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Hannah Fegley
The Danger of Assumed Realism in
Pornography: Pornography Use and
its Relationship to Sexual Consent

ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades there have been contradictory research findings regarding the effects of pornography on attitudes and violence toward women. Researchers have recently found that the more realistic one perceives pornography to be, the more likely one is perceived positive benefits of pornography. As a result, in the current study, researchers explored how one's perceived realism and frequency of viewing impacted attitudes about sexual consent. Participants, who were 18 years and old, living in the United States, and who had viewed pornographic content online in the last 12 months, completed an online survey. T-tests revealed frequency of viewing did not impact attitudes about sexual consent; but perceived realism did significantly impact attitudes about sexual consent. The more realistic one perceived pornography to be: the less behavioral control participants felt they had about sexual consent and the more likely the participants were to rely on non-verbal cues for sexual consent. A linear regression that controlled for age, gender, and socioeconomic status found that perceived realism played a small, but significant role in attitudes about sexual consent. More nuanced research about pornography, including studies that that continue to explore how perceived realism of pornography impacts attitudes about sexual behaviors and beliefs is needed.

**THE DANGER OF ASSUMED REALISM IN PORNOGRAPHY:
PORNOGRAPHY USE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUAL CONSENT**

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2013

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In pop-culture there is a growing body of self-help books regarding pornography addiction and the wedge that it can create in romantic relationships (Chamberlain & Steurer, 2011; Collins & Adleman, 2010; Jensen, 2007; Leahy, 2008; Maltz & Maltz, 2008; Manning, 2008; Paul, 2004; Skinner, 2005; Struthers, 2009). Despite the abundance of self-help books, most of which focus on the impact of addiction to pornographic material, there is a paucity of empirical research that explores how pornography may impact sexual relationships and sexual communication.

While the impact of pornography on the general population remains largely understudied, researchers have found that sexual communication and relationship satisfaction are significantly positively correlated (Hess & Coffelt, 2012; Timm & Keiley, 2011; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2011). One important aspect of sexual communication is sexual consent, the “freely given verbal or nonverbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual activity (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999, p. 259). Despite the importance that direct verbal communication plays in sexual and relationship satisfaction, most individuals in both heterosexual and same-sex partnerships negotiate consent through non-verbal body language rather than direct verbal communication (Beres, Herold, & Maitland, 2004; Fantasia, 2011; Humphreys & Herold, 2007; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2011). As a social work intern on a college campus' mental health center, I saw firsthand the impact of excluding verbal consent from sexual

scripts. In these instances, female students often reported feeling violated as their partner had moved forward with sexual activity, assuming the absence of a “no” was consent. I believe this is concerning as consent is not only needed to engage in sexual relations but it can enhance sexual communication and satisfaction (Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Litzinger & Gordon, 2005).

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Sexual Script Theory

Sexual script theory was influenced by aspects of both feminist and constructivist schools of thought, which emphasized cultural and subjective experiences. These schools are diverse in their theoretical propositions and while they can be complimentary, such as on the focus on multiple perspectives and identity construction they are not necessarily aligned in locus on analysis or conclusions about the experience of particular individuals (*e.g.*, men vs women). Gagnon and Simon (1973) first developed the sexual script theory to encapsulate how cultural norms dictate what sexual participants should do, both verbally and non-verbally. Pulling from feminist critiques of gender roles, a “traditional” sexual script emerged. In the traditional, heterosexual, sexual script, the male makes a sexual advance and the female engages in token resistance before eventually submitting to sexual activity (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; La France, 2010). In this script, sexual consent is negotiated non-verbally, or not given at all. Since 1973, researchers have explored this theory and “traditional” model, using both qualitative and quantitative measures to support it (Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Hussen, Bowleg, Sangaramoorthy, & Malebranche, 2012; La France, 2010; Littleton, Axsom, & Yoder, 2006; Vannier & O’Sullivan, 2011).

