



KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF YOUTH TOWARDS PORNOGRAPHY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH.

Home Science

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ABSTRACT

Pornography is described as sexually suggestive content, "like a picture, video, or text," that is meant to arouse sexual desire. Pornographic images have developed over the course of approximately 40,000 years, from drawings in caves to virtual reality displays intended for adult use. Pornography and erotica are two general categories used to categorise adult content. Addiction to pornography can be due to loneliness, peer pressure, lack of socialization or low self-esteem, the influence of which can have an impact the mental health of the youth. Hence the objective of the study was to assess the Knowledge and Attitude of Youth towards Pornography and its Influence on Mental Health. The samples for the study were selected from degree colleges and University in Bangalore. Two hundred young adults (100 male and 100 female), in the age bracket of 18 to 26 years were identified for the study. An online tool on Internet Pornography Questionnaire (IPQ) by Laura K Noll and a standardized tool on Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava were used. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Survey method was used to collect the data. The data collected was analysed using Chi-square, t- test and f-test. The findings of the study revealed that, youth have a significant knowledge on pornography and moderate attitude towards pornography. The result indicated that the youth have a positive mental health. There was no significant correlation between observed between the level of knowledge and attitude towards pornography and mental health.

KEYWORDS

Internet pornography, Knowledge, Attitude, Youth, Mental health.

INTRODUCTION:

Pornography is a representation of sexual behaviour in books, pictures, statues, films, and other media that is intended to cause sexual excitement. The distinction between pornography (illicit and condemned material) and erotica (which is broadly tolerated) is largely subjective and reflects changing community standards. The word pornography, derived from the Greek **porni** ("prostitute") and **graphein** ("to write"), was originally defined as any work of art or literature depicting the life of prostitutes.

Outlook India (2017) reported that, 35-40% of content downloaded daily from India is Pornography. According a report, quoting Kislay Chaudhary, Director of the Indian Cyber Army (ICA), there are no exact statistics but findings show that search engines get over 1,16,000 queries daily related to child pornography.

The volume of such content can be estimated as every second around 380 people are looking for 'adult' content on search engines. Around 25% of all search engine queries are related to pornography which will be about 68 million search queries a day.

Impact of pornography on mental health

Youth use pornography as a coping mechanism when they are feeling lonely, stressed, sad, or upset. But instead of providing a healthy outlet for negative emotions, pornography can be detrimental to mental health in the long-run as highlighted by Camilleri, C et.al (2021), Levin, M. E., et.al (2012), the more pornography someone consumes, the more likely they are to experience mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, and social problems.

Pornography consumption is also linked to lower self-esteem (Koletić G. 2017), both for the consumers and their partners, both tend to have poorer body image as many seem to internalize the unrealistic body ideals displayed in pornography Tylka, T. L. (2015), Tylka, T. L., & Kroon Van Diest, A. M. (2015).

Studies also indicate that porn can have serious negative effects on relations, health, including fewer fulfilling relationships, increased relationship conflict, poorer romantic attachment, probability of subsequently going through a separation or divorce.

While many youths use pornography when they are feeling lonely, a study by Butler, M. H et.al (2018) showed that porn can ultimately fuel feelings of loneliness and feeding an unhealthy coping cycle. When youth turn to pornography to make themselves feel better, it might be doing the opposite for their mental health.

The influence of pornography on the mental health of youths can be complex in nature creating a havoc in their day-to-day affairs. Exposure at a very young age to pornography can have negative consequences on their psychosocial well-being. One of the major concerns is that it may contribute to distorted perceptions about relationships. Pornography often presents unrealistic and exaggerated portrayals of sexual activity, which can create unrealistic expectations and pressures on young people which can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and body image issues. Furthermore, frequent exposure to explicit sexual content can desensitize the youth on the emotional and intimate aspects of real-life relationships. Due to which they may struggle to differentiate between fantasy and reality, leading to difficulties in forming healthy and meaningful connections with others. Pornography can also normalize behaviours that may be harmful or non-consensual, which can impact their understanding of healthy boundaries and consent.

