

Sex Addiction and Crime in Pakistan: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between sexual addiction and crime, examining the theoretical and etiological factors contributing to its development. It used various academic databases like Science Direct, Frontier, Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis Online, APA PsycNet, PubMed, PsycInfo, HEC Digital Library and NCBI. Key terms used were like sex addition, sexual addiction, sex related crimes, sexual attitude and illegal sexual acts. Although the literature search is limited, the study aimed to provide an overview of the relationships, theories, and etiological links to sex addiction and crime. According to the review with increased internet access allowing for more sexual education and growth, there has been significant increase in sex addictive behaviors in recent years. Among the various etiological factors, pornography can lead to exaggerated sexual attitudes and aggressive behavior. Psychiatric history and co-morbidity in families and a history of child sexual abuse can also contribute to sexual addiction and serious sex crime. Parents should closely monitor their children, both young and adult, and provide guidance on sexual norms and healthy ways to relieve sexual urges. Governmental efforts can also involve seminars and awareness campaigns to promote responsible sexual behavior.

Key words: sex addiction, sex and crime, aggression, pornography

1. Introduction

Formerly, the term "addiction" was used to describe substance misuse, such as alcohol and illegal narcotics (Alavi et al., 2012). There have recently been arguments urging that the word addiction be expanded to cover compulsive behavior rather than only pharmacological substances (Kraus et al., 2016). Behavioral addiction is a type of addiction that does not include the use of medications (Grant & Chamberlain, 2016). Gambling, eating, exercising, and sexual engagement are examples of these behaviors (Miller, 2013). The idea of sexual addiction has arisen within this group of behavioral addictions (Kafka, 2010).

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According to APA (2013) sexual addiction is a problematic sexual behavior, viewed as a type of addiction similar to substance addiction. Sexual addiction is defined as out-of-control sexual conduct that has serious negative repercussions and that the individual is unable to quit despite their desire to do so. Other characteristics include perseverance in high-risk, self-destructive conduct, spending a significant amount of time in sexual action or fantasy, disregard of social, vocational, or other activities, and emotional changes related to sexual activity.

Lifetime prevalence rate of sexual addiction and its related disorders is 5.6% (Fuss et al., 2019). Despite evidence that sexual addiction is a severe psychosocial problem for many men and women, as well as those who care about them, it has been greatly ignored (Karila et al., 2014). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental disorder (DSM) committees have not yet managed to find reasonable grounds to classify sexual addiction as a psychiatric disorder (Krueger, 2016; Levi et al., 2020), possibly because the boundaries of sexual normality are not precisely articulated, the symptom trends are not distinguishable, extreme ethical norms are involved, and the label may be a misleading term (Krueger, 2016; Levi et al., 2020). It is, however, a devastating illness that wrecks marriages and family ties (Hajela & Love, 2017). It increases the risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted illnesses (Echebura, 2012; Gohar et al, 2012). This addiction causes societal and vocational issues because of the abandonment of obligations while pursuing sexual conduct. (Kraus et al., 2016; Levine, 2010).

In our culture “SEX” is a taboo word, even though it is basic desire of human being to reproduce or have off springs. Every living being on the earth has felt or desired sexual urges or has engaged in sexual behaviors at some point in their lives. Many regions of the brain are engaged in triggering a series of sexual processes in the body, but the Limbic System is important to drive sex and pleasure (Malandain et al., 2020). When a person is aroused by or attracted to someone, certain areas of the brain become active and induce sexual desire; however, when these portions become hyperactive and sexual desire becomes uncontrolled, this condition leads to sexual addiction. Because live-in partnerships are uncommon in Pakistan, sex addiction affects largely unmarried people. According to research conducted in Pakistan (Batool & Ahmed, 2010), sexual activity at young age is on the rise and familial, societal, and cultural barriers are the most significant precursors to this aberrant behavior.

Thus, keeping this in mind the aim of this review is to explore the impact of sexual activities on committing extramarital affair, sexual aggression, and immoral acts in context of Pakistani culture. Specifically, the literature aims to identify theoretical and etiological factors contributing to development of sexual

frustration and addiction. Moreover, the increasing body of research on cultural and social and societal factors related to sexual addiction will be explored. Finally, recommendations for future research will be discussed, based on this literature review.

