Research Article

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS OF ADULT CONTENT CONSUMPTION: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS BY GEOUNDED THEORY

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Abstract

Adult content consumption has become very common among young adults in numerous states. Objectives: The study was conducted to explore the psychological predictors of adult content consumption among the young adults. Method: Exploratory qualitative method was used. Data was collected form 27 young adults who consumed adult content once in a month by using purposive sampling strategy with in-depth interview. The study was conducted in 2022 with the approval of institution and young adults. Results: The findings were analyzed through grounded theory and psychological predictors of adult content consumption among young adults were extracted. Negative emotions, traumas in past experiences, insomnia, self-gratification, personality, role of cognition, and lack of self-control were the major predictors were found behind the adult content consumption among young adults. Conclusion: The present research has made a prominent contribution to the literature by exploring the psychological predictors on adult content consumption particularly in Pakistani culture. The study can be implemented in home, education, health and medical setting. The findings can be fruitful to guide the people specially our young generation for healthy relationship rather to avail such opportunities. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 23(7), July, 2022; 1-8.*
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Introduction

Adult content involves any images and videos showing sexually explicit material of every nature to sexually arouse the viewers [1]. The expansion of technology, namely the internet, has contributed greatly to the increase in availability of adult content [2]. Researches on adultery content have typically focused on the prevalence rates and the potential effects of its consumption. However, little is known about antecedents of adult content consumption [3]. A little have worked to explore the antecedents and develop theories but limited to the perspectives of western countries and demographics [4]. Currently in Pakistan internet users are increasing from 133, 900 in 2000 to 44, 608, and 065 in 2018. According to the CIA World Factbook (2018) Pakistan ranks on place twenty four among two twenty eight countries in worldwide comparison, which is the indicator of the extent of Internet connectivity. Moreover statistics reveal that at about 88.2% of Pakistani in the age range of 14 to 30 years old are regularly connected to the Internet [5]. And according to Google data (2015) released Pakistan tops the list of adult content consumer countries. It is thus anticipated that the technological reality of the Internet provide the road map for Adult Content. Like increase in the consumption of internet provide opportunities to easily access Adultery material and more of it.Lack of effective regulations, censorship and rating systems has led concerns with accessibility to undesirable contents. The resources of such content might be erotica,

prints, films, photography, video, DVD, Satellite TV, internet, and portable devices. The abundance of Adult content tends to magnify the anxiety about the harmful influence of its consumption, in particular, for youth. Studies show that there is a public perception that Adult Content on internet is more accessible, more harmful and dangerous than in its traditional forms [6]. Scholarly research on the description and explanation of adult content has been dominated by clinicians [7]. These have included works in general categories like proposals to apply psychological consequences of adult content consumption, clinical studies of patients and convicted offenders, and descriptive studies. These studies of adult content consumption have speculated that factors such as psychological disorders (personality, mood and anxiety disorders), traumas (physical, sexual, family), biological factors (e.g., high testosterone), and substance abuse may be related to cyber porn use. Clinical work includes case studies of how adult content consumption is related to hypersexual disorders or how continued use is related to deceit [8].

In Pakistan studies revealed that young people want to learn about their sexual health. Youth is very important asset of our country [9] . The lack of proper sex education does lead to buildup of curiosity, which is satisfied by going on the internet, most often misleading the seeker towards pornography and other adult-themed content [10]. In recent years, there has emerged a limited, but growing, research literature on personality traits concerning adult content consumption [11]. Another study has found a significant positive correlation between extraversion and risky sexual behaviors [12]. Different theories also explained such behavior from different perspectives. Hirschi (1969) suggests that the social bond contains four elements as an individual's attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief with his/her family, parents, or friends. Lack of all elements an individual moves towards adult content consumption. The idea that consumers imitate the behaviors they see rewarded in media is known as the social learning theory. This theory argues that the information contained in the films teaches about the nature of sexual relations between people as well as illustrates the mechanics of intercourse.

