

The Implications of Pornography Addiction among Adolescents

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Abstract

Since the implementation of the Covid 19 Pandemic Movement Control Order, there has been a significant increase in the use of the internet among adolescents involved in pornographic activities. This study aims to identify the threats and the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents. Realizing the alarming risks of pornography, the authors have conducted a qualitative study into the pornography phenomena and its implications on the brain's nervous system among teenagers. This study employs the document analysis method through the selection of related articles in collecting the research data. In addition, the study also examines pertinent websites in gathering statistical data on sexual-related crimes, offenses, and misconduct in Malaysia. Therefore, this study identifies that the pornography phenomenon is not a local issue in Malaysia but also a global menace that involves humans of all ages. It is discovered that generation Z who are between the ages of 11 to 22 years is at the greatest high risk due to the group's close preference characteristics with the cyber world. The study also identified some major clinical and scientific facts that described the hypofrontality syndrome suffered by pornographic addicted individuals, putting them at risk of serious mental disorders. In conclusion, pornography has emerged as a menacing silent enemy that should be overcome and considered a vital concern for all parties within the community.

Index Terms— Social Media, Addiction, Internet, Adolescent, Negative Implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

The pornography phenomenon has always been one of the most discussed issues of concern among Malaysians. Since the beginning of the mobility restriction or the Movement Control Order (MCO) that started on 18 March 2020, it has to some significant extent boosted the use of the internet as the online learning medium among students of all ages in replace of the traditional face-to-face learning in physical classrooms. This is also experienced by

adolescents which in a way opens the door even wider than before on their internet presence and cyber world exploration. Without self-control and parental monitoring, such online engagement may lead them to involvement in unhealthy negative pornography activities and others.

Pornography activities in Malaysia are involved adults and teenagers who are the future generation that may one day be leaders of the country. The threat of pornography is not only

real but also a worrying trend and it should be given the utmost attention by all levels of the community. Parents' role is vital in ensuring the children's daily online activities are monitored especially during the MCO period when the children are spending most of the time at home undergoing their schooling on online mode due to the closure of schools. Such ample online time and without parental monitoring in a way may provide them with opportunities to freely browse any websites including pornography websites on cyberspace. Therefore, it is essential for parents to always be on alert and oversee their children's activities at home.

In Sweden, a study conducted by a group of researchers on identifying pornography activities among teenagers found that it has become part of their daily routine where 96% of the male respondents are involved with pornography as compared to 54% of the female. The researchers suggested that sex education should be integrated into the school curriculum to highlight and teach children about the harmful and damaging effects of pornography (Magdalena Mattebo et.al, 2014).

The current modern society considers pornography as a common thing or just as an entertainment-like hobby to fill in leisure time. Some people are considering it as an individual's personal or privacy rights without realizing that such an inclination toward pornography is harmful and it leads to negative implications for individuals and the community at large

The local mass media has also reported of a new special unit in the Royal Malaysia Police (RMC), called the Malaysia Internet Crime Against Children Investigation Unit (MICAC) was officially established and launched on the 9th of February 2018, functioning mainly to monitor and investigate internet users that visit pornography content materials, especially child pornography. MICAC is well equipped with high-tech apparatus to trace the frequency and types of pornography content loaded and downloaded by internet users for convictions (Astro Awani, 2018).

In addition, Sinar Harian (12 December 2020), a well-known Malaysian newspaper in the local language (Bahasa Malaysia) stated that the influx of easily installed video-based applications which are used to showcase sexual conduct shared on various social media has in a way contributed to the higher trend in sexual induced crimes. Shahul Hamid Abd Rahim, a local freelance criminologist states that there is an abundance of pornography elements on social media platforms that are being used as means of getting a huge number of likes and followers. This starts not only from an individual's curiosity about the sexual world and the extra hours influenced by pornography contents but includes inadequate exposure to religious teachings and also morally accepted as positive values are said to be contributors to the issue (Raja Nur Faznie Aida, 2020).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study that employs document analysis through the use and analysis of data in presenting and elaborating the topic of concern. The gathering of data through document analysis provides the necessary relevant information and discovery of the investigated issue. Analyzing documents is the most convenient resource as they are readily available with the information and doubtlessly reliable and valid (Kamarul Azmi Jasmi, 2012). This study utilizes library research to get local and foreign statistical data pertinent to sexually based crimes and pornography addiction. The data is needed to verify the research hypothesis; the majority of criminal cases and sexual offenses are caused by pornography.