2. Methodology

Sex addiction has not yet received massive interest from scholars and clinicians especially in Pakistan. There have only been a few organized researches done on sex addiction in Pakistan to date, however, western researchers have done considerable work on it. Present study reviewed the recent (i.e., 2001 to present) literature regarding the theoretical and etiological factors contributing to development of sexual addiction and crime. The study also examines the impact of sexual addiction on incidence of crime and criminal behavior among the significant academic databases that were accessed and searched were Science Direct, Frontier, Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis Online, APA PsycNet, PubMed, PsycInfo, HEC Digital Library and NCBI.

Key terms used in the literature search included: sex addition, sexual addiction, sex related crimes, sexual attitude, sexual behavior, sexual frustration, sexual aggression, and illegal sexual acts. The relevant key-term was searched throughout the content, not only in the title and abstract.

It is understood that the literature search was limited and that there are many more publications that researchers, academics, and other stakeholders may mention; nonetheless, the goal of this study is to provide an overview of the relationships, theories, and etiological linked to sex addiction and crime.

3. Results

Following factors were identified that appeared repeatedly in several research studies and were relevant to Pakistani culture.

Theoretical factors

Biological Theory

Sexual behavior represents a complex interaction of biology and psychology (Balon, 2011). It is evident from the research that antidepressant and other psychiatric drugs have been shown to be useful in treating sex addiction in certain persons, suggesting that biochemical abnormalities increase the risk of sex addiction (Malandain et al., 2020; Elmore, 2005).

Study indicates that substance abuse and sexual interest share a common pathway (Herkov et al., 2008). Our brain's survival and reward system, conveys a signal that obsessive sexual behavior is required for survival (Schmidt et al., 2017) thus, people who are addicted to sex, experience euphoria and utilize sexual

behaviors to seek pleasure, escape negative sensations, or cope with external challenges (Love et al., 2015).

Neurotransmitters

The limbic system is the center of the brain, producing 100 different types of neurotransmitters (NT's) which significantly control the emotions and behavioral responses. Monoamines, such as serotonin, dopamine, and nor epinephrine, have been studied as most significant NT's in obsessive sexual behaviors (Malandain et al., 2020). However, research in clinical populations is scant. Hypersexual behavior has also been linked to drugs for Parkinson's disease, suggesting that dopamine systems are involved in compulsive sexual activity (Cooling et al., 2015).

Moreover, role of sex hormones, in addition to NT's, are clearly important for sexual function as well. Testosterone levels have been linked to sexual function, though they do not always correspond with libido and sexual urges (Rastrelli et al., 2018). It's crucial to comprehend the role of these hormones in obsessive sexual activity. It's possible that these hormones influence reward and pleasure centers by facilitating or intensifying the reaction to sex and the desire for sex.

Theory of personality disorders

Personal attributes are one of the elements that play a significant influence in the creation and maintenance of an individual's behaviors (Hashemi, 2020), and its importance in the emergence of various forms of healthy sexual behaviors has been established in several researches (Efrati et al., 2021). As a result, personality traits may play a role in the development of excessive sexual activities. Evidence suggests that borderline personality (Sansone & Sansone, 2011), narcissistic personality (Laaser & Adams, 2013), and anti-social personality (Andrade et al., 2014) has high risk for engaging in sex behaviors leading to sexual addiction.

Psychological theory

Numerous psychological elements have a role not only in addiction processes but as well as in the development and maintenance of sexual addiction. From a psychodynamic perspective, attachment styles, trauma, and/or object connections may lead to unhealthy sexual practices and sex related crimes. Psychodynamic theorists believe that secure attachment is a key prelude to healthy relationships and sexual expression in adults (Hall, 2011). People with avoidant attachment styles are more likely to seek out relationships and sexual relationships with little or no emotion or affection, such as with prostitution or may be engaged in using inanimate materials for sexual excitement and pleasure that leads to

paraphilia se, whereas those with disorganized attachment styles may find themselves attracted into an ever-increasing number of sexual relationships or relations in order to receive validation and affection. Individuals with ambivalent attachment types may engage in extra sexual encounters outside of their marital relationship to avoid rejection or to compensate for low self esteem (Samenow, 2010).