There are many studies conducted to highlight the consequences and gender comparison regarding adult content consumption. A high concern that exposure of children and youth to this material, can harm their development motivating sexual aggression, sexual activity at an early age, and distorting sexual attitudes, has been expressed [13]. Now a day there has been an extensive worry about the possible harm to youth after being exposed to Adult content. So there is a need to work in this field to get to know why these young people are attracted to Adult Content Consumption. Adult content Consumption has received some scholarly attention in the literature, but most of this coverage has consisted of consequences of Adult content consumption and descriptive treatments of the subject. These analyses do not rigorously give the major theory of why some people use adult content and others do not. The present research makes several contributions to the literature on adult content consumption. In particular, it focuses on the psychological predictors that are the leading factors in viewing adult content. So, this is the first systematic study in Pakistan to identify the psychological factors that lead to the use of adult content in young adults.

Study Question

•   To explore the psychological antecedents of adult content consumption among young adults for the first time in Pakistani culture.

Method

Research design and sample

Qualitative research design was adopted in the current study to explore the psychological predictors of adult content consumption among young adults. The sample was young adults with an age range of 19-35 both males and females. The participants were included who consumed adult content once in a month. They have their personal devices and they were approached at their own decided places or telephone through in-depth interview. The sample of 40 young adults was initially screened with snowball sampling strategy and for final data collection purposive sampling strategy was adopted and 27 interviews were conducted.

Assessment Measures

Demographic information sheet and interview guide were used to collect the data. Both were pre planned. Demographic information sheet included age, gender, education, socio economic system, family system, family environment and resident (Area/city). Interview guide was

prepared into Urdu and in-depth interviews were conducted. The probing technique was also used for obtaining additional information where it was required.

Currently included translated (English) version based on following questions.

- Why do you consume adult content?
- What happened at the time when you first time consume adult content?
- What things trigger you towards adult content consumption?
- What was going on in your life at the time you started adult content consumption?
- What was your experience in that situation?

Compliance with ethical standards

An ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of University of Punjab Lahore, Pakistan for conducting study on such sensitive phenomenon. A formal permission was taken from the department of Institute of Applied Psychology, Punjab University, Lahore. A record of 40 young adults who consumed adult content was collected through snowball sampling. Then data collection was started by using prepared interview guide [14,15]. The purposive sampling strategy was used to approach the concerned sample with age range of 19-35. Only those participants were included who were willing to share the information about their experience of adult content consumption as consent was obtained from each participant before conducting in-person in-depth interview. They were assured about the privacy and confidentiality of the data. The interviews were also recorded by getting the permission of the young adults. All the data was transcribed and verbatim were drawn by the first author. The transcription and themes was verified by the supervisor [16].

Results

Description of the Findings

The objective of the study was to investigate the psychological predictors of adult content consumption among the young adults having age range 19-35. The data was collected by in-depth interview and was analyzed through grounded theory. The participant information was collected regarding age, education, socioeconomic status, relationship status, family system, and family environment of participants before collecting the concerned data of adult data consumption as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of respondents who participated in the current study (N=27)

Demographics	f(%)	Demographics	f(%)
Age M (SD)	26.81 (3.48)	Family System	
Education		Nuclear	18 (67)
Below Middle	0	Joint	09 (33)
Middle-F.A	2 (7)	Residency	
Graduation and Above	25 (93)	Lahore	17 (62)
Socioeconomic Status		Shadra	1 (4)
Upper class	5 (19)	Kasur	2 (7)
Middle class	6 (22)	Peshawar	1 (4)
Upper middle class	15 (55)	Gujranwala	2 (7)
Family Environment		Sahiwal	1 (4)
Cohesive	17 (63)	Karachi	1(4)
Criticizing	3 (11)	Quetta	1(4)
Open	7 (26)	Other city	1(4)

Table 1 showed that the average age of the participants was 26.81 and 93% of participants were qualified above graduation. The majority of the participants (67%) lived in a nuclear family system. Data was collected from multiple cities to cover all the provinces of Pakistan for a diverse sample. But most participants belonged to Lahore [17,18]. Grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data. The data was Table 2 showed open, axial, and selective coding of the

interviews that were conducted to generate a substantive theory/model on the psychological antecedents of adult content consumption. This model was named based on of the following psychological factors.

