

# Exploring The Issues and Thought Patterns of Pornography Addiction to Mental Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Analysis Review Study

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## Abstract

This study aimed to explore the issues and thinking patterns of pornography addiction to mental well-being. The study uses a qualitative method of study through document analysis. The method of document analysis in this study uses the technique of systematic review and meta-analysis of optional reporting items (prism). A systematic review of 15 studies was conducted to explore the issues and thinking patterns of pornography addiction to mental well-being. The results of the study found that there are four thought patterns that are identified as affecting the well-being of adolescents. The four patterns are health, social, behavioral, and worship. Based on the findings of this study, it is clearly proven that there is a pattern of thinking of pornographic addiction to mental well-being. Therefore, the issue of addiction should be controlled and given attention by all parties including parents, teachers, government and the private sector to take care of the mental health of the ummah specifically.

**Keywords:** Addiction, Pornography, Well-being, Mental.

## Introduction

In the present time, there is an outburst of information and communication technology, with the internet emerging as a major player without borders. However, one of the debated issues is the emergence of elements of obscenity on the internet, more commonly known as internet

pornography. According to Dewan (2007), pornography is the depiction or narration of certain behaviors in a manner that is stimulating or intended to arouse sexual desire, whether through films, reading materials, and so on, depicting or narrating certain acts in a lewd manner. If the use of pornography is continuous and left unchecked, it will lead to even worse addiction. This starts from soft pornography and leads to hard pornography.

Discussion about addiction needs to be preceded by an explanation of several related terms. Addiction is a brain disease situation where there is a craving and desire for a stimulus, even though it brings harm. The pleasure and satisfaction sought from the initial stimulus gradually become something necessary to ensure normal bodily function. Someone experiencing this problem is called an addict when they experience physical or psychological dependence on a stimulus. Examples of substance and behavioral addictions include alcoholism, drug addictions like marijuana, nicotine, cocaine, food, video games, internet, sports, idols, shopping, gambling, self-harm, and sex (Norman & Othman, 2020).

Pornography is the depiction or narration of certain behaviors in a manner that is arousing or any material intended to arouse sexual desire. Laili et al (2018) explain pornography as any form of action or behavior containing sexual behavior or sexual exploitation that violates moral norms in society or acts of immodest exposure or excess. According to the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2012), the term "pornography" comes from the word "porneia," which is a Greek word used to refer to prostitutes, and this term carries the meaning of writing about prostitutes. It can be understood that pornography is an act that is not good and not accepted in daily life because it is not only prohibited from an ethical and moral perspective but also forbidden in terms of religion.

Addiction is when someone cannot stop doing something, usually something harmful. The word "addiction" is not related to beer or wine like alcohol addiction (Antoneli et al., 2021; Jamieson & Dowrick, 2021; Minhas et al., 2021). Some addictions may include the inability to stop doing things like internet gaming (Dong et al., 2021; Savci & Aysan, 2017; Yang et al., 2021), smoking (Buckell et al., 2021; Malone et al., 2018; Thirlway, 2019), or pornography (Grubbs et al., 2019, 2020; Lewczuk et al., 2021).

Therefore, pornography addiction refers to individuals who frequently view pornographic images or watch pornographic videos as their daily intake. Pornography addiction is something done in silence without the knowledge of others. Pornography addiction can arouse desire (increase libido) in those who view it. Pornography addiction worsens when cases of rape, murder, and so on increase. This is actually very much related to this pornography addiction. Critical levels of pornography addiction can lead to serious consequences such as rape and murder. The desire to try when one is too addicted to pornography they have seen invites problems, and victims are sought to satisfy that desire to try.

### **Literature Analysis**

Mental disorders (or mental illness) are conditions that affect your thoughts, feelings, moods and behavior. The disease may be in an occasional or long-lasting (chronic) type and it can affect your ability to connect with others and function every day. There is no single cause for mental illness. Several factors can contribute to the risk of mental illness, such as genetic and

family characteristics (Moses, 2010; Tsuang et al., 2004); life experiences, such as stress or a history of abuse, especially if they occur in childhood Angermeyer & Matschinger (1996), biological factors such as chemical imbalances in the brain Ciocca et al (2021a); Samenow (2010); traumatic brain injury (Bandelow et al., 2004); maternal exposure to viruses or toxic chemicals during pregnancy Bölte et al (2019); Dietert et al (2011); recreational alcohol or drug use Bölte et al (2019); Jane-Llopis & Matytsina (2006); and feel lonely or isolated (Sticley & Koyanagi, 2016). There is a relatively high correlation between Internet addiction criteria and symptoms of mental disorders; more specifically, non-dependent variables of psychosis and anxiety from indicators of mental disorders have a significant impact on Internet addiction (Mohammadkhani et al., 2017).

