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“But everyone does it!”: A Look into the Psychosexual Outcomes of Pornography Use in
College-aged Men and Women

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the

Department of Psychology

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Science

By

Rose-Sienna Medina

August 2021

Dedication

Dedicated to Mia Khalifa. Your strength inspires. We stand behind you.

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Abstract

In the current digital age, pornography is rapidly increasing in popularity amongst emerging adults and college students. Research from a variety of fields have found that consumption of pornography poses neurological, physiological, and psychological threats to emerging adults (Wordecha et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2018). Notably, many consequences of pornography consumption differ across gender (Brown & L'engle, 2016; Fritz & Paul, 2017). College students are more likely than the general public to experience cybersex addiction, with male students significantly more likely to meet the criteria than their female counterparts (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). A clear link between negative mental health outcomes and pornography consumption has been established among women (Willoughby et al., 2014). Alarmingly, best-selling and highly viewed pornography videos mainly consist of female objectification and degradation (Bridges et al., 2010, Fritz & Paul, 2017). Further, many scholars have found that mainstream pornography *revolves* around the exploitation of women (Sun et al., 2016). The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between pornography consumption, misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex. Specific attention is paid to use and outcome differences across gender. Findings revealed that women experience higher amounts of cognitive distractions during sex than men, despite watching significantly less pornography. Further, results of a multiple linear regression indicated that gender is a significant moderator when using either internalized misogyny or cognitive distractions to predict pornography consumption.

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Introduction

The Popularity of Pornography

Currently, around half of the world's population is using the internet, with more than 640,000 new users each day (Roser et al., 2015). Every day in 2019, 115 million people (equivalent to the population of Canada, Australia, Poland, and The Netherlands) visited Pornhub, an incredibly popular pornography site where the U.S. is the top consumer (Pornhub Insights, 2019).

The digital age has propelled pornography use from a peek at Dad's Playboy to a billion-dollar industry that garners millions of views in a single day (Pornhub Insights, 2019). In 1998, Alvin Cooper coined the term "Triple A-Engine" of access, affordability, and anonymity to describe the internet as an ideal sexual search engine. Internet pornography offers the three A's in more ways than ever before. The vast majority of college-aged students in North America have unmonitored, personal access to the internet at any time of the day (Perrin & Atske, 2019). Consumers can browse any of the millions of pornographic sites, many of which are freely available. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the secrecy one can consume pornography in. For the first time, internet pornography offers users the luxury of watching from the bedroom, the workplace, the car – with complete anonymity.

Emerging Adults & Pornography

The accessibility, affordability, and anonymity of internet pornography may explain its success amongst American emerging adults. 18–29-year-olds report being online persistently throughout each day (Perrin & Atske, 2021), and a large portion of pornography consumption is done by people aged 19-25 (Brown et al., 2017, Pornhub Insights, 2019). Approximately 13.2%

of men aged 18-29 report watching pornography daily (Sun et al., 2016). Further, there is a higher percentage of sexual addiction amongst college students than the general population (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017).

In a study of 457 students from a university in the United States, scholars sought to discover the differences in motivation for pornography use (Brown et al., 2017). They found that most college students use pornography with the goal of sexual arousal, physical catharsis, masturbation assistance, and overall pleasure (Brown et al., 2017). While some watch to self-soothe, even amongst frequent users, most do not watch with the motivation of coping (but do consider it a distraction). The majority of students that are using pornography do so for sexual pleasure but cite expanding their sexual knowledge as a secondary motivation (Brown et al., 2017). They also found that there is a group of students that tend to abstain from pornography. Those that consume the least amount of pornography were those with high levels of religiosity, high levels of self-esteem, and women. If someone who typically abstains does watch, it is only for the sake of expanding their sexual knowledge (Brown et al., 2017).

Trends in Usage

By observing the analytics of popular pornography websites in the United States, some degree of information can be gathered on the current common patterns of sexual desires and how they fluctuate. A summary of the high-frequency pornography search terms on popular websites brings to light the common themes in American sexuality. In 2018, the top and gaining searches were “Lesbian” (videos that feature two or more women), “Hentai” (Japanese cartoon pornography), and “MILF” (videos where the female is either the male’s mother, an ambiguous older woman, or someone in proximity’s mother) (Pornhub Insights, 2018). In 2019, they were “Japanese” (videos where the female actress is Japanese) and “Hentai” (Pornhub Insights, 2019).

Amongst 18-24-year-olds, the terms primarily searched were “Hentai” in 2018 and “Japanese” in 2019, with the category “Solo Female” (videos that feature a single woman masturbating) growing 207% in 2019 (Pornhub Insights, 2019). Overall, the most viewed categories of the past few years are “Japanese” and “Lesbian” (Pornhub Insights, 2019). The popularity of these categories may suggest trends in fetishes, beauty standards, and even a preference for animation.

Despite similar themes in views and searches, there are varying patterns of use across gender. In 2019, most women were watching “Lesbian” and “Popular with Women” (videos from other categories most watched and most “liked” by women) categories while most men were watching “Japanese” and “Amateur” categories (videos that feature non-professional actors and thus are closer to reality). Women are 281% more likely to be watching “Pussy Licking” (videos that feature cunnilingus) and 197% more likely to be watching “Solo Male” (videos featuring a single male masturbating) categories than men (Pornhub Insights, 2019), suggesting that women prefer to watch categories that do not focus on and/or include heterosexual intercourse.