Excessive exposure to pornography may increase the risk of developing addictive behaviours. It can trigger the release of dopamine in the brain, creating a reward system that can lead to compulsive viewing and difficulty in controlling sexual impulses. This can have detrimental effects on mental health, causing feelings of shame, guilt, anger, and anxiety. Additionally, exposure to explicit sexual content at a young age can disrupt the normal development of healthy sexual attitudes and behaviours. It may contribute to a skewed understanding of consent, gender roles, and sexual scripts. This can have long-term implications on their ability to form healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships in later part of adulthood. It is important to note that not all young people who are exposed to pornography will experience negative mental health effects. Factors such as individual resilience, support systems, and the presence of comprehensive sexual health education can play a pivotal role in mitigating the potential harm. However, it is crucial for the stake holders to create an awareness among the youth on the potential risks about the addiction to pornography and take proactive measures to provide accurate information, promote healthy attitude towards sex, foster open dialogue about sexuality, relationships and assist them in leading a healthy and productive life.

Thus, the prime focus of the study was to understand the knowledge and attitude of youth towards pornography and its influence on mental health.

METHODOLOGY:

Students pursuing their graduate and post graduate studies at degree colleges and university in Bangalore City were identified to assess the

knowledge and attitude of youth towards pornography and its influence on mental health. The sample for the study consisted of two hundred youth in the age bracket of 18-26 years of age (100 male and 100 female). An online tool on Internet Pornography Questionnaire (IPQ) developed by Laura K Noll was used. The questionnaire consisted 52 questions with 12 questions on Knowledge and 40 questions on attitude. For every statement in the IPQ tool, there were three possible answers: Agree, Disagree, and Neither Agree nor Disagree. For the positive statements, the scores were 3, 2, and 1. In contrast, negative statements received scores of 1, 2, and 3. Additionally a standardized tool on Mental Health Inventory developed by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava was used to assess the mental of the youth. This tool consisted of 56 questions with 6 dimensions- Positive self-evaluation, Perception of reality, Integration of personality, Autonomy, Group oriented attitude and Environmental mastery. Four options were included in the mental health inventory. The responses for true keyed (positive) statements were: Always, Often, Rarely, and Never, scoring 4, 3, 2, and 1. With false keyed (negative) statements, the scores are 1, 2, 3, and 4 for "Always," "Often," "Rarely," and "Never," accordingly. Random sampling method was used for the study and the statistical analysis used to interpret the data was t-test, f-test, and Chi-square test.

Findings

The demographic information of the respondents is as follows: A majority of the male (46 per cent) were in the age bracket of 22 to 24 years while majority of the female (36 per cent) were in the age bracket of 20 to 22 years. Majority of the respondents belong to science stream (50 per cent male and 68 per cent female). It is found from the study that (61 per cent male and 47 per cent female) of respondents had only one sibling. Whereas (20 per cent male and 12 per cent female) respondents were single child. Majority of the respondents (65 per cent male and 79 per cent female) belong to nuclear families. Majority of the respondents' parents have completed degree and with respect to occupation, majority of the respondents' father are self-employed and agriculturist and majority of the respondents' mothers are home makers. Majority of the male respondents belong to monthly income of >50,000 and female respondents belong to monthly income of <30,000.

Table.1- Assessment of level of Knowledge of Respondents on Pornography N=200

Categories	Knowledge Level of the Respondents			Chi square test value	P value	Contingency Coefficient
	Adequate	Moderate	Inadequate			
Male	31	35	34	45.35**	<0.001	0.37
Female	5	81	14			
Over All	53 (26.5%)	85 (42.5%)	62 (31%)			

