



Media screen addiction and the evolution of juveniles' behaviour towards LGBT pornographic materials

*Norhawanirwana Binti Habidin
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
hawanirwana@gmail.com

Azian Muhamad Adzmi
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

Mohd Azul Mohamad Salleh
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate relationship between media screen addiction among juveniles and its influence on the evolution of behaviours towards LGBT pornographic materials. In an era characterised by pervasive digital connectivity, adolescents' excessive reliance on screens, particularly smartphones, has raised concerns regarding its impact on their behaviours. The availability and accessibility of explicit content, including material related to the LGBT community, has exponentially increased through online platforms. This study reviews existing literature exploring the correlation between media screen addiction and juveniles' exposure to LGBT pornographic materials. It investigates how prolonged media screen time can potentially alter attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards explicit content within the LGBT spectrum. The aim of this investigation is to combine the effects of acceptance and action on the use and satisfaction of smartphone screen accessibility among juveniles who face challenges in a digital society. This study involved in-depth interviews with juveniles from two Tunas Bakti schools in Malaysia, with the approval of the Department of Social Welfare. Findings indicate that media screen addiction can cause individuals to become hardcore pornography viewers and embrace the LGBT culture.

Keywords: **Media screen addiction, smartphone, pornographic materials, juveniles, LGBT**

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the internet has significantly facilitated life in the digital era, providing easy access to information and services (Haleem et al., 2022). Currently, the world is highly accessible, with several open access points readily available over the internet. It is given as internet access in numerous countries worldwide offers unrestricted and unregulated availability to a wide range of materials (Bahrini & Qaffas, 2019). The phenomenon of unrestricted open access enables the digital community to effortlessly locate material that aligns with their interests and preferences. In addition, the widespread proliferation of social media has emerged as a significant platform for adolescents to access without guardian or parental supervision (Barrett-Maitland & Lynch, 2020; Sinurat et al., 2022).

Social media has exerted a profound and dynamic influence on the contemporary world, with its evolution continually accelerating. Over time, it has progressively reshaped individuals' choices in their daily media consumption (Norizzati et al., 2023). This is because existing modern communication technologies have been interpreted into more extreme forms, capable of transforming societies at any level, including propagating individual addiction. Thus, there is a growing population of individuals who are excessively fixated on communication technology, or screen addiction (Hu et al., 2020).

From a psychological standpoint, screen addiction is characterised by an individual's inability to control dependency on gambling apps or regulate the usage of applications on social media (Paulus et al., 2018). The presence of smartphones exacerbates the detrimental symptoms of screen addiction, leading to the emergence of social problems associated with excessive screen use. This encompasses a broad spectrum of issues, including substance abuse, alcoholism, and exposure to explicit content, including pornography. Of particular concern is the proliferation of free-sex addiction, along with numerous instances of moral degradation linked to the negative influences inherent in media screens (Adeena, 2022).

This study examines the problem of smartphone screen addiction among juveniles, specifically pertaining to pornography addiction and its association with the growing influence of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) culture. Additionally, this study explores the inclination towards accessing such content on screens that may influence juveniles to become part of the LGBT community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existence of smartphones in the digital age facilitates rapid access to various content. Today's digital society is characterised by rapid and effortless information dissemination and acquisition, leading to widespread smartphone screen usage. Thus, excessive and regular exposure to screens leads to a heightened addiction and has numerous ramifications for frequent smartphone users (Jasni et al., 2021).

Concerns regarding the detrimental impact of screen addiction are increasingly spreading, particularly among children and adolescents who have a tendency to consume pornography. Furthermore, this desire can spread to pornography addiction, leading some of these minors to later experience more severe issues with socialisation (Wacks & Weinstein, 2021).

Unlike the pre-digital era, when obtaining pornographic material required physical presence, such as visiting cinemas and shifting to the usage of video cassettes and optical discs, the modern era provides convenient online access to such content, usually for free (Brosius et al., 1993; Coopersmith, 1998; McDonald, 2019). Consequently, the pervasiveness

of heightened screen exposure and widespread pornography access has become a global phenomenon, affecting individuals across the globe (Rowland et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, a concerning issue is the high occurrence of smartphone screen addiction, particularly among children and adolescents, potentially impeding their normal developmental processes (Dong et al., 2020). An overwhelming majority of online searches primarily serve the purposes of entertainment, escapism, relaxation, leisure activities, and sexual gratification. This phenomenon has resulted in a plethora of social problems among adolescents (Rajak et al., 2022; Zaharman et al., 2022).