Content of Pornography

Although some watchers may be avoiding content with heterosexual intercourse, the most-watched pornographic videos consistently feature female degradation and gendered violence (Sun et al., 2016). When compared to smaller and lesser-known feminist/queer pornography websites, mainstream pornography featured significantly more sexual objectification of women with a significantly wider gender objectification gap. This gender objectification gap was also present when Pornhub’s popular content was compared to its own “Popular with Women” category, where sexual objectification was present but significantly less than the popular content (Fritz & Paul, 2017).

In a content analysis of the best-selling pornography videos, 87% featured physical and verbal violence against women (i.e., gagging, choking, slapping, name-calling, coercion, etc.), with the violence overwhelmingly performed by men (Bridges et al., 2010). The most common sexual act, female-to-male oral sex videos (90%), were three times as likely to feature verbal aggression. In 63% of videos, a male actor ejaculated on an actress's face. When aggressed against, 96% of women were likely to respond with pleasure or neutrally (Bridges et al., 2010). On very popular videos, Pornhub time stamps the video by the sexual act, so the user can easily fast forward to their favorite part. Popular pornography sites consistently offer variety and novelty – unfortunately, often including illegal content. In recent years, Pornhub has faced several legal battles due to its illicit posting and monetization of videos containing rape, child sexual exploitation, trafficking, and other non-consensual acts (Ritter, 2021).

Risks

Emerging research strongly suggests that pornography poses neurological, physiological, and psychological threats to young adults (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017, Willoughby et al., 2014, Wordecha et al., 2018, Wright et al., 2018). Comparable to misuse of an illicit substance, pornography can become neurologically addictive (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). When recreational substances are used, they activate dopamine in the brain, causing a pleasurable feeling in the user. Besides drugs, sexual stimulation releases the largest amount of dopamine in the brain's reward center (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). Emerging adults already have an increased risk of addiction, and those that attend college are twice as likely to abuse a substance than those who do not attend (Juergens, 2019).

The combination of vulnerability and increased acceptance of pornography (Willoughby et al., 2014) positions it as a potentially detrimental and addictive activity. Consistent use of

pornography results in prolonged overstimulation of dopamine, and the brain's response is to decrease both the production and the reception of dopamine (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). The buildup of tolerance and desensitization may result in the user increasing frequency and searching for escalating novelty, becoming neurologically reliant on the stimuli (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). Those who frequently consume pornography alone report significantly less intimacy and commitment in relationships than their non-user counterpart (Minarcik et al., 2016). Pornography use can also result in physiological barriers, specifically for men (Grubbs & Gola, 2019). Most commonly, erectile dysfunction and delayed ejaculation are cited as a physical result of pornography use (Grubbs & Gola, 2019).

Gender & Pornography

Research suggests that gender is the most significant mediator of pornography's psychological influences and consequences (Glascok, 2005, Johnson, 2019). Where it is likely for men to face physiological consequences from pornography, for many, there is not a significant link between pornography use and negative mental health outcomes like depression (Willoughby et al., 2014). However, there is a clear link for men between pornography use and risk-taking behavior. Men who report high usage and acceptance of pornography, as well as high sexual activity, also report high levels of substance use and binge drinking (Willoughby et al., 2014). Men who seek treatment for their pornography use often show a high level of anxiety (Wordecha et al., 2018), as well as decreased mental health overall (Palazzolo & Bettman, 2020). Amongst college students, men are significantly more likely than women to meet the clinical criteria for a cybersex addiction (Giordano & Cashwell, 2017). For men, exposure to pornography can predict sexual harassment perpetration due to permissive sexual norms (Brown & L'engle, 2006). Men consuming pornography are more likely to request specific pornographic

acts from their partners. Most notably, the more pornography a man watches, the more likely he is to not only rely on pornographic recall to maintain arousal during sex but to prefer pornography over sex altogether (Sun et al., 2016).

Among women, there is a clear link between negative mental health outcomes and pornography consumption (Willoughby et al., 2014). For female college students, higher pornography use is associated with decreased self-worth and depressive symptoms. Specifically, female college students who consume pornography but *do not* participate in relational sex report the lowest mental health outcomes amongst their peers. Research suggests that heterosexual women consuming pornography *as well* as participating in relational sex may be doing so at the request of a male partner or to gain knowledge. Women who are highly sexually active but do not use pornography report the most positive mental health outcomes (Willoughby et al., 2014). Sexually active female consumers of pornography are more likely to be cognitively distracted during sex and activate the pornographic script, where they are comparing what they are doing to what they have seen (Dove & Weiderman, 2000). Women who recall the pornographic script during sex report lower body image, and diminished enjoyment and arousal (Johnson, 2019). For both men and women, exposure to pornography predicts a stricter adherence to traditional gender roles, including a hierarchy of dominant men and submissive women (Brown & L'Engle, 2009).

