

'I only respect my sisters and my mother; all other women can go to hell': an exploration into involuntary celibates' relationships with their female relatives.



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Abstract

Involuntary celibates, known as incels, are a growing online community that are renowned for their harmful and misogynistic views on women. These beliefs have had offline physical impacts, with violent attacks against women and the public claiming lives. Some attacks carried out by those associated with the incel community have killed their own female relatives, such as their mothers and sisters. There is a lack of research, however, on incel's relationships with their female family members and how these are articulated within their online spaces. This study aimed to address these shortcomings and contribute original research to this topic by conducting thematic analysis on the popular incel forum incels.is. to explore the relationship incels present to have with their female relatives, and if this has impacted their ties to the community and its' ideologies. Over 200 posts and comments were analysed on the forum and four themes were derived from the data; that incels generalised their relatives within their perception of all women, others made exceptions for the females they are related to, female relatives were blamed for the inceldom of users, and some posters wanted sexual relationships with their female relatives. The conclusions were that the several opposing views within the data highlights the contradictory and hypocritical beliefs that are rife in incel culture, yet they all uphold the rigid gender stereotypes of misogyny. Each theme, however, is crucial for explaining how incel ideologies link to the relationships they have with their female relatives and that exploring incel's relationships with their female relatives is significant to understanding incel culture. This study concludes with its' limitations and recommendations for further research.

Content warning

This dissertation uses expurgated terms that are offensive. Misogynistic, racist and homophobic language is used not for shock value, but rather to show the harms and language of incels in their entirety. A conscious effort was made when writing this dissertation to ensure this study did not further platform incel content and disseminate their ideologies.

Chapter 1- Introduction

This dissertation explores involuntary celibates' relationships with their female relatives and how they present this in online spaces to understand how this has affected their outlook on women and their ties to the involuntary celibate community. The research question is as follows: how are incels talking about their relationships with female relatives within the context of incel spaces?

Involuntary celibates, abbreviated to incels throughout this dissertation, are rapidly becoming the subject of increased attention from the public and mass media (Daly & Reed, 2021). They are characterised as predominantly men and having an online presence of hundreds of thousands across sites such as Reddit, YouTube, and their own online forums; which they use to communicate and create bonds over their inability to acquire sexual and romantic relationships (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022; Papadamou et al., 2021). Incels are part of a broader community of the manosphere, consisting of groups that are united by their hatred of women and the belief that feminism has corrupted male supremacy (Sugiura, 2021). Incels view themselves as incapable of obtaining relationships with women due to the empowerment of feminism, and the perceived societal and hierarchical standards for men (Daly & Reed, 2021). These standards include their appearance, financial status, social status, disorders and disabilities (O'Malley et al., 2020). As a result of these frustrations, incels view women as inherently evil and of purposely gatekeeping sex from men, making males the truly oppressed gender (Byerly, 2020). Although not all incels are homogenous in the extremity of their beliefs, it is misogynistic incels who have mostly co-opted the incel name (Kelly et al., 2022). It is difficult and controversial to differentiate between misogynistic and non-misogynistic incels because the core values of their ideology support misogyny and the dehumanisation of women (Kelly et al., 2022).

Incel violence is becoming a prevalent issue within the criminal justice system because their online platform and extremist ideologies spread and encourage violence against women (Byerly, 2020). Consequently, incels have been labelled by some as a terrorist threat to society (Hoffman et al., 2020). Some incels idolise those within the community who have committed violence, such as Elliot Rodger and Alek Minassian (Baele et al., 2019). In 2014, Elliot Rodger became influential and admired by incels for killing six and injuring several others in a shooting and stabbing attack, and leaving a manifesto that detailed his resentment towards women from being rejected and remaining a virgin (Labba, 2020; Tomkinson et al., 2020). This violent act was revealed by Rodger's manifesto to be explicitly for the men's rights movement (Baele et al., 2019). Since this tragedy, Elliot has been labelled a saint in the incel community by being users' profile photos, nicknamed 'The Supreme Gentlemen', his manifesto quoted and even had his initials used as a verb in incel jargon for committing mass murder (for example, going to do an ER) (Witt, 2020). In 2018, Alek Minassian drove a van onto the pavement in Toronto and killed ten civilians, of which eight were female (Baele et al., 2019). He had posted on social media prior to the attack stating that the incel rebellion had begun, and 'all hail Elliot Rodger' (Hoffman et al., 2020). Although these violent attacks are only fulfilled by a small number of incels, the endorsement of these actions is notably just as harmful because it encourages and justifies violence against women (O'Malley & Helm, 2022).

This research aims to delve deeper into this topic to understand how incels feel about the women they are related to. The topic of incels' female familial relationships has not been widely researched; however, female relatives of incels' have become victims of incel related attacks (Williams & Arntfield, 2020). An example of this is Jake Davison, who shot five civilians in a mass shooting in Plymouth in 2021, the first being his mother (BBC, 2022). Despite Davison not explicitly labelling himself an incel, he posted misogynistic views

online, engaged in discussions on incel Subreddits and even idolised Elliot Rodger (Moskalenko et al., 2022). Davison described his mother as ‘vile’, ‘chaotic’ and ‘dysfunctional’, and it should be considered whether his relationship with his mother influenced his misogynistic beliefs and the connection between this, and her being his first victim (Fiamengo, 2021). A similar case is Connor Betts, who killed nine people, one being his sister, in a mass shooting in Ohio in 2019 (Smith et al., 2019). Although speculated, it is unconfirmed if Betts had ties to the incel community (Allison, 2021). Despite this, he fantasised about raping female classmates by having a ‘rape list’, and it was reported that the girls on this list had rejected romantic gestures from him such as dates (Allison, 2021). It is important, therefore, to consider these cases when investigating this topic because both include ties to incel ideologies as part of broader misogynistic and male supremacist structures, along with the murder of their female relatives in mass violence.