Table 2. Frequency of codes of psychological antecedents of cyber pornography/ Adult content consumption (N=27)

Open Coding	f	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Sadness	3		
Frustration	1		
Tension	5		
Loneliness	7		
Hopelessness	1		
Upset Mood	4		
Anger	1	Negative Emotions	
Stress	5		
Depression	3		
Boredom	3		
Irritable Mood	3		
Childhood Sexual Abuse	2		
Childhood Trauma	2	Past Experiences	
Sexual Harassment	1		
Lack of Sleep at Night	2	Insomnia	Psychological Antecedents of Adult Content Consumption
Pleasure	14		
Relaxation	9		
Enjoyment	3	Gratification	
Self-Satisfaction	4		
To Sleep after Relaxation	2		
Exhibitionistic People	1		
Sensation Seeker Trait	3	Personality	
Negative Thinking	2		
Over thinking	1		
Fantasies	5	Role of Cognition	
Imagination Related Sex/Porn	4		
Lack of Self-Control	9		

Unable to control desires	2	Lack of Self-Control	

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors that includes many axial codes like Emotional instability, past experiences, defense mechanisms, insomnia, gratification, personality, cognitions and self-control etc. verbatim supported theses codes are given below:

Negative Emotions

Multiple open codes as sadness, frustration, tension, loneliness, hopelessness, upset mood, anger, stress, depression, boredom and irritable mood were emerged into axial code as negative emotions which lead towards use of adult content consumption to the young adults. Female, Iqra, said that "when I am sad then I use to indulge in adult content consumption". A male participant, Kamran, stated that "there is a lot of reasons when you are feeling frustrated then you move to use the adult content consumption". Another participant reported that "When a person has tension at job or at home or a person feel tensed then he consumes adult content". Mr. Abid said, "For me the heaviest factor is loneliness that seduce me and make me addicted of adult content consumption. A female, Iqra, narrated that when somebody is hopeless due to ups and down in life then he also views such material due to hopelessness in his or her life. Another female, Wania, reported that "when I feel angry I watch adult content". A male participant, Osama, explained that "yes I watch when I got mentally disturbed like when I am in depression due to different matters at home then I watch it". Furthermore a female, Alina, reported that "when my mood is upset then I watch such videos".

Past Experiences

Mostly females reported that there are certain past experiences that lead a person towards adult content consumption. For example, childhood sexual abuse, childhood trauma and sexual harassment etc. As a male participant, Talha narrated that "I was a victim of childhood trauma. You can say that aaa sex trauma from my cousin's uncle. So probably due to this childhood trauma that I could not discuss with anybody as I was too young. I was being traumatized in my childhood and then I started thinking of such content and then started

watching adult content later in my life". A female, Asifa, explained that "when I was a teenager, I went to my grandparents' home. There was a beggar type man who touched his penis again and again and tried to show me what he was doing. He was trying to harass me. When you are younger such incidents put a mark in your mind and you go for adult content consumption. For me I consider such incidents as sexual harassment that lead towards adult content consumption".

Insomnia

Insomnia is another axial code. Females reported that the reason of adult content consumption for them is lack of sleep. When they are not able to sleep at night then most of the time they watch adult content. For example a female, Sara, explained that "when I am not able to sleep then I am used to watch adult content. Lack of sleep leads towards to consume adult contents". Similarly, another female, Alina, narrated that "most of the time I watch these videos at night due to lack of sleep".

Gratification

Gratification was an umbrella term that incorporated different open codes like pleasure relaxation, enjoyment and self-satisfaction etc. As a male, Adnan, narrated that "a person feels good when he watches it. A human's brain says keep watching it until you get pleasure". Another female Shazia reported that "when you do not understand anything then for relaxation a person uses to watch it. These videos then seem interesting and you feel yourself in that porn role and feel more relaxed. Whatever is happening in the video I feel relaxed to view it and feel it. So I watch it to feel relax". A female, Asifa, explained that "when I watch porn then I feel enjoyment and this enjoyment forces me to watch again and again". Additionally another male participant Taha said "When friends are sitting in the gathering and weather is pleasing then there is demand of these videos to satisfy themselves". Furthermore a male, Sajid, reported that "I think the reason I watch porn is to since I have a busy routine and sometimes when I get back home I just want to lie down on my bed. Just feel and sleep. Probably adult content consumption is something that releases

stress and help me to get relax and fall asleep quickly".

