The Impact of Pornography on Psychological Distress and Loneliness among University Students of Karachi, Pakistan: An Explorative Study

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Abstract: *The society we are surviving in is an age of advancement and invention. Where the internet has millions of merits, every coin has two sides. The negative side of this is the accessibility of pornography. This exploratory study investigates the correlation between pornography consumption and psychological distress among university students in Karachi, Pakistan. It was hypothesized that "There will be a correlation between pornography and distress and loneliness." A sample of 100 participants was taken using a convenient sampling technique. Data were collected from different universities in Karachi, Pakistan. Pornography-related factors were measured with the help of self-constructed items. Kessler distress scale was used to measure distress, and the UCLA Loneliness scale was used to measure loneliness among participants. The results demonstrated that there was a correlation between the duration of the pornography with distress (r (99) = -.235, p<.05) and also among participants who were unable to stop the behavior (r (99) = -.257, p<.05) Also, a correlation was found between an inability to indulge in the behavior with loneliness (r (99) = -.277, p<.05) and the duration of the usage with the loneliness (r (99) = -.116, p>.05). However, the small sample size (n=100) limits the generalizability of these findings. The study concludes that there is a notable desire for pornography use among participants, often leading to psychological issues.*

Introduction

"Let Go Of Anything That Brings You Stress And Sorrow"

(Hazrat Ali R.A)

Today's society belongs to science and technology, and we've seen a vast number of increasing mind-blowing inventions, one of which is the internet. Without the internet, life is dull, and the internet has many millions of merits. Due to easy, convenient, affordable access to the internet for everyone has brought change because, as we all know, every coin has two sides: one is positive while the other one is negative, and it also has demerits, which cause severe issues for the youth and also for others. It brings dangerous changes in their lives. Among these demerits, internet pornography has its place, and it is an alarming situation and also an addiction that people cannot get rid of quickly.

Despite the growing rate of pornography all over the world and their number, which was increasing day by day. Its main target is the young population, and their social life is also affected. Since the advent of the internet and its miracles, pornography's involvement in the lives of the people has also taken place, which is alarming for any country at any level, whether it is national, provincial, or local. (Lewczuk et al., 2022).

Pornography and the internet both are tightly linked together 50% of the internet traffic is due to the porn materials. Pornography has physical, chemical, and biological effects on human health and lives. Physically shivering will take place slowly as per frequent use into your body; fine motor muscles work weekly, and many more while on the other hand, chemically and biologically are correlated with each other because dopamine hormone is the hormone responsible for excitement and relaxation state and due to watching porn sites and addiction of pornography this hormone play a key role there. (Privara & Bob, 2023).

It was observed that the condition of sexual addiction poses a severe psychological problem which is really ignored by the psychiatrists that's why its poses a very bad impact on the lives of the people and also many terms have been previously use for the problem in many places it is also known as libidinous disorder , wherever a insufficiency of empirical evidences is the result of complete absence of this disorder from the DSM, nonetheless people who are characterized as having a besetting or hypersexual dishevel having besetting cogitation and behaviour as well as sexual nonentity while on the other hand existing prevalence rate of sexual dependence related disorder is confine from 3 to 6 % and its also made different problematic behaviours from which we can't get rid quickly so study suggests that we have to make sure and try to understand the complexity level of the disorder, it include excessive masturbation , cybersex , porn sites , telephone sex , strip club visitation etc (Karila et al., 2014).

Furthermore, another research on pornography conducted by (Gola et al., 2016) is putting the concerns of the responsible organization towards this issue. It has become popular with internet technology and has easy access for everyone with one finger's touch. That's why it has become entertainment for most people: they don't know the upcoming danger. It becomes a danger that is out of control and not easily controlled behavior, which is why many of the studies suggest that usage of pornography heft sexual behavior, but the coition between pornography use and treatment solicit behaviors has not been audited.

Another study conducted by (Duffy et al., 2016) showed that self-perceived pornography addiction (SPPA) has maximally emerged as a concept within research and also in popular culture and warns of the reported impact that it has despite this pornography addiction is not operationalized adequately in term of definition therefore, how SPPA is operationalized and often varies and this influence the conclusions made about the impact of SPPA.

Another research follows the visual sexual stimulus. According to the study, "Dependence" is habituated to pertain to the high prevalence of sexual action in about 37% of examined articles (Mudry et al., 2011). An excessive amount of viewing "visual sexual stimulus" is widespread, and this behavior is reported in many hypersexual behaviors.