Incel online spaces have become a place for resentful men to express their misogynistic views that are rooted in their sexual entitlement (Sparks et al., 2023). They view themselves at the bottom of society’s hierarchy due to their perceived unattractiveness. Their core belief is that women are in high demand and therefore control the sexual market, and that the top 20% of men will attract the top 80% of women, with the remaining men having to settle for the last 20% of less attractive women (Tranchese & Sugiura, 2021). This belief that unattractive females will still be able to find sexual partners leaves incels believing they are victimised by feminism and their right to have autonomy over their bodies (Tranchese & Sugiura, 2021). This is hypocritical, as it could be argued incels are not involuntarily celibate but reject women who do not fit their standards (Maxwell et al., 2020). This hypocrisy in incel ideology also extends to their hatred towards women yet desiring to form relationships with them, as well as their resentment from being judged by their looks but judging non-incels for their appearance (Dyner, 2020). Incels’ reactions to their ideology differs between

individuals, with some trying to alter themselves to change their incel status, and others accepting their fate and believing there is nothing they can do to change this (commonly referred to as laying down and rotting (LDAR)) (Preston et al., 2021).

When researching this topic, a great number of studies and reviews were utilised, with research methods including interviews, thematic, discourse and content analysis, and literature reviews. Most of the literature found on incels and the manosphere originated from westernised countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. This westernised focus on the available literature is not completely representative of the incel community, as digital spaces enable people across the world to join the community (Gheorghe, 2023). During this research, terms such as currycel, ricecel and niggacel were used by users to describe themselves and others, which indicates that the incel community consists of several ethnicities, yet Caucasian incels are the only race not criticised for their racial identity (Gheorghe, 2023; Pelzer et al., 2021). It was also found by Speckhard et al., (2021) that white ethnicities make up around 53% of incel forums. The scope of research focusing on Western countries may be because the violent attacks that link to this topic were carried out in Western countries by white or arguably white passing males (Sugiura, 2021). Furthermore, the online spaces utilised by incels are primarily English speaking, but this could be due to English being the most dominant online language (Kaharuddin, 2019).

The aims of this study are:

- To understand incels' relationships with their female relatives and how they present this in incel spaces; and
- To explore how incels' family relationships with females has affected their incel status and outlook on women.

It will achieve these aims by carrying out three objectives:

1. To establish how incels view and discuss women through a review of the current literature to identify the gaps in knowledge on this topic.
2. To explore how incels articulate their relationships with female relatives through the observation and collection of incel discussions via the incel.is forum.
3. To identify if there is a difference between how incels discuss their female relatives as opposed to women in general through a comparative analysis of the literature review and the data from this study.

The research design entails carrying out thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) on incel forum incels.is, that consists of over 300,000 posts and almost 17,000 members (Hinds, 2022). The ethical considerations of this design include having anonymity for all users so that informed consent is not mandatory (Stommel & Rijk, 2021). To further protect the users in this study, quotes have been presented in an aggregated manner to prevent tracing back to users. Additionally, there is a risk of harm to the wellbeing of the female researcher when studying this misogynistic topic, therefore, the researcher has been able to utilise wellbeing services at the University of Portsmouth if necessary. This research was ethically approved by the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Portsmouth, with reference number 991.

The first chapter of this dissertation is a literature review, which will gain an understanding of the existing research surrounding incels and their relationships with their female relatives. This will show the present gap in the literature that this study aims to fill. The second chapter is the methodology, which will justify the use of thematic analysis for this study. It will also detail the sampling strategy, the data collection method and expand on the ethical considerations. Thirdly, the findings and discussion chapter will provide the results of the analysis and provide explanations for the findings. Additionally, the discussion section of the chapter will establish these findings within the literature to understand its'

significance in the current knowledge landscape of incels female familial relationships. The last chapter of this study is the conclusion, which will highlight how the study has met its aims and objectives, as well as touching upon the limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

This chapter will encompass a literature review. This review will cover the meaning of misogyny and sexism to understand how women are still disadvantaged in current society (Manne, 2017). Furthermore, it will discuss incels in relation to their background, ideologies and linked criminological and psychological theories. It will also focus on how female relative relationships impact men's wellbeing and attitudes towards women, and evidence the lack of insight informing the research aim and demonstrate how important it is to fill this gap.

Misogyny and sexism

Sexism is described as social, political and economic discrimination based on the belief that women are inferior to men (Parikh et al., 2021). This supports the systems that disadvantages women. Despite misogyny being rooted in sexism, it is the enforcement of the systems that differs the two definitions (Manne, 2017). Both sexism and misogyny work collaboratively to uphold these beliefs and attitudes towards women.

Misogyny is not a new issue, in many cultures there seems to be universal negative feelings towards women, whether they are viewed as less human, less intelligent, weak or comparable to children and animals in demeanour (Gilmore, 2009). It is understood by most as hatred towards women due to their gender, however this fails to address the patriarchal imbalances surrounding misogyny and focuses too simply on feelings (Loewen Walker, 2022). Although it may seem that misogyny is no longer a pressing issue due to the cultural shift towards gender equality through the aid of activism, reforms and policy, there is still a disparity of privilege, rights and attitudes towards women (Manne, 2017). Furthermore, misogyny is not simply the hatred of women, it is the control of them that makes it a significant issue in current society (Manne, 2017). This control can stem from governments, whose decisions are often made by men with misogynistic ideologies and a lack of knowledge on women: such as the overturning of Roe v Wade (Gentry, 2022; Loewen

Walker, 2022). This control can also occur from men who impose these views and dominance in their everyday lives (Saresma et al., 2021). To be a misogynist, dominance and hostility is not required towards every woman, but those that they enforce it on is solely because of their gender and their lack of fulfilling males' expectations (Manne, 2017).

The manosphere

With the accessibility and anonymity of social media and online spaces, misogyny is easily spread with little implications (Saresma et al., 2021). Suler (2004) conceptualised this through his study of online disinhibition, revealing that users engage in behaviours and react differently online compared to offline. This is because an online presence relaxes individuals and gives them the freedom to exhibit harmful behaviours that they would not have the confidence to in a normal environment (Cheung et al., 2020). This toxic disinhibition includes behaviours such as hate speech, harassment and cyberbullying (Kurek et al., 2019).

The term manosphere can be traced back to the 1960s, when males founded activist groups that stemmed from the liberation of stereotypical gender roles, but this evolved into an angry and false sense of oppression due to the rise of feminism (Han & Yin, 2022).

