

University of South Dakota

USD RED

Honors Thesis

Theses, Dissertations, and Student Projects

Spring 5-6-2023

Assessing Gender Differences in USD Students in the Consumption of Pornography

Abbey Selleck

University of South Dakota

Follow this and additional works at: <https://red.library.usd.edu/honors-thesis>



Part of the [Other Mental and Social Health Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Selleck, Abbey, "Assessing Gender Differences in USD Students in the Consumption of Pornography" (2023). *Honors Thesis*. 294.

<https://red.library.usd.edu/honors-thesis/294>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Student Projects at USD RED. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Thesis by an authorized administrator of USD RED. For more information, please contact dloftus@usd.edu.

**ASSESSING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN USD STUDENTS IN THE CONSUMPTION
OF PORNOGRAPHY**

By

Abbey Selleck

University of South Dakota

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the
University Honors Program

Department of Psychology
The University of South Dakota
May 2023

The members of the Honors Thesis Committee appointed
to examine the thesis of Abbey Selleck
find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

DocuSigned by:
Cindy Struckman-Johnson
84CE934054D94FF...

Dr. Cindy Struckman-Johnson
Professor of Psychology
Director of the Committee

DocuSigned by:
S. Jean Caraway
AF919B6B9426464...

Dr. Jean Caraway
Professor of Psychology

DocuSigned by:
BreAnne Danzi
71CA3FD173AF42E...

Dr. BreAnne Danzi
Assistant Professor of Psychology

ABSTRACT

Assessing Gender Differences in USD Students in the Consumption of Pornography

Abbey Selleck

Director: Cindy Struckman-Johnson, Ph. D.

While pornography consumption has been studied many times in the past decade, little has been done on assessing the gender differences behind it. This study sought out to find those differences. A total of 306 University of South Dakota students participated in an online pornography survey. There was 231 females and 75 males. When asked about intentionally consuming pornography, there was 241 responses, 180 females and 61 males. Of those responses, 57 males (93%) and 142 females (79%) said they intentionally consume pornography. As hypothesized, a higher percentage of men said they consumed porn regularly (34%) than did women (4%). Although hypothesized that men would have greater acceptance of pornography use, results showed there was no difference in teen and adult consumption (9% combined acceptance in teens and 40% in adults). It was hypothesized that men and women would have different motives for their pornography consumption. However, men and women had the same top three motives, sexual pleasure, masturbation material, and stress relief. Women, however, were more likely to choose stress relief as their top motive (73%) than men (39%). It was hypothesized that pornography consumption would increase during Covid for both men and women. While most men reported they consumed more (50%), most women reported it had no effect on their consumption (68%). Exploratory material looked at the favorite types of pornography that are being consumed. Men and women had the same top three types: Professionally Produced, College-Aged Actors, and Homemade. However, women were more likely to chose Bondage and S&M (19.5%) than men (5%).

Keywords: Porn, Pornography, Consumption, Use, College, Student

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures.....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
Chapter	
I. Literature Review.....	6
Present Study.....	9
Aims and Specific Hypotheses of Present Study.....	10
Exploratory Material.....	11
II. Methods.....	11
III. Data Analysis.....	12
Exploratory Material.....	17
IV. Discussion.....	18
Limitations.....	20
V. Conclusion.....	20
VI. Appendices.....	22
A. Pornography survey.....	22
B. Informed Consent Form	43
VII. References.....	46

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1.....	7
Figure 2.....	8
Figure 3.....	9
Figure 4.....	10
Figure 5.....	12
Figure 6.....	13
Table 1.....	14
Figure 7.....	15

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my research advisor and thesis director, Dr. Cindy Struckman-Johnson. She has pushed me to be a better researcher and is always available when I need help. I would not have been able to do this thesis without her. I would also like to thank Dr. Jean Caraway and Dr. BreAnne Danzi for being part of my committee. I could not have done this without them and their willingness to move their schedules around for me. To my research team, Alex Kleven and Diana Leal, thanks for being great research partners and being supportive in the making of my thesis. Thank you to the other members of CS-J's research group, Allie, Mariah, and Salena for always having great insight on my project. Lastly, I would like to thank the Honors Program for their support through my years here at USD, especially to Melissa Berninger and Nick Gilbert.

Assessing Gender Differences in USD Students in the Consumption of Pornography

Literature Review

In a study of college students ages 18-26 years old, researchers found that 87% of males and 31% of females have reported using pornography at some point in their life (Cooper & Klein, 2017). Pornography can be described as any type of media that contains material that generally portrays sexual organs or sexual behaviors for the purpose of sexual arousal (Uzma et al., 2021). Views on consuming pornography can be very different depending on which gender is asked. According to Brown et al., (2017), individual pornography use is predominantly a male activity. However, in recent years, views on women consuming porn have become more acceptable (Willoughby et al., 2014). Women's views on pornography have been known to be negative due to the potential that their partner may use it. However, on a study done about women's attribution towards their partner's pornography use, it was found that 45.62% of women had an overall positive composite compared to 31.02% of negative composite when asked multiple questions about their relationship and their partner's usage (Uzma et al., 2021). Women also seem to be happier in relationships if they have positive attributions towards their partner's consumption of pornography (Uzma et al., 2021). Having a happier relationship is not the only positive outcome from consuming pornography. According to Brown (2016), some positive outcomes from consuming pornography are being more sexually educated, having a higher satisfaction with one's own body image, and generally being more comfortable with sexuality. Willoughby (2014) also discusses positive influences from pornography consumption, stating that adult men and women report positive effects of their own pornography use, seeing few drawbacks to viewing it and that it is a healthy or normative sexual expression.

There are also some negative effects that can be associated with pornography consumption. Many studies have shown that consuming pornography is linked to risky behaviors. Some examples of these behaviors include higher levels of drinking and binge drinking, and negative views on women such as violence and sexist views (Willoughby et al., 2014). In a recent study, it was found that there is a correlation between pornography consumption and sexism. The correlation stems from some pornographic material being aggressive or hostile towards women (Speed et al., 2021). When doing an analysis on frequency of violence occurring in films, Speed et al., (2021) found that 90% of videos showed physical aggression and 50% showed verbal aggression. In a separate study it was also reported that there were associations between pornography use and negative views of women, like violence and sexist attitudes (Willoughby et al., 2014). Other risky sexual behaviors include an increase in sexual partners, oral sex and sexual intercourse during a hookup, sexual permissiveness, anal intercourse, engaging in extramarital sex, and paying for sex (Camilleri et al., 2021). Willoughby's (2014) study also showed links between pornography consumption and other risk-taking measurements, particularly substance use and binge drinking, in men. The study showed that men who reported high levels of relational sex and pornography use combined with high acceptance of pornography displayed the highest levels of substance use behavior among men (Willoughby et al., 2014). This was slightly different for the women who consumed pornography as Willoughby's (2014) study showed that women with high numbers of relational sexual partners tended to indicate only infrequent and casual use of pornography and no correlation of substance abuse was reported.

