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A Study on the Effect of Pornography on Romantic Relationships, Quality of Life and Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT: The present study titled “A study on the effect of pornography on romantic relationships, quality of life and wellbeing” aims to find out the effect of consumption of pornography in the romantic relationships, quality of life and overall wellbeing of college going young adult students. The hypothesis for the present work is that the consumption of pornography will affect the romantic relationships, quality of life and wellbeing of an individual. For the purpose of this study 40 young adults aged between 20-25 years were selected through stratified sampling technique. The original English version of the Pornography consumption effect Scale(PCES), Dyadic adjustment scale(DAS) and WHO quality of life Scale(WHOQOL) were distributed exclusively to the respondents currently studying in Amity University Lucknow Campus, who were exposed to pornography and were currently in a romantic relationship. The analysis of data included the mean and standard deviations of the scores obtained from PCES and DAS questionnaire, suggests that the average respondent in the sample had a moderately high level of overall relationship adjustment or satisfaction. Further analysis included finding out the Pearson’s Correlation. The correlation between fear of happiness and flourishing proved to be insignificant at 0.01 levels. After the analysis of data, the hypotheses were rejected, that is, there was indeed no effect of pornography on one’s romantic relationship, quality of life and wellbeing.

KEYWORDS: Pornography, Relationship, Quality of life, Wellbeing, Young Adults, Correlation

I. INTRODUCTION

The present study has been conducted with the aim to explore the relationship between pornography, romantic relationships, quality of life and well-being. The rapid expansion of the internet and digital media has made pornography more accessible and common than ever before. With just a few clicks, individuals can access an unprecedented amount of sexually explicit material, ranging from softcore images to hardcore videos. Research on the effects of pornography on relationships has yielded mixed results. Some studies suggest that pornography use can have negative effects on relationship satisfaction, trust, and communication, while others suggest that it can have positive effects, such as increased sexual communication and experimentation (Bridges, 2010; Hald&Malamuth, 2008).

Romantic relationships: Pornography use can have a significant impact on individuals' romantic relationships. Studies have found that frequent pornography use can lead to decreased relationship satisfaction and intimacy, as well as increased conflict and mistrust between partners (Perry, 2018). This is likely due to the unrealistic and often misogynistic portrayals of sex and relationships in pornography, which can create unrealistic expectations and undermine healthy communication and trust between partners.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing refers to an individual's state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy. Exposure to pornography has been linked to decreased wellbeing, particularly in individuals who consume pornography excessively. Studies have found that excessive use of pornography can lead to negative outcomes such as low self-esteem, feelings of shame and guilt, and decreased life satisfaction. Research has shown that frequent pornography use is associated with negative mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Wéry&Billieux, 2016).



Young Adults: According to Kessler (2022), the term 'young adult' is defined differently in various disciplines of medicine, psychology, researches in science, various popular cultures, and literature. She further states that the age range for young adults could refer to people aged 12 to 18, or could be between the age of 18 and 30; and it all depends on the context in which it needs to be discussed.

Rationale: The researcher was intrigued by the topic of pornography and wanted to conduct this study to shed light on the potential effects of pornography on individuals' romantic relationships, quality of life, and wellbeing. Previous studies have suggested that pornography use can lead to decreased sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and relationship quality (Bridges, Bergner, & Hesson-McInnis, 2003; Poulsen et al., 2010). Additionally, some studies have linked pornography use to negative mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety (Dwulit&Rzymiski, 2019). However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the topic, and existing studies have produced mixed findings. This study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the impact of pornography on individuals' romantic relationships, quality of life, and wellbeing.

II. RELATED WORK

Bryant, J., Zillmann, D. (1988). According to their study on the impact of pornography on sexual behavior, it was found that pornography consumption was associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behavior. The study used a sample of 200 college students and found that those who consumed pornography were more likely to engage in unprotected sex and have multiple sexual partners. Cooper, et. al. (1999). According to their study on the examination of the relationship between pornography consumption and anxiety and depression in a sample of 232 college students. The study found that higher levels of pornography consumption were associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression, particularly for women. The study also found that the negative impact of pornography on anxiety and depression was greater for those who perceived themselves as having a non-ideal body shape. Bridges et. al., (2010). In their study on the relationship between pornography consumption and quality of life examined the relationship between pornography consumption and quality of life in a sample of 1,500 men and women. The study found that those who consumed pornography reported lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness than those who did not. The study also found that the negative impact of pornography on quality of life was greater for men than for women. Sharma, Rao, et al. (2019) conducted a study titled "Use of pornography in India: Need to explore its implications" to examine the prevalence of pornography use and addiction among a sample of 2525 Indian adults. Results revealed that 8.3% (229; 152 men; 77 women) of the participants acknowledged using pornography, with a higher prevalence among single and single-parenting groups. Pornographic addiction was reported in 0.2% (5/2525) of the participants, with a higher prevalence among men (0.3%) than women (0.1%). Wright, Tokunaga, Kraus, and Klann (2015) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between pornography consumption and satisfaction. They identified fifty studies from ten countries that collectively included more than 50,000 participants across the domains of sexual and relational satisfaction, body satisfaction, and self-satisfaction. The study found that pornography consumption was not related to intrapersonal satisfaction outcomes. However, pornography consumption was associated with lower interpersonal satisfaction outcomes, as demonstrated by cross-sectional surveys, longitudinal surveys, and experiments. The negative impact of pornography consumption on interpersonal satisfaction was not moderated by publication status or year of release. Sharma, A.J., & Subramanyam, M.A. (2021). A cross-sectional study of psychological wellbeing of Indian adults during the Covid-19 lockdown: Different strokes for different folks. The study finds that anxiety was higher among LGBT adults, individuals with comorbidities, and those with a history of depression/loneliness. Additionally, LGBT adults reported a greater usage of pornography than heterosexual individuals, which the authors suggest may be a coping mechanism given limited physical access to sexual partners in a society that stigmatizes homosexuality. Qualitative findings also suggest that calling family members more frequently during the lockdown can strengthen social relationships and increase social empathy. Sharma et al. (2021) explores the issue of excessive pornography consumption and its impact on couples seeking marital therapy. The authors use a case study approach and employ clinical interviews and the Beck's Depression Inventory to assess the patterns of porn use and associated dysfunctions, including depression, in the male partner and distress in the female partner.

III. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to study the relationships between pornography, romantic relationships, quality of life and well-being. The hypothesis states that there will be a relationship between pornography, romantic relationship, quality of life and wellbeing.



The tools used are the pornography consumption effect scale (PCES) the 47-item version of the is a revised and expanded version of the original 18-item scale. The expanded version was developed by Joshua Grubbs and his colleagues, Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) is a widely used self-report questionnaire that is designed to measure relationship satisfaction and adjustment. It was first developed by Graham Spanier in 1976 and WHO Quality of Life (WHOQOL) Scale is a widely used self-report questionnaire that is designed to measure an individual's perceived quality of life across a range of domains. The scale was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). For the purpose of this study 40 young adults aged between 20-25 years were selected through stratified sampling technique. The research design used is cross-sectional research.

For the procedure, the student researcher approached the young adults and took their consent for participation in the study, 40 respondents were randomly selected and were presented with the three scales one after the other, they were asked to pay attention to the instructions laid out in the beginning of the questionnaires before filling them, the respondents were requested to ask if they had any query or doubt.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Table No. 1: MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION EFFECT SCALE, AND THE DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE.

	Pornography consumption effect scale	Dyadic adjustment scale
Mean	125.525	48.475
Standard Deviation	45.641	9.559

The above table highlights the mean and standard deviation of the scores of young adults:

- a. The mean score of 125.525 on pornography consumption effect scale suggests that the average respondent in the sample had a moderately high level of negative effects from consuming pornography.
- b. The mean score of 48.475 on Dyadic Adjustment Scale suggests that the average respondent in the sample had a moderately high level of overall relationship adjustment or satisfaction.

Table No. 2: PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN PORNOGRAPHY AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Correlations			
		Pornography	Romantic relationships
Pornography	Pearson Correlation	1	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.997
	N	40	40
Romantic relationships	Pearson Correlation	.001	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.997	
	N	40	40

The above table 2 highlights the correlation between pornography and romantic relationships.

TABLE NO. 3: MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION EFFECT SCALE, AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION QUALITY OF LIFE (WHOQOL) SCALE

	Pornography consumption effect scale	WHOQOL
Mean	125.525	66.637
Standard Deviation	45.641	12.292

The above table 3 highlights the mean and standard deviation between pornography and quality of life.



Table No. 4: PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN PORNOGRAPHY AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Correlations			
		Pornography	QoL
Pornography	Pearson Correlation	1	-.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.517
	N	40	40
QoL	Pearson Correlation	-.105	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.517	
	N	40	40

The above table 4 highlights the correlation between pornography and quality of life.

V. CONCLUSION

The present dissertation hypothesizes that an individual’s exposure to pornography will have an effect on their romantic relationships, their quality of life, as well as on their well-being. Table No. 1 represents the individual raw scores obtained through the Pornography Consumption Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

Table No. 2 highlights the correlation between pornography and romantic relationships obtained through Pearson’s correlation. The results reveal that the correlation between two variables are no significant, that is, exposure to pornography doesn’t seem to have an effect on romantic relationships.

Table No. 3 represents the mean and standard deviation of the scores obtained through the Pornography Consumption Scale and the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) Scale. The results reveal that there is a higher mean value and standard deviation of scores of pornography, as compared to the quality of life.

Table No. 4 represent the correlation between pornography and quality of life obtained through Pearson’s Correlation. The results reveal that the correlations between the two variables are not significant, that is, exposure pornography doesn’t seem to have a significant effect on one’s quality of life.

The WHO Quality of Life (QoL) Scale assesses the well-being of a person by measuring their perceived quality of life across several domains. Since there is no significant correlation between pornography and quality of life, the exposure to pornography doesn’t seem to have a significant effect on one’s well-being.

This work was done to observe if the researches done on this theme were applicable in the Indian context. The result obtained through the current study doesn’t incur the desirable outcomes and therefore doesn’t support the hypotheses.

LIMITATION:

The existing review of literature revolving around the variable of effect of pornography on romantic relationships, quality of life and wellbeing. There exists large number of researches on the mentioned variables, but those are done either individually, or with respect to other factors like sexual healthy, assault, stereotype, etc. There also exists a significant gap in the literature with respect to the Indian context. The tools mentioned previously are majorly used on the American and the European population, with very little exposure to the Asian population.

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