Currently, the manosphere is an online space consisting of a network of communities that believe that there is oppression towards masculinity (Chang, 2020; Horta Ribeiro et al., 2021). These groups include Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), Pick Up Artists (PUA), Men's Rights Activists (MRA) and Involuntary Celibates (Krendal, 2020). These groups are connected by their perceived view that feminism is corruptive of the societal standards for men such as their social reputation, looks and economic status (Dafaure, 2022). Their beliefs also include that feminism has stripped men of their entitlement to women, leading to a society where only a small number of men have autonomy on women and their bodies (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022; Pelzer et al., 2021). They are scattered across the web in the form of website forums, YouTube channels, subreddit groups and blogs (Ging, 2017). Older and

milder communities including PUA and MRA have become less popular and overshadowed by the extremist ideologies of more recent groups such as incels and MGTOW (Horta Ribeiro et al., 2020). Horta Ribeiro et al. (2021) found that these newer communities show higher levels of misogyny and toxicity when compared to the other communities that have been present for longer.

Who are incels?

Incels are a community within the manosphere consisting of predominantly young males who view themselves as incapable of developing sexual and romantic relationships with the women they desire (Ging, 2017; Preston et al., 2021). These incapacities result in frustration and anger which fuels hatred and occasionally violence towards women (O'Malley et al., 2022). They place blame on the rise of feminism, which has ranked unattractive men at the bottom of society's social hierarchy (Chang, 2020). Currently, incels have the largest community within the manosphere, with several hundred thousand members spread across their platforms (Horta Ribeiro et al., 2021; Waśniewska, 2020). Incels use these platforms to create bonds with each other, post memes, and incite violence and hate speech towards women and feminism (Jones, 2020).

Despite incels sharing the view of being unable to develop relationships with women, there are variations of the extreme ideologies possessed by individuals due to differing groups in their numerous online spaces (Sugiura, 2021). For example, some incels simply exist without posting in these spaces, some form friendships via posting, others incite violence within these spaces and few commit violence (Hoffman et al., 2020). It is therefore important to note when discussing this community that they are a diverse group that although share core principles, have varying limits to their extremities (Sugiura, 2021).

The origins of incel

There is research to suggest that incel ideologies have been present since the 1700s (Daly & Reed, 2021; Prazmo, 2020). Psychologist Brian Gilmartin explored love-shyness in the 1980s, to describe men who were not able to fulfil their desires to develop sexual and romantic relationships with women (Gilmartin, 1987; 2013; Randall & Cheek, 2016). They posed extremely similar characteristics to those currently used to describe incels; such as virgins, socially anxious and self-loathing (Randall & Cheek, 2016). Gilmartin also found that love-shy men lacked confidence, had poor self-image and blamed this for their inability to interact with women (Gilmartin, 1987; Stijelja & Mishara, 2022). Their obsession with looks is something that also characterises incels today; with incels believing there is nothing they can do about their status due to their unchangeable features such as height and race (Gilmartin, 2013; Stijelja & Mishara, 2022). These similarities infer that incels may be a current version of love-shy men, and that an online platform has given incels more exposure and community than those experiencing the same feelings Gilmartin explored in the 1980s.

The term incel was first used by Alana Boltwood in 1993; a student who made a discussion board for those struggling to obtain sexual relationships (Daly & Reed, 2021; Preston et al., 2021). Her intentions were to help and relate to others on the forum with loneliness and self-acceptance, irrespective of their gender (Karlen, 2021). However, she removed her website in 2003 after observing an increasing amount of negativity, hate speech and misogyny on her forum (Taylor, 2018). Alana's definition of an incel was broad and defined as a challenging time in an individual's life rather than a lifestyle (Waśniewska, 2020). For example, she stated incels included people who had never dated, previously had romantic relationships and belonged to any gender (Preston et al, 2021). Fuelled by frustration and hostility towards feminism, incels are now united by their hatred towards women and thus reject those that have had previous valid romantic experiences, women and

those that are deemed conventionally attractive from their community (Sugiura, 2021). Although the definition and portrayal of incels has altered since Boltwood's project, the shame of lacking sexual relationships remains a core principle of this subculture (Sharkey, 2021). Subcultures are formed as an opposition to societal norms and values, to create a group with shared ideologies (Cohen, 1995; O'Malley et al., 2022). Swidler (1986) states that subcultures are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour to express their beliefs, which can be attributed to the number of violent crimes incels have been linked to (Baele et al., 2019; Cohen, 1994; Hebdige, 1979).

Incel ideologies

Ideologies are defined as a representation of society based on the beliefs held by a subculture or group (Dyrel, 2020). Within the incel community, the concept for their ideologies is based on the principle that sex is a right that women are intentionally depriving men of (Rouda & Siegel, 2020). They believe the sexual 'market' is controlled by women which is making males oppressed and as a result, incels perceive women as inherently evil (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022).

An important part of subcultures is the unique language, where the vocabulary is not often recognised for its meaning in regular society (Holt, 2007). Incels fall under both the red pill and black pill ideology within the manosphere (Jones, 2020; Preston et al., 2021). The red pill is the belief that unites all communities within the manosphere; the realisation that feminism has destroyed their masculinity and control over women (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). This is usually associated with incels new to the community, who are awakening to the fact that they are the most oppressed in society (Fowler, 2021). However, many who identify with the red pill still have hope to climb the hierarchical ladder, through changing their appearance to appear more desirable to women (Fowler, 2021). The black pill is more exclusive to the incel community. It describes the acceptance and defeat that there is no hope

for them to develop relationships with women, due to women biologically favouring attractiveness and materialism (Hoffman et al, 2020). Those who accept the black pill do not have interest in self-help or changing themselves, they either give in and live in despair or use it as an outlet to commit violence (Rouda & Siegel, 2020).

Incels fundamental beliefs entail that their looks are the core reason for their celibacy (Pelzer et al, 2021). As a result, they allocate those who are not incels into dehumanising categories. 'Chads' are the top of the social hierarchy, they are a true alpha male with muscular bodies, confidence, money and able to have relationships (romantic or sexual) with any woman they want (Tranchese & Sugiura, 2021). Incels are at the bottom of this scale. The top of the social hierarchy for women are 'Stacys' who are the most attractive women who can pick anyone as they desire (Waśniewska, 2020). 'Chads' and 'Stacys' are seen by incels as materialistic, lacking intelligence, and only engaging in sexual relationships with each other (Young, 2019). 'Beckys' represent women that incels believe are only averagely attractive, yet still hold standards to only want 'Chad' men (Menzie, 2020). Ironically, incels use 'Stacy' and 'Becky' labels to demean and slander women, yet these are the women they desire. Incels are unwilling to engage with women with specific traits they find unattractive such as of an undesirable weight or age to their standards (Maxwell et al., 2020). Therefore, this argues that incels may not be involuntarily celibate but choose to reject women that do not fit their ideals in a partner (Maxwell et al., 2020). Another term used in this community is femoid/foid, which is an abbreviation for female humanoid and is commonly used by incels to depict women as subhuman (Chang, 2020). Implying women as below human creates justification for violence and emotes disgust for those in the community (Chang, 2020).