Pornography also has the tendency to become problematic. Camilleri et al., (2021) used the Modified Compulsive Internet Use Scale that consisted of 13 questions and found that 57%

of respondents displayed problematic and addictive pornography use. In a study done on male adolescents, from age 15-25, examined the long-term associations between adolescent boys' pornography use frequency, problematic pornography use, and theory-based predictors of problematic pornography use (Rousseau et al., 2021). Using a testing system of three conceptual models, Rousseau's (2021) study examined the relative contributions of impulsivity, depression/anxiety symptoms, and religiosity to problematic pornography use, controlling for pornography use over time. The study showed that baseline levels of, and subsequent growth in pornography use predicted later higher levels of problematic pornography use, irrespective of participants' religiosity, negative emotions, and impulsivity. Baseline higher levels of negative emotions and impulsivity predicted higher levels of problematic pornography use three years later (Rosseau et al., 2021). A different study showed that many internet-related activities, "erotica" (or online pornography) had the greatest potential to be addictive (Awan et al., 2021). Problematic pornography use may be on the rise, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic because the Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in internet usage and the consumption of pornography (Awan et al., 2021). A study that Awan (2021) focused on found that internet and pornography use during the pandemic had an impact. The Covid-19 pandemic limited possibilities for casual sex and other behaviors, making individuals lean to pornography as the most accessible, affordable, and anonymous alternative (Awan et al., 2021). The authors found that between March 8th and March 17th of 2020 there was a 160% increase for virtual private networks usage for all countries that were hit hardest by the pandemic. The United States had reached a peak increase of traffic on the website Pornhub of 27% just two weeks after the pandemic started.

Awan et al., (2021) also found that problematic internet and online pornography use have been reported to constitute an increasing burden in public mental health since the 2000s.

Pornography or internet addiction can make “re-adaptation” after the pandemic complicated and difficult to cope for individuals who have, owing to elongated periods of staying at home, adopted this lifestyle and have developed a dependence on these activities as an essential part of their lives. However, the pandemic has not just started the association between pornography use and mental health issues. In one study, students who consumed pornography reported higher scores of depression, anxiety, and stress than students who did not consume (Camilleri et al., 2021). In another study, it showed that women who consumed pornography at a higher use were more depressed and had less self-worth than men who had a high consumption rate (Willoughby et al., 2014). Overall, many studies do show a correlation between pornography consumption and mental health issues.

Present Study

The aim of the present study is to look at students who consume pornography at the University of South Dakota in hopes to assess the gender differences with consumption. In 2021, an earlier research team of undergraduate students in the psychology department (Corbett, et al., 2021) created a survey on pornography consumption by USD students and presented it at Idea Fest 2021. The current research group, consisting of myself and two other students, took this survey and revised certain questions that overlapped too many topics. These parts of the survey were improved: history of use, what types of porn are consumed and preferred, a reduced version of the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018), and a new section of how the Covid-19 pandemic affected their pornography consumption. We felt it was important to know how Covid-19 affected pornography consumption in college students as that could have led to an increase or decrease in consumption for both genders. For two semesters, the research group revised the survey to what it looks like today. The revised survey was presented at USD

Idea Fest in 2022. The following fall of 2022, the research group worked on getting the survey approved by the IRB to be sent out to students to take. The survey was approved at the end of November and data collection started immediately. There was a break from data collection during the break between semesters, but it resumed again in mid-January. Data were collected on March 10, 2023.

Aims and Specific Hypotheses of Present Study

Aim 1: Identify how acceptable pornography consumption is in USD students.

H1: USD women will have less acceptability of pornography consumption in adolescents (14-17) than USD men.

H2: USD men and women will have similar acceptance levels of pornography consumption in adults 18+.

Aim 2: Identify the frequency levels of pornography consumption in USD students.

H1: USD men will have a higher frequency level of pornography consumption than USD women.

Aim 3: Identify the motives behind pornography consumption in USD students.

H1: USD men and women will have different motives behind their consumption of pornography. Sexual arousal may be more common in men and women may consume for education reasonings.

Aim 4: Identify how USD men and women feel after consuming pornography.

H1: USD men and women will have different feelings after consumption. Women may feel more sad and lonely feelings. Men will possibly have more happy or good feelings after consumption.

Aim 5: Identify if pornography consumption increased or decreased during the Covid-19 pandemic in both USD men and women.

H1: Both USD men and women will have increased rates of pornography consumption during the pandemic.

Aim 6: Identify if pornography consumption can be addictive using the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018).

H1: USD men will report higher levels of addiction than women on the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018).

Exploratory Material

The exploratory material from this survey that will be assessed is on the favorite types of pornography that are being consumed right now by USD students. A hypothesis is unable to be formed as there is no previous knowledge on this topic.

Method

Participants had to be University of South Dakota students 18 years or older. They could be undergraduate or graduate students. After data cleaning, there was a total of 306 participants. Students ages ranged from 18-38 with most participants being in the 18-22 range, and predominantly freshman students. There was a wide range of ethnicities with Caucasian/White/non-Hispanic being the most (83%).

The data were obtained by using an online system called Qualtrics that provided the survey to the participants. Participants who are in psychology classes were able to take the survey through SONA for extra credit points in their class. Tabling at the Muenster University Center on campus was done to obtain more participants. Candy was provided as an incentive to take the survey. Students had the opportunity to put their name into a drawing for a chance to win one of four \$50 gift cards to Amazon. Approximately 20 men and women were sampled in the MUC and the rest came from SONA. Participants were only allowed to take the survey once. Prior to taking the survey, they completed an online informed consent form (see appendix B). After the form was completed, the survey began. It is estimated that the survey took between 14-22 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using the SPSS statistical software. There was a proper procedure done to clean up that data of participants who failed to complete significant parts of the survey. The final sample size was 306 participants made up of 231 females and 75 males. Chi square tests were done to see if there was a statistical difference between the male and female categories. There were 3 non-binary participants that were removed from the analyses in order to make male and female comparison for the chi square tests. When asked if they intentionally consume pornography, there was only replies from 241 participants, 180 females and 61 males. Of the 241 participants, there was a total of 57 males (93%) and 142 females (79%) who intentionally consume pornography. Aim 1 looked at how participants described the acceptability of pornography consumption in teens and adults. Figure 1 shows the percentages of acceptance in teens for females and males and figure 2 shows acceptance for adults.

Figure 1

Female and Male College Students Ratings of Acceptance of Pornography Consumption by Teens