** : Significant at 1% level

Table 1 indicates the assessment of knowledge level of respondents on pornography. Knowledge and comprehension of the topic are crucial, which can involve a person in many forms, and kinds of pornography in addition to the ethical and legal issues that surround its creation, dissemination, and use. It may also entail being aware of the possible effects that pornography may have on people individually, in relationships, and in society. It can be observed that 35 per cent of the male respondents have moderate level of knowledge on pornography, while 31 per cent of respondents have adequate information on pornography and 34 per cent of respondents have inadequate information on pornography. On the contrary 81 per cent of female respondents have moderate level of knowledge on pornography whereas five per cent female respondents have adequate information on pornography and 14 per cent female respondents have inadequate information on pornography. It can be observed in the overall score also 42.5 per cent of the respondents have a moderate knowledge on pornography, while 26.5 per cent of the respondents have adequate knowledge on pornography and 31 per cent of respondents have inadequate level of knowledge on pornography. It is evident that majority of the respondents have moderate and adequate level of knowledge on pornography. The result of chi square value is (45.35**) and is highly significant at 1% level of significance. Eunja Oh, Jin-a Choi (2015), observed that exposure to internet pornography in elementary students increased sexual knowledge in females, but did not significantly impact level of sex knowledge.

Table: 2- Assessment of Attitudes of Respondents towards pornography

Categories	Attitudes of Respondents			Chi square test value	P value	Contingency Coefficient
	Favourable	Moderate	Unfavourable			
Male	29	41	30	1.23NS	0.53	0.12
Female	28	48	24			
Over All	49 (24.5%)	94 (47)	57 (28.5%)			

NS: Non significant

Data of table 2 signifies the assessment of attitude of respondents towards pornography which range from being positive and accepting to being negative and critical, and may also be influenced by cultural, religious, moral, or personal values. It also encompasses attitudes towards the issues such as objectification, exploitation, consent, and the potential harms or benefits associated with pornography. Data confirms that 41 per cent male respondents and 48 per cent of female respondents have moderate level of attitude about pornography. Whereas 29 per cent of male respondents and 28 per cent of female respondents have favourable attitude on pornography. While 30 per cent of male respondents and 24 per cent of female respondents have unfavourable attitude on pornography. It can be observed that 47 per cent of respondents have a moderate attitude on pornography. The results of chi square value (1.23^{NS}), is statistically non-significant. Norazlifah Muhamad et.al (2021), in their study found that female respondents had higher non permissive feelings towards pornography while male respondents had higher permissive feelings towards pornography. Females were more non-permissive towards pornography, perceived better the impact of pornography and factors contributed to pornography compared to males.

Table:3 Frequency distribution of the Respondents towards Mental Health

Sl. No	Dimensions	Class	Frequency	%	Mean value	F Test Value	P value
1	Positive self evaluation	Good	54	27	29.17	354.06**	<0.001
		Average	100	50	25.33		
		Poor	46	23	21.57		
2	Perception of reality	Good	56	28	23.00	456.25**	<0.001
		Average	100	50	20.02		
		Poor	44	22	16.93		
3	Integration of personality	Good	42	21	36.24	359.09**	<0.001
		Average	116	58	30.19		
		Poor	42	21	24.45		
4	Autonomy	Good	41	20.5	17.85	377.09**	<0.001
		Average	114	57	14.88		
		Poor	45	22.5	12.38		
5	Group oriented attitude	Good	37	18.5	25.08	443.46**	<0.001
		Average	124	62	21.04		
		Poor	39	19.5	17.74		
6	Environmental mastery	Good	45	22.5	29.62	401.40**	<0.001
		Average	101	50.5	25.52		
		Poor	54	27	21.89		

** : Significant at 1% level

Mental health is the key to good health and well-being of the youth. Table 3 depicts the frequency distribution of respondents related to their mental health. Positive self-evaluation is characterized by feelings of self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-esteem. It involves having a healthy and balanced view of oneself, acknowledging both strengths and areas for growth, while still maintaining a positive overall self-image. It can be observed from the table that 50 per cent of the respondents have average level of positive self evaluation with the mean value of 25.33 and 27 per cent of the respondents have good positive self evaluation with a mean value of 29.17. It can also be observed that 23 per cent of respondents have poor positive self evaluation. This may mean that they are struggling with poor self-esteem or lack confidence in themselves. The F test value is significant (354.06**) at 1 per cent level.