Prior research tends to separate pornography consumers into two separate classes – those using it as a substitute for sexual activity, and those using it as a supplement to sexual activity, depending on relationship status and gender (Brown et al., 2017). College-aged women use it as a substitute: either engaging in relational sex often or using pornography often. The same is not true for men, as the two conditions often work in collaboration, and pornography is a supplement

to sexual activity (Willoughby et al., 2014), supported by the finding that men in relationships are significantly more likely to use pornography than their female partner (Minarcik et al., 2016).

Like women, men who consume pornography are also likely to compare what they are doing to what they have seen, and report diminished arousal and body image concerns during sex (Sun et al., 2016). Further, as men tend to visually fixate on sexual imagery, they may be predisposed toward comparing actors in pornography to themselves and sexual partners (Goldsmith et al., 2017). In complex opposition to women, however, men are likely to *deliberately* recall the pornographic script during sex to maintain arousal (Sun et al., 2016). Essentially, the function of the pornographic script is completely flipped for men and women: when women recall what they have seen, arousal decreases; men recall what they have seen to encourage arousal.

When imitating what was seen in pornography, neither men nor women particularly enjoy the mimicked acts. However, men are significantly more likely than women to report enjoying the more degrading and uncommon acts (Ezzel et al., 2020). Notably, women who experience cognitive distractions (i.e., concerns about appearance and performance) during sex report often pretending orgasms (Dove & Weideman, 2000), suggesting that even when they do not enjoy the acts being done, women prioritize their male partner's pleasure. When shown exploitative pornography, men report significantly higher arousal than their female counterparts, despite being able to recognize the degradation towards women (Glascock, 2005).

These findings, like many aforementioned, suggest that sexual activity and pornography consumption work in smooth collaboration for men, but in direct opposition for women - such that pornography is conducive to pleasure for men but an obstacle to pleasure for women. Feminist theory suggests this is due to mainstream pornography's persistent objectification of

women and the production of sexual scripts harmful to women (Fritz & Paul, 2017). Further, feminist scholars assert that because mainstream pornography is tailored for men's arousal and is so reliant on the objectification and degradation of women, men are conditioned to become aroused not only by the sexual content but by the aggression towards women - an idea supported by the many findings of significant correlation between male's attitudes of aggression/dominance towards women and arousal to pornographic films (Glascock, 2005). Research consistently shows that as women and men use pornography differently, they experience significantly different results (Glascock, 2005, Johnson, 2019, Sun et al., 2016, Willoughby et al., 2014) – results that do not necessarily create an enjoyable and healthy sexual experience for men or women (Fritz & Paul, 2017).

Accordingly, the current study sought to join others and assess how pornography consumption relates to men's and women's personal and sexual function. As many studies measure frequency and amount of pornography consumption, there is a necessity for research regarding the content of pornography and the nuances of outcomes, especially outcomes regarding in-person sexual activity. Perhaps most notably, however, as mainstream pornography is saturated with scripts and direct portrayal of female degradation and exploitation (Bridges et al., 2010, Fritz & Paul, 2017, Willis et al., 2020), there is a need for research exploring how pornography's rules of gender translate in the minds of young men and women. Thus, with exploratory aims, the current study sought to assess the misogyny of both the male and female user as well as their experience of cognitive distractions during sex (i.e., concerns of performance and appearance). Our hypotheses were as follows:

H1: Pornography consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions during will be associated.

H2: The association between pornography consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex will be moderated by gender.

Methods

Participants

This study consisted of 189 participants recruited from two main sources. 67.2% of participants were female, 29.6% male, 2.1% non-binary, and 1.1% identified otherwise. Mainly, participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology courses at West Chester University, a large public university in the northeastern United States. Additionally, participants were recruited through social media platforms Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, where a short description and an anonymous link to the study were distributed. For those enrolled in West Chester University psychology classes, course credit was offered for the completion of the research surveys. Those recruited via social media participated voluntarily. The only exclusion criteria were for those under 18 years of age. 95.2% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25. 76.7% of participants were Caucasian/White, 11.6% African American or Black, 7.4% were Hispanic or Latino, 1.6% were Asian, and 0.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 2.1% identified otherwise. 51.3% of participants reported to be in a relationship, and 76.2% reported to be sexually active within the last 6 months.

Procedure

Participants received information about the study in one of two

Measures

Demographics. Participants began by filling out a demographic questionnaire that recorded participants' age, race/ethnicity, and gender. Additionally, participants were asked about their sexual activity, relationship status, and the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic influenced their usage of pornography (See Table 1).

Pornography Consumption. To measure pornography consumption, participants took the Cyber Pornography Use Inventory (CPUI-9; Grubbs et al., 2015), a 9-item self-report inventory comprised of three factors: Perceived Compulsivity ($\alpha = .81$) (e.g., “I feel unable to stop my use of online pornography”), Access Efforts ($\alpha = .75$) (e.g., “I have put off important priorities to view pornography”), and Emotional Distress ($\alpha = .84$) (e.g., “I feel sick after viewing pornography online”). The CPUI-9 is reliable with an overall alpha of .81. The higher the score, the higher the level of pornography use (in frequency and amount), as well as sexual compulsivity and hypersexual tendency. The instrument is scored by taking the average of the items (Grubbs et al., 2015).