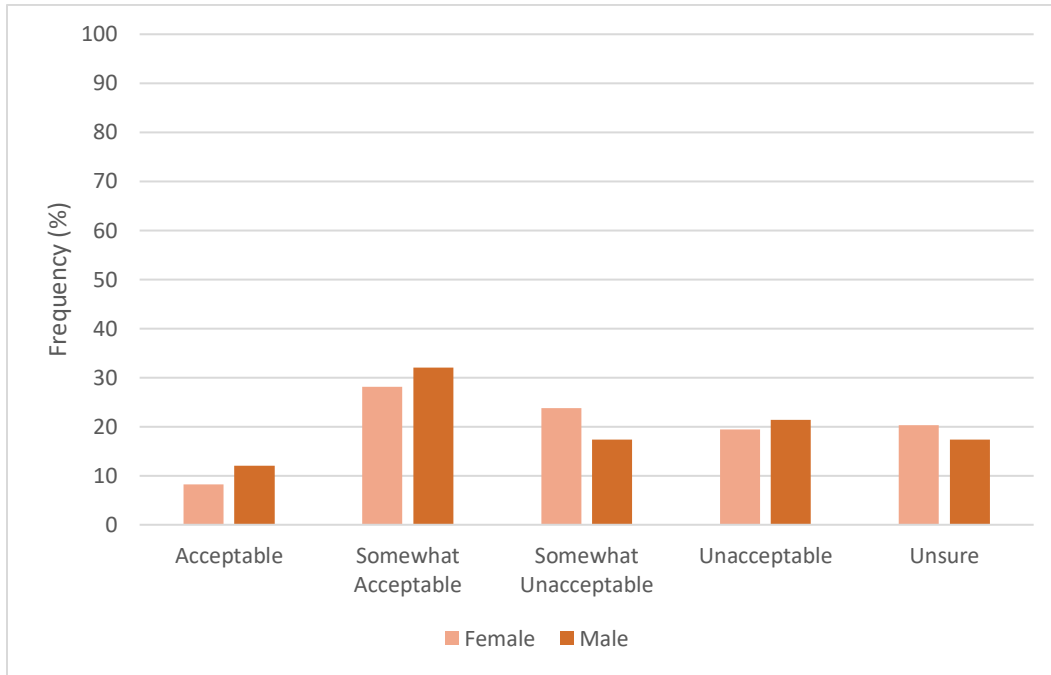
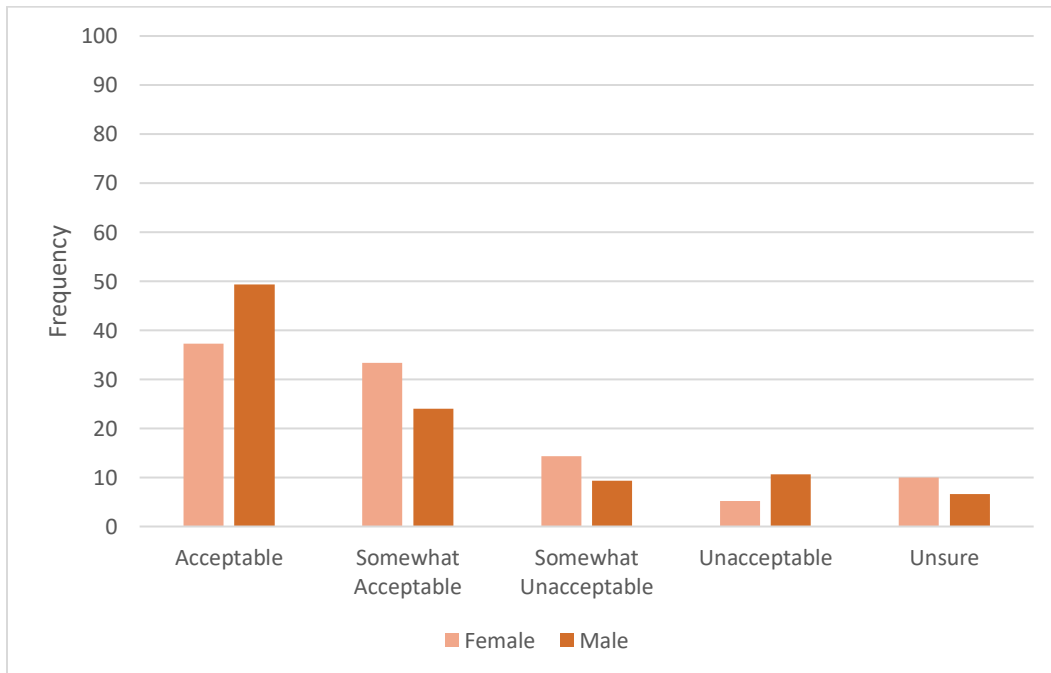


Figure 2

Female and Male College Students Ratings of Acceptance of Pornography Consumption by Adults

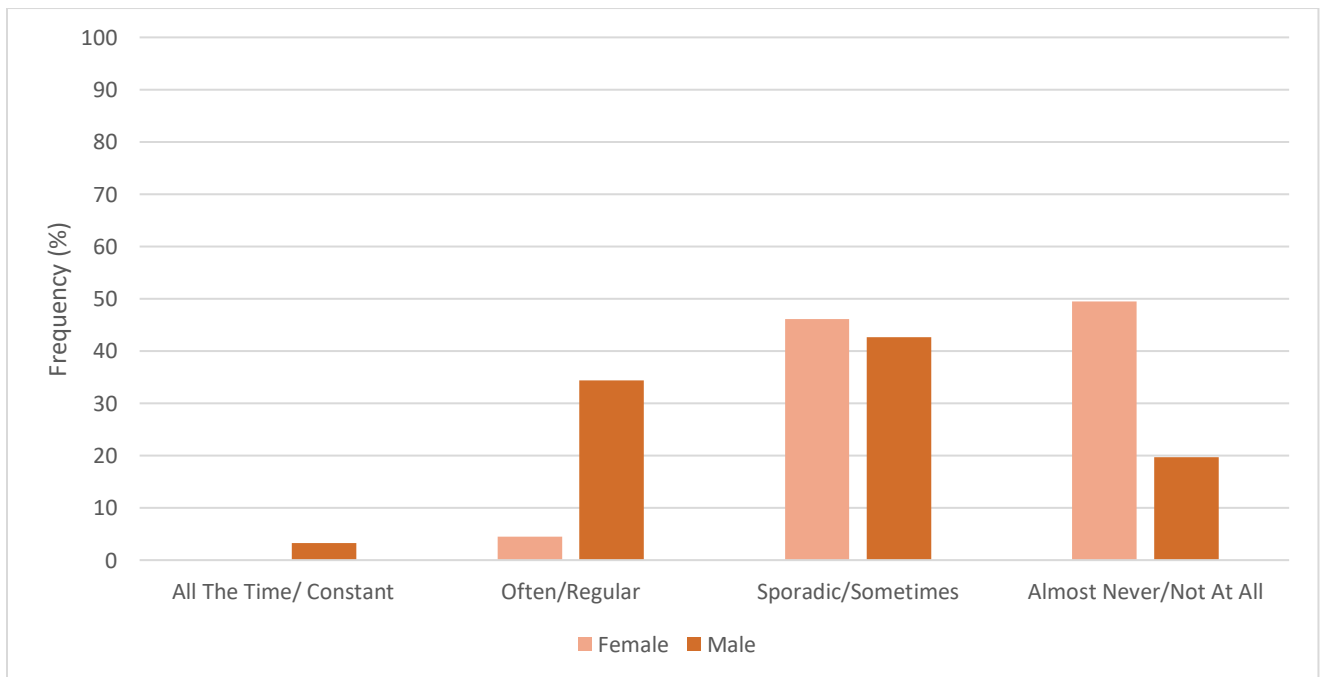


For both acceptability in teens and adults, there was no statistical difference between females and male acceptance. Overall, participants rated teen use as 9% acceptable and 29% somewhat acceptable compared to adult use where it was 40% acceptable and 31% somewhat acceptable.

Aim 2 is assessing the frequency of intentional pornography consumption in USD students. Figure 3 shows the frequency of intentional use for both females and males. There is a statistical difference between men and women's frequencies. Chi square=51.169 and $p < 0.001$, meaning that men did have higher frequency of consumption than women. Men who consumed pornography often/regular was 34% compared to 4% of women. Women who consumed pornography almost never/not at all was 49% compared to 19% of men.

