

Exposure to pornographic media and Parenting Democratic Style as predictors of Sex –Related Behavior among adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

The aim was to investigate the predicting role of exposure to pornographic media and Parenting Democratic Style to Sex Behavior among adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities. In this study, it was assumed that exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style would predict sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities. 90 adolescents with ID aged between 13 and 16 years and who were enrolled in the ID Inclusion program were recruited. Multiple regression was used to explore the relative contributions of pornographic media and parenting democratic style to the prediction of sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities. Findings indicate that Exposure to pornographic media correlates positively with Parenting Democratic Style and sex –related behavior. Parenting Democratic Style correlates positively with Sex –Related Behavior. Exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .566 and a multiple correlation square of .558. This shows that 55.8% of the total variance in sex –related behavior of adolescents is accounted for by the combination of exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style.

Introduction

Individuals with IDs are characterized by deficits in intellectual functions, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience, confirmed by both clinical assessment and individualized, standardized intelligence testing. Deficits in adaptive functioning that result in failure to meet developmental and sociocultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. (Abdul, 2014; Baczała, 2016; Eissa and Hesham, 2013; Szczupał, 2017).

The concern for individuals with IDs is still a subject of interest by researchers, specialists, and government institutions that support individuals with disabilities in our human societies (Ćwirynkało, Beata and Urszula, 2016). Despite the development in the field of education for individuals with IDs, the field needs more research and studies that help workers in this field in dealing with adolescents with IDs to meet their needs and face their problems (Eissa and Beata, 2019). There are no differences in sexual activity between individuals with IDs and their normal peers, because sexual development is a physiological process that is often not affected by mental development and the level of intelligence. Individuals with IDs go through the same physical and hormonal changes as normal individuals (Hanafy, and Hassanein, 2022).

Puberty and its challenges for people with disabilities are the same as normal people, but with a slight difference in proportion to their physical and mental condition, which may sometimes begin puberty later or earlier than other people (Rushbrooke, Murray, Townsend, 2014). People with intellectual disabilities start puberty later than normal people (Menon and Sivakami, 2019) and in some cases, such as sexual role, identity, stability and health, which require coordination of mental and physiological development, in maintaining, maintaining and needs containment are met with more delays (Yıldız, Cavkaytar, 2017).

Puberty is one of the most important and valuable periods of every person's life, because it is the beginning of his biological and psychological changes and transformations. In this period, a person

distances himself from the world of childhood and steps into adulthood as a teenager;Euling et al.,2008). Also, in the age of puberty, due to the changes that occur physiologically and psychologically for adolescents, the possibility of emotional behaviors and sexual slips is higher (Angoldand Costello,2006).

Sex represents an important axis of human life, as it is linked to psychological and sexual development; from childhood to adolescence, adulthood, youth and all ages(Brkić-Jovanović,Runjo,Tamaš,Slavković,Milankov,2021). An individual with an ID is like any human being who begins as a child and grows up, which means that he goes through the stage of childhood, sexual puberty, and the development of sexual desires(Hanafy, and Hassanein,2022).

Children and adolescentswith ID is characterized by weak thinking ability(Bartnikowska, Katarzynaand Beata,2017;Eissa and ElAdl,2019;Hanafy, and Hassanein,2022).

Due to the lack of adaptive behavior in individuals with IDs, they may engage in random sexual behavior without knowing that it is socially unacceptable, which exposes them to anger from parents, teachers and educators, and affects their social adjustment(Miri,Afruz,Ghobari, Ghadami,2019).Insufficient knowledge of sexuality leads to subsequent problems insexual behavior(Blasingame,2018).

Literature Review

Sexual problems in individuals with intellectual disabilities

There is no doubt that the suddenness of physiological development in puberty, the lack of cognitive abilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities, and their ignorance of sexual matters, underlie many forms of sexual dysfunction. In general, it can be said that masturbation is one of the most common sexual perversions among people with intellectual disabilities(Szczupał,2017). Individuals with intellectual disabilities show many forms of abnormal sexual behavior, especially touching and fondling sexual organs, and practicing masturbation in public places, spontaneously without understanding that it is wrong, and we know that practicing these behaviors is prohibited and unacceptable(Stein, Kohut& Dillenburg,2017).