Derogatory language is not just used by this subculture to discuss those they despise or are envious of, incels also use insulting nicknames to describe themselves (Gothard, 2020). For example, different races of incels are referred to as 'currycel' (of Indian heritage),

‘ricecel’ (of Asian origin) and ‘niggercel’ (black skin colour) (Young, 2019). There is a link therefore to white supremacy within this community as white incels do not have a specific or insulting nickname (Young, 2019). Furthermore, this illustrates how their perception of themselves and their self-esteem is so low that they too class themselves as physically subhuman, yet feel they are psychologically superior compared to ‘Chads’ and ‘Stacys’ (Pražmo, 2020).

Explanations for inceldom

As well as the previously mentioned subcultural theory, Durkheim’s theory of anomie can also be used to describe the radicalisation of incels (Durkheim, 1893; 1897). Anomie occurs when there is a breakdown of social values, something incels may feel is present when they are continually faced with female rejection (Karlen, 2021). This disconnection from society could encourage individuals to become incel (Bernburg, 2002).

There are also several psychological theories that can be adapted to address incels relationships with women. Othering theory was further developed in 1985 by academic Spivak as a postcolonial theory to study how people treat those within their community as opposed to those outside their community (Spivak, 1985; Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). Spivak’s theory suggests that individuals attribute negative characteristics to those not in their group (Gebara, 2021). This can be applied to the incel community as they create insulting nicknames and have hateful views on non-incels in society to give themselves superiority (Beverly, 2022). Similarly, the in group/out group theory suggests that individuals group people together based on stereotyping and shared ideologies (Gross, 2020). This categorisation of people seeks to view those outside the group with negative connotations, sometimes dehumanising these groups (Vaes et al., 2012). The simplified view of women and relationships incels possess can be attributed to the lack of social experience they have had outside their ingroup (Gross, 2020).

The above psychological theories, however, are not without their limitations. Both othering and the ingroup outgroup theories have been criticised for failing to address the ‘third space’, in which there are identities that do not fit within the extremities of either group (Harmer & Lumsden, 2019). It may be that incels view their female relatives as being a part of this ‘third space’, and do not tarnish them with the same insults they use on the women they desire; however, this requires research to confirm. Furthermore, not all incels hold the same views and attitudes towards their outgroup, some may feel envy, sadness, anger or neutral feelings towards the rest of society (Daly & Reed, 2021; Hamley et al., 2019). There is also a lack of literature on whether ingroups make exceptions for those outside their groups, such as incels’ female relatives. Therefore, this research will aim to fill this specific gap and find out if and why these exceptions occur and what makes female relatives different from the outgroup they feel negatively towards.

The effect of female familial relationships

When conducting this review and searching key terms such as ‘incels views on female relatives’, ‘incel family relationships’ and ‘incels and their mothers’, there were no specific studies that looked at this aspect of incelism in detail. However, a section within Maxwell et al. (2020)’s thematic analysis on incels using Reddit found that some incels’ mothers felt sorrow and concern for their sons. A common theme throughout their study was incels’ feelings of being a disappointment to their family (Maxwell et al., 2020). Furthermore, their research suggests that some incels have never experienced the feeling of love at all, including the love of a family member (Maxwell et al., 2020). Additionally, Cottee (2020) researched comments made by incels on forums that suggest they blame their mothers for their lack of attractiveness (Cottee, 2020). This could suggest that they hold resentment towards their mothers due to the genes they inherited, and place blame on them for their incelism (Jones, 2020). It is important to mention that the same comments were not made about their fathers,

who they share an equal amount of heritage with. Moskalenko et al. (2022) also suggests that incels simply crave attention and an emotional bond, which could imply that they have not received this from their relatives. Despite this, it could be argued that their strong ideologies have condemned them from forming any meaningful bonds with women (Cottee, 2020).

It is accepted that a difficult childhood and family issues can have a psychological impact on a person and their life (Silverio et al., 2021; Thiara & Humphreys, 2015). Abandonment, emotionally distant mothers or a neglectful childhood can leave those affected with a low self-esteem, anxiety and give them unrealistic expectations for relationships in adulthood (Sherr et al., 2017; Thiara & Humphreys, 2015). All these factors are common characteristics for incels, which may be a coincidence or something that requires further research (Williams & Arntfield, 2020). Furthermore, Gilmartin's (1987) research on 'love shy' men discovered that they felt ignored and not good enough for their parents and were raised by mothers described as having unpredictable tempers and mood swings (Gilmartin, 1987; 2013). Psychologists have theorised that those who have emotionally distanced relatives are more likely to become incels as they project their struggles onto society (Gothard, 2020). There is also the claim that violence is more common in men who have had poor relationships with their mothers and a traumatic childhood, although the relationship between violent incels and their familial relationships is currently unclear (McMahon et al., 2018). It must also be considered, however, that violent fathers and a poor relationship with an individuals' father can also lead to these results, and that the patriarchal standards of mothers being the main caregiver is unfair and places more responsibility on the female parent (Schieman et al., 2017; Waller & Swisher, 2006).

Summary

To summarise, this review has addressed the meaning of misogyny, the background, ideologies and theories surrounding incel culture, as well as the impact of female familial

relationships on psychological wellbeing. Importantly, it has evidenced the lack of knowledge between the connection of incels' attitudes towards women and how they present their relationships with female relatives in online spaces. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to knowledge and address these shortcomings to create insight into how incels view their female relatives and if these relationships have impacted their membership within the incel community. The next chapter will present the methodology designed to address this aim.

Chapter 3- Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study. It considers and justifies what approach is most appropriate, the method and sampling strategy, how data was collected and analysed, and assesses the ethical risks for the participants and researcher. The research question is as follows: how are incels talking about their relationships with female relatives within the context of incel spaces? The aims of this research are to understand incels' relationships with their female relatives and how they present this in incel spaces. To meet these aims there are three objectives for this study; to identify how incels discuss women through a literature review, to explore how incels discuss their relationships with female relatives via the observation and collection of online incel forum discussions, and to identify if there is a difference between how incels discuss their female relatives as opposed to women in general through a comparative analysis of the literature review and the data from this study.