The ideas, feelings, and behaviors produced by sex addiction would most likely be the focus of cognitive practitioners (Fuller & Taylor, 2010). Obsessive thoughts about sex, remorse feelings, a need to avert unwanted thoughts, hopelessness, poor self-esteem, humiliation and privacy about sexual activity, rationalizations about continuing sexual activity, preference for anonymous sex, and a lack of control over several aspects of life are all part of the cognitive-emotional component related to sex related unhealthy behaviors (Weinstein, et al., 2015).

4. Etiological factors

Dysfunctional families

According to studies, sex addicts usually belonged from dysfunctional households and are therefore more likely to have been mistreated by their families. It was identified that parents of sex addicts are frequently described as strict, aloof, and unsympathetic (Pfuetze, 2014). Likewise seemingly religious families, with rigid rules and inconsistent boundaries and lack of support and care could breed unhealthy sexual behaviors. (Adams & Robinson, 2001).

Research also found that family of sex addict is often riddled with socio-psychiatric problems such as addictions, high expressed emotions, and compulsions, and where their emotional needs as children were not addressed (Masood & Sahar, 2014). A recent study conducted in Pakistan also found that families of many addicts have a history of psychiatric anomalies and misconduct, including substance abuse (Zada et al., 2022), depression, Schizophrenia, and child sexual abuse (Ahmer et al., 2021)

Similarly, child sexual abuse was also linked with disruptive sexual behavior in adults (Aaron, 2012). Adults who have been sexually abused as children have grown up with a misconstrued notion that sex is the most significant indication of love or that love must be acquired via sex. (Wildmon-White & Young, 2002).

Late Marriages

Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim country; therefore, religion plays a significant role in all aspects of living including marital relationships. Even though

religious penalties demand marriage to be based on mutual consent between the husband and wife, in Pakistan, parental permission of both parties is required for a marriage to be socially and culturally acceptable in majority of the cases. Thus, acquiring an acceptable status from both families and endorsement for the potential spouse, can lead do delayed decisions regarding marriages Moreover, people are more interested in attaining education and getting their career fixed and stable before they a tie knot, this can also have an adverse effect on natural process of fulfilling adequate sexual desire (Khubaib et al., 2020) and thus a rise in sexual frustration emerges (Khalil, 2016).

Internet

Information and social media resources have infiltrated all aspects of cultural, financial, legal, and social life altering social interactions, personalities, and consumption and production trends (Davis, & Rasmussen, 2015; Keane, 2016). Accessibility, cost, secrecy, availability, escape, disinhibition, and other aspects of sexual activity are all facilitated and stimulated by the internet. The illicit, inadequate and unlimited access to promiscuous and indiscriminate content on internet may also promote behaviors that people would never consider doing offline, such as online sexual stalking (Dhuffar & Griffiths, 2015; Farooq & Ashraf, 2022).

Individuals of all ages are increasingly turning to the internet for sexual education (Johnson & Keane, 2017), sexual health (Papacharissi et al., 2011), social connection (Griffiths, 2016), employment, marketing, amusement, media, and education. Through cybersexting, cyberporn, and sex work, this development has had a significant influence on sexual habits and society (Ringrose et al., 2013). Convenient access to pornography and other potentially devastating resources,, communicating with individuals who have similar sexual interests and concerns , playing erotic games culminates in the provision of unlimited opportunities for commitment to sexual pleasures (Levi et al., 2020).

Unsupervised access for adolescents, on the other hand, raises legitimate concerns due to the possible dangers (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011). The use of Internet-dating apps on mobile phones for sexual purposes, namely as a medium for finding sexual partners, is on the rise (Zlot et al., 2018). Adolescents frequently lack the risk tolerance required to recognize and manage internet threats and information in a safe and healthy manner (Delmonico & Griffin, 2008). Adolescents are increasingly suffering with excessive use of internet and behavioral addictions connected to Internet pornography and cybersex (Zafar & Suneel, 2018).

