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**THE EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY TO ADOLESCENTS**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It is undeniable that pornography has always been a controversial topic in society, especially among adolescents. At the beginning of the last century, feminists criticized pornography as the content is equivalent to violence against women (Dworkin, 1979). According to The Star (2018) that revealed Assistant Commissioner Ong Chin Lan's statement that Malaysia happens to be the country with the largest number of IP addresses for downloading and uploading pornography in Southeast Asia, according to the information by the Dutch police in Malaysia in the year 2015. This shows that most teenagers in Malaysia have watched pornography content. These data indicates that pornography is widely promoted among teenagers in our country. Moreover, the limitless access towards the Internet becomes a contributing factor for adolescents to dig deeper into this explicit subject. Similar to most controversial topics, pornography inevitably brings plenty of negative effects that could influence many aspects in adolescents' lives. Watching porno during adolescent years, or in general can give bad effects on the mind, increase the risks of bad health, and it could trigger the engagement of more sexual crimes.

## **2.0 NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENTS' MIND**

Pornography will not directly affect adolescents' thoughts but will slowly erode the ways most teenagers view on things. One of the biggest negative effects of pornography is emotional distress such as no sense of shame, humiliation, and loss of judgement (Ashraaf & Othman, 2019). Pornography causes adolescents to think of sexual organs intuitively and cause adolescents to never lose their enthusiasm for pornography. We must know that there are many kinds of pornographic content, some of which contain violence, rape and even the content that violates family social ethics. Hence, when adolescents cannot differentiate the right and wrong, the actions being done might not be the most ideal. They may imitate sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual perversions and even they can rape people around them. In conclusion, adolescents who have watched pornography for a long time have the potential of turning things upside down, and they might regard prostitution as a modern entertainment.

According to Ashraaf and Othman (2019), adolescents who watched pornography lost respect for their parents and cause conflicts within family relationships through incidents such

as rape. For adolescents who are not mature, they will think that the acts portrayed in pornography is normal and the behaviour is acceptable. They will be curious about the actions being executed in the pornography they watched, which in return, causes them to have the idea of giving it a try. Therefore, the people around them are the best targets. There are plenty of inhuman acts being done by teenagers such as performing non-consensual sex with their younger siblings. Moreover, pornography will create an unpleasant gap between adolescents and their families. An adolescent who has watched pornography has the potential of being more aggressive in comparison to people who do not watch pornography excessively. Thus, the relationship between adolescents and their families will become alienated.

“Unlike drug addiction, the problem of pornography addiction is more difficult to treat because there are no specific drugs available and pornographic materials are more readily accessible than drugs that makes pornography addiction very difficult to treat.” (Ashraaf & Othman, 2019, p.9). Once a person watches pornography, their brains will increase their desire to look for more pornographic content as most adolescents will find it addicting. This bad energy can lead to plenty of negative consequences and become torturous because seeking pornography is a behaviour that is difficult to extricate. Hence, we have to keep ourselves from being overly absorbed and get rid of the pornography.

In our opinion, we strongly agree that effects on the mind happens to be one of the major negative impacts that could be gained from pornography usage. The advances of the internet in this current technological era increases the prospects for adolescents to be more significantly exposed to pornographic content. When adolescents and young adults cannot differentiate the right from wrong, these pornographic films will indirectly affect their outlook on the world, life, and values which contributes to how their mind works. Teenagers’ minds are prone to be affected by what they see, and they would be unable to control themselves, leading to major negative behaviours being performed as to what they have seen in these contents.

### **3.0 RISKS OF BAD MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

Pornography will also increase the risk of mental and physical illnesses among adolescents which threatens the health of adolescents. For mental health, adolescents who consume the pornography will affect one's self esteem. According to William (2019), when adolescents with low self-esteem consume pornography, they will put themselves at a higher risk of being more mentally affected as they compare themselves with these porn stars. They may experience self-doubt after watching pornography and may lead to severe depression, anxiety and even develop suicidal thoughts since low self-esteem is linked with many mental disorders (Williams, 2019). The mental health of adolescents can be affected very easily as they are in their sensitive age.

Besides, adolescents physical health can also be affected as pornography provides an inappropriate and unsuitable environment of sex educating for them. Through the clinical report by Williams (2019), it was stated that consumption of pornography can cause several physical health issues among the consumers such as dysfunction of erectile which can directly decrease their sex satisfaction and sex performance. Studies have found that consuming pornography can affect the function of the brain by decreasing the volume of grey matter. Grey matter plays a very crucial role in our bodies as it contains many neuron cells that help us control our movement, emotions, and memory. Reduction of grey matter due to pornography are very risky as it will increase the chances of getting disorders such as Bipolar, Alzheimer's and Schizophrenia (Williams, 2019). To overcome these issues, adolescents must reduce their consumption on pornography in order to retain good health.