A qualitative approach was selected for this research because it is the most appropriate as it aims to understand meanings, contexts and concepts on non-numerical data (Power et al., 2018). Meanings and concepts are important for this study to gain a deeper understanding of incels' perspectives to explain their behaviours and beliefs (Daher et al., 2017; Maxwell, 2021). Quantitative research is an unsuitable approach because it does not delve deeper into meanings and themes when analysing the data (Davies & Francis, 2018). Specifically, thematic analysis of data collected from an incel forum was undertaken because it is best suited to flexibly organise and analyse patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Giles, 2017).

Method

The method for this research is non-participant observation on one of the most popular incel forums <https://incels.is/>. This is the most suitable method because it enables

insight into the incel online community without requiring direct interaction with participants (Busetto et al., 2020), and the data still informed the objectives of this research. This forum was also chosen because posters communicate directly to each other, and an account is not needed to view these conversations. These posts can be found through internet searches without the use of encryption technologies, which makes it accessible for the researcher so they do not need to encounter private and potentially dangerous websites on what is commonly called the Dark Web (Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). Furthermore, due to the anonymity of incel users on online forums, the recruitment for research such as interviews or questionnaires would be time consuming and challenging to implement (Maxwell et al., 2020). When observing posts, it was important to remain critical of how incels present their attitudes towards women within the context of their online spaces, as often they are competing to appear the most offensive and gain reactions from inside and outside their subculture (Hoffman et al., 2020; Regehr, 2020). The satirical nature of the content expressed by incels, however, was taken at face value, albeit critically, by the researcher as it was not possible to directly question them in this study (Cottee, 2020).

Sampling

The sampling strategy entailed reading enough posts and threads to yield around 250 pieces of data. This amount was chosen as it is enough information to validate results and the strength of themes, without oversaturation (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The posts were taken from the online forum <https://incels.is/>. Subreddit incel forums were not utilised in this study because they are often removed by Reddit for promoting violence against women (Byerly, 2020). This would have risked the elimination of results if the sites were removed prior to the publication of this research. The inclusion criteria for sampling data were users over the age of eighteen, however this was challenging to ascertain in online spaces (Marett et al., 2017). Therefore, any users that have inferred they are underage did not have their posts collected.

Additionally, all users that self-identify as an incel were included in the sample. Unless stated otherwise on the users' profile, creating an account and posting on incel online forums infer that they are a part of this community (Costello et al., 2022). The exclusion criteria include anyone known to be under the age of eighteen and users that have accounts or posts removed in the duration of this study.

Data collection

The data collection began by searching key terms such as 'mother', 'sister' and 'family' on the forum to find posts, whilst also following their threads. Furthermore, the researcher made use of the 'similar threads' feature at the bottom of posts, which uses an algorithm to find posts using the same key words in the discussion being observed (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2020). When a post or statement was found that was useful for the study, it was manually copied and pasted into a table. The use of memes and polls on incel sites were also used by screenshotting the webpage and adding this to the table. This enriched the data because incel culture heavily incorporates memes in jest and to communicate their opinions in a satirical manner (Aulia & Rosida, 2022).

Analysis

The results of this data were analysed by following Braun and Clarke (2006)'s thematic analysis. Step one involves becoming familiarised with the data, and step two begins to sort the data into codes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These were coded by key words and phrases that relate to incels' relationships, attitudes and statements about their female relatives. The third step was searching for themes and deeper meanings within the codes that aided in accomplishing the research aim (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). These were reviewed in step four and defined in step five (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The themes found aimed to answer the research question and objectives.

Ethical considerations

Despite not directly interacting with participants in this study, ethical considerations were still addressed. This is because there are pressing debates by scholars as to whether informed consent must be sought to use data from online spaces (Fuchs, 2018; Golder et al., 2017; Stommel & Rijk, 2021). The data was collected via a public domain, therefore informed consent was not required (Stommel & Rijk, 2021). To protect all participants' identities, all accounts were anonymised and referred to as 'users'. As a female researching misogyny, there is the potential that this study may affect the researcher's mental wellbeing (Conway, 2021). This was reduced by not interacting with the participants, which avoided any risk of trolling and abuse that is common from incels towards women (Sugiura, 2021). Furthermore, becoming involved in this research may impact the mental health of the researcher due to the hateful and violent comments towards their gender (Sugiura, 2021). The researcher made use of their supervisor and the University's wellbeing services when it was required.

The next chapter will present the findings and discussion of this research.

Chapter 4- Findings and Discussion

This chapter will provide the results from the thematic analysis carried out on the incel.is forum. It will examine each theme and provide explanations and contexts to understand their importance. The discussion section of this chapter will link these findings to the literature to establish the significance of the themes within the current knowledge landscape and provide understanding about incels' attitudes and relationships with their female relatives.

Findings

During the collection and organisation of the data, four themes became dominant, manifested through repeated words and phrasing: generalisation, exception, blame and incest. The table below displays each theme with its definition to show their prominence.

Theme	Definition
Generalisation	Incels include their female relatives in their negative opinions towards women,
Exception	Incels make exceptions and exclude their female relatives in their negative attitudes towards women,
Blame	Incels blame their female relatives for their incel-dom.
Incest	Incels want to engage in sexual activity with their female relatives.

Generalisation

The strongest theme found in the data is generalisation. This theme is conceptualised as incels not distinguishing their female relatives from their broader negative opinions about women. This generalisation of all women being the same is clear through their use of the acronym AWALT (All Women Are Like That), and users quoted this frequently to justify their hatred towards their female relatives:

'every incel should hate their mom. AWALT'

Furthermore, incels within this theme rationalised AWALT by describing all women as being unable to think differently. Labelling women as not having individual thought processes reinforces the belief that all women are inherently evil and are inferior to men (Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). Incels within this theme also described those who exclude their female relatives from their opinions on women with insults and degradation, as shown by one user:

'I have noticed some degenerates in this community will say all women are this and that and then make an exception for their mothers and their sisters, as if they do not exhibit the same thought processes and are not just as superficial as all other women. I have literally heard normies say in real life that every woman is a whore except me mum. Let's get a reality check in here - your mum is a whore'

As well as women being described as lacking individuality within this theme, the dehumanisation of women was extremely apparent. One user used an analogy of an animal to describe women's nature:

'since I've learned more about woman's nature/ human natural overall I've come to the conclusion that my mother is a whore. Anyway, I don't hate her (I try at least), I mean, it is in woman's nature to be whores. You can't judge a lion by killing a prey, it is only following its nature'

Within this theme there are varying extremities, from incels calling their relatives whores, to wishing death upon their female relatives. One user justified the actions of killers Adam Lanza and Jake Davidson. Both these males committed mass shootings, their mother being the first victim, and Davidson had ties to the incel community (Jangada Correia, 2021).

