



## **THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY BUILDS THROUGH PORNOGRAPHY ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNER PREFERENCES: A STUDY IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA**

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Pornography is influenced by both positive and negative societal discourses, illustrating multiple perspectives on its cultural, ethical, and psychological consequences. Numerous studies have demonstrated that internet pornography has several kinds of sociopsychological consequences. Sri Lanka has been ranked first in terms of searches for the word 'sex' on Google. There have also been studies on the influence of cultural hegemony on social behavior through various media messages. In this context, it is more important to examine the impact of internet pornography on young people when selecting their partner. Studying how ideological and cultural hegemonic ideas constructed through pornography affect youth relationships is an important research gap in the present, and this study has attempted to fill that research gap. The main research problem of this research is whether young people are using internet pornography to build an ideological cultural hegemony when selecting their partner. The main objective of this study is to examine whether young people are using internet pornography to build an ideological cultural hegemony when selecting their partner. The study was conducted with a special focus on the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This study utilized a mixed method, integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods. The Online survey method was used to collect data through questionnaires analyzing the responses from 374 participants aged 18 to 29 in the Western Province. SPSS was used for data analysis. The findings of the research indicate that a significant number of young people expect the physical characteristics shown through internet pornography when selecting their partner. Also, the percentage of those who expect sexual activities shown through internet pornography from their sexual partner is high. Based on this data, the research indicates that young people are in a cultural hegemonic ideology built through internet pornography when selecting their partner.

**Keywords:** pornography, ideological hegemony, cultural hegemony, youth partner preferences

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Internet pornography has become a significant social crisis, particularly in the realm of addiction and partner preferences. The concept of "hegemony" by Antonio Gramsci, a leading Marxist theorist, is used to explain how ruling classes maintain dominance through cultural and ideological leadership. In Sri Lanka, despite being legally prohibited, pornography is not regulated, leading to numerous channels on porn sites. Psychologists argue that getting rid of a porn addict is more difficult than getting rid of a drug addict due to changes in brain chemistry. Pornography has a significant impact on society, particularly the family unit, leading to perversion, glorified natural sex acts, domestic violence, and mental health issues.

This study aims to examine whether young people are using internet pornography to build an ideological cultural hegemony when selecting their partner. It is crucial to consider the social impact of internet pornography and the individual's tendency to become addicted. The research also focuses on how the spread of cultural hegemony is subtly conducted on the influences of sexuality. Pornography is a manufactured product, and it may contain fakes. If these behaviors and ideologies exist within an individual, then a cultural hegemony is operating on them. This is especially evident in Sri Lanka, where it is easier to trap an individual in a certain hegemony based on sexual health literacy, media literacy, and political literacy. In such cases, the individual must depend on a dominant culture in another country. The findings of this research help identify the cultural hegemonic ideology of pornography and its impact on youth relationships.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research employed a deductive approach to examine the concept of cultural hegemony, introduced by Antonio Gramsci. The study used a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, and collected data from 374 young people aged 19 to 29 in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected through a closed and open-ended questionnaire, while secondary data were gathered from library research and existing internet survey data. The study also studied research papers on the theory of "hegemony" and pornography, using the Pornhub 2022 report as a secondary source. Thematic analysis, numerical analysis, and content analysis were used to analyze the data.

The study focuses on the Sri Lankan Porn Channels on Pornhub, analyzing their video content and trends. However, due to legal restrictions, children under the age of 18 were not included in the study. Challenges arose during data collection, limiting the



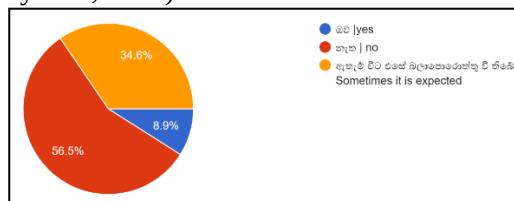
sample to young people aged 19-29 years. The age limit of Pornhub users mentioned in the Pornhub 2022 report was considered, and the Western Province of Sri Lanka was chosen as the research sample. The study's findings are based on the main theoretical framework and the findings of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A study in Sri Lanka surveyed individuals aged 19-29, revealing that the majority of respondents were male and exposed to online pornography. 65.8% of the participants reported exposure to online pornography content, with over 50% using the internet to find it. The study focused on cultural hegemonic forms and analyzed the most viewed channels of video content on the Pornhub website. The majority of respondents, 34.2%, did not access pornography, with women being the majority. Men are more fond of internet pornography, as demonstrated by research on US university students. Men tend to use pornography more than women, indicating a higher prevalence of internet pornography among men.

