences are not always connected analytically to the technological affordances and mechanisms that precede or accompany them.	Treats victim impact as a distinct but connected layer and supports many-to-many conceptual mappings.
Contextual, regional, and institutional research [12], [15], [19], [20]	Cultural norms, legal and institutional responses, marginalisation, and knowledge-production conditions.	Context is often examined within particular populations or settings rather than across the full conceptual pathway.	Positions contextual conditions as cross-cutting influences that may shape affordances, mechanisms, manifestations, responses, and impacts.

Table III. Positioning of the Proposed Framework Relative to Existing Approaches

Table III shows that the proposed framework is an organising synthesis rather than a replacement for existing theories. Its contribution lies in specifying a common vocabulary and set of relationships across strands that have typically been examined separately.

7.3 Implications

The framework has implications for research, policy, platform governance, and practice. For researchers, it provides a common structure for comparing different forms and contexts of TFGBV. For practitioners and policymakers, distinguishing technological affordances from abuse mechanisms may help identify different points for prevention, reporting, platform intervention, and victim support.

The framework also emphasises that responses should consider both the digital mechanism of abuse and the broader consequences for victim-survivors.

Overall, the framework offers an integrative way of understanding TFGBV as a process involving technological conditions,

perpetrator behaviour, manifestations of abuse, and victim impact, while recognising that contextual factors may shape relationships across all layers.

7.4 Limitations of the Conceptual Framework

The framework should be interpreted within the limits of a conceptual study. It does not establish causal relationships, estimate effect sizes, or determine the prevalence of TFGBV. The literature synthesis is structured but not systematic, and the selected studies are not intended to represent the complete TFGBV literature. The selected conceptual categories may also underrepresent culturally specific, intersectional, or emerging forms of TFGBV that are not adequately represented in the corpus. Affordances, abuse mechanisms, manifestations, and victim-impact domains may overlap. Empirical research is needed to operationalise the constructs, test the propositions, identify moderators, mediators, and reciprocal relationships, and examine whether the proposed relationships vary across platforms, populations, and cultural contexts.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is an evolving dimension of gender-based violence that is increasingly shaped by digital platforms, communication technologies, and technology-mediated social interaction. The reviewed literature shows that TFGBV encompasses diverse manifestations and mechanisms and can be associated with psychological, social, behavioural, and health-related consequences [2]–[12].

This study introduced an Integrated Theoretical Framework that connects Digital Affordances, Potential Abuse Mechanisms, TFGBV Manifestations, and Victim Impact.

The principal contribution is integrative rather than a claim of wholly new constructs. By organising established dimensions into a TFGBV-specific explanatory architecture, the framework provides a common language for future empirical research. Its propositions and mapping tables can support construct operationalisation, comparative studies across platforms and populations, and empirical examination of moderators, mediators, and reciprocal pathways. Future work should proceed in four directions: (1) develop measurable indicators for each framework layer; (2) empirically test the proposed relationships using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs; (3) examine cross-platform, cross-cultural, and intersectional variation; and (4) conduct a systematic or scoping review to refine, challenge, and extend the framework as the TFGBV evidence base evolves.

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