The rationalisation of the motives of these murderers, as well as the pedestal incels place them on, contributes towards the acceptability of violence towards women (Baele et al., 2019):

'I understand why Adam Lanza, and Jake Davison offed their moms before going ER'

Another example of dehumanisation of women that occurred in the generalisation theme is the use of foid when describing their female relatives. The frequent use of foid within this theme further consolidates the ideology that women are unable to be anything but their biological functions (Prazmo, 2020). This user, similarly to the user above, also wished death upon his female relative. This therefore evidences the lack of emotion and distant relationship these incels present as having with their female relatives:

'Why would you care about a foid? They're just like the rest of foids except you're slightly related. She gets to live a first class life while you LDAR. I personally hate my sister and would be satisfied if she died'

Exception

The second theme that was prominent in the data is exception. This theme is characterised by incels still having extremist and hateful views towards women; however they make exceptions for their female relatives. These exceptions are justified by different points that will be discussed in the following quotations. It is interesting to note that although this group do not believe their female relatives are like 'other women', this user still dehumanises their mother by comparing her to an animal, also seen in the generalisation theme:

'I see my mom like a domesticated tiger to make an analogy. I know 99.999% of tigers out there represent fatal danger to me, but at least there's one tiger I can trust will not kill or hurt me.'

A reason why incels within this theme separate their female relatives from the general female population could be attributed to the treatment they received from them compared to their romantic experiences with women. The user below believes all women are shallow with high standards, whilst describing his mother as kind and understanding. This differentiation is justified by the user because their relatives have treated them with more respect than they claim to have received from women outside their family:

'The ONLY woman who has ever treated me even remotely like a human being is my mother, who keeps bothering me about the relationships thing over the holidays. I usually put up with it but not this year. I opened up and told her all about women and their shallowness and their high standards, and why I will never find a woman. My mother is a very kind and understanding woman so i didnt want to extremely blackpill her, I do not want to upset her too much'

During the data collection, it was also found that many incels do not provide reasoning for why they believe that their female relatives are the only women deemed worthy of their respect:

'I only respect my sisters and my mother. All other women can go to hell'

It is contradictory that incels in the exception category feel love and protectiveness towards the females in their family, however, still use dehumanising terms to describe them. This demonstrates that although the user can differentiate females in their family to other

women, they still coin all women as fooids; which has connotations to being subhuman, emotionless and having the main purpose of male pleasure (Pražmo, 2020):

'Family are off limits. Still love my fooid family. They love me also. That's never going to change'

Finally, although incel ideology is grounded on women controlling the sexual market and purposefully depriving men of sex, they do not feel the same about their female relatives because they do not view them as sexual beings (Menzie, 2020):

'She is still one of the few females who are good to me. Also why would I care about my mother's "whoriness"? I don't think about my mother in a sexual way like I think about pretty much every single other female who is not part of my family'

Blame

The third theme identified in the data is blame. Within this theme, incels place blame on their female relatives, particularly their mothers and sisters, for their looks, personality and entire existence. Sisters are mentioned most frequently in this theme, with incels implying that their siblings intentionally deprived them of conventional attractiveness:

'I could have been a legit 9.5\10 Chad if my sister hadn't robbed me of the half of good aesthetics that was supposed to be mine. this thought is literally driving me insane'

Incels within this theme also blame their mother for giving them the genetics they believe have ruined their chances of being a Chad or having sex with women. Despite genetics coming from both parents, mothers are mentioned considerably more than fathers on the forum for being responsible for inheriting undesirable features (Fletcher & Hickey, 2013).

'women are fucking scum. Remember your mom is responsible for your incelldom. I inherited most of my features from her.'

As well as blaming their mothers for their looks and personality, incels in this theme also blame their mother for having sex that led to reproduction:

'she brought me into this hell hole, and now she expects mercy or forgiveness. Fuck all niggas who says "It's your mother after all" She was horny and you came into this world. All your problems are because your parents got horny. Fuck them'

Incest

The final theme within the data is incest. This theme comprises of incels who claim to have desires to engage in sexual activities with their female relatives. The strictest of incels within the community claim they would not turn down sex from any woman; and would have sex with a relative to fulfil what they believe is their right. The severity of beliefs in this group means that often users' shame those by degrading them to a volcel (voluntarily incel) and fakecel (fake incel) if they would not engage in incest:

'Im strict. You are a volcel if you would decline anything that defies celibacy, however repulsive it may be. You are also only a volcel if you would reject anything that breaks celibacy under any material conditions.'

'fakecel if you wouldnt try bro'

It is critical to note that the most discussed female relative within this category is cousins, not an immediate family member, which other themes have lacked. This may be

attributed to the un-immediacy of the relation desensitising incels from the offensiveness of incest. The user below is discussing their female cousin:

'disgusting narsisistic little whore. absolute scum. but I want to cum in her. hot whore. the only use I could ever get out of her. I hope she dies in a fire'

Like all themes, incels use the term foid to describe women, including their relatives and those they wish to have sexual intercourse with. Furthermore, their beliefs that their mother and sister are more likely to help their cause alludes that they see their relatives as more understanding with better morals than other women:

'Legalizing Incest could also help Incels ascend because our own sisters and mothers would be more likely to help us ascend than other foids'

Discussion

Many parts of incel culture and their beliefs have been studied by a breadth of scholars, including their perceptions on women, mental health, ideologies and their lived experiences (Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). However, little has been discussed on incels' attitudes and relationships with their female relatives. This study has addressed the current gap in the literature using thematic analysis on discussions about their female relatives on an incel forum.