Persons with ID differentiate male and female genitalia, and can tell a person's gender and gender differences, while others speak to the contrary(Brkić-Jovanovićet al.,2021). Although adolescents with IDs are not likely to adapt to their environment, they have the samephysical development and sexual developmentcharacteristics as normal peers(Shulhan, Sri and Budi,2021). Adolescents with IDs like their typically developing peers,experience sexual behavior problems. However, studies on sexual behavior problems in thisgroup are still rarely conducted(Murphy and Elias,2006).

Adolescents with IDs can act some sexual behaviorswhich seem to be not normal, specially when done in the public,such as getting naked in public places, masturbationin public, and failure to understand privacy(Shulhan, Sri & Budi,2021).

Those adolescents do not understand their own sexuality and how to express it appropriately. However , it has been shown that they do have sexual needs and engage in various sexual contacts(Brkić-Jovanovićet al.,2021).ID adolescents are vulnerable to sexual abuse by family members, caregivers, and close friends, twice more than normal people(Goli, Noroozi and Salehi,2020).

Sexual activity is the highest risk behavior inadolescents with intellectual disabilities(Savage and Bouck,2017). Adolescents with IDs display some sexual problems, such as public masturbation,sexual arousal, and severe sexuality against the oppositesex(Akrami,2014).

Because these adolescents with IDs are often isolated from others oftheir age, it has been speculated that they may lack opportunities to learn about theirsexuality or to engage in social activities or sexual experimentation(Isler et al.,2009).

Evidence suggests that cultural norms might influence the relationship between parenting styles and sex-related behavior in adolescents(Ling et al.,2022).Adolescents are curious about their sexual life ,and this makes them look for information about sex, mostly through the internet. This isdone by adolescents due to a lack of dialogic communication between adolescents and their parents about sexual problems(Zubaidah, Maria, and Rusdiana,2020).

Purpose

The aim was to investigate the predicting role of exposure to pornographic media and Parenting Democratic Style to Sex Behavior among adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities

Problem Statement

The subject of sexual desires is a moral one. The absence of sexual education prevents individuals with intellectual disabilities from being able to come to a correct understanding of their sexual desires. Because these individuals have poor awareness of the values and norms governing social behavior, many do not distinguish between socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior, so they are in dire

need of sexual education that includes instruction in social behavior and self-protection. Educating these individuals about sexual aspects in appropriate ways is also necessary and important. Many people mistakenly think that the lower a child's IQ is, the less active he or she should be in other areas, when the opposite is sometimes true, because sexual behavior has nothing to do with the mind but with endocrine hormones. Because students with intellectual disabilities are less aware of social norms, these sexual desires may arise sooner than normal students. Therefore, it was found that sexual problems are more common in students with intellectual disabilities in adulthood.

The need for sex among individuals with intellectual disabilities is not different from the need for it among ordinary individuals, but it differs in the way this need is satisfied. Individuals with intellectual disabilities face many problems in satisfying these desires, due to their low mental capacity and adaptive behavior, and they express these needs with unacceptable sexual behaviors, which requires the family and teachers to provide them with sexual information and knowledge appropriate to their mental and cognitive abilities.

Hypotheses

H1. There will be a significant relationship between exposure to pornographic media ,parenting democratic style and sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

H2. Both exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style will predict sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

H3. Exposure to pornographic media ,parenting democratic style will collectively contribute to sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

Research method

Research model

In this study, it was assumed that exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style would predict sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities, and based on this, a research model as shown in [Figure 1] was established.

exposure to parenting pornographic democratic media style behavior

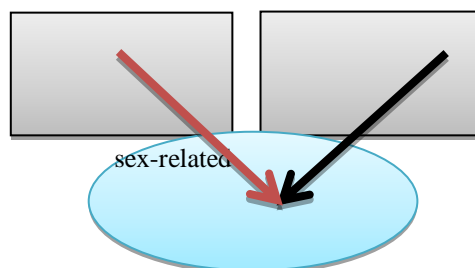


Figure 1. Research model

Participants

90 adolescents with ID aged between 13 and 16 years and who were enrolled in the ID Inclusion program were recruited. All the participants had to fulfill the following inclusion criteria: a) Deficits in intellectual functions, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from experience, confirmed by both clinical assessment and individualized, standardized intelligence testing, b) Deficits in adaptive functioning that result in failure to meet developmental and sociocultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility, c) can read and write, and d) enrolled in the ID Inclusion program. Exclusion criteria include those who have comorbid with other disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, and other developmental disorders.

