

A Psychological Perspective of Craving Towards Pornography and its Effect on Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Attitude

Samiksha Jain¹, Neelam Pandey², Sakshi Mehrotra²

¹Research Scholar, ²Supervisor, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, Noida, India

Abstract

Media has been defined as “mediated experiences”. It consists of all kinds of medium such as print media, audio, video, electronic media etc. Furthermore, this brings up the issues like pornography or sexually explicit materials which can hampers an individual interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. The present study aimed to understand the effect of craving towards on relationship satisfaction and sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males. The sample of 150 males were divided into two groups namely, dating and non-dating (21-28 years) were given a questionnaire to measure pornography craving, couple satisfaction, four forms of sexual attitude (permissiveness, birth control, communion, instrumentality). The main purpose of the study was to study the difference in level of pornography craving among dating and non-dating males and to explore the relationship between pornography craving and relationship satisfaction, sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males. The study however attempts to find the difference in components of sexual attitude of dating and non-dating males. The obtained data was analysed by MANOVA and correlation. As predicted, significant negative correlation was obtained, between pornography craving and relationship satisfaction, two forms of sexual attitude (permissiveness and instrumentality). The result indicates that there exists no significant difference in pornography craving among dating and non-dating males. Also, there exists a significant difference in one form of sexual attitude (permissiveness) among dating and non-dating males.

Keywords: *Pornography, craving, relationship satisfaction, sexual attitude, dating, non-dating males*

Introduction

The internet is a global network that helps us to get connected to other networks. It is the source or medium that communicates any meaning or purpose or something to which we can attach up a meaning. The emerging trends of internet addiction have also started giving new opportunities of sexual exposure to all the people across the world.

The topic of sexuality is always left unspoken in developing country and always subject to limitations. In ancient India, sexual arousal was the well-known concept given by Kamasutra written by Mallanaga Vatsyayana during the 2nd or 5th century. It was considered to be the integral part in adult’s life. Major changes occurred after the entry of britisher and wherein the Indian culture got mixed up with the moral standards of Victorian system and now the recent technology has given a new shape to the sex culture in India.

According to Hald & Malamuth (2008), pornography is a “material intended to cause sexual arousal or sexual excitement.”^[6] “It is a material which creates the feeling of sexual arousal and contains detailed elucidation of sexual acts involving the nether regions” (Reid and colleagues, 2011)^[14]. The use of sexual attitude and behavior are predicted by exposure to sexually explicit content (i.e. pornography) in adult magazines, X-rated movies and internet. It has been found that two- third (66%) of males and one third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media in past year. Also, the study showed that males who are exposed to such media earlier predicts more permissive sexual norms, having oral sex and sexual intercourse 2 years later and decrease in gender role attitude (Brown, J. D., & L’Engle, K. L., 2009).^[2] The appetite for pornography is increasing at a rapid rate because of three factors: accessibility, affordability and anonymity.

Internet connected devices have allowed individuals of different age groups to consume, create and distribute sexually explicit material worldwide. (Flood, 2007; Haggstrom-Nordin, Sanberg, Hanson, & Tyden, 2006; Lo & Wei, 2005; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).^[3] Pornhub, an adult site in 2015 came up with the annual report or data and revealed that India is the third country which brought maximum traffic to the site. Top three ranking of countries are: United States, United Kingdom and India. But data revealed that as far as the duration of the visit is concerned, countries on first and second ranking are same but Canada have come up to the third rank. And India is holding up the fourth rank. According to Pornhub 60% of the viewer's use mobile phone to access such videos whereas 27% of viewers access computers

Human beings are known as social animals. People suffer when they are deprived of social contacts with others and the core element is "our need for intimate relationship". Our relationship with others is the one of the important factors in our lives. They bring us happiness when everything is going well and sorrow when they are going through a bad phase.

