

Behind Digital Screen: A Thematic Analysis of Pornography Views in Malaysia's Youth

ABSTRACT

Pornography consumption is a pervasive issue in contemporary society, with particular significance among student populations. Despite its ubiquity, the negative ramifications of pornography on various facets of life—mental health, relationships, and attitudes—remain largely underexplored, especially among students in South Asian contexts. The current study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the perceptions of first-year undergraduate students at a public university in Malaysia. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, 21 students were invited to pen self-reflective papers on their views and experiences related to pornography consumption. These responses were subsequently subjected to thematic analysis, revealing four major themes: prevalence, motivators, impact, and potential solutions. The study confirmed that students generally perceive pornography to be highly prevalent, attributing its widespread use to a variety of factors such as easy accessibility via digital platforms, emotional isolation, and stress. Students also expressed concerns about the detrimental impact of pornography on academic engagement and learning processes, mental health, and ethical standards. When it comes to mitigating these negative effects, participants displayed divergent viewpoints. Some students endorsed banning access to pornographic websites as a preventive measure, albeit with reservations regarding its efficacy. Others highlighted the importance of educational interventions and called for increased awareness among the student population concerning the detrimental effects of pornography. The insights derived from this research are discussed comprehensively in the subsequent discussion and conclusion sections, providing a valuable contribution to the existing literature, and offering a foundation for future scholarly endeavors and policy initiatives aimed at addressing this complex issue.