When socialisation concerns become prominent, they often act as the trigger for a variety of other problems. The overexposure of juveniles to pornography has been identified as a contributing factor to societal issues such as incidences of rape, sexual harassment, and pre-marital pregnancy (Rostad et al., 2019). A significant proportion of current societal issues can be attributed to profound pornography dependency, resulting in the admission of several distressed adolescents into moral rehabilitation facilities and juvenile educational institutions (Norman & Othman, 2020). In addition, several informants acknowledged being ensnared in the realm of homosexuality and embracing the LGBT culture without reservation.

LGBT issues pertain to matters concerning those who identify as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders. This is a societal matter pertaining to human rights, gender identity, sexual orientation, and the acceptance of individuals from the LGBT community. LGBT materials on media screens have been a subject of increasing discussion in recent years. Of course, exposure and awareness through the media screen play an important role in raising awareness about LGBT issues. It aids in dispelling societal prejudice and offers extensive knowledge to the community regarding the wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities (Morris, 2019).

Further, the emergence of “positive” LGBT characters in popular TV shows or films has fostered open discussion and acceptance of the LGBT community in today’s digital society. The LGBT community no longer experiences marginalisation or discrimination but feels acknowledged for its existence in society (Abdullah & Akhir, 2019).

The mass media’s determination to profit from LGBT content has created a shift in the current digital age’s popular culture. LGBT materials in the media have influenced changes in popular culture, including the LGBT rights movement, which involves changes in laws and regulations that allow same-sex marriages and the protection of LGBT rights in Western countries (Dall’Agnola, 2023; Semambo, 2023).

In addition to being a platform to promote LGBT culture, media screens promote social action and societal acceptance and adaptation to this culture. Adjustment is important for the digital society to understand that the emergence of LGBT material on media screens is a multifaceted issue that necessitates a balanced and judicious approach to uphold human rights and promote gender diversity in the digital realm (Sharifuddin et al., 2023).

The present study seeks to elucidate the impact of LGBT cultural stimuli transmitted through the media on children and adolescents. According to the accounts provided by selected juvenile informants, discussing these experiences mostly serves as a means to identify solutions or alternatives for addressing the issue of sexual behaviour involving minors. This study aims to tackle the issue of underage children’s growing vulnerability and simultaneously offer more accurate information to adolescents, parents, and communities. This study is highly relevant to the contemporary world as it encompasses the fundamental principles of life connected to digital technology, which grants complete autonomy to society in the utilisation and acceptance of advanced technologies like smartphones.

METHODS

This study employed qualitative approaches, namely in-depth interviews, for data collection. In-depth interviews are a highly valuable research tool for investigating research themes. A face-to-face interview is a dynamic process that involves direct interaction between the interviewer and the informant (Knott et al., 2022). The methodology employed in this study is distinctive due to several factors, notably the utilisation of a small sample size. Data collection is grounded in the perspectives of informants, encompassing their values, motivations, experiences, thoughts, and emotions gleaned during the course of interviews. Face-to-face interviews facilitate in-depth investigation into non-verbal communication when informants are engaged in interaction (Subedi, 2021).

Therefore, the interviewer's influence and function are crucial during the interview process, as the effectiveness of face-to-face interviews heavily relies on the strong rapport built between the interviewer and the interviewee. The qualitative in-depth interview approach in scientific communication is a research methodology that uses in-depth interview techniques to gather data on individual perceptions and experiences in the field of scientific communication. The objective is to provide a deeper understanding of how individuals comprehensively perceive communication phenomena with greater precision (Mohd Kamal & Abdul Rahman, 2021). Furthermore, this approach also elucidates a more detailed understanding of data saturation in qualitative research, referring to the point at which additional data no longer provides new or significant information (Guest et al., 2020).

Additionally, in-depth interview techniques are unique in qualitative research since they facilitate creating interview questions, managing interview interactions, analysing data, as well as understanding case studies and examples from previous research that used this method (Lessard et al., 2022). Besides, comprehensive references regarding in-depth interview techniques in qualitative research are critically important, specifically the design, execution, and interview analysis, as well as strategies for managing interview interactions and addressing ethical issues in research (Seidman, 2022).