Misogyny. To assess misogyny and sexist attitudes towards women, participants took the Internalized Misogyny Scale (IMS; Piggot, 2004), a 21-item instrument scored in a Likert format from 1= ‘strongly disagree’ to 7= ‘strongly agree’ (Piggot, 2004). The IMS assesses internalization of misogynistic attitudes through stereotypical beliefs about women, distrusting/devaluing other women, and valuing men over women. Originally, the IMS was validated for women both heterosexual and lesbian, in which heterosexual women scored significantly higher (Piggot, 2004). The IMS includes subscales that measure Hostile Sexism (e.g., “When it comes down to it, a lot of women are deceitful), Ambivalent Sexism (e.g., “Women are too easily offended”), and Body Image (e.g., “If I could afford it, I would consider getting plastic surgery”) (Piggot, 2004). The Internalized Misogyny Scale shows reliability with an overall alpha of 0.82. Higher scores on the IMS are indicative of higher levels of internalized misogyny. Women that score higher on the IMS are more likely to report depressive symptoms and decreased self-esteem (Piggot, 2004).

Cognitive Distractions During Sexual Activity. To analyze the relationship between pornography usage and disruptions to sexual function, participants took the Cognitive Distractions During Sexual Activity Scale (CDDSA; Dove & Wiederman, 2000). The CDDSA is a valid and reliable 20-item measure that assesses cognitive disruptions during sex ($\alpha=.97$ for men, $\alpha=.98$ for women). The CDDSA was originally split into two subscales, one regarding appearance-based distractions ($\alpha=.95$) one regarding performance-based distractions ($\alpha=.95$) (Dove & Wiederman, 2000). However, when taken by women, it appeared that the scores of the two subscales were highly related ($r=.83$), suggesting that performance-based distractions and appearance-based distractions are one and the same when experienced by women. Dove and Weiderman (2000) assert that this could be due to women's socialization regarding appearance and desirability. For women, to be sexually attractive is to perform well, as being an appealing visual stimulus is performance enough. Thus, the two subscales were combined into one, labeled cognitive distractions (Dove & Wiederman, 2000). Questions inquire about body image (i.e., "If the lights are on during sexual activity, I worry too much about how appealing my body is to my partner"), partner satisfaction (i.e., "During sexual activity, I think too much about whether my partner is happy with the way I am touching his/her body), and overall distraction. Items are scored on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0=*always* to 5=*never*. High scores on the CDDSA indicate a higher frequency of disrupting thoughts during sex. Thus, women who report higher frequencies of cognitive distractions during sexual activity also report lower sexual esteem and satisfaction (Dove & Wiederman, 2000).

Data Analysis

To assess the relationship between pornography consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. To measure these variables across gender, an independent-sample t-test was used to analyze comparisons. Finally, as the association between consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions were expected to be moderated by gender, two multiple linear regression models were run with an interaction variable of gender.

Results

First, a Pearson correlation coefficient ($\alpha=.01$) was computed to assess the relationship between pornography consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex across both men and women. There was only a weak, positive correlation between internalized misogyny and cognitive distractions during sex ($r(184)=.21, p < .01$). Usage was not significantly correlated with cognitive distractions ($r(184)=.14, p = .066$), or internalized misogyny ($r(184)= -.046, p = .535$). (See Table 2).

Next, an independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare pornography consumption, internalized misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex between men and women. There was not a significant difference of internalized misogyny scores between men ($M=55.6, SD=18$) and women ($M=56.3, SD=15$) as they were very close ($t(88.4)= -.226, p = .821$). There was, however, a significant difference of cognitive distraction scores between men ($M=47.5, SD=21.1$) and women ($M=62, SD=25.5$), with women scoring higher ($t(126)=-3.91, p < .05$). There was also a significant difference in consumption scores between men ($M=45.2, SD=7.8$) and women ($M=41.5, SD=6.4$), with men scoring higher ($t(89.1)=3.1, p < .05$). (See Table 3).

To determine how gender moderates the relationship between consumption and internalized misogyny, a multiple linear regression model was calculated to predict consumption based on the interaction variable of misogyny and gender. Step 1 included main effects for gender and misogyny (adjusted $r^2 = 0.048$), and step 2 explained an additional 0.027 variance ($p= 0.024$, adjusted $r^2 = 0.070$), with a significant moderation effect. Specifically, higher misogyny increased consumption for men but decreased consumption for women (See Figure 1).

To determine how gender moderates the relationship between consumption and cognitive distractions, a multiple linear regression model was calculated to predict consumption based on

the interaction variable of cognitive distractions during sex and gender. Step 1 included main effects for gender and cognitive distractions (adjusted $r^2 = 0.091$), and step 2 explained an additional 0.030 variance ($p = 0.015$, adjusted $r^2 = 0.116$), with a significant moderation effect. Specifically, higher cognitive distractions during sex significantly increased consumption for men, but only very slightly increased consumption for women (See Figure 2).

Discussion

When analyzing the relationship between internalized misogyny, pornography consumption, and cognitive distractions during sex across the entire sample, only misogyny and cognitive distractions during sex were revealed to have a strong positive relationship. Notably, both instruments for misogyny and cognitive distractions measured body image. Therefore, negative views of women were highly associated with negative feelings about oneself when engaged in sex. However, pornography usage did not significantly correlate with either – when looking at both men and women, pornography is not strongly related to either misogyny or cognitive distractions, supporting the theory that effects of pornography differ between gender.