Psychosocial factors are the qualities or aspects of a person that affect their psychology and/or social well-being. These variables can be used to characterize the way people interact with their social environment and how this interacts with their physical and mental health. Psycho-social variables include both protective and risk factors. In the social context, psycho-social resources include social networks and social support. The ability to overcome or dominate, coherent feelings, and self-esteem are critical (Ciocca et al., 2021b). Fatigue, depression, hopelessness, and aggressiveness are psychological risk factors.

Biological factors are gaining more attention in the latest research. Endocrine systems and neurotransmitters have traditionally been the main focus of research. Most of this research has been carried out with adults and is quite complex and in terms of its methodology it is also complicated. The findings were based on analysis of post-mortem tissue, brain chemistry, cerebrospinal fluid and neuroendocrine correlations. Biological factors associated with hypersexual disorders include situations and molecular, genetic, physical/organic and chemical substances. The system of neurotransmitters, neuronal pathways, hormones and other molecular variables contributes to the development of certain diseases (Samenow, 2010). Biological factors include inheritance, which is often manifested through family history. Medical illnesses, nerve problems, other diseases, and non-disease situations such as pregnancy are all considered physical illnesses. Substances include over-the-counter prescriptions and pharmaceuticals, as well as illegal narcotics (Ciocca et al., 2021b). The collection of scientific data that supports hypersexual models comes from biological investigations. This may be because biological processes lend themselves to empirical investigations.

While there are growing doubts about biological reductions in understanding and treating sexual problems, investigating biological factors is important for doctors, patients and even policymakers to adopt disease models for these conditions. Concentration on biology does not cancel other "schools of thought" but instead gives credibility. Trauma and linkage are concepts that refer to dysregulation in processes and pathways that ultimately have their origins in neurobiology. Although our knowledge of the brain is still in its infancy, it is important that studies focus on the physiological causes of observable thoughts, thinkings, emotions and actions.

According to Hagedorn (2009) also, pornography can result in various other problems such as behavioral problems stemming from what is seen and fantasizing with it, social problems such as mood, divorce and cancer. For children and adolescents, pornography has

a detrimental effect on the brain. Emotional stimulation results in the brain secreting a hormone called *epinephrine* that will chemically burn the picture into permanent memory. This effect is further enhanced by the combination of photographs and masturbation.

According to Sarnon @ Kusenin et al (2020), in pornography addiction, two main substances play a role: dopamine and endorphins. Dopamine is a reward neurotransmitter that allows someone to feel pleasure or happiness. Meanwhile, endorphins act as chemicals used to cope with stress and physical exercise and help someone relax and recover. When an individual masturbates due to stimulation from pornography, dopamine is released due to the high level of pleasure. After climax, endorphins are released, making someone feel tired and sleepy. This process, if repeated, can lead to addiction because the brain requires the same chemical reaction. This can affect thinking, impair decision-making skills, and other interpersonal skills.

Thus, addiction refers to an individual who often sees pornographic pictures or watches pornographic videos as his daily need. Pornography addiction is something that is done in silence without the knowledge of others. Pornographic addiction can bring lust (raising arousal) to those who see it. Pornographic addiction is on the rise as cases of rape, murder and so on increase. This is very much related to this addiction. Critical level addiction can lead to bad things like rape and murder happening. The feeling of wanting to try an individual when it is too addicted to pornography has been seen to invite problems and the victim is sought to satisfy the feeling of wanting to try it.

There are several studies related to pornography addiction that have been conducted. Among them, a study conducted by Zakariah & Baharuddin (2011), titled *Cyber Sex Addiction: The Experience of Counsellors In Malaysia*. This study discusses the challenges faced by counsellors to help patients to abandon cyber sex/cyber pornography addiction. The study was conducted in a qualitative form and there are several important findings that researchers have managed to obtain such as the effects of cyber sex, knowledge requirements (understanding cases) and approaches to treating cyber sex addiction. The study also focuses on maintaining the recovery from cyber sex addiction to ensure that those who are stuck with pornography can change with better morals and leave the act forever. This is because pornography has only devastating implications in life, including in family relationships.