The informants of this study were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that they possess the specified characteristics. The primary criterion is for the informants to have been frequent smartphone users prior to their enrolment in *Sekolah Tunas Bakti* (STB) (Malaysia's rehabilitation institution for juveniles). The sample comprised a total of 34 informants who matched the predetermined criteria; 17 male juvenile students from STB Kuala Lumpur and 17 female juvenile students from STB Sungai Lereh Melaka. The sample was meticulously vetted using various criteria to guarantee the precision of the collected data. All informants, varying in their level of information proficiency, were troubled adolescents who have been identified as individuals active in accessing, sharing, or interacting with online pornography through smartphones. This sample of juvenile students is a non-probability sample and was selected on a voluntary basis among individuals who were willing to participate as research subjects. Purposeful sampling was crucial to ensure that the informants selected for this study were eligible and appropriate for addressing all questions related to the investigated phenomenon.

The informant's age group was determined by their certified age level, which must be below 18 years. The researchers, principals, and supervisors of both STB collaborated on the research on a comprehensive case file. This file included data on informants representing various ethnic backgrounds, encompassing Malays, Chinese, and Indians residing in both urban and rural areas. The case files of juvenile students were segregated and selected based on the offence category pertinent to the study.

To ensure confidentiality and safeguard the identity of the participants in this study, informant codes RJJ (male juvenile respondent) and RJP (female juvenile respondent) were assigned, together with the interview queue number, to facilitate the analysis of the research. Utilising a questionnaire as a research instrument is more efficient and impactful when constructing a series of questions centred around identified themes, using the list of questions as a reference during the interview process. Considering that the study focuses on sensitive issues, it was important for the interviewer to prioritise the informant's emotions and adhere to research ethics. This involves respecting the informant's responses and opinions. Data collection commenced subsequent to the acquisition of an official permission letter and confirmation of study implementation from the Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia.

The in-depth interview data analysis in this study comprised several methodologically aligned stages. The first stage entailed transcription of the in-depth interviews, which refers to the conversion of audio recordings into textual transcripts. The subsequent stage involved the coding process, where the collected data was annotated with labels or categorised to facilitate the identification of emerging themes or categories from the in-depth interview. Once these themes had been identified, the subsequent stage revolved around aligning them with the research objectives. This process is vital for discerning patterns or associations within the data. Finally, following the categorisation of research themes in line with the research objectives, the focus shifted to the interpretation process. This stage involved deciphering, interpreting, and formulating conclusions based on the collected data (McMullin, 2021; Murthy et al., 2020). All interviews were manually transcribed, which significantly expedited data recall (Normahfuzah, 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the study findings, the informants spend a significant amount of time using their personal smartphones. The vast majority of all 34 informants admitted to spending more than 8 hours per day for this specific purpose. The informants can be classified as persistent users due to their significant reliance on these telecommunication gadgets. In addition, individuals place greater importance on dedicating time and effort to these devices compared to other obligations, such as academic endeavours, employment, or social engagements. This study will thoroughly examine the chronology of the initial acceptance of the LGBT culture, starting from the early phases of childhood and adolescence among the participants in this study.

Smartphone ownership among juveniles

This analysis confirms the urgent necessity for increased attention to the early acquisition of personal smartphones by juveniles. The prevalence of smartphone ownership among juveniles is widely acknowledged as a common trend in the contemporary digital era. In the present society, parents tend to provide their children with smartphones, iPads, and various technological devices. This deviation from conventional offerings such as confectionery, toys, and literature signifies a discernible shift in societal trends for presenting gifts to children.