5. Porn addiction

Pornography on the internet has grown into a multibillion-dollar industry, pushing the boundaries of what is possible (Fong, 2006). Internet provides mobility, accessibility, and HD-visual images of sexual practices that leave nothing to the imagination (Lim et al., 2017). It has been reported that almost 13-68 percent of young population in Pakistan of age 18 to 24 years are engaged in watching sexually explicit content (Nimra et al., 2019).

According to recent article published by Raghil(2020)showed that around 30 percent of content that spread on the cyberspace is somehow related to pornography and individuals regardless of gender engage in viewing pornography. This increased accessibility has revealed an inability to manage sexual desires, leading to continuing participation in these activities despite negative effects such as sexual addiction (Maas, 2010).

Exposure to pornography affect the individual sexual socialization by influencing their knowledge of sexual practices (Razzaq & Rafique, 2019), which is often distorted and unrealistic. Pornography viewing has also been linked to an increase in high-risk sexual practices. (Ehsan et al., 2019). Not only this pornography addiction leads the individual to become hostile, angry and aggressive (Razzaq & Rafique, 2021)but Internet Pornography exposure can lead to emotional disturbance, frustration, guilt, shame which affect their daily life activities (Andrie et al., 2021).Excessive use of internet pornography is associated with interpersonal and psychological distress (Maas, 2010).

6. Sex addiction and crime

Sex addicts do not always turn into sex criminals. Furthermore, not all sex criminals are sex addicts. Half of all convicted rapists, however, can be classified as sex addicts (Efrati et al., 2019). Approximately 71% of child abusers are sex addicts (Schiffer & Vonlaufen, 2011). According to Krueger (2016), 33 percent of males convicted for sexually linked Cyber offences have compulsive sexual behavioral issue. The most often reported reasons for sexual assaults have been a desire for power, domination, control, retribution, sadistic enjoyment, or the display of anger or resentment.

Similarly, in Pakistan, increasing sexual provocation has initiated surge in the proportion of people engaging in a range of unconventional or criminal sexual behaviors, such as phone sex (Anwar et al., 2019), the use of call girls service, and cyber pornography (Razzaq & Rafique, 2019).In the western culture having multiple extra marital relationship is not considered as unacceptable anymore crime but in our culture engaging in extra marital relationship is seen as a serious

offense. So, if a spouse goes against the wishes of the other partner it calls for intimate partner violence (Ali et al., 2020).

Pakistani culture has strong restriction on illegal sex. Some people may have sexual interest in someone with whom having an open relationship is not approved by the society, or if the spouse or other family member are a source of hindrance for the relationship, thus in order to get an easy access to their sex partner, individuals may resort to even killing the spouse or that particular family members to remove them from their way (Al Arabiya English, 2020).

Research survey has shown that many street children are sexually abused in Pakistan and the number is as high as 88% (Khan et al., 2010; Sohail et al., 2021). Sexual trauma and negative experience in their subconscious mind may thus develop into revengeful and negative thoughts against society. (Achakzai, 2016). Later they become sex offender and commit different types of crime (Sohail et al., 2021). Similarly, the compulsion of sex increases the obsession of negative thought (Efrati et al., 2019). Which in turn leads to intolerance and increased restlessness which can only then be satisfied by committing a bigger crime. In a study done by Abbas (2021), it was found that children who were sexually abused in their childhood, due their guilt feelings, were involved in many criminal and violent activities later in their lives..

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the literature review reveals a significant increase in recent years in sexual activity. The widespread availability of the internet has opened up new avenues for sexual education and personal development. Research indicates that individuals who consume pornography may develop exaggerated sexual attitudes and behaviors, often characterized by sexually aggressive conduct. Additionally, dysfunctional family dynamics and a history of child sexual abuse have emerged as prominent factors contributing to sexual addiction and, in some cases, serious sexual offenses.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that parents maintain a vigilant watch over their children. A thorough understanding of healthy sexual practices is crucial, underscoring the importance of families providing guidance to young people who have reached puberty. Moreover, the government can play a role by organizing seminars and awareness campaigns in society to promote responsible sexual behavior.

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