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Review 1 of "'Goodbye, My Friendcels': An Analysis of Incel Suicide Posts"

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Published on: Oct 01, 2021

DOI: 10.21428/cb6ab371.f4f4969c

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Vote: Publish pending minor changes

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The paper presents an interesting study, looking at suicide notes from incels. The topic is unique, and the authors have identified some interesting themes within the data.

However, there are a few issues with wording/phrasing throughout. For example, the authors regularly refer to users 'committing suicide' – which positions suicide as a criminal act. This is something which should be revisited to be more compassionate to those who have ended their own life. Another example of this is how the authors claim that previous research which has not looked at this topic is an 'oversight'. In a lot of work, this topic often does get touched upon, however this topic is often not explored in this level of depth, likely due to limitations of space or focus of those studies.

The authors do cite a fair amount of literature; however, a good amount is not fully relevant to the current study. For example, there were entire sections of reviewed literature (such as about coping strategies), which were not fully drawn upon in later analysis. These sections could have been a single sentence in the analysis. Personally, I would recommend that the authors look more closely at topics such as suicide notes placed online and how they differ from offline suicide notes. Additionally, the authors might want to consider looking at masculinity and/or normativity as it relates to the incel community, how they construct ideologies, and suicide ideation.

There are a few structural issues. For example, there are parts of analysis where new concepts are introduced, but these could have been introduced much earlier. Similarly, there are areas where some more sign posting would have been useful. Something I think would benefit the paper would be a clear definition of incels. There are some in the literature I have recommended in the annotated paper I will send separately.

In terms of some of the linguistic labels used – things like 'generic rope' are more of a semantic label prescribed by the authors. However, using appropriate linguistic terminology would have been more preferable. Additionally, there is some linguistic analysis which could be further developed through the use of appropriate terminology (e.g., including a discussion of metonymy in the analysis of 'rope'). This also applies to a wider range of examples – such as in 'I manned up and brought a gun'; linguistically

here, manned up can be referred to gaining the confidence to go on an end one' s life. This therefore means that it might not be the act of buying a gun which is associated with masculinity. This drastically changes the interpretation in the analysis.

Overall, a very interesting paper – but a little bit more polishing is needed before it can be published.

[Please put additional info below, as/if you see fit.]

I attach a file with specific comments throughout the paper.

The File.docx

60 KB