Moreover, the prevailing circumstances following the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified the perceived necessity for every school-age child to possess, at minimum, a smartphone endowed with comprehensive internet access to facilitate remote learning (Joseph et al., 2022). The advent of remote learning (RLE) has accentuated the omnipresence

of personal electronic devices, particularly among the demographic still engaged in formal education. Nevertheless, the unregulated usage and inadequate supervision of these telecommunications devices has given rise to instances wherein these youthful and impressionable individuals engage in misuse, a phenomenon articulated by the perspectives of the informants presented herein:

My own laptop, Mom bought it for my birthday present. She also bought a smartphone. I'm still small, but mom bought it for that day.
(Informant RJP18)

*I first saw a porn video when I was in 4th grade.
I already had a mobile phone at that time.*
(Informant RJP17)

*I became addicted to the screen since...
I first got a smartphone when I was still in kindergarten.
Then I watched a porn video at the age of 13.
But I was caught by my mother at that time.*
(Informant RJP29)

As time progresses, it becomes more evident that children and adolescents require specialised electronic tools, particularly smartphones, for educational purposes. Nevertheless, the widespread possession of these devices has greatly liberated modern young individuals, providing them with unrestricted internet access while simultaneously limiting parental oversight. Providing personal electronics, especially smartphones, to children at an early age not only has the potential to adversely impact their physical development but also has significant consequences for the widespread issue of screen addiction among children worldwide (Kerai et al., 2022).

The repercussions of high-access addiction are numerous, especially since this proclivity often develops in childhood. The prolonged use of smartphones can have detrimental effects on individuals' physical health. Extended screen exposure in individuals who frequently use electronic devices can result in ocular complications, discomfort in the neck and shoulders, and the potential onset of severe headaches (Ling & Zawi, 2023). Moreover, even ardent users frequently encounter disruptions in their nocturnal sleep patterns. The emission of high-intensity displays, particularly in the blue light spectrum, has been identified as a potential cause of interference with the production of sleep hormones, resulting in delayed sleep initiation and the occurrence of sleep disruptions (Kheirinejad et al., 2023).

Previously, the subject of pornography was regarded as sensitive, and engaging in discussions or seeking information about it was seen as socially taboo and disrespectful. Nevertheless, in a profoundly sophisticated era, this problem presents an increasing threat to the deterioration of moral principles and ethical standards in posterity. All parties concerned must recognise and address the severity of screen addiction, which can ultimately lead to pornography addiction. The process of education and recovery must proceed in synchronisation and requires the participation of all segments of society. However, in addressing noteworthy issues like these, initiating the process early is critical, by focusing on parental roles as crucial mediators for monitoring the use of gadgets and overall time spent on screens (Mahbob & Nordin Ahmad, 2020).

The establishment of a pornographic material collection platform

Furthermore, a discernible phenomenon that emerges involves the establishment of groups expressly dedicated to the accumulation of explicit content within smartphone applications. Specifically, the informants undertook the initiation of a group on the WhatsApp platform with the explicit intent for the sharing of such material. Drawing from the informants' personal experiences and those of their associates, these groups served as conduits for the exchange and dissemination of their preferred adult content, demonstrating a pronounced proclivity for videos categorised as “Western“ and “*Budak Sekolah*” (schoolchildren). The informants' observations indicate that these groups adopt diverse nomenclatures, yet their overarching objective remains consistent — functioning as focal points for the aggregation and distribution of explicit materials, a phenomenon substantiated by their testimonies:

*Oh, but there is a group to make. Friends sent it.
I'm so excited...hehehe...friends who are admins..
Hehehe...obscene video ('Barang Sedap')...
Many people share porn videos there...
...At 2, 3, 4 in the morning, it doesn't stop.
(Informant RJP19)*

*We have a lot of groups like “konek hitam”,
If like...we put a picture, then we put picture stickers.
“konek hitam,” that's how people will do a lot.
Half there, half in my handset, there are 4 groups.
All kinds of “fly without feeling sticky”...
The one with the “konek hitam” is really blue.
Those 4 are my WeChat; that's all.
Just mixed messages. (Informant RJP20)*

*WhatsApp group and WeChat group friends
who share porn there. (Informant RJP22)*

The formation of groups dedicated to this illicit content escalated in severity when certain informants acknowledged their inability to erase the explicit imagery witnessed in the pornographic videos they viewed. Informants acknowledged that they frequently have a partial visual reminder of the activity they have seen, which hinders their ability to shift their focus to other matters. The informants opted to engage in sexual intercourse with their partner as a means of resolving the issue. The proliferation of this WhatsApp group dedicated to the dissemination of explicit sexual content is highly prevalent among adolescents, necessitating a substantial response to address this issue. The majority of informants who are highly addicted to pornographic materials acknowledged their willingness to invest both time and money in subscribing to and collecting videos, among other activities. Informants have made the following confessions regarding the development of several groups dedicated to accumulating pornographic materials:

*I downloaded pornography from the group...
On WhatsApp, my friend invited me to join the group
then I share with my other members.
(Informant RJP32)*

*There is sex Group, I don't know the one who added me..
the "Sex 18XX" group... (Informant RJP23)*

*There is Whatsapp group to share the porn
called "konek hitam", ridiculous, it's full of porn
videos there. I opened it in the morning
and it was like 100, 500...a thousand... WhatsApp,
you all know, if I delete the group thing,
the admin will add me back...
not more than 400 a day, a lot...I have shared it too...
(Informant RJP20)*

*I watched the "blue videos" in group...
Everyone sends in group share via WeChat & WhatsApp.
People share videos... "blue video." (Informant RJP33)*

Unrestricted access to pornographic content exposes individuals to explicit depictions of sexual immorality and unprotected premarital sex, which can result in both social and personal harm. An informant (RJP33) revealed that there were multiple groups on WhatsApp and WeChat dedicated to sharing pornographic content. Additionally, these platforms were used to identify and capture victims for the purpose of sexual trafficking. One informant claims to have been sold as a sex slave by individuals known to be associated with the WhatsApp sex group.

The creation of a platform for the accumulation of pornographic content involving adolescents and children is an extremely alarming issue that demands the attention of multiple parties, including the general public, authorities, and educational institutions. Not only does it entail the distribution of sexual content inappropriate for mental and emotional growth, but it can also detrimentally affect the sexual maturation of a child or adolescent. The creation of such platforms can influence minors' perceptions of interpersonal connections and potentially contribute to mental health issues and emotional instability (Norman & Othman, 2020).

Early exposure to platforms that enable the acquisition of pornographic content can also influence the formation of social relationships, resulting in detrimental associations and heightening the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation. The proliferation of such platforms among adolescents and children represents a serious violation of minors' interests and welfare. These platforms not only violate the fundamental principles of human rights and child safety, but also evade the obligation of all parties concerned to protect the younger generation from being exposed to pornographic materials, which can result in dangerous and risky behaviours (Azhar et al., 2018; Herring et al., 2022; Sinaga & Wardaya, 2022).

In fact, the prevalence of contemporary social media platforms presents a potential danger in the form of cyberbullying, which refers to receiving explicit sexual messages online, sometimes referred to as cybersexual harassment. Cybersexual harassment encompasses a range of forms, such as the dissemination of digital content (including images, videos, suggestions, and direct messages) on various social media platforms. Victims of such incidents typically experience profound fear and emotional distress (Liyana & Mohd, 2023).

Early exposure to smartphone screens amongst adolescents might have significant repercussions, potentially resulting in a persistent addiction that is challenging to

overcome. This is due to the fact that habits formed during childhood tend to persist and are difficult to eliminate. According to the study's informants, frequent screen exposure has led adolescents to regularly browse pornography. This simultaneously prompted the informants of the study to become engrossed in consuming pornography extensively and indiscriminately. Furthermore, the forbidden materials conveyed LGBT philosophy and reversed gender roles to these young individuals. The consumption of pornographic content featuring LGBT themes has influenced the informants' cognitive processes and influenced the development of their sexual orientation to a certain degree.

Normalisation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) information

The selection of companions plays a crucial role in defining the overall development of adolescents, leading to well-rounded and healthy growth. However, the current glut of information made possible by modern technology, particularly smartphones, aids in the global distribution of various content. Hence, adolescents of the contemporary era are becoming more and more exposed to the evolving diversity of sexual orientations, such as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders (LGBT), a phenomenon that intensifies with time. The unrestricted dissemination of information in the digital era serves as a catalyst for societal shifts, fostering behaviours that may be perceived as deviant. The emergence of the LGBT phenomenon initially ignited controversy. Nevertheless, the widespread availability of explicit content depicting LGBT individuals on the internet has prompted many segments of society to consider its acceptance, particularly within Western cultural contexts. Amidst this crisis, informants have provided insights that shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of this issue:

*Sometimes I get bored looking at normal porn videos.
I watch lesbian movies. I like that...get molested few times.
Hehehe... Excited...When you see men playing with men...
(Informant RJL17)*