In contempt of the disorder of widespread use of pornography, research was conducted to make such reliable and valid instrument to tap the problem and also the other problems for which pornography is the root cause so that is the reason the research paper reports the discoveries of three investigations planned for creating and approving another scale estimating hazardous erotic entertainment use (PPU). However, the other result shows that adverse side effects related to PPU (erotic entertainment use) more firmly anticipate looking for treatment than a minor amount of sex entertainment utilization. Along these lines, the treatment of risky PU should address subjective variables, as opposed to only moderating the recurrence of the conduct since the recurrence of PU probably won't be a central issue for all patients. Future symptomatic criteria for hazardous PU should consider this issue's intricacy (Gola et al., 2016).

Another result of the study appeals that researchers have to focus on the frequency of pornography use and its related impact as determinants of self-perceived pornography addiction. It

similarly affects partners, such as increased feelings of isolation and breakdown of relationships (Duffy et al., 2016).

However, the result of another study shows that 42% of young individuals are exposed to online pornography sites. Among those, a large amount of the participants exposes to the sites unwanted, and the number is 66% wherever separating and obstructing programming decreases the danger of undesirable presentation to the porn sites. While those who want to visit these sites, they know the unblock proxy sites to visit pornography sites and wanted exposure to the porn sites. This rate is higher in teens. They use images, videos, and online sex calls for their desires, or they use friends' homes for this purpose. This addiction brings them to the borderline to the clinically significant range, and this leads them to severe depression as a side effect and also interpersonal victimization as well (Wolak et al., 2007).

The study was conducted to make the instrument on the standard criteria. The result shows that the high score on the dangerous sex entertainment use scale was decidedly related to proportions of psychopathology, low confidence, and poor connection. Hazardous erotic entertainment use was identified with different issues like conduct addictions. Tricky sex entertainment use operationalizes right now to be interestingly recognized from highlights of conduct addictions identifying with betting and Internet use. Findings feature the potential utilization of tricky erotic entertainment use for future research and conceivable clinical applications by characterizing dangerous sex entertainment use as a social dependence (Kor et al., 2014).

Research Objective
The objective of the study is to find the correlation between pornography, distress, and loneliness among participants.

Research Hypothesis
There will be a significant correlation between pornography, distress, and loneliness among participants.

Methodology
The research comprised 120 participants randomly selected from different places in Karachi: universities, physical fitness gym, and their home places. The age ranges from 18 to 26 years, whereas the mean age of the selected participants is 23.7. Moreover, the inclusion criteria in the research are only male participants from age 18 to 26 and random selection from any place. The exclusion criteria are that no female candidates participate in the research. Only the male candidates were selected for the following study.

Measures
This section comprises three subsections. The first subsection is based on the informed consent form in which the text gives the participants brief instructions on their voluntary basis participation and a space for their consent given to them. Also, the researcher asked them if there was any such risk during the whole procedure. At the same time, the second subsection is the primary demographic form, including the text regarding name, which is optional, age, education, gender only male, no siblings, marital status, family status, and occupation. After this, the researcher overviews the self-report measure of porn addiction, which is based on the item content in this, some questions based on the four-point scale and asks the participants to answer each of the following statements and among them, two questions are dichotomous in nature and also ask the participants to answer them lastly the main subsection is based on the scales using to measure the following variables that are distress and loneliness. The distress is measured by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), while the UCLA loneliness scale measures loneliness.

1.   Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)
Kessler's psychological distress scale is a self-reporting 5-point Likert scale having 10 statement questions used to measure distress. Moreover, it is a reliable and valid instrument, and its reliability and validity are measured by many of the researchers; according to the research, which is done to measure the reliability of the scale in Dutch, the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.94, which is satisfactory (Donker et al., 2009). In this five-point Likert scale, the answer ranges from 1 = None of the opportunity to 5 = Constantly. As a general rule of this scale it provides a large number of

information to the clinicians for those individuals who rate most usually to "some of the time" or "all of the time" and those who rate in between the "a little of the time" or "none of the time" may likewise profits by ahead of schedule interventions and also tips to help the bringing issues to light of the condition of anxiety and depression and also some strategies to prevent any mental health issues in future.