The survey data revealed that 85.8% of people watch pornography for self-pleasure, 28.9% to learn about sexual activities, and 26.8% to learn new ways to have sex. People are tempted to go beyond natural sexual acts to get artificial stimulation through pornography, which can affect their natural sexual health from a psychological perspective. Most people watch pornography to pass the time - (Kirby, 2021). Most respondents watch both local and foreign pornography, with a preference for foreign pornography. 32.9% of people are interested in foreign pornography, while only 12.6% are interested in local porn. Young people are more interested in foreign pornography. Other popular websites include Xhamster, xvideos, and Brazzers.

The content analysis revealed that some Pornhub products depict sex realistically, but most do not naturally depict sexuality. Currently, Pornhub lacks commercially maintained pornographic channels in Sri Lanka, with only a few having good technology and creative content. The majority of Pornhub website products do not depict natural sex, with 12.6% showing perverted performances. 83.7% believe pornographic scenes are often scripted, while 3.7% find them as actual activities. Most respondents find these scenes not true, indicating they are acted out according to a script. (Vera-Gray et al, 2021).

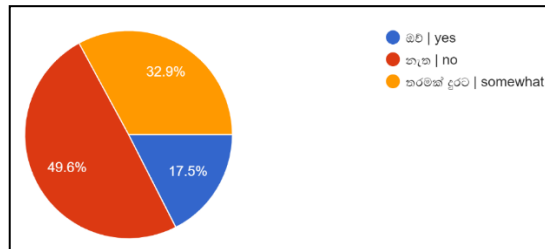


(Figure 1: anticipating body characteristics seen in pornography in normal life)

Research examines cultural hegemony in pornographic scenes, examining how we adopt styles, languages, and manners, and how the society operates within this hegemony, which is often based on specific actions or beliefs. Internet pornography



in Sri Lanka is a cultural hegemony, with users often engaging in pornographic activities in their normal lives, influencing their sexual relationships. The research revealed that 34.6% of respondents sometimes expect their spouses to have similar physical characteristics to the images they see in pornographic scenes (Figure 1) The study reveals that 8.9% of people expect body features in pornography from their partner, while 56.5% do not, highlighting the significant difference.



(Figure 2: Expecting activities in pornography from one's spouse.)

In sexual activities, the level of activities seen in this pornography is expected from their sexual partner is 17.5% (Figure 2 ) The data shows that while the expected level of pornography is 32.9%, the unexpected level is 49.6%, suggesting that most users expect the activities depicted in pornography to be normal.

The research reveals that users are not forced to watch pornography but rather accept and use it as part of their lives. It identifies how cultural hegemony operates through pornography, focusing on sexuality, eroticism, and human subjectivity. The study highlights the operation of cultural hegemony constructed from erotic images.

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATION

This research aimed to understand the influence of cultural hegemonic ideology on young people's partner preferences in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The study found that there is a significant dominance over the sex culture in Sri Lanka, with a greater interest in pornography among the younger generation. 65.8% of participants were watching porn content, with most internet users being men. Women were less likely to turn to internet pornography, indicating a deep cultural hegemony operating through internet pornography.

The study also revealed that 34.6% of respondents imposed expectations for physical attributes influenced by male and female depictions in pornographic material onto persons in their daily interactions, while 8.9% fully expected it from the other. This suggests that cultural hegemony has emerged in individuals, and 37.4% of frequently used words contained in internet pornography are used in their normal life. The findings indicate that a significant number of young people expect physical characteristics shown through internet pornography when selecting their partner, and a high percentage expect sexual activities shown through internet pornography from their sexual partner. This indicates that young people are in a cultural hegemonic ideology built through internet pornography when selecting their partner.

In conclusion, this research contributes to academia by providing a new body of knowledge about the intersection of pornography and cultural hegemony. Future



researchers can use these data to investigate the reasons behind the tendency of users to watch internet pornography at night.

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