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Psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers State

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Abstract

Due to rise in the Internet access and technologies, the possibilities of conduit for sexual interactions, online pornography, and other type of repetitive behaviours have increased. Hence, the study investigated the psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state, Nigeria. The sample of 200 undergraduate students was used for the study using Simple random sampling technique via balloting. Two research questions were answered while two hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire tagged “psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students” (PPPUS). The data collected were analyzed with mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested with t-test. From the analysis, it was found out that there is a high prevalence of pornography among male than female undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Furthermore, the findings revealed that and curiosity influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, it was recommended that education sector management should come up with curriculum and programs that addresses age- appropriate sex education at all levels and on media forums. This is to provide sexuality information from balanced and objective sources where the adolescent and young adults are free to engage and to seek for clarification on sexuality issues.

Keywords: Pornography, prevalence, gender, curiosity and undergraduate students

Introduction

The term “pornography” is gotten from two Greek words: “porne” which means harlot and “graphein” which means to write. The two words joined together, originally meant to describe, in literature, the sexual adventures of women deemed to be whores (Okoye, 2019; Jenkins 2010) ^[15, 8]. However, over the years, Okoye (2019) ^[15] and Jenkins (2010) ^[8] respectively maintained that the meaning of pornography has expanded to include all those pictures and literature that are offensive especially when they are related to sex. Such pictures and literature or even phone conversations are described as obscene. In this sense, such obscene pictures, literature, or phone conversations are deemed very immoral, unpleasant, and offensive as they are stark representations of sexual activities or images.

Pornography in the context of this study has to do with the blatant exposure of sexual images of nude pictures showing stark sexual behaviours or activities. It refers to bizarre description of sexual behaviours in literature (books, novels, and magazines) in such a crude manner that it triggers sexual arousal and intercourse. Odu (2015) ^[14] defined pornography as the representation of human sexual behaviours, that is, naked human beings engaging in sexual activities (for example, sexual intercourse), shown in pictures, videos, posters or wall papers, magazines, books, and novels.

Pornography has become more addictive in the recent time than ever in view of advent of technology. Pornography watching has become an extensive social phenomenon worldwide and has contributed to changes in the terrain of human sexuality causing both positive and negative attitudes. Pornographic sources (Internet, smartphones, movies/videos, television, and magazines/books) have made pornography available faster and easier than ever before. Overuse consumption of pornography noted by insatiable reading of pornographic literature and watching films which in turn interferes with daily life activities of the students involved in the behaviour. If the generating youngsters are indeed growing up in a pornified culture, there may be no doubt that a great number of these youngsters, who are in the universities, are involved in pornography.

It is also believed that through pornography, youngsters get a twisted view of what constitutes normal sexual relationship (Carnes, 2018) ^[1]. Other scholars, for instance, Paul (2015) ^[17] believed that teenagers are generally not mature enough to consume pornography and differentiate between fantasy and reality. What they learn from pornography, Paul (2015) ^[17] maintained, are direct lessons, with no filter, and with no concept of exaggeration, irony, or affect, insisting that pornography in all its permutation affects developing sexuality.

Pornography Statistics' (2015) ^[19], found that excessive use of pornography leads to a skewed understanding of sexuality and a lack of belief in monogamy due to the perception that promiscuity is the norm; in turn the result is scepticism about marriage, raising a family, and love in romantic relationships. This finding is supported by Carroll (2008) ^[2] who also reports the correlation between use of pornography with openness to casual sex, lack of interest in raising families and insensitivity towards cheating in relationships. Moreover, research (Haggstrom-Nordin, 2016; Zillman, 2019) ^[5, 24] has shown that when using pornography excessively from a young age, emerging adults may develop insensitivity towards the act of sex and a lack of understanding about relationships in general; which results in sex being developed into a 'mechanical' practice that can prove to be quite superficial and unsatisfactory. This is due to pleasure being the main aim and outcome in the depiction of pornography (Negash, Sheppard, Lambert, & Fincham 2020) ^[13]; hence a sense of respect towards the act of sex and towards a partner may not develop.