In addition, some data are also gathered concerning generation Z's addiction to pornography and how that affects the functioning of their brain system to get answers to the research questions; Why do the adolescents lose their focus during their education learning process? This question can be answered by referring to scientific research data in the area of neuroscience and psychology on pornography addiction. Based on the above-mentioned sources of data, this study will

analyze and elaborate on them for the findings and conclusion.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims on analyzing the generation Z characteristics and identifying pornography threats on them because it is extremely vital as teenagers are the human capital asset of the country that shall one day be the leaders of the future. It is with great hope that we can mold such young teenagers to become prosperous individuals that are physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually balanced and able to contribute to the nation in the future.

In addition, this study also aims to identify the effects of pornography on the human brain function and system. Realizing the importance of generation Z as the successors of the future leadership of the country, the research team believes that there is a great need in ensuring their education process should be at its best to instill the moral values and later develop an outstanding desired personality. Nevertheless, the threat of pornography is real and could be to a certain extent detrimental to their (teenagers) cognitive, ethics and behavior. Therefore, they need to be made aware of the effects of pornography and not use their gadgets and the internet for the wrong reason.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is only analyzing the data concerning generation Z and their pornography addiction. Concerning generation Z, their identity and characteristics data provide a clear description of the target group to determine the approach for in-depth research in the future. During the process of gathering the data and information on pornography, we ensure that the data can answer the research questions. Among pornography, descriptions are the definition of pornography, pornography addiction, and its effects on humans.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

A survey in Klang Valley by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia finds that 78.3% of parents allowed their children to

own digital gadgets (Mohd Nasarruddi Parzi, 2019). Between 1999 to 2000, there are about 80, 000 pornography websites and there is an increase of 200 new websites every day. According to a Forrester study, there is a boost of 30% in profit equivalent to about USD1 billion gained by the pornography industry. In Japan, there are about 3,000 or 30% of pornography websites for children. In addition, at the beginning of the use of the internet in Japan, over 80% of the overall web presence was on pornography sites (Shaikh Mohd Saifuddin, 2000). On the other hand, ranking shows Malaysia as fourth in the usage of Pornhub, and during the Covid 19 Pandemic period the traffic increases to 84% (TechNaveBM, 2020).

In the latest analysis by SimilarWeb, as of November 2020, it sees the highest global statistics of access to websites where three out of ten browsings are into pornography websites. Another BBFC study in 2020 also discloses the statistics of adolescents that are exposed to pornography. It states that the involvement of teenagers in percentages is distributed as follows; 51% of teenagers between the age of 11 to 13, 66% between the age of 14 to 15, and 79% between the age of 16 to 17 (Fight The New Drugs, 2020).

According to a survey of 420 schoolgoers between the age of 9 to 16 years on pornography activities in some schools in the state of Selangor, shows that 50% of the respondents are exposed to online pornography. Another study of 860 13 to 18 years old teenagers in Pulau Pinang, Selangor, and Johor state records 36% of them are involved in at least one sexual behavior and 11% have engaged in a sexual relationship (Mohd Fadhli Othman, 2017).

The 5th Malaysia Population and Family research survey (KPKM-5) by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia in 2014 discloses that 35% of teenagers are engaging in pornography resources on the internet, on video CDs and in printed forms. In 2017, joint

research by Herriot Watt University of Malaysia and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission discovers that out of 551 school students, 19% are already into pornography at the age of 10 and another 7% even earlier before reaching the age of 8. In addition, the 2017 National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) of twenty-seven thousand adolescents find that six out of seven of the group are active internet users while two out of seven are addicted to the internet (Sinar Harian, 12 March 2019).

The above statistics clearly show that pornography is an alarming threat to children and teenagers globally. Even if it does not seem disastrous but the implications of it may bring harm and adversity to the community and nation. The effects of such treatment could lead to an increase in statistics of sexually related crimes, illegitimate births, gender confusion, destruction of the family institution, the fragility of a social institution, and others.

VI. PORNOGRAPHY AND GENERATION Z

Pornography is a word that represents an open sexual idea through the use of drawings, paintings, and writings. According to online Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.), pornography refers to "magazines, DVDs, websites, etc. that describe or show naked people and sexual acts to make people feel sexually excited, especially in a way that many other people find offensive". Pornography websites showcase both normal and abnormal sexual conduct based on known human preferences (Nor Azah Abdul Aziz, 2009). The word 'Pornography' that synonym with the word 'erotic' which means stimulating sexual desire, sexual arousal, and sexual excitement (Hajah Noresah Baharom et.al, 2002). In other words, it is an action that is seen as low in moral value such as fleshing a naked body to the extent of sexually arousing those who watch (Amirul Ashraaf Norman and Nooraini Othman, 2020). Generation Z, the generation between 1998 and 2009 is seen as a technology generation because they are exposed to the internet and web since they were young even some are as early as