In a study conducted by Mass and Dewey (2018), titled *Internet Pornography Use Among Collagiate Women: Gender Attitudes, Body Monitoring, and Sexual Behavior*, internet pornography is a form of oppression for women, where pornography is indirectly capable of making women victims of rape and sexual devices for men. Based on this study, there was no large behavioral gap between women who watched pornography and those who did not watch pornography. However, women who watch pornography are found to be more susceptible to engaging in free sex and exchanging partners. In addition, this study also explains that pornography also has a positive effect on adolescents especially knowledge related to sex. Although this study is a good study, it is not suitable to be adapted to the life, religion and culture patterns of the people in Malaysia who consider pornography to be an immoral act and can only cause harm in one's life and society.

In a study conducted by Vaillancourt & Bergeron (2018), entitled *Self Perceived Problematic Pornography Use: Beyond Individual Differences and Religiosity* was conducted

to look at the effects of pornography on a person who did it. The results of this study show that pornography is capable of causing extreme addiction to a person, thus affecting health aspects such as causing lack of self-control, infertility, loss of respect, harmful sex (violence) and more. Researchers explained that understanding and understanding religion is the best way to control a person's sexual behavior. This is because the appreciation of religion can directly enhance the moral values in a person to control oneself for destructive acts. Thus, this study clearly shows that religious appreciation is the best way for a person to control his behavior in himself, since no religion tells his adherents to commit immoral acts and bring harm in their adherents.

According to Reisman (2008), who is president of the Institute for Media Education in Pennsylvania, for children and adolescents pornography has a detrimental effect on the brain. The brain trusts whatever is displayed and this is what will happen to the minds of children and adolescents. This is because pornography can cause the brain to be covered with false depictions of real reality as follows: *Health-based neurological observations about the instinctual brain-imprinted response to pornographic sights and sounds indicates that viewing pornography is a biologically significant event that overrides informed consent - and that is harmful to children's [moldable] 'plastic' brains because it compromises their grasp of reality and thus their mental and physical health, their well-being and their pursuit of happiness.*

There are two types of measurements in addiction studies: self-report and interviewer evaluation measurement (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996; Robinson, 1999). In self-report measurements, respondents were asked to provide direct feedback about their actions, beliefs, attitudes or intentions rather than others. At the same time, Interview rating measurement is a tool that can be used to assess the lifestyle, attitude, response, problem-solving abilities in different situations and the personality of a mental illness patient. The interviewer can compare these overall ratings and scores with the assessment and overall scores of other mental disorder patients to determine who has the most severe levels of mental illness.

With the latest version of the Diagnosis and Statistics Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM), drug abuse and dependence have been integrated into a category known as substance use disorder. The first stage in the diagnosis recognizes the need for treatment by a friend, family member, or self-addicted individual. The first step is sometimes the most difficult. It may require personal or group intervention if people with addiction disorder are not aware of the severity of their condition (Hagedorn, 2009).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is based on the premise that our thoughts (cognition) interact with our feelings (emotions) and our behaviors (behavior) (Gonzalez & Wekerle, 2016). More specifically, our ideas influence our feelings and actions. Positive and realistic ideas may lead us to happiness and result in success. Past research evidence collected will help determine how CBT can help patients with CSB experience symptoms of anxiety, despair, and less severe compulsive sexual activity (Lotfi et al., 2021). Additionally, given that this research provides a comprehensive overview of the effects of CBT on CSB patients, which were previously unknown, we might expect that these findings will assist psychiatric experts.

According to the theory of psychoanalysis, personality is explained in terms of psychological processes that go unnoticed (for example, desires and fears that we are not fully aware of) (Fonagy, 2010). The theory of psychodynamics holds that childhood experiences are critical in shaping an adult personality. The majority of the theories of pedophilia psychoanalysis address issues that can be mapped to four factors, namely concerns about what sexuality represents ('sexual passion'), concern with what the child represents ('emotional congruence'), and, in connection with this, the idea of how the developmental processes that usually culminate in age-appropriate sexual relationships have slipped ('restrictions'), and the nature of those relationships.

### **Conclusion**

The issue of pornography addiction poses a challenge for preachers and families involved in addressing it. Moreover, those caught in this addiction have typically endured suffering and experiences that serve as strong motivators for them to remain trapped. This issue exacerbates when society fails to take notice because addiction often occurs silently and can pose greater harm to individuals and communities.

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