

Counselors Practice in Addressing Pornography Issues Among Students in School

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Abstract--- *This study aims to explore the practice of counselors in dealing with pornography issues among students in school. The study employs a case study approach with two experienced counselors handling the issues of pornography among students in schools in Selangor. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Then, the data obtained were analyzed manually. Seven themes were developed. The themes were discussed in chronological order, starting from counselors' understanding and perceptions on the pornography issues to the strategies used to solve the pornography issues within the students' circle. Overall, as a counselor, the practice in handling the issue of pornography is very important in order to improve the competency of counselors in future similar cases. The findings from this study will serve as a guidance for counselling practitioners to handle issues related to pornography. Given the focus of the study, future studies may consider in developing the interventions and psychoeducation modules for counseling session related to pornography issues.*

Keywords--- *Pornography, Counselor Practices, Psychoeducation Modules, School, Case Study.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The majority visitors of pornography websites are male and that includes university students, teenagers, children as well as adults and elders (Syed et al., 2014). This happens due to easy access to Internet that encourages them to visit adult websites (Azah & Che Zarina, 2011). This phenomenon is also one of the causes for the increasing cases of incest and abandonment in Malaysia (Mazulizam, 2016). In Malaysia, it is alarming to note that the issue of pornography is rampant among youth especially teens in Malaysia. In this context of study, teenagers are defined as those with age ranges from ten to seventeen years because at this age, their level of maturity influences their interests to know more about sexuality (Rumyeni & Lopez, 2013).

In Malaysian culture, discussing about sexuality with the elders especially parents are considered taboo and this led to their self-curiosities and search for the information through the internet (Mulya et al., 2012). According to a study conducted by the Fifth Residents and Family Studies (KPKM5), the percentage of adolescents who were exposed to pornography is 35.3% in 2016. These adolescents, 60.8% of them were also registered users to obtain online pornographic materials. With minor parental supervision, teenagers who owned smartphones also are addicted to internet pornography.

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The pornographic activities were also found among members of religious groups. A study abroad by Hinman (2013) found that some individuals who have a strong grip on religious doctrine can spend 20 or more hours by visiting the pornography. In addition, the cases reported in Malaysia, namely sodomy among *tahfiz* alleged stems from watching the action in the videos by a teenager who have basic understanding of a religion. This shows that pornography also involves people who understand the religion (Star, 2011).

For the above concerns, the role of mentors and counselors are really needed to address the issue of pornography among youth. Each counselor who manages the issue of pornography addiction among teenagers in Malaysia requires them to have knowledge in sex, impact of pornography and pornography addiction treatment (Zaliridzal & Early, 2011). If the counselor does not want and cannot discuss the issue intelligently with clients, their clients will not be able to consider the harm arising from internet pornography in their lives. Therefore, it is essential if a counselor has the advantage of knowledge and comfort in discussing the experience of someone who is addicted to pornography so that counselors are more willing to offer treatment options for the future (Hinman, 2013). On that basis, this study aims to explore the experience of counselors in helping to prevent the issue of pornography in religious schools.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach. It is the most appropriate design for this study. The choice of method for qualitative case studies is chosen considering the interest of researchers to explore, make discoveries and interpretations rather than to test the hypothesis (Merriam, 1998). This approach will show the real situation in which the respondents are going through in real life.

This study uses purposive sampling technique with such criteria i) the registered counselor with Malaysian Counselor Board and ii) Counselors with the experience managing the issue of pornography. The participants involved are two counselors who are serving in religious schools in Selangor. Researchers have been using semi-structured interviews to obtain data. The result of the interview was later transcribed and analyzed manually by using thematic analysis to get the themes. This process started from descriptive coding followed by analytical coding and themes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data shows seven emerging themes. The themes were written by chronological narrative of the participants. Each theme is detailed according to the research questions such as the followings:

1. What is the perception of the counselor to the problem of pornography among students in the religious school?
2. To what extent counselor readiness to face the challenges in addressing the problem of pornography among students in the religious school?
3. What are the strategies used by the counselor when dealing with the problem of pornography among students in the religious school?

From the three research questions posed in this study, seven themes emerged which cover from: 1. perception of counsellors 2) perceptions of counselors on issues of pornography 3) the factors that influence the counselors to implement a specific strategy to resolve this issue. One strategy that is shared is through intervention and counseling

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approach. A successful designed strategy requires counselors to have willingness on their knowledge, experience and certain attitudes as a professional counselor. Figure 1 shows a summary of the themes emerged from this study.