*I watch a lot of pornography on my smartphone.
I like to watch lesbians. I don't know,
because I like it...look at women with women.
I'm so curious... how do they have sex?
I want to see how they have sex.
I'm a lesbian after watching a lot of movie lesbians
I am aroused by women...definitely...
(Informant RJP27)*

According to Informant RJP27, her frequent viewing of pornographic videos in the lesbian category on the internet has greatly influenced and strengthened her developing feelings towards other females. The informant acknowledged the significant influence of information showcasing lesbian sexual activity, admitting its substantial contribution to the formation and consolidation of her homosexual orientation. Additionally, the informant emphasised that lesbian pornographic videos function as instructional resources, augmenting her comprehension and skills for participating in sexual activities with individuals of the same gender. The informant's candid confession highlights the profound impact of consuming pornography on the development of spontaneous desires for sexual intercourse. This revelation provides significant insights into the ongoing discourse on the

intricate correlation between consuming explicit content and the development of sexual preferences:

*I don't want to be lesbians...
But after I was exposed to a lot of pornographic
content with LGBT elements...
Suddenly I want to be a lesbian... just like that.
I know about the world of lesbians from smartphones
(Informant RJP27)*

Normalisation denotes the gradual acceptance of phenomena previously considered unconventional or taboo, eventually becoming integrated into everyday life. The younger generation, benefiting from increased exposure and educational access, has been instrumental in dismantling negative stereotypes and prejudices against LGBT individuals (Sharifuddin et al., 2023). The advent of social media has played a pivotal role in this normalisation process, facilitating in-depth exploration and access to the stories and experiences of LGBT individuals for adolescents immersed in the digital age.

The influence of social media not only fosters an understanding of the LGBT culture but also propels adolescents towards endorsing and advocating for the rights of the LGBT community on a global scale. The consequential impact extends beyond personal beliefs, as the viewing of pornographic material centred on LGBT individuals contributes to the integration of LGBT characters into popular culture. According to Shabahang et al. (2023), this integration is evident in a variety of media, including movies, dramas, the music industry, and more.

Nonetheless, the scientific community has not yet reached a consensus on the establishment of a definite and conclusive association between pornography consumption and an individual's sexual orientation. This topic encompasses an intricate and contentious field of study. Multiple factors determine an individual's sexual orientation, and empirical evidence indicates that pornography is not an influential variable. Conversely, studies highlight the complexity of the attributes that Komlenac and Hochleitner (2022) identified as significant in predicting an individual's sexual orientation.

Recent studies have highlighted various influences on an individual's sexual orientation, including genetic factors, social environments, and childhood experiences. Consequently, it is not tenable to assert that exposure to pornography constitutes the primary determinant capable of altering a person's sexual orientation (Andrie, 2021).

While scientific research does not provide a definitive understanding or consensus regarding the direct alteration of a viewer's sexual orientation through the consumption of LGBT material, there is a growing body of compelling evidence that elucidates certain aspects of the relationship between viewing such material and associated issues. The process of repeated exposure or reinforcement has the potential to nurture specific ideologies within an individual's mind. This iterative exposure, particularly to specific content, can be likened to a fertilisation process shaping the individual's cognitive landscape.

This notion is not exclusive to LGBT material; the concept of repeated exposure holds relevance across various domains. Exposure to specific materials, be they negative news, depictions of terrorism, or pornography, has the capacity to reshape an individual's perception of the world. Tan et al. (2022), for instance, provided evidence that such changes in perception may cause a person to perceive the world as being more dangerous or negative than it actually is.

Considering the cognitive impact of repetition and frequency of exposure, it becomes evident that certain content can imprint a lasting memory on the human mind. The continuous viewing of material holds the potential to influence an individual's emotional state. For instance, recurrent exposure to negative or tragic events through various reports may induce a persistent sense of anxiety or depression. Another pertinent illustration involves repeated exposure to violent or harmful content, which can lead to desensitisation, fostering the potential proliferation of terror or hazardous materials (Jacobs-Kayam & Lev-Wiesel, 2019).

Consequently, repeated exposure has the potential to influence individual behaviour. For instance, continual exposure to harmful acts or stimuli may impact real-life actions, particularly when individuals attempt to emulate observed behaviours (Melki et al., 2022). Beyond affecting individual social dynamics, the repetition of certain stimuli can lead to addiction. Iterative exposure to stimuli that elicit pleasure or stimulation may engender addictive tendencies, interfering with an individual's social functioning and daily life. Thus, addressing exposure to substances with enduring negative effects necessitates comprehensive measures and control to safeguard one's mental and emotional well-being (Dresp-Langley & Hutt, 2022).