In addition, pornography can also increase the risks of developing STDs diseases. This is because pornography provides inappropriate and irrational sexual information to them. According to Braun-Courville and Rojas (2009), studies have found that adolescents who are exposed to pornography tends to have bad sex drives and behaviours such as having multiple sex partners and anal sex. This will increase the chances of getting STDs diseases such as HIV and AIDS. By watching pornography, it gives the viewers the idea that sexual acts such as not using condoms as protection and other substances during sexual activities are not a problem (Braun-Courville and Rojas, 2009). Hence, it will encourage adolescents to do these practices and risk their health.

As a result, pornography will affect an adolescents health as it is capable of bringing wrong information about sex to them. As time passes, their mental and physical health can cause serious and long-term problems. They may develop low self-esteem, insecurities, and self-doubt in themselves that could severely lead to risks of suicide. This is because they believe that they are unworthy as they are unable to perform as well as the porn stars seen, while in fact pornographic content such as films and movies are mostly exaggeratingly edited. Furthermore, with the wrong sex education being spread among adolescents through this content, adolescents are at a high risk to get themselves infected with critical STDs disease without realizing it.

#### **4.0 ADOLESCENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN CRIMINAL OFFENSES**

Pornography can also lead to adolescents' engagement in criminal offenses. Based on the study of Ferguson & Hartley (2009), male students who watch violent pornography show more hostile manners towards women, in comparison to those watching consensual sex or nonsexual interactions. However, it is vague whether or not pornography has an effect on the rape rate. With this study, we can see that with excessive exposure towards pornography can lead to crimes such as rape. Rape is a sexual assault that takes form in sexual intercourse or acts with a person without their consent. Rape is a serious criminal offense because it can cause bruising, bleeding in the form of vaginal or anal, unwanted pregnancy, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other severe and serious damages on the victim. This heinous crime is the most corrupt and cruel behaviour, and many countries have made the punishment befall a rapist to a death sentence.

By watching pornography, adolescents have the tendency to fantasize and imagine themselves being in the frame and perform sexual intercourse with someone they desire. A study has found that teenagers with a significant exposure to televised sexual content have a higher likelihood to increase teenage pregnancy cases by two times (Chandra A. and et al, 2008). Teenage pregnancy is a common problem in our society in which adolescents perform sexual intercourse without taking extra precautions into account. This is a bold and risky move because the risk of a woman getting pregnant is higher when the person is not wearing a condom or contraceptive devices. Although teen pregnancy is not a crime, child abandonment is a criminal offense that is punishable by law. Unwanted pregnancy leads to irresponsible parents that often abandons their children's needs and leaves them in desperation.

In an unsystematic experimental study amid adolescent men in Denmark, exposure towards nonviolent pornography has led to the increase of hostile sexism, and equality beliefs have significantly decreased (Flood M., 2020). In the light of this, pornography teaches people, typically men to behave in a sexist manner towards women due to how it is portrayed in the pornographic movies and films. Through the bondage and abusive behaviours being depicted in the pornographic content, adolescents who are easily influenced will have the tendency to follow and copy the ways these porn stars behave, leading to the increase of abusive relationships. Sexual abuse is a crime that can be taken legal action. Moreover, uttering words of degradation such as “bitch”, “slut”, and others are also a discrimination is a criminal offence.

Based on the results above, we can see that pornography could lead towards plenty of criminal offenses. Serious action in preventing the spread of pornography content should not be taken lightly as it is to protect the future generation from becoming criminals that can increase the rate of crimes in the country, and the world. Crime such as rape can result in serious damages towards the victims and their surroundings. It is important to understand that rape is never the victim’s fault, as rapists are entirely responsible for the actions being done. In addition to that, adolescent relationships must always consider all the precautionary steps they could take in order to prevent teen pregnancy. Lastly, we must all develop self-respect to everyone, regardless of gender. Abuse should not be done no matter who it is as it can seriously affect a person’s physical and mental health. In the end, pornography is one of the reasons as to why criminal offense risks increase. We should refrain ourselves from watching any explicit or pornographic materials so that we can reduce the rate of criminal offenses in the world.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

To drive into a conclusion, we have collectively agreed that pornography does come with a wide amount of negative side effects, which includes giving bad effects on the mind, increase the risks of bad health like HIV and AIDS, and it could trigger the engagement in more sexual crimes such as rape and sexual assault.

In the most indefinite form, it is undeniable that pornography is difficult to diminish entirely. With the current world's advanced technology, pornography content is remarkably easy to be spread all around the world, regardless of age. Education systems and parents should play an important role in educating and monitoring what adolescents and young adults search and view to avoid the youth from deteriorating significantly. Due to the growing curiosity of teenagers, it is crucial to have their mannerisms and understandings corrected to minimize the risk of negative effects. Hence, everyone must take part in teaching and implementing the right understandings in order to significantly reduce negative impacts of pornography.

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