Gagnon and Simon (2003) noted that the sexual script theory was not an attempt to conceptualize the entirety of sexual attitudes and behaviors, but rather “a beginning, a way of

charting what must remain a complex and changing landscape of uses and meanings” (Simon & Gagnon, 2003, p. 496). Throughout our life, we are bombarded by media that may shape or reinforce the “traditional” sexual script. Recently a handful of researchers have found that pornography is often cited as a primary source for sexual education (Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Hussen et al., 2012; Traeen, Spitznogle, & Beverfjord, 2004). These researchers have found that pornography can positively impact one’s believed sexual knowledge and communication (Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Traeen et al., 2004), especially among individuals who perceive pornography to be realistic (Hald & Malamuth, 2008).

If pornography is one way that individuals may develop their sexual scripts, it is important to explore how pornography may reinforce or challenge the “traditional” sexual script, where sexual consent is given non-verbally or not at all, as noted earlier. Thus, in this study I am to explore how one facet of sociocultural sexual influence, pornography, may reinforce or challenge the traditional sexual script by exploring attitudes and behaviors about sexual consent.

Pornography

Over the past few decades there have been contradictory research findings regarding the effects of pornography on attitudes and violence toward women (see Table 1). In the United States, researchers have found positive correlations between pornography consumption and endorsement of attitudes towards violence against women, but only when mediated by aggressive personality traits (Hald, Malamuth, & Yuen, 2010; Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2011). In a study from 1980, with ethical concerns that would make it inappropriate to replicate, a researcher found that when individuals are exposed to sexually violent material in a laboratory setting, those individuals were more likely to aggress via electric shocks toward a female research assistant in a laboratory setting than those individuals who did not view sexually violent

material (Donnerstein, 1980). Further, participants who did view aggressive-erotic material were more likely to use higher levels of electric shock toward a female confederate than a male confederate (Donnerstein, 1980).

More recently, researchers have focused on the potential impact of pornography on more subtle attitude changes, such as attitudes towards women in leadership positions (McKee, 2007), attitudes about legal punishments for rape, attitudes about the Equal Rights Amendment (Davies, 1997) and attitudes towards sexual behaviors (Foubert, Brosi, & Bannon, 2011; Lambert, Negash, Stillman, Olmstead, & Fincham, 2012; Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010; Luder et al., 2011; McKee, 2007). Researchers found that pornography did not impact attitudes about women's rights, such as attitudes about the Equal Rights Amendment and women in leadership positions (Davies, 1997; McKee, 2007), but the findings in the extant literature on individual attitudes about sexual behaviors were mixed. Some researchers found that pornography consumption did not impact attitudes about sexual behaviors (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988; Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010; McKee, 2007) while other researchers have found significant positive correlations between pornography consumption and high endorsements of rape myths, women as sex objects and sexual harassment (Foubert et al., 2011; Lam & Chan, 2007; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007) and weakened commitment to romantic partners (Lambert et al., 2012; Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). Researchers in Switzerland concluded that pornography consumption did not impact sexual behaviors, yet they also noted that males who viewed pornography were less likely than their peers who had not viewed pornography to have used a condom in their most recent sexual encounter (Luder et al., 2011). These contradictory findings indicate a clear lack-of-consensus among researchers on whether pornography impacts individuals' attitudes and behaviors.

Researchers can agree, however, that with the increase in accessibility of the Internet, pornography consumption has grown immensely (Doidge, 2007; Foubert et al., 2011; Greenfield, 2004; Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010; Luder et al., 2011; Malamuth et al., 2011; Morrison, Ellis, Morrison, Bearden, & Harriman, 2006; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007; Traeen et al., 2004). With the resultant ubiquity of pornography, researchers have started to examine how individuals perceive pornography to impact them (Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Traeen et al., 2004). The common perception among young adults is that pornography overall has positive benefits on individuals' sex life, attitudes toward sex, sexual knowledge, and perception of and attitudes towards the opposite gender (Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Traeen et al., 2004).

Gaps in Previous Research

One area that has remained largely unstudied is how individuals' perceptions, for example, perceived realism, of pornography impact their attitudes about sexual behaviors. Hald and Malamuth (2008) found that individuals who perceived pornography to be most realistic to real-life sexual encounters, also most strongly endorsed perceived positive impacts of pornography consumption; there was a significant correlation between perceived realism of pornography and perceived positive benefits of pornography. Perhaps, as researchers have found from studies about sexually explicit television material, individuals with higher consumption and involvement are more likely to have their attitudes about sexual behaviors impacted by viewing sexual material on television (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Peter and Valkenburg (2007) found that exposure to online pornography significantly impacted adolescents' attitudes towards women and this relationship was largely mediated by the extent to which the participant perceived the pornographic material as realistic. Specifically, adolescents who viewed sexually explicit material on the internet were significantly more likely to view women as sex objects

when compared to their peers who did not view sexually explicit material on the internet. To date, I am unaware of any study that has examined how types of pornography that aims to increase the perceived realism, such as point-of-view (POV) pornography, may influence attitudes about sexual behavior in adults.