Watching sexually explicit material with female centric attribute was associated with affirmative results of sexually explicit materials on sex life and also on how other genders make perception on women. Whereas, men reported negative effects on the same measure. (French, I. M., & Hamilton, L. D. 2017).^[4] And this online sexual activity is also affecting the relationship in some or the other way. Research studies suggest that men show positive attitude about their partner's online sexual activity and are less likely to express their concerns whereas women are more open to new things and they easily talk about what they want sexually. But negative impacts were also identified where women expressed less sex as a result of online sexual activity and men were less aroused by real sex as a result of online sexual activity (Groves, C., et al 2011)^[5]. Also, recent study suggested that 89% of Chinese participants who were in a committed relationships experiences OSA in past 12 months even when they had a real-life partner. Results indicated that men showed higher frequency of watching all subtypes of OSA as compared to women. Also individual with low relationship quality of life includes low relationship satisfaction, insecure attachment and negative communication patterns and engages themselves more frequently in OSAs (Li, D., & Zheng, L., 2017) ^[9]. Maddox, A. M., et al (2011)

investigated relationship between viewing X-rated movies and relationship among people who are single and are into a romantic relationship. It was found that 76.8% men and 31.6% women reported that they view and around 44.8% men and women view SEM with their partners. Also, it was found that people who had never seen SEM reported higher relationship quality in terms of communication, relationship adjustment, commitment, sexual satisfaction and infidelity than those who watch SEM alone. People who view pornography with their mate depicts high zeal and sexual satisfaction as compare to those who watch such movies solitary.^[11]

Sex need not involve romantic intimacy but romantic intimacy involves sex. Braun-Courville, D. K., & Rojas, M. (2009) explored the exposure to sexually explicit web-sites, adolescent sexual attitude and behaviours. Results indicated that adolescents who are exposed to sexually explicit websites are more likely to engage themselves in multiple lifetime sexual partners, usage of substance such as alcohol at the last encountered sexual activity, were engaged in anal sex and had more than one sexual partner in last 3 months. Also, it was found that adolescents who visited to such sites show high degree of sexual permissiveness as compared to ones who never visited to such sites.^[1] Kim, E. H., & Jeon, G. Y. (2007) investigated the ecological variables of adolescent sexual behavior where behaviour was categorized into four groups such as organism (sexual attitude, dating experience etc.), microsystem (parent-adolescent communication about sexuality, peer relationship etc.), mesosystem (family-peer, family-school relationship) and exosystem (pornography and neighbourhood). It was found that though all the groups affect the adolescent's sexual behavior but majorly organism group have the greatest impact on the sexual behavior of the adolescents.^[7] Luder, M. T., et al. (2011) compared the sexual behavior of adolescents who were or were not exposed to online pornography. It was found that vulnerability to X-rated movies is not associated with hazardous sexual behaviors and that the inclination of vulnerability does not seem to have any influence on risky sexual behaviors among adolescents.^[10]

Consequences of watching pornography

1. Individual: According to Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1988), high exposure to pornography leads men to judge their mates as sexually less attractive, which in turn leads to less satisfaction with their affection, physical appearance, and sexual behavior^[16].

2. Family: The use of pornography by parents have a lot of impact on children when they encounter the situation involving sexually implicit material by their parents such as masturbation, phone sex, parental conflicts, pornographic addicted parents etc (Schneider, J. P., 2000) [13].

3. Clinical: Brown and L’Engle (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of adolescents (N = 967) regarding sexual harassment as a manifestation of sexual aggression. It was found that 76% of adolescent males commit some form of sexual harassment using some kind of sexually explicit material. Also, data revealed that males who were exposed to pornography in early adolescence were more likely to engage in molestation activities in middle adolescence. [2]

This research paper has emphasized to understand the impact of pornography craving on relationship satisfaction and sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males

Objectives of the study

1) To study the difference in level of pornography craving among dating and non- dating males. 2) To explore the relationship between pornography craving and relationship satisfaction among dating and non-dating males.

3) To explore the relationship between Pornography Craving and Sexual Attitude among dating and non-dating males.

4) To study the difference in components of sexual attitude of dating and non-dating males

Hypotheses of the study:

- There would be a significant difference in level of pornography craving among dating and non-dating males.

- There would be a significant relationship between pornography craving and relationship satisfaction.

- There would be a significant relationship between pornography craving and sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males.

- There would be a significant difference in sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males.

Method

Participants

The sample consists of two different groups namely, dating males and non-dating males (21-28 years). The sample was collected from participants residing in Delhi NCR on the basis of socio-demographic details such as Age, Education qualification, occupation, relationship status, duration of relationship (more than 6 months) and accessing sexually explicit material.