Figure 3

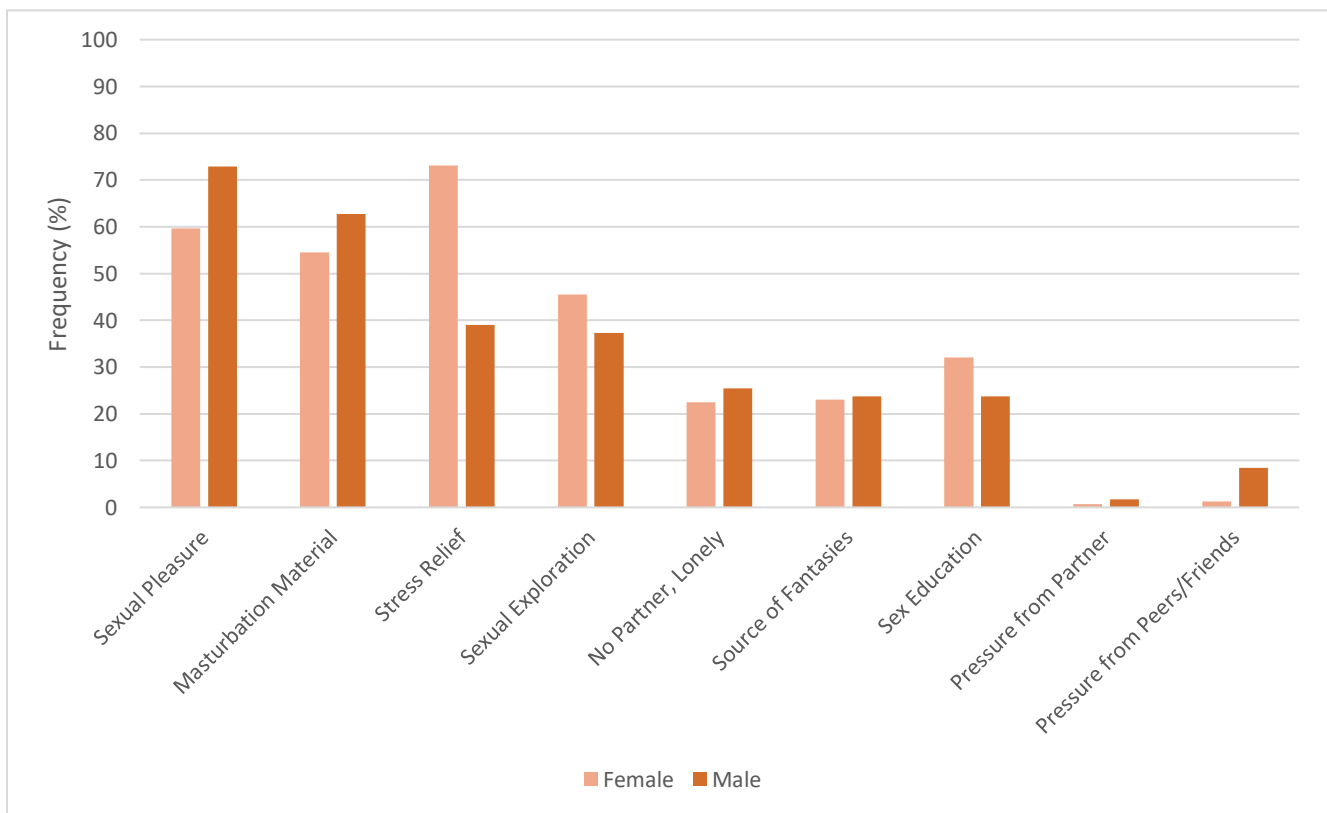
Female and Male College Students Ratings of Frequency of Intentional Consumption of Pornography



Aim 3 looked at the motives for consumption. Participants had the option to click all that applied of a list of 10 motives. Figure 4 shows the motives, starting with the ones with the highest frequency of being chosen to the least. Men’s highest motive for consumption of pornography was sexual pleasure. Women’s highest motive for consumption of pornography was stress relief. Chi square analyses of each option revealed a significant difference for only the stress relief motive, chi square=21.525 and $p < 0.001$. 73% of females chose the stress relief motive compared to 39% of men.

Figure 4

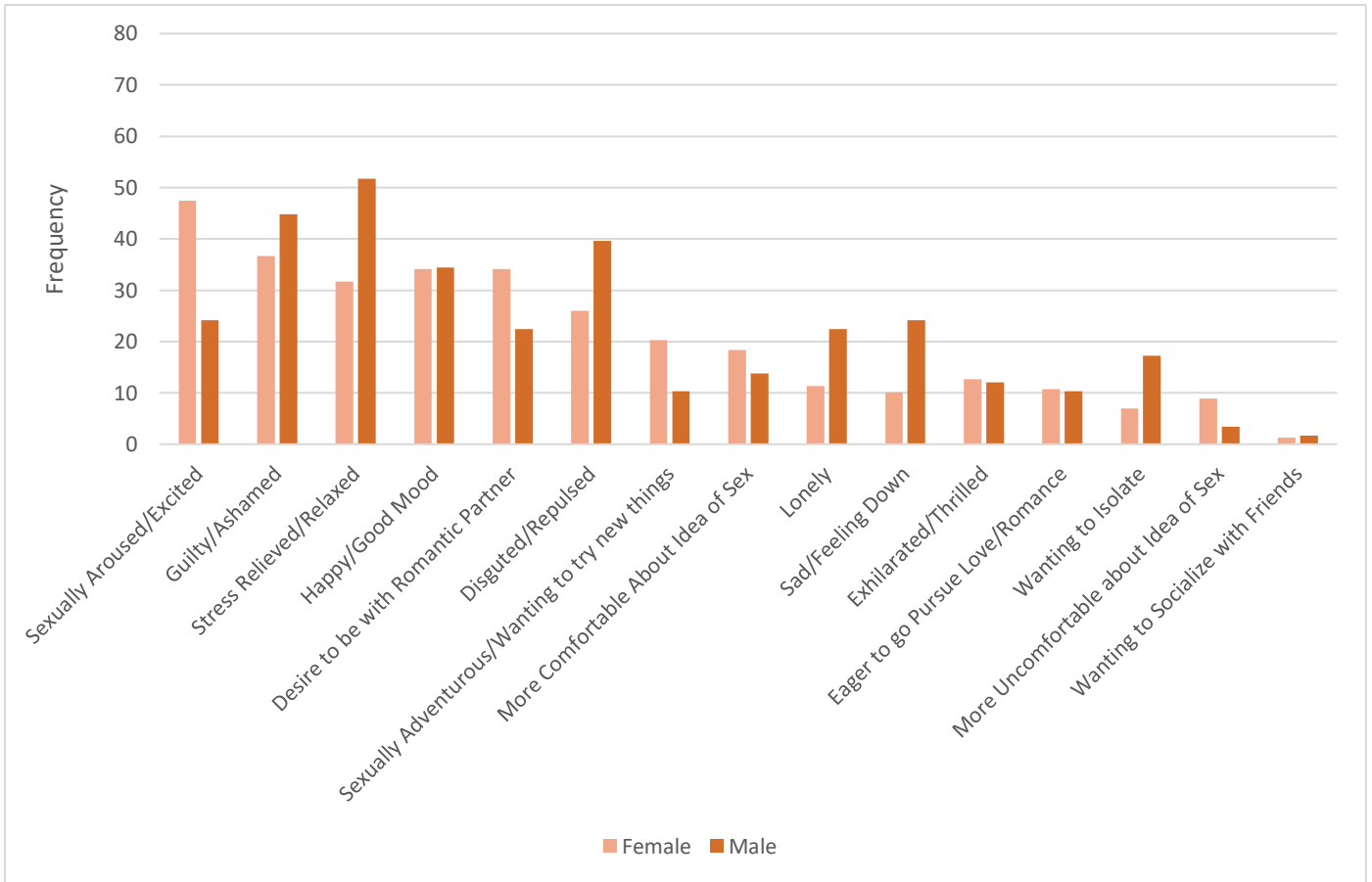
Female and Male College Students Ratings of Motives for Consumption of Pornography



Aim 4 looks at the feelings after consuming pornography for USD men and women. There are quite a few statistical differences in the feelings after consuming pornography. Men reported stress relieved as the most common feeling after consumption (51%) compared to women (31%). Chi-square=7.335 and $p<.007$. Sad/feeling down after consumption is also reported more in men (24%) compared to women (10%). Chi-square= 6.964 and $p<.008$. There were also a few categories that differed on a significance level of $p<.05$. Lonely feelings after consumption are reported more in men (22%) compared to women (11%). Chi-square=4.193 and $p<.041$. Men also report feelings of wanting to isolate after consumption (17%) compared to women (7%). Chi-square=5.108 and $p<.024$. While not quite under $p<.05$, feeling disgusted after consumption is reported more in men (40%) than women (30%). The chi-square=3.822 and $p<.051$. While this is not quite significant, there is definitely a trend. Men and women report similar levels of feelings after consumption in a few different categories. The second most reported feeling after consumption for both men and women was guilty/ashamed. Men reported this feeling 44% of the time and women reported it 36% of the time. Men and women reported the same level (34%) of feeling happy/ in a good mood after consumption. Exhilarated/thrilled was also reported the same for both men and women (12.5%). Eager to pursue love/romance also had the same level of 10% in males and females. Other categories were relatively close or did not differ significantly from each other. Figure 5 shows the ratings of feelings after consumption starting with the most reported feelings to the least.