Perception of reality shapes an individual's understanding of the world and influences his/her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. It plays a significant role in how individuals navigate and interact with their

surroundings and can impact their overall well-being and decision-making processes. It can be observed that 50 per cent of the respondents have average level of understanding with a mean value of 20.02. While 28 per cent of respondents have good understanding with the mean value of 23.00. Whereas 22 per cent of the respondents struggle with perception of reality and have a poor understanding with a mean value of 16.93. The F test value is significant (456.25**) at 1 per cent level.

Understanding and accepting one's positive and negative traits as well as resolving contradictory or conflicting traits are all part of the process of integrating one's personality. It involves bringing one's views, attitudes, and behaviours into line with one's own self to achieve a sense of completeness and authenticity. Findings show that fifty-eight per cent of the respondents have average level of self-acceptance with mean value of 30.19. While 21 per cent respondents have good self-reflection with mean value of 36.24. Whereas 21 per cent of the respondents lack self-reliance with the mean value of 24.45. The F test value is significant (359.09**) at 1 per cent level.

Self-expression, identity development, and personal progress all depend on autonomy. It enables youth to own up to their own responsibilities, make choices consistent with their goals and values, and look out for their own happiness and prosperity. It can be observed from the data that 57 per cent of the respondents have average autonomy with the mean value of 14.88 while 20.5 per cent of the respondents have good autonomy with mean value of 17.85. Whereas 22.5 per cent respondents lack autonomy and have poor self-expression with mean value of 12.38. The F test value is significant (377.09) at 1 per cent level.

A group-oriented attitude often involves a sense of belonging and identification with a particular group, such as a family, community, organization, or society. It recognizes the interdependence and interconnectedness of individuals within the group and emphasizes the importance of collective goals and mutual support. The data shows that 62 per cent of the respondents involve themselves in groups at an average level with the mean value of 21.04. Nonetheless, with a mean score of 25.08, 18.5 per cent of respondents indicate that they participate well in group activities. Whereas 19.5 per cent of the respondents face difficulties in effectively involving themselves in group activities with a mean value of 17.74. The results showed a significance at 1 per cent level with the F test value being 443.46**.

Environmental mastery encompasses the ability to adapt to changes, solve problems, and cope with challenges that arise in different contexts, such as work, relationships, and daily life. It can be observed, with the mean value of 25.52, 50.5 per cent of the respondents have an average ability to adapt to changes effectively. While 22.5 per cent of respondents have good ability to maintain positive relationships and can solve problems effectively with the mean value of 29.62. With a mean score of 21.89, 27% of the respondents, however, find it difficult to deal with problems related to their schooling, relationships, and daily lives. The results of F test value of (401.40**) is significant at 1 per cent level. M.J. Sirgy (2019), studied that positive mental health, a balance in quality of life is achieved by a preponderance of positive psychological qualities and social resources. Thus, it can be concluded that youth have positive mental health.

Table:4 Mental Health of the Respondents

Sl. No	Dimensions	Male		Female s		t test value	P value
		Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev		
1	Positive self evaluation	26.04	3.15	24.96	2.84	2.54*	0.043
2	Perception of reality	20.64	2.32	19.71	2.31	2.83*	0.039
3	Integration of personality	30.73	4.00	30.23	4.51	0.81NS	0.41
4	Autonomy	15.27	1.98	14.74	2.03	1.86NS	0.064
5	Group oriented attitude	21.44	2.39	21.32	2.72	0.33NS	0.74
6	Environmental mastery	25.79	2.84	25.15	3.18	1.49NS	0.13

*:Significant at 5% los, NS: Non significant, N=100

Table 4 specifies the mental health of the respondents. It can be observed from the data that male respondents have better mean value

of (26.04) in dimension of positive self-evaluation in comparison to their counter parts whose mean value is (24.96). The t-test value of (2.54*) is found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

The results shows that male respondents have better mean value of (20.64) in dimension of perception of reality in comparison to female respondents whose mean value is (19.71). This could be attributed to the fact that male respondents are clear with their thoughts and goals do not have any ambiguity.