Instruments

Pornography Craving Questionnaire developed by Shane Kraus and Harold Rosenberg (2014). The reliability and validity were well established. Cronbach internal validity of alpha = 0.94^[8]. The Couple Satisfaction Index developed by Funk, J.L. & Rogge, R.D. (2007) is a 32 items scale designed to measure one’s satisfaction in a relationship. It has strong convergent validity and high internal consistency. Brief Sexual Attitude Scale developed by Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich (2006). It has the following alphas: Permissiveness = .93; Birth Control = .84; Communion = .71; Instrumentality = .77.

Results

After collecting the data from the sample population. Statistical analysis was conducted and following were analysed from the results obtained:

TABLE 1: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation of sample on Pornography Craving, Couple Satisfaction and components of Sexual attitude (Permissiveness, Birth control, Communion, Instrumentality) among Dating and Non-dating males.

| Dimensions | Male | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---------------------|------------|----|--------|---------------|
| Pornography craving | Non dating | 76 | 2.9641 | 1.10870 |
| | Dating | 74 | 2.8809 | 1.30147 |

Cont... TABLE 1: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation of sample on Pornography Craving, Couple Satisfaction and components of Sexual attitude (Permissiveness, Birth control, Communion, Instrumentality) among Dating and Non-dating males.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|----|----------|----------|
| Couple satisfaction | Dating | 74 | 133.2432 | 24.26498 |
| Permissiveness | Non dating | 76 | 2.7605 | .78708 |
| | Dating | 74 | 3.1324 | .94378 |
| Birth control | Non dating | 76 | 1.7026 | .77039 |
| | Dating | 74 | 1.5073 | .83599 |
| Communion | Non-dating | 76 | 1.9684 | .84982 |
| | Dating | 74 | 1.8189 | 0.70316 |
| Instrumentality | Non-dating | 76 | 3.0184 | .82441 |
| | Dating | 74 | 3.1459 | 0.89338 |

TABLE 2: Showing Correlation of sample on Pornography Craving and couple satisfaction and components of Sexual Attitude.

| | Pornography Craving | Permissiveness | Birth Control | Communion | Instrumentality | Couple Satisfaction |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Pornography Craving | | -0.251** | 0.003 | -0.145 | -0.295** | 0.303** |
| Permissiveness | -0.251** | | 0.045 | 0.136 | 0.280** | 0.493** |
| Birth Control | 0.003 | 0.045 | | 0.411** | -0.054 | 0.058 |
| Communion | -0.145 | 0.136 | 0.411** | | 0.118 | 0.025 |
| Instrumentality | -0.295** | 0.280** | -0.054 | 0.118 | | 0.354** |
| Couple Satisfaction | 0.303** | 0.493** | 0.058 | 0.025 | 0.354** | |

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

TABLE 3: Showing the F values of components of sexual attitude among Dating and Non-dating males

| Source | Dependent Variable | F | Sig. |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| RELATIONSHIP STATUS | Permissiveness | 6.884 | .010 |
| | Birth control | 2.216 | .139 |
| | Communion | 1.374 | .243 |
| | Instrumentality | .826 | .365 |
| | Pornography Craving | 0.178 | 0.674 |

Discussion

We are living in an age of dwindling relationships wherein one of the key factors these days is the use of technology because the lot of time that people previously used to give to their personal relations has now gone to the use of laptops, mobile phones or technological equipment. It also led to issues of sex exposure to your sexually explicit material to everyone across the world. This brings about issues such as pornography which can hamper the satisfaction that the person draws from a real relationship. The current study aimed to look at the impact that the virtual exposures can have on real life relationships.

The results indicate that there exists an insignificant relationship between pornography craving among dating and non-dating males. Hence, the hypothesis was not supported. The reason for no significant relationship found between dating and non-dating males might be due to the dearth of sample size. Though, there is a slight difference in the mean of dating scores and non-dating scores i.e. dating mean score is lower than non-dating scores. This indicates that both the groups watch such content on nearly equal level.