Figure 5

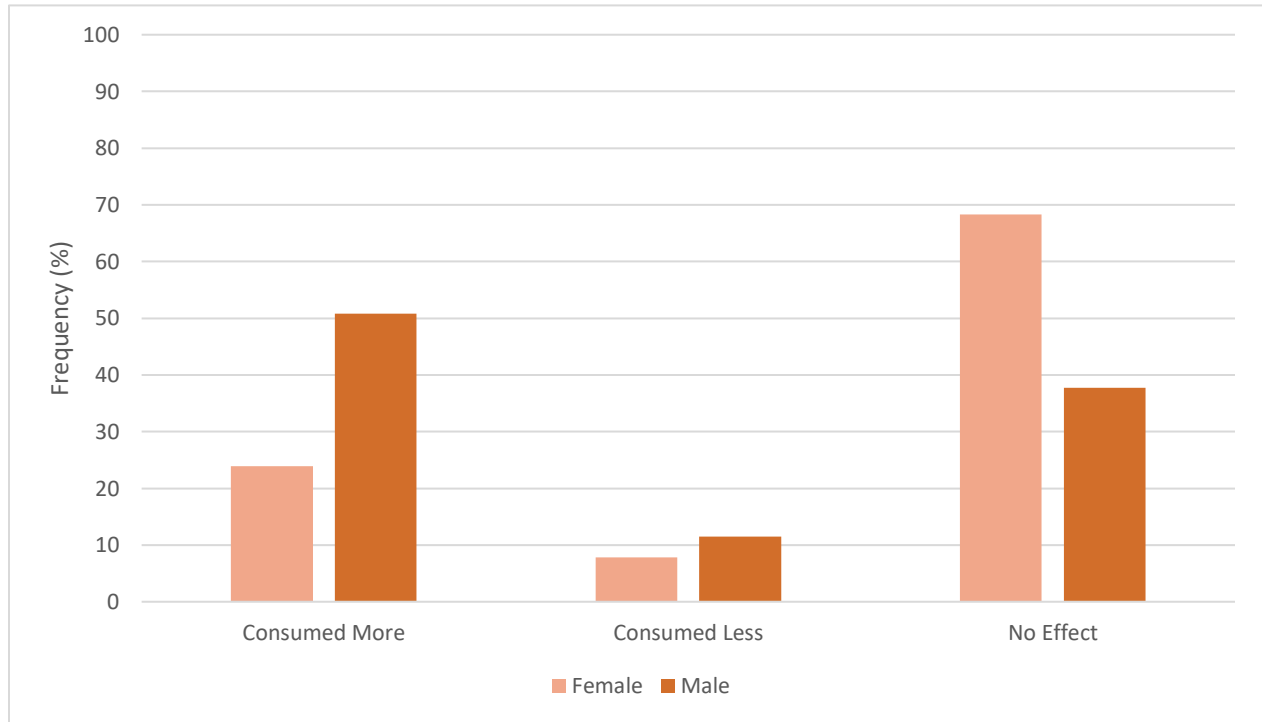
Female and Male College Students Ratings of their Feelings After Consumption of Pornography



Aim 5 is assessing if consumption of pornography increased or decreased during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Figure 6 shows how Covid-19 impacted consumption rates. Men were more likely to have an increase in consumption where women usually had no effect on their consumption. Reasons for the increase in consumption were being bored and lonely at home with no significant other. The reason for the decrease in consumption was that there were kids in the house. Chi-square=19.450 and $p < 0.002$, meaning that men statistically differed from females in their consumption of pornography during Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 6

Female and Male College Students Opinions of the Impact of Covid on Consumption of Pornography



Aim 6 focuses on how addictive pornography consumption can be by using the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018). This is a six-question scale that answers can range from 1 (Never) to 7 (All The Time). Four out of the six questions had statistical differences between male and females. Both men and women reported low levels on the scale, but men reported significantly higher levels on four questions. Table 1 shows the mean scale number of both genders for each question along with the Chi-Squares and p values.

Table 1

Female and Male College Student's Means for Each Question on the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018).

Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018),	I felt that porn is an important part of my life	I released my tension by watching porn	I neglected other leisure activities as a result of watching porn	I felt that I needed more and more porn in order to satisfy my needs	When I vowed to not watch porn anymore, I could only do it for a short period of time	I became stressed when something prevented me from watching porn
Female Means	1.80	3.00	1.60	1.53	1.79	1.53
Male Means	2.73	4.10	2.55	2.54	3.35	1.83
Chi-Square & P value	8.811 and p<.004	7.674 and p<.006	No Difference	7.475 and p<.008	6.205 and p<.015	No Difference