Outcomes differed when moderated by gender, as gender significantly influenced the relationship between internalized misogyny and pornography use as well as between cognitive distractions and pornography use. These findings confirmed our second hypothesis – indeed, gender moderates the associations between pornography use, misogyny, and cognitive distractions during sex.

There were significant differences in consumption levels between men and women, with men reporting higher levels of consumption, craving, and compulsive use. Notably, internalized misogyny levels were incredibly similar between men and women, supporting the finding that both men and women consuming pornography are likely to adhere to traditional views of gender (Brown & L'engle, 2009). However, high levels of internalized misogyny in men predicted an increased level of pornography consumption, where high levels of misogyny in women predicted a decreased level of consumption. Interestingly, a high amount of disdain for women does not predict pornography consumption, despite common ideologies. This may suggest that even for

women with high levels of internal misogyny, the content of mainstream pornography is *too* misogynistic, or displeasing towards women in another way.

Unlike misogyny levels, cognitive distractions during sex were higher for women than for men. Thus, despite watching pornography less, women are likely to not only have high levels of internalized prejudice against themselves and other women, but to be distracted during sex by thoughts about their own appearance and performance. Although men reported lower levels of cognitive distractions than women, a high level of cognitive distractions in men was found to predict increasing levels of consumption, suggesting that men may not connect pornography with their distractions, or if they have discovered the association, they choose to watch despite the results.

Clearly, pornography does not relate to nor predict misogyny and distractions across the board. Rather, pornography manifests its results in complex and varying ways for both men and women. It is not to say that men do not suffer negative effects from pornography – high levels of cognitive distractions (i.e., While nude in front of a partner, I can't help but think about how unattractive my body is) and internalized misogyny (i.e., When I am in a group with men and women and a woman dominates the conversation, I feel uncomfortable) were found to be associated with pornography watching. It is to say, however, that women may experience the effects of pornography in more harmful ways. Is internalized misogyny not ultimately a consequence for women, no matter who experiences it? Given the prevalence of misogynistic content in mainstream pornography (Bridges et al., 2010, Fritz & Paul, 2017, Willis et al., 2010), it is no surprise that women can view significantly less than their male counterparts and still be at heightened risk for a sex life riddled with negative thoughts and self-doubt.

The purpose of this study was not to focus too heavily on the negative effects of pornography and thus demonize it entirely, nor to label pornography as inherently misogynistic and anti-woman. Rather, in hopes to examine the differing relationships between pornography, men, and women as a means to assess the prevalent values of mainstream pornography. Scholars have long disagreed over pornography's role in society, and just as the content, consumption, and consequences of it are complex, the study of it is as well.

Limitations

A major limitation of the current study was the sample, which consisted of mainly women (67%). Only 2% of the population identified as non-binary, requiring us to analyze only those on the gender binary. Additionally, there were no comprehensive measures of sexual orientation, with study aims electing to focus on the heterosexual interactions so commonly seen in mainstream pornography. Future research should analyze these relationships in populations with other orientations. The participant pool was also limited to the United States. While the US is the top consumer, pornography is watched globally. The three cities with the highest traffic on Pornhub, the largest pornography site, are New York City, London, and Paris (Pornhub Insights, 2019). Thus, it would be beneficial for this study to be replicated in a university outside of North America. Additionally, most of the participants were white (76.7%). In comparison to white women, Black women are more often the target of aggression in mainstream pornography. Black men are more often perpetrators of aggression than white men, and they often show less intimacy towards their partners. In mainstream pornography, which is rife with female degradation, depictions of aggression towards women happen between black couples more often than any other race, including interracial (Fritz et al., 2021). Prior research on pornography has not paid adequate attention to black populations. Future studies *must* focus on the portrayal of black people in pornography and the prevalence of misogynoir.

Perhaps the most influential of limitations to the data collection of this study was its cooccurrence with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the coronavirus-induced quarantines, people across the globe increased their media consumption. 80% of people in the U.S. and the UK claim to have consumed more media since the outbreak of the virus. Further, watching videos is cited as the common medium across both gender and generations. (GlobalWebIndex,

2020). Data for this study was collected during the pandemic and observed behavior during a time also within the pandemic. The data from this study, therefore, is not necessarily representative of pornography-consuming behavior outside of COVID-19. To observe this, we asked participants to what extent, if any, the pandemic had on their pornography use. 68% reported no increase.

Further research should closely analyze which *types* of pornography emerging adults are choosing to watch. The surplus of categories and increasing novelty suggests the importance of observing trends around specific content. Further, with so many popular categories being objectifying in nature (i.e., “MILF, Big Tits/Ass, Brunette/Blonde, Stepmom, etc.), racial (i.e., Japanese, Asian, Latina, Ebony, etc.), or representative of a fetish (i.e., Hentai, Teen, Creampie, Gangbang, Anal, etc.), it may be beneficial to measure results related to specific categories and keywords. There are many nuances in the way one experiences pornography and its effects and thus, researching it proves to be difficult and complex. Considering what has been established in the literature, future research can begin to tackle these nuances by focusing less on effects, and more on what exactly it is that mainstream pornography is perpetuating.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: “But everyone does it!”: A Look into the Psychosexual Outcomes of Pornography Use in College-aged Men and Women

Investigator(s): Rose-Sienna Medina; Michael Gawrysiak

Project Overview:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Rose-Sienna Medina as part of her master’s thesis to determine how pornography consumption influences psychosexual function. Your participation will take about 45 minutes to answer demographic questions, take a pornography consumption and type questionnaire, a sexual behavior and sexual attitudes questionnaire, a misogyny questionnaire, a cognitive distractions questionnaire, and a pornography-related sexual attitudes questionnaire.