It is contradictory and hypocritical that throughout incel ideologies, women are degraded, dehumanised and plotted against violently; however, incels still desire to have sexual intercourse with women and some even aspire to obtain romantic relationships with them (Dyner, 2020; Helm et al., 2022). The findings of this study indicate that there are a mixture of opinions and feelings in the incel community towards female relatives. However,

all four themes highlight the key principles of incel culture: that feminism has wrongly placed women at the top of society's hierarchy and that their behaviours are controlled by their biological motivations; making them intrinsically evil (Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). As predicted, incels have varying beliefs when it comes to their female familial relationships. This can be attributed to the diverse culture of inceldom, which includes men of all ages, race, culture and upbringing (Preston et al., 2021). As found in the literature, the anonymity of online spaces allows extremist beliefs to circulate with little implications. Moreover, these online spaces give users the ability to incite violence or anger by falsely presenting themselves, their relationships or beliefs for attention (Aulia & Rosida, 2022). This must be considered when discussing the current study because users may be performative or fabricating when posting on forums, but it is important to interpret the data as literal to not undermine the severity of the data.

The use of derogatory terms and language is used throughout all four themes. This is unsurprising in the themes of generalisation and blame, where terms such as roastie, whore and toilet are used regularly and interchangeably to degrade women (Pelzer et al., 2021). Women's intelligence and behaviour were also insulted throughout the data and themes, with incels making comparisons to animals when describing women's thought processes, behaviours and emotions to dehumanise them (Chang, 2020). However, contradictorily, even when incels' are defending their female relatives or positively speaking of them, some incels still referred to them as foids. Foid was the most common term used in the exception theme, which alludes that even though these incels believe their female relatives are kinder and more understanding than other women, they are still inferior to men (O'Malley et al., 2020). Furthermore, by regarding women as subhuman, it further encapsulates the incel ideology that women should have less rights and thus condemns gender-based violence (Prazmo, 2020). It could be suggested that these findings of exception may explain to the 'third space'

of the ingroup outgroup theory, in which incels identify their female relatives as not fitting within either the ingroup of incels or outgroup of normal women (Harmer & Lumsden, 2019).

The relationships the users have had with their female relatives throughout their childhood and adulthood may have impacted this result and lead to the variance in opinions. For example, incels within the generalisation theme expressed that their childhood traumas, such as feeling rejection from their mother, established their hatred for women and thus turned them to incelism. Furthermore, within the themes of generalisation and blame, mothers and sisters were criticised for their sexual experiences, low intelligence and treatment of their male relatives. Although studies have shown that unhealthy relationships with mothers can cause low self-esteem and negatively impact their future romantic relationships, it is critical to state that many men who do not identify as incels have experienced a similar childhood (Alam, 2018; Aloia & Strutzenberg, 2018; Williams & Arntfield, 2020). Furthermore, it is unknown if those posting about their childhood on the forum are being honest because they may be intentionally misconstruing events to authenticate incel ideologies (Andersen, 2022).

Within the exception theme, incels were able to acknowledge that their female relatives loved them, accepted them and treated them with kindness. As a result, these incels perceived their female relatives as the only good women in society. This was supported by their opinion that their mothers have a maternal obligation to love their sons, and that no other woman would be capable of loving them. It was also confirmed in the data that this exception even goes as far to believe that their mothers and sisters would have sexual intercourse with them to fix their celibacy. Furthermore, incels claim that their mothers and grandmothers have higher morals due to being from a different generation, however, psychologist Gilmartin's (1987) study of love-shyness in the 1980s reveals that difficulties in obtaining romantic relationships with women has a history before the manosphere (Randall &

Cheek, 2016). It could be suggested that incels may believe that older females were superior to current women due to the lack of feminism and female rights present in older generations (Sharkey, 2021). This separation of incels' female relatives from all women is therefore hypocritical and accentuates the entitlement they believe they deserve over women.

Although within the theme of blame incels present malice towards their female relatives, the reasoning differs from the reasoning in which they detest non-related women. The incel movement typically projects hate and misogyny towards women for their dominance of the sexual market, their autonomy over their bodies and their 'success' in romance (O'Malley et al, 2020). Within this theme, the data found that the prior factors were mentioned less, with incels implying that their female relatives maliciously and intentionally assigned them unattractive features. However, the use of the phrase 'genetic lottery' is used throughout incel culture and this theme to suggest that a person's genetic makeup is based on luck (Zimmerman, 2022). This therefore contradicts the blame this group place on their mothers and sisters for their appearance. It should be considered that incels use blame as further justification for their misogynistic views and to encourage the oppression of women. As well as this, they blame their mothers and sisters for their genetics and appearance to further assert the belief that they themselves are victimised and oppressed (Lindsay, 2022). This is especially prominent due to fathers receiving significantly less scrutiny than mothers. Furthermore, this is validated by research conducted by Cottee (2020) who found data to suggest that some incels resented their mothers for their lack of attractiveness.

Incel culture is centred on the perception that a woman's main purpose should be to provide sex (Thorburn et al., 2023). This entitlement to a woman's autonomy reiterates incels' belief that women are for nothing but mens' pleasure (Sparks et al., 2022). Despite this, within the exception theme, some incels view their relatives as unsexual, but view every other woman as a sexual object. It could be considered that incels only view women they are

attracted to in a sexual manner, therefore suggesting that incels may not be involuntarily celibate, but reject women that do not fit their ideals (Maxwell et al., 2020). However, the incest theme found a cohort of the community that do think about their relatives in a sexual manner. It was discovered that some users fantasized about ascending from celibacy with their mothers, sisters and cousins. It is highly debated in incel ideology if incest is acceptable and most thread found within the theme had opposing views on the topic. Some users sit on the extremity of believing that the denial of any sexual contact inhibits those to be fakecels or volcels. Whereas there are others who believe that relatives should not be considered to break their celibacy. Furthermore, those who agree with incest link with the generalisation theme of viewing their relatives in the same way as other women. An incel is viewed as more legitimatised when it is apparent that they will never have the opportunity to sexually engage with a woman, including relatives (Hinds, 2022). Therefore, it is possible that some users agree with incest to appear as a genuine incel. It could also be disputed that some users' views on incest is performative and attention-seeking to cause controversy on the forum (Stahl et al., 2022).

Summary

This chapter has provided the results from the study and analysed the four themes. These themes were developed to understand incels opinions on their female familial relationships, and to investigate the reasonings behind the breadth of their views on this topic. The discussion section of this chapter conceptualised the data into the current knowledge of incels' female familial relationships, as well as filling the gap on the under-researched aspects of this topic. The conclusion will further address what these findings mean for the wider research and acknowledge any limitations of the study.