before they were even able to speak. In other words, they are growing in a man-made technological world that connects people regardless of geographical location. The fast-growing technology of this time as the tool for communication is the reality that provides a great advantage to generation Z. They are continuously being online and communicating with individuals from all over the world without any restrictions. Their online communication with friends and even followers at home and abroad is very much seen through their social media constant presence. Therefore, with such online participation, they are labeled as iGeneration, internet generation, or net generation (Fariza Md Sham, n.d.). Don Tapscott (1999) shares his study in the book 'Growing up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation' which has introduced the phases of generation. This scholar introduces three levels of the generation that are now popular in use; Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z (Hairul Anuar Hj Mak Din, 2017).

In exploring this topic, the researchers are focusing on the characteristics of Generation Z to discover and accurately discuss the connection between Generation Z and the cyber world. A study by Diana G. Oblinger & James L. Oblinger (2005) finds that the characteristics of Generation Z are as follows:

1. Known as *internet generation* or *net generation*, *platinum generation*, and *the native gadget*.
2. *Digital literate*. Utilizing various digital and visual technology and prefer visuals rather than texts.
3. *Prefer networking*. Always in connection using the internet network using any available gadgets such as smartphone, tablet, or laptop regardless of location.
4. *Being instantaneous* in getting information to the extent of not evaluating the accuracy of the information.
5. *Experiential Learner*. Prefer learning from experience rather than being told what they should do.

6. *Social networking*. Prefer to connect with others on social media even with other random unknown social media users, fancy online games, sharing by uploading daily activity photos for public view, etc.
7. *Visual and Kinaesthetic*. Prefer visual stimulus rather than textual in comprehending instructions or processing knowledge-based information.

Generation Z is a group of generations that is very different in terms of their interest, skills, cognition, behavior, and action compared to other generations. Their characteristics are shaped by social media and technological development which are greatly influencing and shaping their psychological state and way of thinking. Their constant engagement and obsession with the virtual world and social media reduce their direct real-life connection and communication with people around them but they are in contact with virtual friends all over the world without really knowing their background. This situation affects the development of their value orientation that does not only cover the traditional values and norms that are within their societal origin (Fariza Md Sham, n.d.).

VII. THE ROLES OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Many parents do not expect that their children dare to visit pornography websites because of their lack of awareness of the threat of pornography and the sexual development of their children. Sexual development does not only involve fulfilling sexual desire but also includes the shaping of values, attitudes, feelings, identity, interaction, and individual orientation (Margareta, 2016).

During children's sexual development, they do not think of sex in the same way as adults. During the phase of sexual development, their thinking of their sexual development covers the emotional, social, cultural, and physical aspects.

Therefore, parental guidance is very much vital in providing a transparent explanation of what is accepted as right and wrong in the process. Everything that they learn, think, and feel about sex shall determine their attitude and behavior in their sexual life in the future. Therefore, parents need to comprehend this and assist their children so that their sexual development process progresses in a healthy manner (Margareta, 2016).

Islam describes in detail the aspect of children's sexual education that includes dress code, the command to cover one's body parts, observing the relationship between men and women, and also to abstain one's vision from seeing or looking at forbidden things. In the Quran, surah Al-Nur (The Light) verse 58 states the restriction of entering parents' bedroom during three specific times; before dawn, before afternoon prayer (Zohor) time, and after night prayer (Isyak) time. The three mentioned times are the parents' private time when they are resting in their room. Such restriction in Islam is aimed at teaching the children manners and to avoid them from seeing any adult couple's sexual behavior that might be detrimental to the children's thinking and perceptions. Islam even stresses the need to teach children to ask permission by knocking on the door if they want to enter their parents' bedroom.

Islam forbids pornography activities as commanded by Allah SWT in Surah An-Nur (The Light) verses 30 and 31:

“O Prophet! Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their chastity. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what they do” (30)
“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and not to reveal their adornments except what normally appears. Let them draw their veils over their chests, and not reveal their hidden adornments except to their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their sons, their stepsons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons or sisters’ sons, their fellow women, those

bondwomen in their possession, male attendants with no desire, or children who are still unaware of women's nakedness. Let them not stamp their feet, drawing attention to their hidden adornments. Turn to Allah in repentance all together, O believers, so that you may be successful" (31)

The words 'yaghuddhu min absarihim' and 'yaghdudna min absarihinna' in the above verses 30 and 31 describe the obligation of withholding one's vision of looking at views that are forbidden by Allah SWT. According to fiqh scholars, our vision may open the door to immoral behaviors that make our heart and mind full of imaginations, and desires and may lead to curiosities. Such a state may influence one into slander, adultery, and sexual misconduct.