There is a minimal risk of these instruments revealing uncomfortable feelings regarding sexuality, body image, and pornography consumption. Further, this study asks intimate questions that may trigger uncomfortable thoughts regarding sexual function and behavior. The benefits to the participant include possibly discovering the harm pornography has caused. Further, potential benefits include simply analyzing a habit that participants may have previously avoided exploring. Additionally, this study offers the opportunity of being increasingly in touch with one’s sexuality to you as the participant.

This research will help society by educating the public about the psychosexual influence of pornography, something that is widely considered harmless and normal amongst emerging adults. Pornography consumption is incredibly prevalent amongst emerging adults, but the dissemination of research regarding use is not. This study can assist emerging adults and the society around them in learning how pornography consumption may be influencing different aspects of one’s psychological functioning.

The research project is being done by Rose-Sienna Medina as part of her master’s Thesis to determine how pornography consumption influences psychosexual function. If you would like to take part, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Rose-Sienna Medina any questions to help you understand this study. If you don’t want to be a part of this study, it won’t affect any of your studies at West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
 - Determine how pornography consumption influences psychosexual function.
2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:**
 - Answer demographic questions.
 - Take pornography consumption questionnaire.
 - Take pornography type questionnaire.

- Take sexual behavior questionnaire.
 - Take internalized misogyny questionnaire.
 - Take the sexual attitudes questionnaire.
 - Take cognitive distractions questionnaire.
 - Take pornography-related sexual attitudes questionnaire.
 - This study will take About 45 minutes of your time.
3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
- No
4. **Is there any risk to me?**
- Possible risks or sources of discomfort include: This study may reveal uncomfortable feelings regarding sexuality, body image, and pornography consumption. Further, this study asks intimate questions that may trigger uncomfortable thoughts regarding sexual function.
 - If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with West Chester University Counseling Services (610-436-2301), the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273-8255), or Chester County's Warm Line (1-866-846-2722).
 - If you experience discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.
5. **Is there any benefit to me?**
- Benefits to you may include: The benefits to the participant include possibly discovering the harm pornography has caused them. Further, potential benefits include simply analyzing a habit that they may have previously avoided exploring.
 - Other benefits may include: The benefits to society include educating the public about the psychosexual influence of pornography, something that is widely considered harmless and normal amongst emerging adults. The dissemination of sexual research can assist society in understanding psychosexual function and health for emerging adults.
6. **How will you protect my privacy?**
- The session will **not** be recorded.
 - Your records will be private. Only Rose-Sienna Medina, Michael Gawrysiak, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.
 - Your name will **not** be used in any reports.
 - Records will be stored:
 - Password Protected File/Computer
 - Records will be destroyed Three Years After Study Completion
7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**
- No
8. **Who do I contact in case of research-related injury?**
- For any questions with this study, contact:
 - **Primary Investigator:** Rose-Sienna Medina at 610-755-5545 or RM853532@wcupa.edu
 - **Faculty Sponsor:** Michael Gawrysiak at 610-436-3339 or MGAWRYSIK@wcupa.edu
9. **What will you do with my Identifiable Information/Biospecimens?**

- Not applicable.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557. I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

Subject/Participant Signature

Date: _____

Witness Signature

Date: _____

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please enter your age: _____
2. Biological Sex Assigned at Birth: Male (1); Female (2); Intersex (3)
3. Gender: Male (1); Female (2); Non-Binary (3); Transgender (4); Other (5)
4. Race/Ethnicity: White/Caucasian (1); Black or African American (2); American Indian or Alaskan Native (3); Asian (4); Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5); Hispanic or Latino (6); Other (7)
5. Student Status: Freshmen (1); Sophomore (2); Junior (3); Senior (4); Graduate Student (5); Not a Student (6)
6. If you're a current student, are you involved in Greek life? (1); Yes (2); No
7. If you're a current student, are you on an athletic team? (1); Yes (2); No
8. Please indicate number of partners with which you've had sexual intercourse: _____
9. Oral sex? _____
10. Anal Sex? _____
11. What is your current relationship status? (1); Single (2); In a Relationship
12. Are you currently/have you been sexually active in the last 6-months? (i.e., engaged in any type of sexual relations) (1); Yes (2); No

APPENDIX C

CYBER PORNOGRAPHY USE INVENTORY

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat Agree
- 4 = Neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = Somewhat Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Disagree

1. I believe I am addicted to internet pornography.
2. Even when I do not want to use pornography online, I feel drawn to it.
3. I feel unable to stop use of online pornography.
4. At times, I try to arrange my schedule so that I will be able to be alone in order to view pornography.
5. I have refused to go out with friends or attend certain social functions to have the opportunity to view pornography.
6. I have put off important priorities to view pornography.
7. I feel ashamed after viewing pornography online.
8. I feel depressed after viewing pornography online.
9. I feel sick after viewing pornography online.