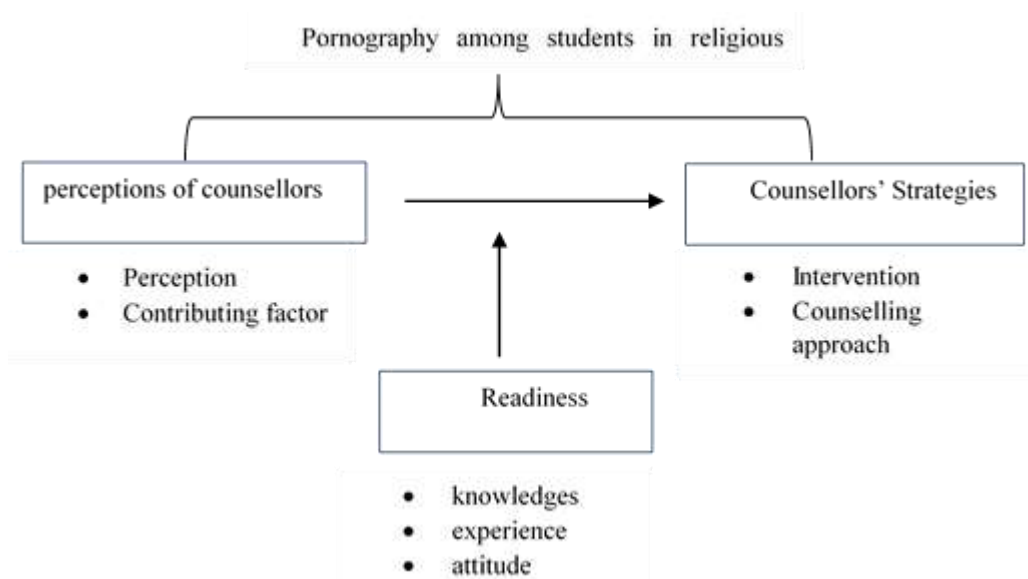


Figure 1. Emergent themes and sub themes

1) Perception of Counselors About Pornography

The counselors and community groups' acceptance about their students' involvement in this issue is rather difficult. However, the issue is considered as one of the aspects in human nature as expressed by PK1. Although in the beginning, both the study participants were surprised and in disbelief with their student involvement in pornography, they remain open to help their students.

The data about my students really terrified me. I was quite surprised. Of course, based on the given data, 30% of my boys were involved.

(PK1 / I1 / 34)

When I first started teaching, I was surprised. During my first posting, all of a sudden, I got to know about cases of pornography exist in religious schools. For the first I have my own stigma. But then I realize if we wanted to avoid this from happening, we must face it. Nowadays teenagers can be rebellious.

(PK2 / I1 / 25)

The involvement of students in religious school with pornography issues in this case study supports the findings of a study conducted by Hinman (2013), who found some individuals with strong faith in religion also can spend 20 or more hours of visiting the Pornography website. This is further supported by a study abroad by Yaniv (2018) in which the findings showed that religious teenagers have high sexual thoughts and fantasies. This is because according to him, religion considers primarily sexual thoughts before marriage is prohibited and this 'unholy' desires caused strong curiosity among teens.

2) Counselor Preparedness in Handling the Issue of Pornography

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Knowledge and experiences are aspects which are emphasized in counselors' readiness to manage the issue of pornography.

Oh, it's important. Handling students with these issues requires experience. Although we have a lot of knowledge, if you have no experience, do not get carried away. The experience plays an important role.

(PK1 / II / 324)

The findings indicated that the aspect of readiness was in line with the experience gained by counselors in handling the case. This is consistent with previous studies (Neukrug, 2007), who found that brilliant and competent counselors must always gain the knowledge and examine trends and approaches to counseling so that they do not miss the latest trends in their respective fields.

Referring to the findings and subthemes, the nature of a competent counsellor in handling the issue of pornography is openness, responsibility, able to love and not judgemental.

Openness. We cannot shut your mind. When we close, we will feel, we will continue to ban him wrong. Actually we have to know why he did that.

(PK1 / II / 153)

The boys who were involved in pornography usually seek for affection. However, they find the affection of love in a way that is not right.

(PK2 / II / 162)

All four qualities mentioned above are the qualities needed in a good counselor. According to a study by Sharif et al. (2003), the quality of 'ability to love' is needed in counseling sessions so that the clients do not feel threatened. In addition, the qualities of openness and not judgemental are another element that must be present in every counselor. Not only on the issue of pornography, but also all the other issues that require the clients not to feel offended during the counselling sessions. Hinman (2013) also stated that the main elements that lead to a counselor failure to handle sexually related sessions are the counsellors' attitude who are not very comfortable in discussing with clients about sexual issues. The uncomfortable feelings faced by the counselor in discussing the issues of sexuality in counseling can lead to countertransference because sexuality is an element of the human functionality (Sousa, 2018). If a counselor does not want and cannot discuss the issue intelligently with clients, their clients will not be able to justify the harms arising from internet pornography in their lives (Hinman, 2013).