The present study found that there was a negative correlation (-0.303) between pornography craving and couple satisfaction. This indicates that higher is crave for pornography, lower will be the relationship satisfaction. These findings are supported by one of the researches by Maddox, A. M., et al (2011) investigated relationship between viewing X-rated movies and relationship among people who are single and are into a romantic relationship. It was found that 76.8% men and 31.6% women reported that they view and around 44.8% men and women view SEM with their partners. Also, it was found that people who had never seen SEM reported higher relationship quality in terms of communication, relationship adjustment, commitment, sexual satisfaction and infidelity than those who watch SEM alone. Also, there exists negative correlation ($p < 0.01$) between pornography craving and permissiveness and instrumentality i.e. higher pornography craving will lead to lower permissiveness and instrumentality. ^[11]

The result in table 3 indicates that there is a significant effect at one of the components of sexual attitude i.e. “permissiveness” and insignificant effect on other components such as “birth control”, “communion”, “instrumentality”. This might be because people, specifically the males are more open towards their sexual

relationships. These findings are supported by research done by Wiederman, M. W. (1997) found that men were more likely than women to report in engaging in extra marital sex. And no gender difference was found among the participants younger than 40 years of age. Research also found that there is a strong association between permissive sexual attitudes and behavior and exposure to music videos in females as compared to males due to unsatisfactory family environment ^[15].

Conclusion

The present study was aimed to determine the effect of craving towards pornography on relationship satisfaction and sexual attitude among dating and non-dating males. The differences could be the result of cultural differences since the sample was taken from urban population. This study helped us to sensitize the current status of Indian relationships which are getting affected due to the accessibility and availability of content such as pornography. Further, such studies can help psychologist to create an intervention plans to balance out the behaviors which are getting affected due to this.

Conflict of Interest: NIL

Source of funding: Self

Ethical Clearance: Taken from Ethical committee of Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Noida.

References

1. Braun-Courville DK, Rojas M. Exposure to sexually explicit web sites and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of adolescent health*. 2009 Aug 1;45(2):156-62.
2. Brown JD, L'Engle KL. X-rated: Sexual attitudes and behaviors associated with US early adolescents' exposure to sexually explicit media. *Communication Research*. 2009 Feb;36(1):129-51.
3. Flood M. Exposure to pornography among youth in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*. 2007 Mar;43(1):45-60.
4. French IM, Hamilton LD. Male-centric and female-centric pornography consumption: Relationship with sex life and attitudes in young adults. *Journal of sex & marital therapy*. 2018 Jan 2;44(1):73-86.

5. Grov C, Gillespie BJ, Royce T, Lever J. Perceived consequences of casual online sexual activities on heterosexual relationships: A US online survey. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. 2011 Apr 1;40(2):429-39.
6. Hald GM, Malamuth NM. Self-perceived effects of pornography consumption. *Archives of sexual behavior*. 2008 Aug 1;37(4):614-25.
7. Kim EH, Jeon GY. The ecological variables affecting adolescent's sexual behavior. *Journal of the Korean Home Economics Association*. 2007;45(7):71-91.
8. Kraus SW. *Excessive appetite for pornography: Development and evaluation of the Pornography Craving Questionnaire (PCQ-12)* (Doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University).
9. Li D, Zheng L. Relationship quality predicts online sexual activities among Chinese heterosexual men and women in committed relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2017 May 1;70:244-50.
10. Luder MT, Pittet I, Berchtold A, Akre C, Michaud PA, Suris JC. Associations between online pornography and sexual behavior among adolescents: Myth or reality?. *Archives of sexual behavior*. 2011 Oct 1;40(5):1027-35.
11. Maddox AM, Rhoades GK, Markman HJ. Viewing sexually-explicit materials alone or together: Associations with relationship quality. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. 2011 Apr 1;40(2):441-8.
12. Malamuth NM, Addison T, Koss M. Pornography and sexual aggression: Are there reliable effects and can we understand them?. *Annual review of sex research*. 2000 Mar 1;11(1):26-91.
13. Schneider JP. Effects of cybersex addiction on the family: Results of a survey. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*. 2000 Jan 1;7(1-2):31-58.
14. Reid RC, Li DS, Gilliland R, Stein JA, Fong T. Reliability, validity, and psychometric development of the Pornography Consumption Inventory in a sample of hypersexual men. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*. 2011 Oct 1;37(5):359-85.
15. Wiederman MW. Extramarital sex: Prevalence and correlates in a national survey. *Journal of Sex Research*. 1997 Jan 1;34(2):167-74.
16. Zillmann D, Bryant J. Pornography's impact on sexual satisfaction 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 1988 Apr;18(5):438-53.