There have been numerous limitations in the small body of research that aims to explore the relationship between pornography and attitudes about gender and sexual behavior. Despite the finding that both men and women perceive positive benefits of pornography consumption (Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Traeen et al., 2004), most researchers have exclusively focused on males (Davies, 1997; Donnerstein, 1980; Foubert et al., 2011; Hald et al., 2010; Lam & Chan, 2007; Linz et al., 1988; Malamuth et al., 2011). There have been very few studies where researchers have examined how pornography may influence women, and of those studies, most have focused on relationship satisfaction (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009; Zillman & Bryant, 1988), or, as one research put it, “research that focuses on women as active users of pornography are practically non-existent” (Attwood, 2005, p. 72).

Further, another area that has remained unstudied is pornography’s impact on attitudes and behaviors about sexual consent. While researchers have examined how pornography consumption may impact individuals intent to commit a rape, and its association with aggression (Davies, 1997; Donnerstein, 1980; Foubert et al., 2011; Hald et al., 2010; Linz et al., 1988; Malamuth et al., 2011), there is a deficit of research exploring the relationship between pornography and sexual consent. The lack of research about how pornography may impact sexual consent is alarming, considering that consent is required for consensual sexual activity.

In light of the gaps in the research, the research question investigated in this study is as follows: Do both males’ and females’ perceived realism and frequency of viewing pornographic

material impact their attitudes' and reported behaviors about sexual consent? I hypothesize that individuals who perceive pornography to be more 'realistic' will perceive sexual consent to be less important when compared to individuals who perceive pornography to be less realistic. I also hypothesize that individuals who have higher frequencies of viewing pornographic material will perceive sexual consent to be less important when compared to individuals who have lower frequencies of viewing pornographic material.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Participants

All of the male and female participants met the inclusion criteria: the participants were 18 years and older, were able to read and write in English, were living in the United States at the time of completing the survey, and had viewed pornography within the last 12 months.

Participants included 140 self-identified males and 109 self-identified females. The males ranged in age from 18 to 79 years, with an average age of 42.14 years ($SD = 15.13$ years). The females ranged in age from 19 to 63 years, with an average age of 30.19 years ($SD = 8.64$ years). The male and female participants were similar in racial make up, with a majority of male participants (89.3%) and female participants (79.8%) identifying as White (see Table 2). The average socioeconomic status for both male and female participants was lower to middle class. Male participants averaged \$38,790.08 per capita income compared to female participants' \$23,934.92 per capita income. There was also a notable skew towards higher education among the men, as can be seen in Figure 1 with the mode education attainment being a Bachelor's degree ($n=65$, 46.4%). Similarly so, there was a skew among the women as can be seen in Figure 2, over 80% of this women have obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Because we dealt with pornography and sexual behaviors, demographics about the participants' sexual identity was recorded. A majority of male (76.4%) and female (61.5%)

participants identified as straight or heterosexual (see Table 3).

Definitions

Unable to find an explicit definition of pornography in previous papers, the researchers developed their own definition for the purposes of the study. Pornography, as defined by the researchers based on several meetings of the research team and the review of the literature the following definition is offered, is

the explicit portrayal of sexual activity or sexual organs through recorded (*i.e.*, not live) visual media (including, video, film, video games, magazines, photos, and animation) found on the internet, pay-per-view, in stores, or from friends/acquaintances.

Pornography can be free or purchased using money. Pornography can be used for sexual excitation and arousal. Please note that written descriptions of sexual activity and live exhibitions (online or in-person), such as sex shows, striptease, online sex chats, phone sex, and sexting are **not** considered pornography.

This definition was provided to participants at the start of the survey. Participants were reminded of this definition two more times throughout survey.

Measures

Demographic Questions.