Demographic variable such as gender differences on prevalence of pornography among undergraduate, women and men who were exposed to pornography at a younger age, consumed more pornography as measured by time and frequency, and used pornography more often during sexual activity on their own (Ken, 2017) ^[9]. Gender differences in the interpersonal context of use were also evident, with women using pornography more often with a regular sexual partner than men. In turn, men were found to use pornography more often on their own or with friends (non-sexual partners) than women. For both men and women, the usual place of use was home and no significant gender difference was found in this regard (Flood, 2018) ^[3]. Men and women were found to vary in their preferences in pornographic materials, with men both preferring a wider range of pornography and less pornography in women. Gender differences in sexual behavioural factors were limited to masturbation patterns with men masturbating more than women. Male gender, higher frequency of masturbation,

lower age at first exposure, and younger age were found to account for 48.8% of the total variance of pornography consumption (Osilama, 2017) ^[16]. Gender differences in social acceptability, adherence to gender stereotypes, traditions of gender sexuality, gender norms, and mating strategies are key factors in understanding gender differences in pornography consumption.

Research evidence has also identified gender differences in prevalence of pornography and sexual behaviour. Rangel and Garcia (2010) ^[20] have suggested that men and women differ in the way they express their sexuality and their sexual practices. Some studies have noted that males who are sexually active are more likely to engage in sexual activity at a much earlier age than their female counterparts (Gillmore, 2016; Shisana & Simbayi, 2019) ^[4, 22]. Hooke, Capewel and Whyte (2020) ^[7] also identified gender differences in relation to prevention of pregnancy in sexual relationships and suggest that females tend to be more responsible for birth control than males. Sayles (2006) ^[21] asserted that men have a greater tendency to engage in high-risk sexual behaviour than women.

More so, curiosity is another factor that may influence prevalence of pornography. Curiosity is a desire to know, see or experience that motivates exploratory behaviour towards acquisition of new information (Litman & Jimerson, 2004; Litman & Spielberg, 2003) ^[11, 12]. Lenner, (2016) ^[10] pointed out that sexuality is a deep and significant human value throughout the whole life. The adolescents and young adult who are in the psychosocial stage of developing identity and intimacy respectively are in great need of sexuality information. Haney, (2010) ^[6] noted that adolescent curiosity about sexuality is a normal and healthy aspect of human development. But in the absence of socially accepted channels of learning about sexuality they may resort to the freely available sexual explicit materials in the media to get information about sexuality. Flood, (2018) ^[3] further pointed out that exposure to pornography shapes sexual knowledge. However, the media does not have a forum through which the viewers could raise questions or seek clarification thus leaving them with no option but take the material as offered. Pornographic viewers are likely to imitate and model similar behaviours with other human beings.

However, despite the documented increase of pornography psycho-demographic prevalence and its negative consequences on the youths, little attention has been given to the topic in Nigeria. Only a few studies have focused on pornography in Nigeria. Most studies on pornography were conducted in the Western cultures and therefore, more attention needs to be given to the influence of pornography on the youths in non-Western cultures such as Nigeria. It is therefore important to examine the Impact of pornography because in the opinion of Slap, Lot, Zink and Succop (2003) ^[23] culture no longer has a grip on the youths in Nigeria, the society appears to be plagued with decayed moral codes and values and the sense of right and wrong has vanished.

Statement of the Problem

A lot of problems seem to be invading the knowledge of sex and sexual risk behaviours among undergraduate students. There is increase problem today as to moral laxity, promiscuity, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), forced marriage, school dropout among youths. Also, the increase in these problems has been attributed to ignorance of youths about effect of pornography.

Pornographic material can result in a negative self-perception and decreased contentment with body-image. Moreover, it can also lead to feelings of shame, moral conflict and low self-esteem.