APPENDIX D

INTERNALIZED MISOGYNY SCALE

For each statement fill in the response on the answer sheet that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

For each statement:

- 1** = Strongly disagree with the statement
- 2** = Moderately disagree with the statement
- 3** = Slightly disagree with the statement
- 4** = Neutral - neither agree nor disagree
- 5** = Slightly agree with the statement
- 6** = Moderately agree with the statement
- 7** = Strongly agree with the statement

1. Women exaggerate problems they have at work
2. Women are too easily offended
3. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men
4. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against
5. It is generally safer not to trust women too much
6. When it comes down to it a lot of women are deceitful
7. I think that most women would lie just to get ahead
8. I am sure I get a raw deal from other women in my life
9. Sometimes other women bother me by just being around
10. I believe that most women tell the truth
11. When I am in a group consisting of equal numbers of men and women a woman dominates the conversation, I feel uncomfortable
12. I am uncomfortable when I hear a woman speaking with authority on male-dominated topics such as football or horseracing
13. I prefer to listen to male radio announcers than female
14. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men
15. I prefer to work for a male boss
16. If I were to beat another woman for a job, I would feel more satisfied than if I beat a man
17. Generally, I prefer to work with men.
18. I dislike the way my body looks.
19. I am very dissatisfied and self-conscious about specific parts of my body (e.g., nose, breasts, legs)

APPENDIX E

THE COGNITIVE DISTRACTIONS DURING SEXUAL ACTIVITY SCALE

Please use the following scale to indicate how often you agree with each statement or *how often you think it would be true for you*. The term *partner* refers to someone with whom you are or would be romantic or sexually intimate. *Sexual activity* refers to mutual stimulation of genitals, oral sex, or sexual intercourse (penis in vagina).

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Usually
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Rarely
- 6 = Never

1. During sexual activity, I am worried about how my body looks to my partner.
2. While engaged in sexual activity, I worry that my partner is *not* enjoying the way I am touching his/her body.
3. During sexual activity, I worry the whole time that my partner will get turned off by seeing my body without clothes.
4. It is difficult *not* to think about whether my movements during sexual activity are pleasing to my partner.
5. I can only quit worrying about how my body looks to my partner if it is dark during sexual activity.
6. I am usually worried about my partner's satisfaction with my actions while engaged in sexual activity.
7. During sexual activity, it is difficult *not* to think about how unattractive my body is.
8. I often worry about the way I am behaving toward my partner during sexual activity.
9. It is difficult to enjoy sex because of my concerns over how appealing my body is to my partner.
10. During sexual interactions, I am concerned that my level of activity is *not* satisfying my partner.
11. While nude in front of a partner, I can't help but think about how unattractive my body is.
12. While engaged in sexual activity with a partner, I think too much about the way I am moving.
13. During sexual activity, I am distracted by thoughts about how I look to my partner.
14. Thoughts about whether my actions are satisfying my partner distract me during sexual activity.
15. If the lights are on during sexual activity, I worry too much about how appealing my body is to my partner.
16. During sexual activity, I think too much about whether my partner is happy with the way I am touching his/her body.
17. During sexual activity, I can focus on my pleasure much more if I am in a position such that my partner *cannot* see my body.
18. While engaged in sexual activity, I am distracted by thoughts regarding what my partner thinks about my behavior.

19. I can only quit worrying about how my body looks to my partner if there are covers over my body during sexual activity.
20. Overall, during sexual activity, I am distracted by thoughts about my sexual performance.

APPENDIX F
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

TO: Rose-Sienna Medina & Michael Gawrysiak

FROM: Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

DATE: 3/22/2021

Protocol ID #

20201214B-R1

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs | West Chester University | Wayne Hall West Chester, PA 19383 |
610-436-3557 | www.wcupa.edu

**Project Title: An Examination of the Prevalence and Psychosexual Consequences of
Pornography Use in Emerging Adults - REVISION**

Date of Approval for Revision/Amendment: 3/22/2021**

Expedited Approval

The submitted amendment/revision to this previously approved expedited study does not elevate the study risk. As a result, the amendments are approved for implementation. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed will require approval by the WCU IRB. Upon completion of the project, you are expected to submit appropriate closure documentation. Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

Co-Chair of WCU IRB



West Chester University is a member of the State System of Higher Education

WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) IORG#: IORG0004242 IRB#: IRB00005030 FWA#: FWA00014155

APPENDIX G

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5. Table 5: *Cognitive Distractions x Gender Mediator Analysis Predicting Pornography Consumption*

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample (N=189)

Variable	N (%)
Age	
18-25	180(95.2%)
26-41	9(4.8%)
Gender	
Male	56(29.6%)
Female	127(67.2%)
Non-Binary	4(2.1%)
Prefer not to specify	2(1.1%)
Race/Ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	145(76.7%)
Black or African American	22(11.6%)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1(.5%)
Asian	3(1.6%)
Hispanic or Latino	14(7.4%)
Other	4(2.1%)
Student Status	
Freshman	79(41.8%)
Sophomore	22(11.6%)
Junior	23(12.2%)
Senior	20(10.6%)
Graduate student	17(9.0%)
Not a student	28(14.8%)
Involved in Greek Life	14(7.4%)
Involved in Athletics	15(7.9%)
Relationship Status	
Single	92 (48.7%)
In a Relationship	97 (51.3%)
Sexually Active*	144(76.2%)