Participants were asked a series of demographic questions including their identified gender, age, income range, household size, education level (see Figure 1 and Figure 2), identified race (see Table 2), and identified sexual orientation (see Table 3). The participants' approximate income per capita was determined dividing the bottom, center and top of each income range by the number of people in the participants' stated household and then averaging the three results.

Sexual Consent.

The Sexual Consent Attitudes Scale, developed by Humphreys (2007) and updated by Humphreys and Brousseau (2010), has four factors, two of which – (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control and Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent – were adapted and used for this study. In this study, each statement used a five-point Likert-Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with values assigned to each number. Humphreys and Brousseau (2010) original scale used a 7-point Likert scale with anchors on each end stating strongly disagree and strongly agree. The first factor, (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control, aims to measure individuals' perceptions of their behaviors about asking for sexual consent. An example item includes: "I am worried that my partner might think I'm weird or strange if I asked for sexual consent before starting any sexual activity" ($\alpha = .91$ for male participants and $\alpha = .89$ for female participants in the current study). The second factor, Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent, aims to measure individuals' use of non-direct body language to assess sexual consent. An example of this item includes: "Typically, I ask for consent by making a sexual advance and waiting for a reaction, so I know whether or not to continue" ($\alpha = .72$ for both female and male participants).

Perceived Realism.

The realism measures were developed by the authors and researcher Hye-Kyung Kang and aimed to explore to what degree individuals perceive pornography to realistically display sexual acts and the sexuality of individuals and couples. There were two sets of questions with forced choice four-point Likert-scale answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Participants also had the option of answering, "does not apply to me" if they did not view pornography that featured the stated individuals or couples. The first set of ten questions asked

about different individuals race and gender (*i.e.*, “I believe that pornography accurately displays what Asian men are like in sexual situations;” other groups of individuals included: Asian women, black men, black women, Latino men, Latina women, white men, white women, multiracial men, multiracial women). The second set of twelve questions asked about accuracy of displays in couples of mixed race and orientation (*e.g.*, I believe that pornography accurately displays sexual relations between: straight white/Asian couples, gay white/Asian couples, straight black/Asian couples, gay black/Latino couples). Realism scores were determined by summing the participants’ responses across all questions. Both the individual ($\alpha = .96$) and couple ($\alpha = .98$). realism scores had high inter-item agreement .

Frequency of Viewing Pornographic Material.

The authors developed a single question to assess the frequency of viewing pornographic material. Participants were asked: “On average, how often do you view pornography?” There were 8 mutually exclusive response options, ranging from from one time per year to more than three times per day (see Table 4).

Recruitment and Procedure

The Smith College Human Subject Review Board in Northampton, Massachusetts approved the measures for the survey (see Appendix A). Prior to answering any questions for this survey, participants agreed to an informed consent (see Appendix B) which explained the nature of the voluntary participation, the minimal risks of participating in the study and a list of referral sources should participants experience uncomfortable or negative reactions or emotions.

Participants were recruited using a non-probability snowball sampling technique. The researchers used their social network, including personal and professional contacts to contact potential participants via email and social media (see Appendix C). Potential participants were

encouraged to participate, repost, forward, and ask others to participate. The recruitment pleas consisted of brief synopsis of the questionnaire, eligibility requirements, and a list of minimal risks of participation.

The survey was administered through SurveyMonkey, an online survey host that was set to not collect any names, e-mail addresses or IP addresses. Anonymity was thereby guaranteed to those who participated. Participants could leave the questionnaire at anytime. Upon completion of the survey, participants were able to enroll in a separate survey to enter a random drawing for a 30-dollar online gift certificate to amazon.com. There were a total of 40 gift cards that were distributed via email to participants chosen at random.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Sexual Consent Scales

There was a significant effect for gender on the (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control scale, $t_{233} = 2.29$, $p = .023$, with males ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .77$) scoring higher than females ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .66$). Overall, males perceived that they had less control in asking for sexual consent when compared to females. There was no significant difference ($t_{231} = .395$, $p = .693$) between males ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .68$) and females ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .77$) on the Indirect Behavioral Approach to consent scale. Males and females relied on non-verbal behavior cues to assess sexual consent equally.