2.   UCLA Loneliness Scale

*UCLA stands for the University of California in Los Angeles, where the scale was made and revised thrice, while the third version was used in the research. It is a 20-item scale to gauge dejection, loneliness, and feelings of social confinement (social isolation).*it is a simple and easily worded version and a dependable and substantial instrument to gauge loneliness or feelings of social isolation. Wherever the result of the research showed that the measure was exceptionally reliable, both regarding inner consistency (coefficient ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest unwavering quality over a 1-year time frame (*r*= .73). Focalized legitimacy for the scale was demonstrated by critical relationships with different proportions of depression (Russell, 1996). *In the following research, Participants are asked to answer each of the statements: either o indicates "I often feel this way," S indicates "I sometimes feel this way," R indicates "I rarely feel this way," and N indicates "I never feel this way."*

Procedure

After the approval from the course instructor, the researcher approaches the participants in their universities, gyms, restaurants, and homes. After the introduction of the researcher then, the researcher asks the participant to give verbal consent. They also stated the point of the examination and the consent form in which the request for their precious time was taken and presented to them. After their verbal consent and informed written consent, the researcher gave them a demographic sheet and then introduced the main structure of the forms, which included the Text regarding the topic and selective questionnaires regarding variables displayed to them.

Each of the statements from the questionnaire was described clearly to ensure the authenticity of the answers and to eliminate the fake answers or answers without thinking or matching them or their characteristics. Along with this, the researcher took four collaborators whose work was to collect the data from different places by meeting the same criteria discussed above. Also, the training regarding the following questionnaires was given to them for any situation, or the participants would ask any question or query.

Another option initially discussed with the participants, which they were free to skip this work at any point, was given to the participants by the researcher and collaborators. From the beginning till the end, the standardization and the protocol were maintained by both the researcher and the collaborators. From approaching the end of the whole work, the following research, those participants who stances back from work between or at the start and those who finished the task as guided by the researcher and the four collaborators. The researcher and the collaborators also thanked them for their precious time and support for the whole procedure and the sensitive topic.

Statistical Analysis

To examine the whole procedure, as discussed in the procedure section. The researcher used the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23. Each item was pasted down on this software, as were the participant's reports in front of the statement. Then, the acknowledged categories per the hypothesis's requirement, i.e., the descriptive statistics, correlations, and other statistics, were applied to each item and the demographic sheet.

Result

Table 1 *Frequency and Percentages of Demographic Variables (N=100)*

Demographic variables	F	%
Gender		
Male	100	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	86	86.0
Married	12	12.0

Separated	2	2.0
Education		
Matric	7	7.0
Intermediate	24	24.0
Undergraduate	11	11.0
Graduate	42	42.0
Masters	16	16.0
No of Siblings		
0-3	37	37.0
4-7	54	54.0
8-11	8	8.0
12-15	1	1.0
Family Structure		
Nuclear	49	49.0
Joint	51	51.0
Age in Years		
18-25	71	71.0
26-35	27	27.0
36-40	2	2.0
Occupation		
Student + Job	1	1.0
Student	55	55.0
Employed (P Sector)	23	23.0
Student + Business	1	1.0
Government Job	2	2.0
Personal Business	7	7.0
Doctor	3	3.0
Teaching	2	2.0
Lawyer	1	1.0
No Occupation	5	5.0

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics (frequencies) of the sample. According to this table, the sample size is (n=100). The 86 participants from that sample are single, while 12 are married, and two are separated. Among the n=100, only 7% are those in the matric class, while the graduators have a high frequency of 42% also, intermediates have 24%, undergraduates have 11%, and masters have 16%. According to this table, in the family structure column, the nuclear has 49%, and the joint family system has a high ratio, with the comparison of the nuclear at 51%. Hence, most of the research participants were youth, and their ages ranged from 18 to 25, with a frequency of 71%. In the whole research, the researcher finds a relationship between the pornography duration and the problem faced by people to stop this behavior (pornography). Half of the population and the majority of the people are students, i.e., 55, which is the most sought-after value and alarming.

Table 2 *Mean and standard deviation of Distress Scale & Loneliness*

Descriptive Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Distress Scale	100	23.04	6.657
Loneliness	100	29.04	12.788

Table 2 illustrates that the population's mean on the distress scale is 23.04, which means the population falls there. On the other hand, a large number of people, along with the pornography scale, lie at 29.04, which is more significant in comparison to distress.