The recurrent exposure and frequent consumption of pornography materials, particularly those pertaining to LGBT content, has the potential to exert influence and modify the sexual concepts and orientations of the individuals involved. The recurrent presentation of images has the capacity to shape users' ideologies and thought patterns, underscoring the implication that repeated encounters contribute to the assimilation of such materials into an individual's psyche. Consequently, this process initiates adaptation mechanisms and fosters a heightened inclination towards the content.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study about the prevalence of smartphone screen addiction among juveniles have a substantial and beneficial impact that will be valuable to a wide range of individuals and groups involved. The primary beneficiaries of the advantages are the younger cohorts, including adolescents and children, as well as those now involved in the process of self-rehabilitation. Adolescents, specifically, have much to gain from this study's findings, which provide them with a greater understanding of the adverse repercussions linked to excessive smartphone screen use. Overall, this study offers significant novel insights and enhances awareness regarding the dangers associated with screen addiction. Adolescents are equipped with the necessary information to make informed decisions and develop strategies for effectively managing their time, thereby restricting their screen usage.

This study's next contribution is specifically targeted at families and teachers. This study will assist family institutions in developing optimal strategies for early childhood education. Hence, the publication of this study's findings has the capacity to stimulate awareness among parents and families that provide their children with electronic devices without implementing strict regulation over such devices. Parents can employ the information offered by this study in a manner that promotes well-being and accountability to gain a better understanding of the actions and constraints that adolescents and children encounter in the context of digital technology. The findings of the present study can also assist teachers and staff members in educational institutions at all levels in developing extracurricular activities beneficial to students. Such extracurricular activities have a crucial role in shaping the holistic cognitive and lifestyle development of young individuals as they occur beyond the confines of the classroom.

In fact, this study has the potential to provide valuable insights for medical professionals and mental health workers seeking a comprehensive understanding of behavioural issues as well as the immediate and long-term consequences of screen addiction and sexual identity distortion in adolescents. Experts and professionals can leverage the findings of this study to enhance their understanding of treating adolescents involved in cases of screen addiction leading to criminal activities and other inappropriate behaviours. Lastly, this study enhances societal awareness and knowledge by raising consciousness about the topic among the general population since the responsibility of educating young individuals is a collective obligation among community members who care for each other.

CONCLUSION

Smartphones are crucial in today's digital society, serving as the primary means of accessing various entertainment alternatives, providing an escape from reality, fostering relaxation, and occupying time that would otherwise be spent on constructive activities. Nevertheless, technology frequently serves as a gateway to sexual stimulation, a prevalent habit in the contemporary era of the internet. The present study reveals that excessive screen exposure, especially to pornography, is a contributing factor to the significant pitfalls experienced by adolescents. Based on the outcomes of this study, adolescents (juveniles) with pornography addiction have an increased tendency to participate in a range of behavioural offences, including sexual harassment, rape, sodomy, and other societal disorders. Frequent exposure to pornographic media featuring LGBT elements can potentially influence the behaviour and sexual preferences of individuals who are originally heterosexuals, leading them to develop homosexual attraction instead. Evidently, children and adolescents are unable to make well-informed decisions, including the acquisition of information or content that is either beneficial or detrimental to them. Thus, parents, educators, and society in general must take action to foster an atmosphere that motivates adolescents to make more intelligent decisions for the sake of their future.

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Norhawanirwana Habidin Norhawanirwana Binti Habidin

is a PhD student at the Media and Communication Studies Centre (MENTION), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Azian Muhamad Adzmi

is a PhD student and a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the School of Journalism, Media & Culture (JOMEC), Cardiff University, Wales, United Kingdom, affiliated with Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia.

Mohd Azul Mohamad Salleh (Dr)

is a senior lecturer at the Center for Research in Media and Communication, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. His main research work includes new media and communication technology.

Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali (Assoc Prof Dr)

is a lecturer at the Media and Communication Studies Center (MENTION). His research is focused in the fields of broadcasting (documentary), visual communication, and media literacy.
