

Subjective Factors Affecting Adolescents' Perceptions and Attitudes toward Smartphone Pornography

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to explore adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography. Adolescents' perspectives on experiencing smartphones pornography were collected through interviews and classified using Q methodology. The participants in this study were fifty Korean middle school students and a total of forty Q samples were sorted in accordance with a Q sorting distribution. The Q analysis using a QUANL program produced some distinct factors. The results suggested that adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography varied but could be categorized according to predominant features.

Keywords: adolescents, smartphone pornography, Q methodology

1 Introduction

The problematic use of mobile phones by adolescents has not been widely studied;¹ however, there has been an enormous amount of studies on pornography. According to the results of previous studies, reckless contact with pornography in adolescence can cause psychological and emotional conflicts. This behavior evokes sexual curiosity and interest in sex,² and there is a strong possibility that those who have experienced immoderate sexuality through pornography at an early age will develop social deviant behaviors.³ More attention should therefore be paid to the adolescents using pornography on their smartphones.

Despite the availability of current research, there is still insufficient data regarding adolescents' specific use of smartphone pornography. There is a significant lack of research on the subjective factors informing adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography from the perspectives of media studies, communication studies, or education studies. This study attempted to categorize adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography, classifying them into different groups with the aim to identify individual perceptions which could not be discerned with numerical and statistical data. As such, the result of this study might serve as a foundation for investigating the actual circumstances of adolescents' use of smartphone pornography by considering the subjective factors.

2 Literature Reviews

The proliferation of pornography over the last two decades, particularly via the Internet, has influenced youth culture and adolescent development in diverse and unprecedented ways.⁴ As a result, a large number of studies have focused on the impact of internet pornography on adolescents.⁵ However, very few studies have considered the use of smartphone pornography by adolescents or the influence of smartphone pornography on adolescents' perceptions and beliefs. The body of literature exploring adolescents' perceptions of smartphone pornography remains very limited.

While most researchers do not directly address the issue of smartphone pornography, the findings of different studies on the use of pornography are both positive and negative. A number of studies reveal that the use of pornography may relieve stress, frustration, and boredom in some viewers.⁶ After investigating the self-perceived effects of pornography use among male and female young adults in Denmark, Hald and Malamuth⁷ discovered that the respondents attributed few negative effects and moderate positive effects to their use of pornography, with men reporting slightly more negative effects than women. Ross et al.⁸ examined Swedish young adults and found that the most commonly-reported reasons for the use of internet pornography were for sexual excitement, sexual satisfaction, convenience, curiosity, and anonymity.

3 Methods

3.1 Q Methodology

Q methodology was created as a systematic approach for identifying clusters of people who shared common viewpoints and for establishing models to represent those shared views.⁹ Q methodology is a very useful tool for looking at other's attitudes. In this research Q methodology was used as an appropriate method to identify the subjective factors of adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward the social phenomenon of smartphone pornography use.

3.2 Q Sample

A Q sample is a collection of statements presented to survey respondents, which they are asked to rank.¹⁰ The statements can be elicited from any number of sources, including existing academic literature, from both literary and popular texts (magazines, television programs, etc.), from formal interviews and informal discussions, and, often, via pilot studies.¹¹ For this study, forty statements collected from in-depth interviews and verified by literature were adopted for the Q sample.

3.3 P Sample

The participant structure, or P sample, is a structured sample of respondents who are theoretically relevant to the problem under consideration.¹² The fifty participants making up the P sample in this study were middle school students with experience of smartphone pornography use. Q methodology has relatively small samples since it is usually employed to identify thought processes where the phenomenon studied is not known well.

3.4 Q Sorting

Q sorting is a process by which a subject models his or her point of view by rank-ordering the Q sample statements.¹³ The sorting of the fifty participants' responses yielded a distribution of forty Q statements from most agree (+5) to least agree (-5) by a Q sorting distribution. After each Q sorting, the participants were asked to write about the items they had placed in the extreme columns.

4 Analysis & Results

The statistical results evidenced some different types of juvenile perceptions and attitudes toward the use of smartphone pornography. The factor Q-values for each statement indicated how each group ranked the items.¹⁴ The distinguishing characteristics were contentious statements that subgroup members ranked significantly different from other subgroups.¹⁴ For each subgroup, the significances were calculated based on the normalized factor scores represented as Z-scores. These scores denoted how far each item was from the overall group mean. A summary profile for each of the categories was acquired from the Q-sorted values and showed its own distinguishing characteristics. The types were named with a descriptive phrase or sentence that highlighted the outstanding features of the factor.

5 Discussion

This study examined adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography employing Q methodology. As a result, the study identified some distinctive subject factors to classify the perceptions and attitudes toward smartphone pornography. The factors were named according to their most distinctive features. Through this study, we are able to classify the different types of juvenile smartphone users who have watched pornography. There is a need for further research on the characteristics and implications of adolescents' exposure to smartphone pornography, as mobile devices have made pornography more readily available. These findings might help researchers gain a better understanding of the possible factors informing adolescents' exposure to the deluge of pornography on smartphones. Related studies

on these topics are expected to be sparked by the changes in adolescents' use of adverse media contents

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