Table 3 *Mean and Standard Deviation of Demographic Questions*

Descriptive Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
From how long have you been doing this activity?	79	2.94	1.223

How many times do you see Inappropriate sites for pornography?	79	2.42	1.307
Have you failed to stop your behavior, even when making promises to yourself or others?	79	1.53	.502
How many times do you do this activity?	79	3.09	2.138

While this table indicates the descriptive of the variables in which the demographic questions are present where the people from how long they are doing this activity, the mean is 2.94, and the standard deviation is 1.223. Wherever how many times they visit inappropriate sites, the mean of the n=79 is 2.42, along with a 1.307 standard deviation. The third slot of the table indicates that only 1.53 is the mean of those who try to stop their behavior of watching porn, with the value of standard deviation being .502 and also the frequency of their usage, and its mean is 3.09 along with 2.138 standard deviations.

Table 4 *Correlation between Loneliness and Distress with different Aspects of Pornography (N=100)*

Variables	Extent of Pornography			
	How many times a week do you do this activity?	Have you failed to stop your behavior, even when making promises to yourself and others?	How many times do you use inappropriate sites for pornography?	For how long have you been doing this activity?
Distress	-.235[*]	.-.257[*]	-.250[*]	.096
Loneliness	-.116	-.277[*]	-.254[*]	-.061

The above table of the correlation shows that there is a negative correlation between distress and the extent of pornography at a significant level of $p > 0.05$. There is an unfriendly association between loneliness and the extent of pornography at a significant level of $p > 0.05$

Discussion

The results of this study provide preliminary evidence for an association between the samples regarding the duration of pornography and distress. Also, there is a significant presence between stopping this behavior and distress. In the past, much of the research justifies that pornography has an impact on loneliness and distress.

According to research conducted in the West, 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to online pornography at the age of adolescence. Wherever boys were more likely to be exposed, they used images and videos for their desires and lust. On the other hand, girls reported more involuntary exposure. (Wolak et al., 2007). Due to this, many mental illnesses take part in the human mind, including distress, loneliness, and many others, such as behavioral disorders, etc.

When one partner (heterosexual couple) uses porn at a high frequency, the effect tendency is to withdraw emotionally. While on the other hand, these men report increased secrecy, less intimacy, and more depression. This means that it is not only a problem for young people. Many married couples also go through the face of it, as discussed above. On the other hand, an excessive amount of people all over the world are going through the face of severe depression, loneliness, distress, and many other mental disorders for many reasons. The top of the list is the economic crisis, etc., but the hidden truth is the excessive number of victims of pornography addiction.

This is an alarming situation also for Pakistan because the pornography rate in Pakistan is increasing day by day. Where the rush of the young one is, according to the PAKISTAN TODAY, is 57.1. Pornography is the root cause of almost all mental disorders. Especially in a country (Pakistan) where, according to the International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Resilience, In Pakistan mental health is the field like other necessary fields neglected, where 10%-16% of the entire populace experiences mellow to direct mental sickness, including distress, loneliness, a maximum number of frequency (Bibi et al., 2022).

Today, the world faces a COVID-19 pandemic for which there is no specific treatment, and almost all countries face its danger. This disease is spreading rapidly. According to the statistics, one COVID-19 patient can spread this fatal virus to another 59000 persons who are in touch with this infected individual. Due to this (COVID-19), many countries are on lockdown to control the condition, but unfortunately, people in countries like Canada, America, Italy, France, and Spain are

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not taking it seriously; therefore, to encourage the importance of staying at home, many tactics were used for them. More interestingly, a famous porn site PORNHUB offers its top product for 30days free trial. According to the spokesperson of this site, it is an attempt to encourage the importance of staying at home during today's lockdown, which has been enforced due to the pandemic.

Many pandemics and epidemics have come since the history of the world, and they proved to be as disastrous as COVID-19, examples of which are HIV, hepatitis, Asian flu, measles, and many others. In a country like Pakistan, when you get treatment for COVID-19, what will you do with the patients who are suffering from many psychological and psychiatric issues?

In Pakistan, there is only one psychiatrist for every 10,000 people, which is the other alarming situation. We do not have sufficient services to face the upcoming danger if it has not been sorted out before. On the other hand, in Pakistan, there are four major psychiatric hospitals present in a large, crowded population, and only 20 such units are attached to the teaching hospitals. Where erotic entertainment hurts the well-being and also the mental health of the people, how is it expected that such a tactic of increasing accessibility of pornographic content to the masses can result in people's improved mental health overall?