Chapter 5- Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the results of the study by drawing upon the findings and what these contribute to the knowledge landscape. It will reoutline the aims and objectives of the research and how these have been achieved. This chapter will also highlight the limitations of the study and provide recommendations for future research on this topic.

The first aim of this study was to understand incels' relationships with their female relatives and how they present these in incel spaces. The second was to explore how incels' relationships with their female relatives has affected their inceldom and attitudes towards women. Both aims were achieved through the thematic analysis of the incel.is forum, by collecting posts that discussed these topics. The posts that were found ranged from statuses to comment discussions, which were valuable to ascertain the results as information was able to be viewed in the context of entire conversations. It is challenging, however, for the findings of the study to be expanded upon in a linear manner, due to the contradictory results that were found due to the heterogenous nature of incels. The conclusions drawn from the findings will therefore be elaborated on by demonstrating how the objectives of the study were met.

The three objectives that this study achieved are as follows:

1. To establish how incels view and discuss women through a review of the current literature to identify the gaps of knowledge on this topic.
2. To explore how incels articulate their relationships with female relatives through the observation and collection of incel discussions via the incel.is forum.

3. To identify if there is a difference between how incels discuss their female relatives as opposed to women in general through a comparative analysis of the literature review and the data from this study.

Objective 1

An expansive search of the current knowledge landscape of incels was conducted to thoroughly understand what is known about incels' attitudes towards women and their female relatives. This found that incels as a group have varying levels of extremity with their ideologies (Kelly et al., 2022; Sugiura, 2021), which is important to consider when studying this topic. However, the community tends to share the core principle that feminism has enabled women to control the sexual market, which has oppressed males and stripped them of their entitlement to sex (Byerly, 2020; Sparks et al., 2023). This has consequently led to the shared belief that women are evil, materialistic and subhuman (Chang, 2020). The search of the current literature found little exploration on incels' relationship with their female relatives. There were sections of studies that touched briefly on the relationships incels have with their family, with incels claiming to have experienced feelings of disappointment and resentment towards their family for their incelhood (Cottee, 2020; Maxwell et al., 2020). It should be noted, however, that there were no currently published studies in this field that exclusively explored the relationship between incels and their female relatives. The literature review therefore achieved this objective, demonstrated the shortcomings of current research on this topic and highlighted the contribution to the current knowledge landscape provided by this research.

Objective 2

The second objective was met through the observation and collection of incel discussions via the incel.is forum. Incels articulate their relationships with their female family members in varying degrees of extremity, while also having opposing views. The results are

therefore not definitive and it is difficult to explain the findings in a non-contradictory manner. This is demonstrated through the key findings; while some incels did not distinguish their misogynist attitudes from women in general vs their female relatives, others within the community made exceptions for their female relatives. Furthermore, while some incels claimed to desire incest, others wished death upon their female family members. There was further hypocrisy in the blame incels' place upon their mother for their genetics, and unfair dismissal of the equal heritage they share with their male parent.

When exploring how incels articulate these relationships, it is important to acknowledge that this community are renowned for their performative nature, which makes interpretation of the data complex. Their narratives on their upbringing, situations and feelings may not be true, or exaggerated to gain more traction, disputes and humour from other users. Even with such nuances in mind, however, the harms arising from comments should not be downplayed.

Objective 3

The final objective was achieved through the comparison of the findings of the data and the current knowledge that was derived from the literature review. This established that although there were differing views towards incels' female relatives, they are all responsible for the community's harmful attitudes towards women. Although these views were not all the same, they all adhere to the rigid gender roles of male superiority that incels support. This is evident because even when those within the data were making exceptions for their female relatives, they still referred to them as fooids, further reiterating the impact incel ideology has on the dehumanisation of women. These exceptions are problematic because this group only made these exceptions due to reasons that benefited themselves; by claiming that their relatives cared and raised them, and that is why they are worthy of their respect. This group still did not respect their female relatives for the people they are in their own right, such as

for their achievements and careers, but simply respected them for serving purpose in their own life and needing protection due to their inferiority to males. This objective also confirmed that incels recognise the hypocrisy and contradictory nature of their views, but typically use this as humour, or are so invested in their oppression that they believe this is justified (Dyner, 2020).

This objective further corroborated the gender stereotypes incels uphold. When incels generalised their female relatives with other women, they reinforced the belief that women are evil and that their only purpose is to provide males with sex. When other groups excluded their female relatives from this belief, it is arguably just as harmful because their pureness is only due to their maternal and familial ties, not them as individuals with their own autonomy.

Limitations

Although this research has contributed original knowledge on incels' relationships with their female relatives, the findings should be received with some limitations. The current study only utilised data from one incel forum, which may generalise the views of a community that is spread across several online spaces such as other website forums, Reddit and Twitter. Additionally, the satirical nature of incel discussions mean not all posts used in the study may be factual on users' opinions or situations. Users' intentions are not always clear, and fabrication is common because posters are aware of non-incels using their spaces for research and investigations (O'Malley & Helm, 2022). This limitation has attempted to be minimised by collecting a substantial sample of posts to ensure variability within the data.

Recommendations

A future direction for this research could entail interviews with incels to discuss this topic (as per Daly & Reed, 2021; and Sugiura, 2021) as the motivations of their writings could be justified, although caution should be exercised not to enable the platforming of

dangerous ideologies. This study could also be expanded upon by examining one of the themes presented in this study in greater detail to further the understanding of these results.

The implications of this research could benefit a wide range of organisations such as:

- Educational settings: it is beneficial for education settings to be conscious of the implications of misogynistic and extreme views on women to prevent bullying and violence (Stahl et al., 2022). This research could be useful to aid in understanding how female familial relationships tie into this to safeguard students, staff and families.
- Law Enforcement: cybercrime and counterterrorism organisations are growing more aware of incel online spaces and their consequences (Gordan et al., 2022). The knowledge from this study could be beneficial to policing when investigating online spaces and considering that female relatives of offenders within the incel movement may be at a higher vulnerability than previously considered.

This study has contributed original research to the current knowledge landscape of involuntary celibates. It has found that the relationships incels have with their female relatives differs between individuals although still reinforcing rigid gender stereotypes. The research has demonstrated how incel ideologies link to the relationships they have with their female relatives and in turn how their relationships are used to justify and support their incelhood. This contributes to the misogyny that can spread to physical violence within this community.

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