Viewing of violent pornography can result in a lack of sensitivity or reaction to violence, which can lead to vulnerability, together with the perception that women are weak. Since pornography tends to result in promiscuous behaviour and few pornographic materials depicts safe sex practices, there is a risk of increase in unsafe sex. Due to lack of sex education, most undergraduate students have become victims of sexual molestation and other social vices; some have dropped out of school due to unwanted pregnancies, stigma from sexually transmitted diseases and infections, etc. This study therefore, intends to investigate the psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state, Nigeria. Specifically this study intends to;

1. Examine the extent gender influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state.
2. Examine the extent curiosity influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study

1. To what extent does gender influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state
2. To what extent does curiosity influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated and testable at 0.05 alpha level of significance guided the study:

1. Gender does not significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state
2. Curiosity does not significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students university of Port Harcourt in Rivers state

Methodology

The design of the study is descriptive survey research design. It sought to identify the psycho-demographic prevalence of pornography on gender and its curiosity among undergraduate students. The study is carried out in university of Port Harcourt, 2020/2021 academic session with a population of 50,568 undergraduate during the period under review. The researcher randomly and independently selected 200 undergraduate students for the study using the simple random sampling (balloting). The sampling technique is appropriate to ensure that every member of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected for the study. A pretested self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection and the questionnaires were retrieved back from each respondent immediately after completion. The

instrument was validated and the reliability of the instrument result yielded 0.81 using Pearson product moment. Therefore shows that the instrument is adequately reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested with t-test statistics.

Results Presentation

Research Question 1: To what extent does gender influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in Rivers state.

Hypothesis 1: Gender does not significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in rivers state

Table 1: Showing analysis of influence of gender on prevalence of pornography

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	121	80.83	50.65	198	7.615	1.96	Significant
Female	79	53.69	20.73				

From table 4.1, the result of the data analyzed showed that male had mean score of 80.83 and SD of 50.65 while, female had mean score of 53.69 and SD of 20.73. The data analyzed revealed that the two groups differ significantly in their mean scores. The result also showed that the t-calculated of 7.615 is greater than t-critical of 1.96, this is accepted. This indicates that male significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt.

Research Question 2: To what extent does curiosity influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in Rivers state.

Hypotheses 2: Curiosity does not significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in rivers state

Table 2: Showing analysis of influence of curiosity on prevalence of pornography

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Curiosity	104	81.14	16.87	198	8.215	1.96	S
Prevalence of Pornography	86	60.36	13.74				

The result of the data analyzed showed that curiosity had mean score of 81.14 and SD of 16.87 while, prevalence of pornography had mean score of 60.36 and SD of 13.74. This indicates that curiosity influence prevalence of pornography. Since the t-calculated of 8.215 is higher than t-critical of 1.96 at df of 198 and 0.05 level of probability, this is accepted. Therefore, this shows that curiosity significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

Gender and prevalence of pornography

The result of the finding shows that there is a high prevalence of pornography among male than female undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. In agreement with the study, Paul and Shim (2018)^[18] claim that even though men watch pornography and display their desires more strongly, both males and females report consuming pornography to express their sexuality by fulfilling sexual fantasies and

improving their mood.

Curiosity and Prevalence of Pornography

The study revealed that curiosity significantly influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Curiosity is a desire to know, see or experience that motivates exploratory behaviour towards acquisition of new information. This study is in agreement with a previews study by Haney, (2010) ^[6] noted that adolescent curiosity about sexuality is a normal and healthy aspect of human development Lenner, (2016) ^[10] pointed out that sexuality is a deep and significant human value throughout the whole life. The adolescents and young adult who are in the psychosocial stage of developing identity and intimacy respectively are in great need of sexuality information which make them to engage in pornography.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a high prevalence of pornography among male than female undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Also, the findings revealed that curiosity influence prevalence of pornography among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended the following;

1. Functional counselling units should be established by school authorities to assist students that struggle with pornography to gradually overcome the behaviour
2. It is recommended that the students who make effort to overcome pornography addiction should be encouraged by counsellors to maintain the behavioural change process, employing all the necessary reinforcement packages and adopting group counselling methods by counsellors and school authorities
3. School counselors in universities and even secondary school levels should be encouraged to talk on a whole range of social personal issues including how to develop healthy relationships among fellow students and good sexual behaviours
4. School authorities should make school activities more interesting to students so that their interests should be sustained.
5. Education sector management should come up with curriculum and programs that addresses age- appropriate sex education at all levels and on media forums. This is to provide sexuality information from balanced and objective sources where the adolescent and young adults are free to engage and to seek for clarification on sexuality issues.

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