*Engaged in any type of sexual relations in the last 6 months

Table 2*Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson's Correlations of Study Variables (N = 189)*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	IM	CD	CPU
IM	186	55.7	15.9		.214**	-.046
CD	183	57.3	25	.214**		.136
CPU	189	42.7	7	-.046	.136	

Note. IM= internalized misogyny, CD= cognitive distractions during sex, CPU= Cyber Pornography Use

* $p < .01$

Table 3*Independent Group T-test between Internalized Misogyny, Cognitive Distractions, Pornography Consumption, and Gender*

Variable	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IM	Male	55	55.6	18	88.4	.821
	Female	125	56.3	15		
CD	Male	56	47.5	21	-3.91	.000*
	Female	127	61.6	25.5		
CPU	Male	56	45.2	7.8	89.1	.003*
	Female	127	41.2	6.2		

Note. IM= internalized misogyny, CD= cognitive distractions during sex, CPU= Cyber Pornography Use

* $p < .05$

Table 4
Internalized Misogyny x Gender Mediator Analysis Predicting Pornography Consumption

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta	<i>t</i>
IM	.081	.052	.182	1.217
Gender	4.702	3.863	.305	1.567
IM x Gender	-.150	.066	-.609	-2.272
<i>R Square</i>	.085			
<i>Adj. R Square</i>	.070			
<i>R Square Change</i>	.027			
<i>SE</i>	6.866			
<i>F Change</i>	5.165			
<i>P Change</i>	.024			

Note. IM= internalized misogyny, Dependent Variable = Cyber Pornography Use

Table 5
Cognitive Distractions x Gender Mediator Analysis Predicting Pornography Consumption

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta	<i>t</i>
CD	.153	.043	.540	3.587
Gender	1.524	2.698	.100	.565
CD x Gender	-.120	.049	-.601	-2.468
<i>R Square</i>	.131			
<i>Adj. R Square</i>	.116			
<i>R Square Change</i>	.030			
<i>SE</i>	6.650			
<i>F Change</i>	10.117			
<i>P Change</i>	.015			

Note. CD= cognitive distractions during sex, Dependent Variable = Cyber Pornography Use

APPENDIX H

List of Figures

1. Figure 1: *Simple Slope of Internalized Misogyny x Gender Predicting Pornography Consumption*
2. Figure 2: *Simple Slope of Cognitive Distractions x Gender Predicting Pornography Consumption*

Figure 1

Simple Slope of Internalized Misogyny x Gender Predicting Pornography Consumption

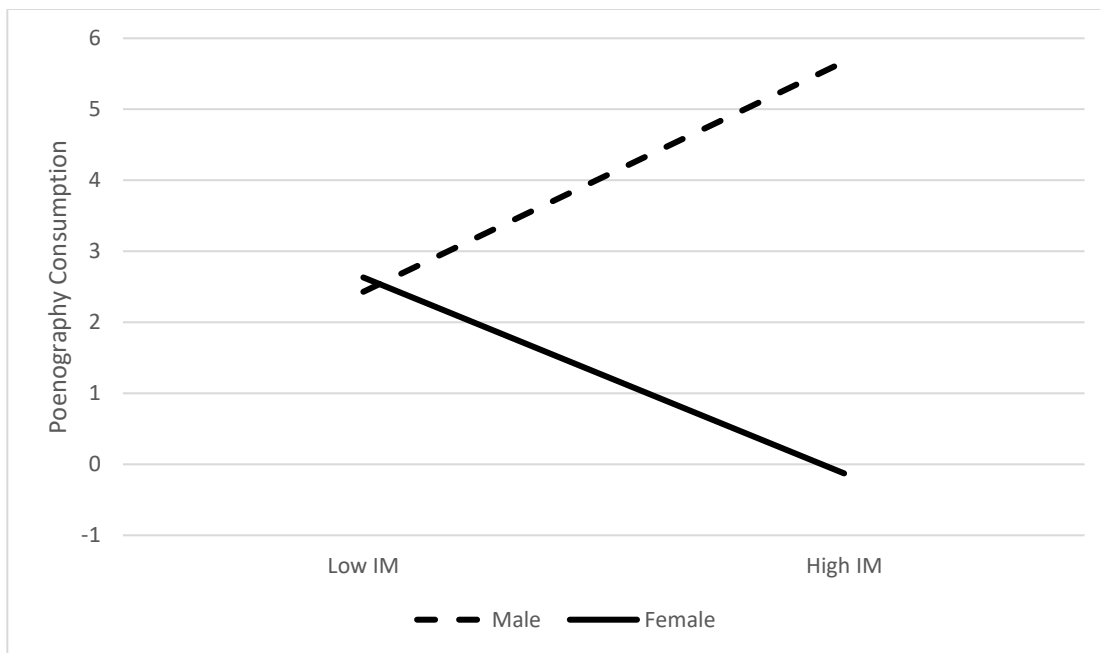


Figure 2

Simple Slope of Cognitive Distractions x Gender

Predicting Pornography Consumption