Personality

Personality was an umbrella term that incorporated different open codes like exhibitionism, sex prone personality etc. A female, Asifa, reported that "there are some people who are exhibitionistic and have personality of exhibitionism. And if somebody shows you his personal parts then your attention goes towards adult content consumption after that incident". A female, Hina, narrated that "it depends on some personal traits like your interest in such sex related things; like they have more sexual tendencies then you go for adult content consumption".

Role of Cognition

Male, Talha, reported that "the primary factor being an adult is obviously the thoughts. A person starts thinking and he has negative imagination as well. So when the person has negative thinking then he recalled the adult content and goes for searching it". Another Male, Adnan, narrated that "when there is over thinking then you think about adult content and go to adult content consumption". A male participant Sajid, narrated that it is more about fantasizing. Fantasizing myself into that role is more compelling then I go to adult content consumption".

Lack of Self-Control

Self-control was an umbrella term that incorporated different open codes like lack of self-control, unable to control viewing, cannot control their desires etc. A female, Sara, narrated that "I watch when I could not control myself. Most of the time I do control myself but sometimes I do lost my self-control and started watching it". Another male subject Osama reported that "sometimes a person loses his self-control on his desires then he watches it. People restrain themselves of doing this wrong deed but when they are unable to control their desires or "Nafs" then they must go adult content consumption".

Discussion

This study was a contribution to the growing literature on adult content consumption by using qualitative data to examine the psychological factors that leads to the use of adult content in young adults of Pakistan. Few studies have explored the antecedents and consequences of adult content consumption on attitudes and behaviour. To fill this gap the current study was conducted and highlighted the different psychological factors which motivate young individuals towards adult content consumption and pornography. The study concluded that negative emotions, past experiences, insomnia, and gratification, types of personality, role of cognition and lack of self-control were the major psychological antecedents of adult content consumption among young adults. Multiple theories guided about the casual factors behind specific kinds of behaviours in the environment. But these theories were unable to explain all kinds of behaviours especially the current phenomenon what are casual factors behind the adult content consumption among young adults.

Social bonding theory claimed that a person show attachment to families and commitment to social norms and institutions school, employment for security, while no foundations were found about the biological factors behind the current study behaviour. So this study is a significant contribution that highlighted the major psychological predictors as negative emotions, past experiences, insomnia, and gratification, types of personality, role of cognition and lack of self-control behind adult content consumption behaviour of young adults. Many other factors lead the young generation towards adult content usage. Like negative emotions, past experiences, insomnia, gratification, types of personality, role of cognition and lack of self-control were the major contributors to use the adult contents because this kind of content provide gratification and satisfaction to young adults also claimed the uses and gratifications theory proposed by the audience actively engaged in medias to achieve individual results that satisfy their needs.

The literature revealed that the males who are under stress or depression consumed more adult content than the females. Similar lily the current study also highlighted the stress, tension, and depressions are the major predictors which direct the young adults towards the adult content.

So this study is a significant addition and unique contribution to forming the new theory of "psychological predictors among young adults of Adult Content consumption" in literature.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Further biological or social factors can be highlighted as well as the consequences or outcomes of adult content consumption can also be evaluated in the upcoming studies, especially in Pakistani culture. Different stages of life and diverse sample can be further evaluated in cross-cultural studies.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study are helpful in medical, health, clinical, educational, and home settings. The people can be guided about the specific causes which energies the young adults towards the adult content consumption. The parents must be provided awareness with the help of these study findings that they must be aware about the psychological health of the adolescent and young adults with a friendly and health relationship with parents.

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