The t-test value of (2.83*) is found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

Personality traits differ from person to person. It is a universal phenomenon that all individuals have both negative and positive traits. It is important to feel good about one's own strength and equally important to work towards the short comings to finetune one's personality. Both male and female respondents have a mean value of (30.73) and (30.23) respectively. The t-test value of (0.81^{NS}) is found to be statistically not significant.

Autonomy is the key to self-confidence. It helps individuals in making independent decisions which can align with their values instead of being coerced by external factors. The results show that male respondents have a better mean value of (15.27) in the dimension of autonomy when compared to female respondents with mean value of (14.74). The t-test value is (1.86^{NS}) is not statistically significant.

The data shows that male respondents have a mean value of (21.44) in the dimension of group-oriented attitude, likewise female respondents have a mean value of (25.15). The results of t-test value (0.33^{NS}) is found to be statistically non-significant.

Both male and female respondents have good environmental mastery with the mean value of 25.79 and 25.15. The t test value is 1.49 is not significant.

Thus, in all dimensions of mental health male respondents are far better than female respondents. This can be due to the influence of family, academics and responsibility of the female respondents. Ramesh D Waghmare (2018), observed that, compared to female respondents, male respondents scored higher in the dimensions of positive self-evaluation and personality integration. In comparison to male respondents, female respondents demonstrated a greater level of environmental mastery. Additionally, no statistically significant differences were observed between the genders in terms of reality perception, autonomy, and group-oriented attitude. Results showed there was not significant difference between male and female respondents on mental health.

Table: 5 Association Between Level Of Knowledge And Attitude Of Respondents Towards Pornography

Knowledge level	Attitude levels			Chi square value	Probab ility	Contingency Coefficient
	Favou rable	Modera te	Unfavou rable			
Adequate	15	17	21	27.48**	<0.000	0.34
Moderate	30	36	19			
Inadequate	7	46	9			

** : Significant at 1% los

NOTE: Missing of interpretation please check

Table:6 Correlation between Mental Health with Knowledge & Attitude

Sl. No	Dimensions	Knowledge	Attitude
1	Positive self evaluation	0.12NS	-0.09 NS
2	Perception of reality	0.09 NS	-0.13 NS
3	Integration of personality	-0.09 NS	-0.03 NS
4	Autonomy	0.01 NS	-0.01 NS
5	Group oriented attitude	0.18 NS	-0.06 NS
6	Environmental mastery	0.11 NS	-0.01NS

NS: Non significant, N=200

Table 6 highlights the correlation between the mental health, knowledge, and attitude of youth towards pornography. Data signifies that when the respondents have knowledge (0.12^{NS}) towards pornography weighing the pros and cons of pornography their attitude

(-0.09^{NS}) towards pornography will be low.

Regarding perception of reality, when youth have good knowledge (0.09^{NS}) about pornography in the form of merits and demerits, their attitude on how to perceive about it (-0.13^{NS}) also diminishes. In the dimension of integration of personality, the knowledge (-0.09^{NS}) on pornography helps the respondents to understand the consequences. When the knowledge on integration of personality is negative the attitude (-0.03^{NS}) is also negative. Autonomy refers to the freedom of what one does and wants to do. Data reflects that respondents have the liberty in understanding and acquiring knowledge (0.01^{NS}) on pornography which can in turn have negative attitude (-0.01^{NS}) towards pornography. In the dimension of group-oriented attitudes, the knowledge (0.18^{NS}) on pornography could create an environment which may strike a balance and the attitude (-0.06^{NS}) being negative. Regarding environmental mastery, when youth have good knowledge (0.11^{NS}) about pornography they can face difficulty in relating it and in turn have a negative attitude (-0.01^{NS}) towards pornography.

CONCLUSION:

The study on knowledge and attitude of youth towards pornography and its influence on mental health revealed that with easy access to internet the youth have moderate knowledge on pornography and are aware of the pros and cons of watching pornography. Youth have a favourable attitude towards pornography and have overall good mental health. The results revealed that there is no significant correlation between mental health, knowledge, and attitude towards pornography.

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Weblinks

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