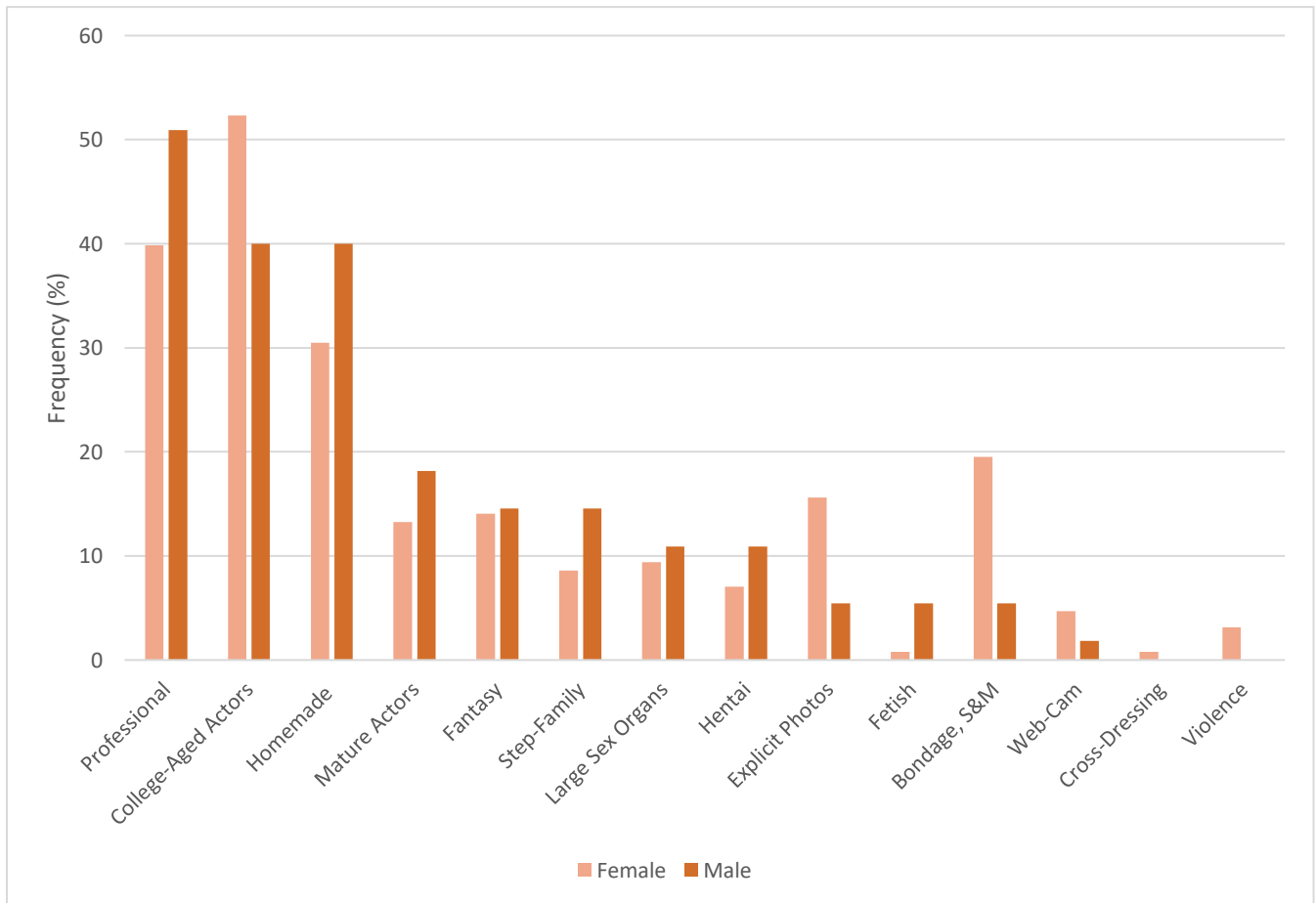
Exploratory Material

The exploratory material for this paper is to look at the type of pornography that USD students are currently consuming. A question on the pornography survey asked the participants to select their top three favorite types of porn to consume. Figure 7 shows the top three favorites starting with the most consumed to least. Professionally Produced pornography was the top favorite for males followed by Homemade and College-Age Actors. College-Age Actors was the top favorite for females followed by Professionally Produced and Homemade. Both males and females had the same top three preferences. Males and females did not differ statistically in any

category except for Bondage and S&M. Chi-square=5.882 and $p < 0.015$ meaning that the females consumed this category significantly more than males. Females consumed Bondage and S&M category at a frequency of 19% compared to 5% of men.

Figure 7

Female and Male College Student Endorsement of the Top Three Types of Pornography Consumption



Discussion

Research on pornography consumption in college students and young adults has increased in the past decade. While it is often thought that pornography is a male dominated field, women are becoming more prone to consumption and it is becoming more acceptable for them to view as well (Willoughby et al., 2014). The purpose of this study was to find the gender differences in pornography consumption, specifically in college students. Since there were only 3 non-binary participants they were removed from the analyses. It would be important to include non-binary student participants in studies of consumption of pornography if sufficient numbers can be sampled. Aim 1 was looking at acceptability of consumption in teens and adults. The first hypothesis stated was that USD women compared to men will have lower acceptance of pornography consumption in teens. This hypothesis was not supported as there was no statistical difference between the men and women at USD for this question. They both hold similar acceptance level with males reporting 12% acceptability and females 8% acceptability in teen consumption. The second hypothesis stated that USD men and women will have similar acceptance levels for adult consumption of pornography. This hypothesis was supported as the men and women did have similar frequencies of acceptance. Nearly 50% of males and almost 40% of women found it completely acceptable to consume pornography as an adult. Somewhat acceptable consumption for adults had a frequency of 24% in men and 33% in women.

Aim 2 looked at frequency rates of intentional consumption of pornography. The hypothesis stated was that USD men will have higher frequency of consumption than USD women. The hypothesis was supported. Men did differ significantly in their consumption from females and were more likely to be regular consumers. Men were often/regular consumers at a frequency of 34% while only 4% of women were often/regular consumers. Women were also

more likely to almost never/not at all consume pornography as 49% of women consumed almost never compared to 19% of men.

Aim 3 identified the motives behind pornography consumption. The hypothesis was that USD men and women will differ in their motives behind consumption. Men's motive may be for sexual arousal as women may use for educational purposes. The hypothesis was only partially supported. Men and women did not differ in any category except for one, stress relief. Women were more likely to have a motive to consume for stress relief compared to men. Stress relief motive was chosen by 73% of women compared to 39% of men. USD men and women had similar motives for consumption, such as sexual pleasure (72% men & 59% women), masturbation material (62% men & 54% women), and sexual exploration (37% men & 45% women).

Aim 4 looked at the feelings after consuming pornography. The hypothesis was that men and women will differ in their feelings. Men would report more happy or good feelings and women would report more sad and lonely feelings. The hypothesis was only partially supported. Men and women did differ in their feelings, but men were more likely to report feelings of stress relieved, guilty/ashamed, and disgusted/repulsed. Women were more likely to report feelings of sexually aroused, guilty/ashamed, happy/good mood, and desire to be with romantic partner. Men were more likely to report more sad and lonely feelings related to watching pornography. Women were more likely to report more happy or good feelings after watching pornography. This was the opposite of the hypothesis. Overall, men and women had high reports of feeling guilty/ashamed. One explanation for this guilt may be tied to high religiosity of students in this Midwestern region. However, there was no demographic question on how religious the

participants are so a true explanation cannot be given. In future research, it is recommended that religiosity item be included.

Aim 5 was the effect that the Covid-19 Pandemic had on pornography consumption. The hypothesis stated was that both USD men and women will have increased consumption. This hypothesis was also partially supported. Men and women did differ significantly in their consumption. However, men had an increase in their consumption during Covid while women showed no effect. Over 50% of men showed increase compared to 23% females while 67% females had no effect on their consumption compared to 37% males.

Aim 6 was finding how addictive pornography consumption can be by using the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (Bothe et al., 2018). The hypothesis stated was the men will report higher levels of addiction than women. This hypothesis is supported. Four out of the six questions had statistical differences between men and women. Men reported the highest mean levels on question 2, I released my tension by watching porn, with a mean of 4.10 compared to women's 3.00. The second highest level was for question 5, When I vowed to not watch porn anymore, I could only do it for a short period of time, with a mean of 3.35 compared to the women's 1.79. While levels on the scale were low for both genders, males were reporting significantly higher levels meaning they have higher level of addiction. The two questions on the scale that did not differ between genders were question 3, I neglected other leisure activities as a result of watching porn, and question 6, I became stressed when something prevented me from watching porn.

Exploratory material is a question on the survey that a hypothesis was unable to be made from as there was no prior knowledge to this question. The question regarded the top 3 favorite types of pornography that USD students consume. It was found that both USD men and women

have the same top three preferences when consuming pornography: Professionally Produced, Homemade, and College-Aged Actors. There was also only one category where there was a statistical difference between men and women, which was Bondage and S&M. Women were more likely to view this category than the men (19% vs. 5%).

Limitations

There were some limitations to this study. First, there was a small sample size of men (n=75) compared to the large sample size of women (n=231). Many of the participants who took the survey were in psychology classes and those classes typically have a lower enrollment of men than women. To try and make up for this, I tabled in the MUC to try and bring up the number of men who participated. Also, this study is only generalized for small Midwest college students and does not apply to everyone.

Conclusion

This current study sought to bring more information regarding pornography consumption in college aged students and specifically assessed the gender differences that come along with consumption. It is consistent with previous research in that men will have higher frequency of consumption rates than women will. However, it was surprising to find in this study that women had a high percentage of consumption pornography and that it was not significantly different from men. In this study, 78% of women intentionally consume pornography compared to 31% in Cooper & Klein's study (2017). While some previous research has indicated that women have less acceptance of pornography, this study found that there is no difference in acceptability in consumption for teens and adults in men and women. While there was only one previous study done on the impact of covid on consumption, it did correlate with this study's findings that

consumption rates did increase. While it was mostly the men who had increase consumption, a few women did too. However, it was more common for women to report Covid have no effect on their pornography consumption.