Coming further ahead, the result of another abroad research shows the alarming situation that is among 122 participants' cooperation of the HSP (hypersexual problem). What is more, the degree of want for sex with an accomplice is anticipated extent. Explicitly, those detailing issues regulating their visual sexual stimulus use who additionally announced maximum sexual want had a minimum degree of want for sex with mate predicted in response to visual sexual stimulus. (Prause et al., 2015). This indicator indicates the nature of the problem. Many developed countries like America passed the bill against this (pornography) from their assembly to get rid of and minimize the effect of this on society.

Unfortunately, the ratio of porn users all over the world is not minimized. It is increasing as the danger of this disorder increases. As per Pornhub's most recent report, about 28.5 billion individuals visited the site, or a normal of 81 million individuals every day. First of all, people must understand the negative effect of porn addiction. After this, the world will move forward with a solution to get rid of this. According to a study conducted in Australia in which the researcher asked the participants whether they watched pornography, this watching had a positive or negative on their overall well-being. 59% of responders say that pornography had a positive effect on their lives in the face of stress relief and open-mindedness as benefits, whereas, in contrast to this, only 7% of individuals claimed that it had a negative impact.

On the other side, there is also an association between loneliness and those people who are unable to stop this behavior. According to research, "those who want to visit these sites they know the unblock proxy sites to visit pornography sites, wanted exposure to the porn sites this rate is higher in teens they use images, videos, online sex call for their desires or they use friend home for this purpose" (Wolak et al., 2007). This addiction brings temporary relaxation, peace of mind, excitement, and a feeling of relaxation from stress. That is why almost 99% of the individuals could not stop the behavior, as this research shows. Because the life of every third person is a problem for many reasons, and everyone wants peace of mind. They do not want to know the way from where it is coming, whether it is positive or negative. It is not their headache.

Due to these related temporary desires, people must understand this upcoming danger. The adverse effects of visual sexual stimuli are erectile problems and difficulty in regulating sexual feelings (Ley et al., 2014).

Wherever loneliness is the feeling of isolation from the environment and also the danger of mental disorders, it is also correlated with pornography. This means that people were approaching this site quickly and frequently. According to the research, "42% of young individuals are exposed to online pornography sites. Among those, a large amount of the participants are exposed to the sites unwanted, and the number is 66%" (Wolak et al., 2007).

This research has a tiny deed in the broader domain. However, the very minute sample shows that there is much work to be done to solve the problem and face the danger of this in the

future because you do not have other options in a country where population and illiteracy are increasing every day.

Pakistan's youth lies at the top of the ten countries in Asia where people are involved in this harmful and dangerous addiction (pornography). On the other hand, many developed countries were taking steps to identify the root cause. It is an addiction that no one can easily accept because people feel ashamed of this.

Limitations

Wherever the limitations of the study are as follows:

1.   The study's sample size for the broader domain is tiny (n=100).
2.   Due to cultural differences and societal changes, no one can efficiently work there because there is much resistance in the culture and the society.
3.   Culturally valid tool is not present, which is why the assessment of porn addiction cannot be done with this mind setup.
4.   The use of the scales is not in the native language.

Suggestions

Some suggestions for future direction are as follows: The sample size for this broader domain must be representative of the population. Moreover, knowledge advertisements and many beneficial programs must be arranged to stop the danger of this because the coming days will be the harder ones if this "porn addiction" is neglected. Essential awareness from the homes must be taught to their children as well. The use of the scales must be translated into the native language, and a culturally valid tool for assessing porn addiction has to be made. However, the systematic review of the many measures suggests identifying the scale that can tell the possible symptoms of this because there is a lack of this, which is why the problem is in place and still needs to be fixed. In short, everyone has to play his role on a national, provincial, and local level to eliminate this. The government has to take serious steps and ban this website permanently. Also, all the unblocked proxies people can access these sites should be blocked. According to the survey, Pakistan is on the list of 10 countries, which is why there is much traffic on these sites. So the government has to take a keen interest in this.

Conclusion

The conclusive remarks of the study confirm the relationship of both the variables, i.e., loneliness and distress, along with the frequent use of pornography, as well as with the promises to stop this behavior. The majority of the people reported that they frequently use these sites. Also, they were unable to stop this behavior. However, half the majority of the sample (n=100) was based on the students with (n=55). Among them, 42% of the sample completed their graduation. There is a negative correlation between distress and the extent of pornography at a significant level of $p>0.05$, as well as there is an unfriendly affiliation between loneliness and the extent of pornography at a substantial level of $p>0.05$.

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