Implicitly, the above verses criticize and condemn those who like to look at activities that are forbidden by Allah. When the vision accidentally looks at something bad or forbidden, one should immediately look the other way or lower the look (Wahbah az-Zuhaili, 2005). This study notices Prof. Dr. Wahbah az-Zuhaili's discussion includes pornography images that tend to stimulate human sexual desires and drive them into real sexual activities.

Other religious scholars' views in the context of the above verses are in agreement that by controlling our vision we can safeguard our self-honor and dignity as well as having a pure heart. On the other end, without control, forbidden negative visions might influence a person's inner purity and such negative images might stay longer through time and might also hinder one from doing good deeds (Nur Mohamad Hadi Zahalan, 2019).

Islamic teachings on values, manners, and positive behavior should also be taught formally in school education to strengthen the children's positive sexual development. Parents are not the only ones responsible to teach the younger generation, teachers should also involve and play a role to instill manners and good moral

values through the school curriculum. Schools need to create awareness of the serious threats and harmful effects of pornography among the learners through anti-pornography and anti-pornoact campaigns and awareness activities. According to Mohd Fadhli Othman (2017), school management, district education offices, and state education departments are not giving full attention to pornography awareness campaigns because of the difficulty in tracing the said issue among the students.

Teenagers' pornography activities are usually done in isolation and are not disclosed to the public and parents. Nevertheless, some secretly share their experiences, pornography images, and pornography websites information or links among their friends. At times, they do watch pornography videos together and even talk about it among them. Such situations impede many concerned parties in identifying the existence of pornography involvement among the youth. Realizing that generation Z is highly influenced by the internet and gadgets, teachers and parents should be equipped with techniques on how to approach them to overcome this issue of pornography addiction more effectively.

Despite the obstacles, it is a relief that recently, The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) and the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia (MCMC) are now monitoring and investigating the internet users' activities on pornography websites. The authorities are taking stricter action by blocking access to those pornography websites and this is done immediately by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) once such user is identified. Other than pornography websites, gambling websites are being monitored as well as they are also seen as detrimental to the Malaysian community (Astro Awani, 2018).

VIII. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the qualitative evaluation, the research findings are discussed in two sections: First, the implications of pornography to the community; Second, the implications of pornography to individuals.

The library research discovers that pornography exposes the community to safety threats from

sexual crimes such as rapes, molests, pedophilias, paraphilias, etc. These sexual-related crimes are frequently reported in the mass media. In a worse case, such sexual crimes may lead the sexual criminals into committing murder. In addition, the effect of pornography activities may drive an individual into sexual misconduct such as masturbation, adultery, and incest. Moreover, its adverse implication is even more destructive which may cause further social issues such as pregnancy before marriage, an illegitimate birth, baby dumping, and the spread of sexually related diseases such as HIV/AIDS and others.

The Women and Children Criminal Investigation Division of the Royal Malaysian Police headquarters in Bukit Aman reveals a total of 89% of sexual crimes happened in homes for the period of three years from 2015 to 2017 and only 11% of such crimes occurred outside of residences (Almaswa Haji Che Ros, 2017). The statistics clearly show that the majority of the cases involve known predatory offenders such as among family members, relatives, neighbors, and friends which are possibly caused by pornography activities that are always in closed locations like homes and other private spaces.

In 2018, the RMP reported a total of 1921 cases of child sexual abuse but the Interpol says that there are possibly many unreported cases that are not disclosed to the authorities. This is due to the eastern culture of being rather silent about such crimes out of shame and disgrace (Odisi, 2019).

My Metro (2019) reported that statistical reports on baby dumping cases discovered by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (DSW) and its partnership with the Royal Malaysian Police (RMC) see a considerable increase between 2014 to 2018. Within the duration, a total of 577 cases of baby dumping are reported and are divided by; 103 cases in 2014, 111 cases in 2015, 115 cases in 2016, 120 cases in 2017, and 128 cases in 2018. In addition, there are 2720 reported cases of pregnancy outside of marriage in 2016 (Namri Sidek, 2018).

The above statistics clearly show the increase in criminal and sexual offenses in the country. Looking at the figures, it is undoubtedly that the contributor to the issue is lacking self-control which is further encouraged by the pornography threat. The vast supply of uncountable pornography photos that are available and easily accessed on the internet and using gadgets somehow further encourages the offenders to be even more aggressive. The pornography materials are also giving ideas to the offenders which they then replicate the sexual act that they have watched. This study is also investigating the causes of lack of self-control from the neurological perspective.