Measures

A 20-item survey instrument was developed particularly for this research study. It composed of four parts: the first part is concerned with the socio-demographic data of the adolescents, while the second part is about exposure to pornographic media (6 items), where participants respond to each question by yes/no/prefer not to say. For example (Did you watch naked people on the internet last 12 months?;

were you watching people engaged in sexual intercourse?). The third part is about Parenting Democratic Style (6 items), where participants respond to each question by yes/no/prefer not to say. For example ("My parents encourage me to talk about sexuality", "My parents give comfort and understanding when I ask them about sexual matters"). The fourth part is about Sex-Related Behavior (8 items), where participants respond to each question by yes/no/prefer not to say. For example ("I always talk about sexual behaviors", "I share sexual images with friends", "I am emotionally attached to another person"). A pilot study was completed for 20 adolescents with IDs in order to determine the clarity of the questionnaire, and unclear questions were updated. Answering the questionnaire took approximately 40 minutes. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha showed that all of the three variables used in this research were reliable as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Based on	Remarks
Exposure to pornographic media groups	0.823	Reliable
Parenting Democratic Style	0.844	Reliable
Sex-Related Behavior	0.850	Reliable

The content validity of the scale was examined by a group of 5 experts. They assessed the relevance of each item using a four-point Likert scale (where 1 represents "irrelevant" and 4 represents "highly relevant"). They provided suggestions and comments. The 20 items were judged to be quite or highly relevant. A content validity index was calculated at the item level (I-CVI = 0.90).

Procedure

All participants provided written informed consent prior to enrolment in the study. There is no ethical committee in the institutions in which this study was conducted but the ethical code of Umm Al-Qura University in KSA was followed. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling through the managers of the schools for inclusion. Participants were only allowed to participate in the survey if they had read and agreed to the explanation of the purpose and significance of the study, anonymity and confidentiality of responses.

Ethical Procedures

The purpose of the study has been announced. The authors wish all adolescents can continue with them till the end of the study. However, they were free to discontinue at any time.

Data collection

Data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaires. With the support of each school's teachers, each round for filling out the questionnaire was accompanied by the researcher to introduce the study purpose. After obtaining written consents from parents and the school principal, adolescents were tested in their schools with the help of their teachers. That was in a room other than their regular classroom.

Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed in SPSS (v. 22.0). The data were analyzed with Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Multiple regression was used to explore the relative contributions of pornographic media and parenting democratic style to the prediction of sex behavior of adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

Results

Correlation between variables

Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to investigate the correlation between exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style and sex-related behavior. The results are shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, Exposure to pornographic media correlates positively with Parenting Democratic Style ($r = .35, p < .01$) and sex-related behavior ($r = .42, p < .01$). Parenting Democratic Style correlates positively with Sex-Related Behavior ($r = .36, p < .01$).

Table 2. correlation among exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style and sex-related behavior

	1	2	3
Exposure to pornographic media groups	-		
Parenting Democratic Style	*.35	-	*.42
Sex-Related Behavior	*.42	*.36	-

* p < .01

Prediction

Results presented in table3 show that exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .566and a multiple correlation square of .558. This shows that 55.8% of the total variance in sex –related behavior of adolescents is accounted for by the combination of exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style. The table also indicates that the analysis of variance of the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio value significant at 0.01 level (F(2, 87) = 34.778; P < 0.01; see table 4.).

Table 3. The regression results of exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style and sex –related behavior

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F change
1	.788a	.566	.558	4.01227	.566	34.778	2	87	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style
 b. Dependent Variable: sex –related behavior

Table 4 Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style and sex –related behavior.

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	887.556	2	443.778	34.778	.000a
Residual	996.557	87	11.454678160		
Total	1858.791	89			

a. Predictors: (Constant), exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style
 b. Dependent Variable: sex –related behavior

As for results displayed in table 5, between exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style made significant individual contributions to the prediction of sex –related behavior. The results indicated that the following beta weights which represented the relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction were observed. Exposure to pornographic media (b = 0.366, t = 4.128; P < 0.01), and parenting democratic style (b = 0.371, t = 4.243, P < 0.01) .