3) Counselors' Strategy in Managing Pornography Issue

The strategy used by the counsellor to control the students who were involved and those who were not involved in the issue of pornography is very important to evaluate to what extent this strategy could help students for not getting much caught up in the issue of pornography. The findings of this study showed two emerging themes; interventions and approaches.

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The intervention was carried out by both participants to students who were never have been involved with the issue of pornography. The interventions were implemented in various ways, namely through awareness programs, talks on the harms of pornography and early sex education.

Yes... there is one Asleh programme which we called Nafsakh, which means Fix It Yourself Book. We use the concept of counseling and spirituality. We use all. And we 'fix' our students in terms of their faiths, their beliefs in God.

(PK1 / I1 / 38)

The program, brought him back to Allah. We will use that as a ground, and as a sole reason to help them...

(PK2 / I1 / 117)

The students need an early sex education. This is because they don't have the exposure to talk about sex in a positive way. By learning and open discussion will help them to understand the issues and risks better.

(PK1 / I1 / 250)

The findings are in line with the findings by Halimah and Zainab (2015) who reported the approach of prevention intervention is in the form of special programs such as lectures, tours, exhibitions and courses. Deployment of spirituality elements used by both participants was also a good method nurturing the students from the early years. The approach is also used by a study carried out by Zaliridzal and Early (2011), which could help counselors to aid clients in terms of their spiritual aspect. It also requires the counsellor to implement the psychospiritual aspects like technique to God-Hablul Mina God, merit and sin.

The approach used by the participants in this study also involved two approaches for counseling and also theory-related counseling. Based on the findings obtained by PK2, REBT techniques was used to ensure that the behavior of students involved with the issue of pornography can be controlled and reduced.

Yes, it's true. I am very into REBT. We have more to intervene in terms of religion. I also take note the techniques of reward and punishment. So, if he is could control, from the day he watched pornography, let's say he watched 7 days a week, he must be able to cut down into 5 days a week. There were days that he skipped watching pornography, he refrains himself self, his self-control, so he did not watch, so he can reward himself. He decides for himself. One of the things that he did was to actively involved in sports. Later we will discuss about it in the session.

(PK2 / I1 / 103)

The findings of this study supported the findings of the study Zaliridzal (2011), an approach that can be used in dealing with cybersex addiction is a technique which uses Rational Emotive Behavioral and spiritual methods. According to him, using the Rational Emotive Behavior, addictive behaviors clients can be controlled in a systematic way.

In addition, the counseling approach is also used by both the study participants to apply the spiritual element in students so that they make a comeback to God.

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Counseling is great, and I took the techniques from it. Like I told earlier that, the counseling session does not admonish. And I use the skills of questioning, how can I ask him. He questioned the way people think. So we asked the student, so that the boy can think back. By implementing this technique, the students can learn about their own doings.

(PK2 / I1 / 63)

These findings support the study of Halimah and Zainab (2015), which states Counselling also helps in providing information on education as a guide for avoiding *mazmumah*, guide the students to maintain good relations among beings and as a guidance being influenced to negative things such as negative influence of the mass media and the negative impact of science and technology.

The concept of advice used by PK2 also support the findings of Nik & Ruzaini (2018), which states that counseling is not a kind of advice given which must be agreed upon, but should be seen by a wider counseling itself as part of a wider advisory process. This can be seen from the hadith of the Prophet which means "when you ask his advice then you shall give advice to him" (Bukhari).

Overall, as for counselors, researchers argue that the issues of pornography among teenagers is not limited only in a daily school, but also occurs in religious schools because of natural human instinct. However, the difference is that, students of religious schools is associated with the guilt sin in them. A counselor must have the openness and accept their clients unconditionally regardless of the issues faced by them. Such openness among counsellors helps them from continuing to blame the clients but rather provides an opportunity to improve themselves. Although this sexual issue is a sensitive issue, it is also a part of humanity. In addition, programs based spirituality or also known as psychospiritual counseling is strongly emphasized in the process of recovery and prevention in the issue of pornography among students of religious schools. Through these programs, the actors are reminded of his Creator and this will bring awareness to the actors and they will regret what they do and try not to repeat the committed wrongdoings. This is in line with the conditions of repentance, which is ordered to leave sin, repent immediately and leave the sin. It has also been recorded in the Quran surah Al-An'am: 54.

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا
يَجْهَلُهُ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Meaning: "And when the people who believe in Our revelations come

thee, say: "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy, (namely) that whoever does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and amend, then surely Allah is Forgiving lovers.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study explores the experiences of counselors dealing with the issue of pornography among students in religious schools. The role of counselors is to understand and to employ appropriate strategies to cure or prevent

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these teenagers from getting involved with pornography. It is hoped that this study is able to assist counselors who serve in religious schools to tailor programs and improve self-competency to combat the issue of pornography among students in religious schools. Future research might consider producing modules of psychoeducation intervention and tailored counseling sessions that suits the groups involved in the issue of pornography.

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