In describing the impact of pornography on individuals, this paper discusses how the addiction to pornography damages the human nerve system by analyzing scientific and clinical studies.

The human brain consists of two systems, which are the director (prefrontal cortex/PFC) and responder (limbic system). The director system (director) relates to the ability to think rationally. The Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) is responsible for decision making, specifying priority, analyzing risk, and performing the evaluation. However, PFC is not fully grown yet at the adolescent age but shall only be perfectly developed between 24 to 25 years of age (Mohd Fadhli Othman, 2017). Whereas, the limbic system refers to the brain structure related to emotions such as anger, happiness, and fear. The limbic system is also known as a responder that arranges behavior, intentions, emotions, memory, motivation, and responsive reflects. This system promotes an individual's sense of calm, satisfaction, and enjoyment (Mohd Fadhli Othman, 2017). In a normal condition, the limbic system responder acts to stop the brain process when it achieves its aims and needs but it does not happen if someone is experiencing hypofrontality syndrome.

When someone watches pornography images, dopamine, a hormone that is responsible for controlling actions, motivation, emotions, and happiness, is released by the brain which makes a person in a state of calmness,

excitement, and happiness. Dopamine increases as and when it processes new stimulants. In the case of pornography addiction, dopamine strengthens and increases if the stimulant exceeds the amount that it should be (Mustika, 2018).

In a study by a group of neurology researchers on pornography addiction from the neurological point of view, Donald L. Hilton (2011) states that chemical anatomy and pathology change during addiction regardless of the kind including pornography addiction. This condition causes the brain's cerebral cease to function collectively and is called hypofrontality syndrome. Hypofrontal syndrome is a condition that is said as the loss of control of the frontal control system. In addition, such a condition usually happens anatomically after traumas. Nevertheless, hypofrontality may happen in cases of pornography addiction and could cause damage to the "brake system" of the human brain. The hypofrontality syndrome that occurs due to pornography addiction causes the brain's director system at the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) to be unable to stop dopamine hormone production that plays a role in how we feel pleasure. Such reaction makes an individual unable to reach the maximum satisfaction of pleasure and that in turn triggers them to repeat and try again with extra or additional aggressiveness.

Among the main characteristics of hypofrontality is the emergence of impulsive (impulsivity) and compulsive (compulsivity) acts, weak control of emotions (emotional lability), and difficulty in making a judgment (impaired judgment) (Donald L. Hilton, 2011). Impulsivity is a spontaneous instinctive reaction without putting in any thoughts before reacting to any situation which may cause someone to take the wrong choice or decision due to the absence of thinking before doing. It may also cause the feeling of regret and guilt after realizing what had been done wrong which may prolong until it could probably lead to pressure that causes stress and depression. On the other hand, compulsivity is a drive to act until someone feels comfortable and reaches

perfection. Someone with compulsivity normally has perfectionist and obsessive characteristics to the extent of repeating the action until he or she is satisfied.

Analyzing pornography addiction's impact on the human brain from the psychological and neurological aspects, this study concludes that pornography addiction causes interferences to the brain system of individuals until they are unable to think wisely and act appropriately and the state may worsen after constant exposure to pornography that leads to addiction. This fact explains the connection between the two variables which are the frequency of sexual misconduct and the duration of time of the involvement in pornography activities. Therefore, it is not a surprise to see the rise in the sexual crime rate in the country because pornography activities are still very much happening widely. Criminal and sexual cases seem difficult to control until stricter, stern, and comprehensive actions are carried out on blocking access to pornography.

IX. CONCLUSION

The world of the internet and gadgets is synonymous with generation Z. they can't forego gadgets, social media, and the internet because their life surrounds these resources. Moreover, most of their daily learning tasks and assignments are done based on the resources on the internet through the use of various gadgets. Even though it is informed that the availability of pornography on the internet, social media, and gadgets, contributes to negativity, separating them from their gadgets and the internet is an almost impossible task. A likely solution is to educate them on the proper use of gadgets and the internet. They need not only be aware but learn about integrity and responsibility to avoid them misusing the internet for pornography activities that are detrimental to their mental, and physical health, emotions as well as morals.

Such effort is extremely needed by providing them with the knowledge, comprehension, and awareness about the dangers of sexual deviation and pornography until they understand the possibility of the second implication of such

misconduct (Agus Gunawan, 2016). Therefore, comprehensive campaigns against pornography should be a collaborative and progressive effort by all stakeholders and actions should follow accordingly.

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