There has not been much research on motives for consumption of pornography. What was found in this study though is that men and women do share the top 3 motives for consumption. Also, only one motive was statistically different and that was stress relief, where women were more likely to consume for this reason. Previous studies have shown that consumption of pornography can be addictive. The findings of this study correlate with those. Also, men are more likely to report significantly higher levels of addiction than women. Lastly, the top 3 favorite types of pornography are something new that has not been seen in previous studies either. This study found that men and women also share the same top 3 favorite types. Women also differ significantly for one category and that was Bondage and S&M. Overall, there is certain categories where men and women differ significantly in the consumption of pornography and there are some where they do not. It is a complex topic that much more research can go into to find more gender differences.

Appendix A

Pornography Survey

Participant Demographics:

1. Age (in years):

2. Gender

Male

Female

Intersex

Non binary

3. Year in School

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate Student

4. Sexual orientation

Asexual

Bisexual

Heterosexual

Pansexual

Same Sexual

Transsexual

Other (please specify):

5. Ethnicity

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Caucasian, white, non hispanic.

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Other (please specify):

6. Relationship Status

Single, not sexually active

Single, sexually active, non-serious but steady partner

Single, sexually active, small number of partners

Single, sexually active, large number of partners

In a serious relationship, not sexually active

In a serious relationship, sexually active

Engaged, cohabiting, married

7. How many sexual partners have you had in your-lifetime?

None

1-2

3-5

6-10

11-20

21-30

30-50

50-100

100+

Personal Opinions on Pornography:

For the purpose of this study, pornography (porn) is defined as printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or sexual activity.

8. How acceptable do you think it is for adolescents and teens (age 14-17) to consume pornography?

Unacceptable

Somewhat unacceptable

Unsure

Somewhat acceptable

Acceptable

9. How acceptable do you think it is for adults 18 years and older to watch pornography?

Unacceptable

Somewhat unacceptable

Unsure

Somewhat acceptable

Acceptable

History of Exposure of Pornography:

The following items are asking about your history of exposure to porn either accidentally, by your own intent, or by someone else's pressure. If you find any question offensive, you do not need to answer it. If you have never had any exposure to porn (by accident or intentionally), continue to **XXX**

10. Did you view porn either by accident or intentionally during any of these times in your life? Check all that apply.

Preschool/Kinderschool

Elementary school

Middle school

High school

College/Graduate School

Accidental Exposure to Pornography:

11. In your lifetime, have you ever accidentally consumed porn, meaning have you ever watched porn by chance, unintentionally, or unexpectedly? (e.g., found a magazine, saw someone else's screen, etc.)

Yes

No

Not sure

12. If yes to question #10, how old were you the first time you accidentally consumed porn?

__ years

13. In your lifetime, have you ever been forced to watch pornographic material against your will? (e.g., significant other insists that you watch with them)

Yes

No

Not sure

14. If yes to question #13, how old were you the first time you were forced to watch?

__ years

15. If yes to question #13, how often have you been forced to watch?

Purposeful Exposure to Pornography:

16. In your lifetime, have you ever intentionally, by your own choice, watched pornographic material?

Yes

No

17. If yes to question #16, how old were you the first time you purposely watched porn?
__ years.

Frequency of Pornography Consumption:

18. How would you categorize yourself as a porn viewer?

Almost never/not at all

Sporadic/sometimes

Often/regular

All the time/constant

19. How long have you been intentionally using porn?

0-12 months

1-3 years

3-5 years

5-10 years

10+ years

20. In the past year, how frequently did you use porn?

Not at all

One time

Once a month

Once a week

Once a day

Several times a day

21. In a typical week, how many hours do you spend consuming porn?

0

1-2

3-5

6-10

11-20

20+

COVID Effects:

22. How did COVID (starting March 2020) affect your consumption of porn?

Consumed a lot more

Consumed a little more

No effect

Consumed a little less

Consumed a lot less

23. If consumption increased, explain why.

24. If consumption decreased, explain why.

Content of Pornography:

In the 12 months, what type(s) of porn have you viewed? Check all that apply.

25. Sexual Acts:

Anal Sex

Oral Sex

Penile / vaginal

Other (please specify):

26. Ethnicity of participants:

African American

Asian

Interracial/Mixed

Latinx/Hispanic

Native American

White

Other (please specify):

27. Sexual Orientation of participants:

Bisexual male

Bisexual female

Gay male

Heterosexual male

Heterosexual female

Lesbian female

Transsexual/Intersex/Pansexual (either gender)

Other (please specify):

28. Number of participants per scene:

1 person

2-3 people

4-5 people

6-10 people

11-20 people

20+ people

Personal Preferences When Consuming Pornography:

For the purpose of this study, pornography (porn) is defined as printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or sexual activity.

29. Whom do you usually consume pornography with? Check all that apply:

Alone

Friends

Significant other

Other (please specify):

30. What is your preferred format for consuming porn?

Print (Magazine, photographs, etc.)

Video

No preference

Other (please specify):

31. What is your preferred way to consume porn?

Phone

Laptop/Computer

DVD/VCR

Cable TV

32. Is there a certain website you watch porn on the majority of the time? According to Men'sHealth magazine, these are some of the top porn sites in America.

Chaturbate

XVideos

Pornhub

LiveJasmin

xHamster

Xnxx.com

OnlyFans

Other:

33. In your lifetime, have you ever watched any of the following categories of porn? Check all that apply.

Amateur (homemade pornography)

Web-cam
Explicit Photographs
Professionally produced porn
College aged and young adult (e.g. same aged participants)
Underage actors (under 16 years of age)
Mature actors (e.g., middle aged to older actors, mothers, fathers)
Fantasy/Roleplay (e.g., nurse, teacher, fraternity/sorority)
Race play (e.g. master and slave, etc.)
Fetish-Related (e.g., furies, shoe, feet)
Large sex organs (e.g., large penis, large breasts)
Cross dressing (e.g. men dressing in women's clothes, women in men's clothes)
Step-family relations (e.g. step mother and son, step brother and sister)
Hentai (Japanese, anime characters, etc.)
Bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism (BDSM)
Themes of Violence (e.g. physical abuse, sexual assault)

34. What is your favorite type of pornography to watch right now? Select your top 3 choices.

Amateur (homemade pornography video)
Web-cam
Explicit photographs ("dick pics", explicit nudes)
Professionally produced porn
College aged and young adult (e.g. same aged participants)
Underage actors (under 16 years of age)
Mature actors (e.g., middle aged to older actors, mothers, fathers)
Fantasy/Roleplay (e.g., nurse, teacher, fraternity/sorority)
Race play (e.g. master and slave, etc.)
Fetish-Related (e.g., furies, shoe, feet)
Large sex organs (e.g., large penis, large breasts)
Cross dressing (e.g. men dressing in women's clothes, women in men's clothes)
Step-family relations (e.g. step mother and son, step brother and sister)

Hentai (Japanese, anime characters, etc.)

Bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism
(BDSM)

Themes of Violence (e.g. physical abuse, sexual assault)

35. Do you prefer porn in which the participants look like yourself or your partner?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Do not care

Amateur Pornography Creation.