Table 5. Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Prediction of sex –related behavior. Coefficients a

Model	Unstandarized coefficients		Standarized coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std error	Beta		
1 (constant)	9.687	2.690		5.441	.000
exposure to pornographic media	0.374	0.090	0.366	4.128	.000
parenting democratic style	0.380	0.091	0.371	4.243	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), exposure to pornographic media, parenting democratic style
 b. Dependent Variable: sex –related behavior

Discussion

Sexual desire drives sexual behavior in both normally developed adolescents as well as those with disabilities. This sexual behavior can be with the opposite sex as well as with same-sex (Bogaert and Skorska, 2020; Farr, Diamond, and Boker, 2014; Gruia et al., 2022).

Developmentally, adolescents experience full physical changes like adults, they have clear sexual behavior and begin to develop in a relationship where sexual development is accompanied by a psychological development period one. As a result, they are vulnerable to exposure to pornographic media. Findings from this study confirm that persons with IDs have sexual needs and the capacity to engage in sexual behaviour.

In the literature from 7% to 34% individuals with ID have experienced sexual abuse in adult life (Tomsa et al., 2021). People with IDs do not usually receive adequate sexuality education because it is wrongly believed that they are asexual or hypersexual and they do not have the adequate knowledge needed to comprehend about sex behaviour. Moreover, parents and caregivers fear that education about sexuality may 'wake sleeping dogs' by awakening an interest in sexual activity (Kahonde and Johns, 2022).

Although some researchers (e.g. Sabina, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2008) showed that only 12% of male and 18% of female adolescents exposed to Internet pornography reported an important impact on their emotions or attitudes, that is, the positive side of exposure to Internet pornography, while others (e.g. Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Peter and Valkenburg, 2006; Wingood et al., 2001) implied a higher risk to contract sexually transmitted infections and the content of the pornographic material may impact negatively on youth by shaping adolescent beliefs and their attitudes towards sex, that is, the negative side of exposure to Internet pornography, based on the results of this study, exposure to pornographic media is a predicting factor of sexual behavior in individuals with ID.

Access to and use of mass media and the messages they present are influential factors on sex-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors adolescents (Lou, Cheng, Gao, Zuo, Emerson and Zabin, 2012). Stanley et al. (2016) indicate that young adolescents reported less interest in watching pornography after they became sexually active.

Lou et al. (2012) indicate that there is a significant relationship between consumption of pornographic media and the tendency to behave sexually in adolescents. The results of this study show that media exposure is significantly correlated to adolescents' sex-related behaviors. This result is consistent with previous research (Lou et al., 2012). Thus one can say that Internet media access is a powerful factor influencing sex-related behavior among adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

One of the causes of sexual behavior in adolescents is the influence of the parenting style experienced. The lack of open communication between the parents and adolescents on sexual issues can lead to deviations in sexual behavior (Zubaidah et al., 2020). The parents are obliged to correct any incorrect information accompanied by an explanation of the risk of wrong sexual behavior (Zubaidah et al., 2020). The result of this study is in consistent with that of Abu and Akerele (2006) who showed that there was a significant relationship between parental care and adolescent sexual behavior.

Adolescents with IDs, like other adolescents, have sexual desires towards the opposite sex. However, because their weak intellectuality, it is difficult for them to understand their society's values and norms with regard to satisfying their libido, especially if they are not taught correctly and repeatedly so that they find it difficult to distinguish between what they can and cannot do (Shulhan et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Exposure to pornography is normative for today's adolescents. This study advanced knowledge about the predictors (Exposure to pornographic media and Parenting Democratic Style) of sex-related behavior among adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities. The present study is the first of its kind to assess exposure to pornographic media and parenting democratic style as predictors of sex-related behavior among adolescents with intellectual disabilities in our country using a self-report instrument validated. This study has some limitations.

First, the data presented here are cross-sectional and thus the direction of causal influence is unclear. Second, because of the nature of this study, children were tested only once on all variables. Future research needs to follow a longitudinal perspective. Third, Self-reported questionnaires for data collection have obvious biases such as shared method variance. Future studies should collect this information using other sources of information less prone to this type of bias such as the interview process, or reports from parents and/or teachers.

Future research is expected to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods (mixed method) to obtain more complete and detailed data on adolescent sexual behavior.

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