36. Do you make your own porn?

Yes

No

37. If yes, what motivates you to make your own porn?

It helps my partner and I improve sexual activity

It makes me feel sexy

It helps me make money; it is a source of income

Other (please specify):

38. If yes, do you distribute your porn?

Yes

No

39. If yes, where do you distribute your amateur porn?

To friends

Via social media

Onlyfans

Pornhub

XVideos

Other (please specify):

Motives of Pornography Consumption Scale:

40. Why do you consume porn? What motivates you? Check all that apply.

Sexual pleasure

Sexual exploration & curiosity

Source of sexual fantasies & daydreams

Masturbation material

Fun and entertainment with others

Learn sex techniques, education

Stress relief, distraction

No sexual partner available, lonely

Pressure from sexual partner to consume

Pressure from peers/friends to consume

Other (please specify):

41. How likely is it that you masturbate while consuming porn?

Never

Sometimes

Often

Always

42. How often do you have sex with someone during or after consuming porn?

Never

Sometimes

Often

Always

43. How has pornography affected your love life in the last year?

Helped

Hindered

No difference

44. What is the longest period of time that you have gone without porn in the last year?

Hours

Days

Weeks

Months

Feelings After Consuming Pornography:

45. What are your feelings after consuming porn? (Check all that apply)

Happy/good mood

Sexually aroused/excited

Exhilarated/thrilled

Sad/Feeling down

Lonely

Wanting to socialize with friends

Wanting to isolate

Guilty/ashamed

Disgusted/Repulsed

Desire to be with romantic partner

Eager to go pursue love/romance

Stress relieved/relaxed

More comfortable about the idea of sex

More uncomfortable about the idea of sex

Sexually adventurous/Wanting to try new things

46. Do I feel I am addicted to porn?

Yes

No

Maybe

47. Do you think you could stop watching porn if you decided to?

Yes

No

Maybe

Please Explain:

Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale

48. I felt that porn is an important part of my life.

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Sometimes (4)

Often (5)

Very Often (6)

All the time (7)

49. I released my tension by watching porn

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Sometimes (4)

Often (5)

Very Often (6)

All the time (7)

50. I neglected other leisure activities as a result of watching porn.

Never (1)

51. Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Sometimes (4)

Often (5)

Very Often (6)

All the time (7)

52. I felt that I needed more and more porn in order to satisfy my needs.

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Sometimes (4)

Often (5)

Very Often (6)

All the time (7)

53. When I vowed not to watch porn anymore, I could only do it for a short period of time.

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Sometimes (4)

Often (5)

Very Often (6)

All the time (7)

54. I became stressed when something prevented me from watching porn.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Often (5)
- Very Often (6)
- All the time (7)

Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale

55. I like wild uninhibited sexual encounters

- Not at all like me (1)
- Slightly like me (2)
- Mainly like me (3)
- Very much like me (4)

56. The physical sensations are the most important thing about having sex

- Not at all like me (1)
- Slightly like me (2)
- Mainly like me (3)
- Very much like me (4)

57. My sexual partners probably think I am a "risk taker"

- Not at all like me (1)
- Slightly like me (2)
- Mainly like me (3)
- Very much like me (4)

58. When it comes to sex, physical attraction is more important to me than how well I know the person

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

59. I enjoy the company of sensual people

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

60. I enjoy watching "X-rated" videos

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

61. I am interested in trying out new sexual experiences

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

62. I feel like exploring my sexuality

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

63. I like to have new and exciting sexual experiences and sensations

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

64. I enjoy the sensation of intercourse without a condom

Not at all like me (1)

Slightly like me (2)

Mainly like me (3)

Very much like me (4)

Personal Feelings Scale

Answer appropriately for the number of events that have occurred in your life in the past week:

65. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

66. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

67. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

68. I felt that I was just as good as other people

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

69. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

70. I felt depressed

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

71. I felt that everything I did was an effort

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

72. I felt hopeful about the future

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

73. I thought my life has been a failure

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

74. I felt fearful

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

75. Restless sleep

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

76. I was happy

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

77. I talked less than usual

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

78. I felt lonely

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

79. People were unfriendly

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

80. I enjoyed life

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

81. I had crying spells

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
All of the time (5-7 days)

82. I felt sad

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

83. I felt that people dislike me

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

84. I could not "get going"

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

All of the time (5-7 days)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING OUR SURVEY!

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

The University of South Dakota

TITLE: *Pornography Use Survey*

PROJECT DIRECTOR: *Dr. Cindy Struckman-Johnson*

PHONE #: 605-658-3717

Department: *Department of Psychology*

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a University of South Dakota student and be at least 18 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is this study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to assess the ways in which USD students use pornography. We expect that as many as 800 students may take part in this research.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to take an 84 question survey regarding your background information, your history on the extent to which you have used or not used pornography, your preferences if you have used pornography, effects pornography use may have had on you, and some of your personality characteristics. The survey will be provided to you on Qualtrics and can be taken at any time for your convenience. The survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

All of the questions on pornography use, preferences, and effects are sensitive. In addition there are a few personal sensitive questions such as your sexual orientation and past sexual relationships. There is an option to not answer a question if you are unable or do not want to.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is an optional and personal choice whether or not to participate in this survey. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are some psychological risks you might experience from taking this survey. You may be embarrassed, offended, or upset by answering questions due to the sexual nature of pornography use. However, these risks are not viewed as being in excess of your experiences in everyday life. Nonetheless, if you become upset by questions, you may stop at any time or choose not to answer a question.

If you become upset from taking the survey, you are encouraged to reach out to The University of South Dakota's Student Counseling Center at [605-677-5777](tel:605-677-5777) which provides counseling services to USD students at no charge. In addition, there is a national hotline from the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Please call the toll-free Lifeline at [800-273-TALK \(8255\)](tel:800-273-TALK) to speak with a trained crisis counselor available to anyone 24/7.

What are the potential benefits from this study?

Although you will not directly benefit from taking this survey, others might benefit because of the knowledge that will be gained on the use of pornography by college students in the Midwest.

How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Any report published with the results of this study will not include any information that could identify you. We will protect the confidentiality of the research data by keeping the survey confidential and anonymous to ensure that the data collected may not be linked to individuals now or in the future.

How will my information be used after the study?

After this study is complete, survey data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

The researchers conducting this study are Dr. Cindy Struckman-Johnson, and student researchers Alexandra Kleven, Abbey Selleck, and Diana E. Leal. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Dr. Cindy Struckman-Johnson, at 605-658-3717 during the day.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact The University of South Dakota- Office of Human Subjects Protection at (605) 658-3743. You may also call this number with problems, complaints, or concerns about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is an informed individual who is independent of the research team.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. We will give you a copy of this document for your records [or you can print a copy of the document for your records]. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

Your consent to participate in this study is signified by continuing on to answer the survey questions in Qualtrics.

References

- Awan HA, Amair A, Diwan MN, Ulla I, Pereira-Sanchez V, Ramalho R, Orsolini L, de Phillipis R, Ojeahere MI, Ransing R, Vadsaria KA, & Virani S (2021) Internet and Pornography Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Presumed Impact and What Can Be Done. *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 12:623508. Doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2021.623508
- Brown, C. C., Durtschi, J. A., Carroll, J. S., & Willoguhby, B. J. (2016, September 25). *Understanding and predicting classes of college students who use pornography*. Computers in Human Behavior. Retrieved January 15, 2023, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563216306355?via%3Dihub>
- Camilleri C, Perry JT, & Sammut S (2021) Compulsive Internet Pornography Use and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Study in a Sample of University Students in the United States, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11:613244, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.613244
- Cooper, D. T., & Klein, J. L. (2017). College students' online pornography use: Contrasting general and specific structural variables with social learning variables. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(3), 551–569. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-017-9424-4>
- Rousseau, A., Bóthe, B., & Štulhofer, A. (2021). Theoretical antecedents of male adolescents' problematic pornography use: A longitudinal assessment. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58(3), 331–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1815637>
- Speed, D., MacDonald, J., Parks, A., Doucette, H., & Munagapati, K. (2021). Pornography consumption and attitudes towards pornography legality predict attitudes of sexual

equality. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58(3), 396–408.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1864263>

Uzma S. Rehman, Vanessa Tran, E. Sandra Byers & Natalie O. Rosen (2021) A Mixed-Method Analysis of Women’s Attributions about Their Partner’s Pornography Use, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58:3, 364-374, DOI: [10.1080/00224499.2020.1856765](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1856765)

Willoughby, B. J., Carroll, J. S., Nelson, L. J., & Padilla-Walker, L. M. (2014). Associations between relational sexual behaviour, pornography use, and pornography acceptance among US college students. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 16(9), 1052–1069.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.927075>