Frequency of Viewing Pornographic Material

For males, there were no significant correlations between frequency of viewing pornography and the (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control scale ($r = -.045$, $p > .05$) and the Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent scale ($r = .114$, $p > .05$). The same was true for females, with no significant correlations between frequency of viewing pornography and the (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control scale ($r = .015$, $p > .05$) and the Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent scale ($r = -.017$, $p > .05$). The hypothesis that the frequency of viewing pornographic material impacts attitudes about sexual consent was not supported.

Realism Scales

Males and females also had a significant difference on the individual realism scale, which

measured how realistic one felt pornography displayed individuals' sexuality ($t_{202} = 2.38, p = .019$). Males ($M = 23.52, SD = 11.99$) perceived pornography to be more realistic compared to females ($M = 19.59, SD = 11.62$). There was no significant difference between males' and females' scores on the couples realism scale, which measured how realistic one felt pornography displayed couples' sexuality ($t_{186} = 0.68, p > .05$) (see Table 5).

Correlations

For the total sample of males who completed the sexual consent and realism scales ($n = 113$), there is a significant positive correlation between the individual realism scale and the (lack of) perceived behavioral control scale ($r = .26, p < .01$). Thus, the more realistic that males perceive pornography to be in displaying the sexuality of individuals, the higher their scores on the (lack of) perceived behavioral control, meaning they perceive less behavioral control in asking for sexual consent. There is also a significant positive correlation between the individual realism scale and the indirect behavioral approach to consent scale for males ($r = .22, p < .01$). Again, the more realistic that males perceive pornography to be in displaying individuals' sexuality, the more likely they are to rely on non-verbal methods for sexual consent. The hypothesis was supported for males (see Table 6). There are no significant correlations for females between perceived realism scales and sexual consent scales, and the hypothesis was not supported for females (see Table 7).

Regressions

To assess how the perceived individual realism variable and basic demographic variables – including gender, age and socioeconomic status – impacted the two sexual consent scales, we used a hierarchical regression. Age and gender were entered as a dummy variable (female = 0,

male = 1) in the first block and the individual realism scale variable and income per capita variable in the second block for both of the sexual consent scales.

Using a linear regression, the control variables of gender and age were entered in the first block and had a small but significant relationship to the dependent variable of (Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control scale (see Table 8). The independent variables, the individual realism scale and income per capita, were entered into the second block and contributed significantly to the model ($F(\text{change})_{192} = 4.25, p = .003$) and accounted for a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .083$; see Table 8). Realism explains about 8% of the change in the model. The hypothesis that perceived realism impacts attitudes about sexual consent was supported.

Using linear regression, the control variables of gender and age were entered in the first block and did not have a significant relationship to the dependent variable Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent scale (see Table 9). The independent variables, the individual realism scale and income per capita, were entered into the second block and contributed significantly to the model ($F(\text{change})_{190} = 2.44, p = .048$) and the entire model accounted for a significant, but small amount of variance in the model ($R^2 = .049$; see Table 9) Realism explains about 5% of the change of the model. The hypothesis that perceived realism impacts attitudes about sexual consent was supported.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Summary

It is challenging to group pornography into one category, as there are vast differences in pornographic content. However, it is not challenging to find pornography that mirrors the “traditional” sex script, of the male making sexual advances and the female providing token resistance before engaging in sexual activity. The results of this study appear to support this statement, as I found that the more realistic one perceived pornography to be, the more likely they were to rely on non-verbal cues for sexual consent and were less likely to perceive themselves as having behavioral control over sexual consent. In this instance, it appears that pornography, as a whole, reinforces the traditional sex script, which negotiates sexual consent through non-verbal cues or nothing at all.

Researchers have previously found links between pornography and more subtle attitudes about sex and sexual aggression. Pornography consumption has been positively correlated to endorsement of rape myths (Foubert et al., 2011), sexual harassment of women (Lam & Chan, 2007), perceiving women to be sex objects (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007) and engagement in casual sex (Wright, 2012). In this study, I found that pornography consumption alone did not impact attitudes about sexual consent; rather, it was one’s perception of pornography as realistic that impacts attitudes about sexual consent. With that said, this study was limited in that all of

the participants had viewed pornography material within the past twelve months, meaning that there were no participants who were not active consumers of pornography.

Implications for Social Work Practice

In light of the findings of the current study, clinical social works should emphasize the importance of exploring with clients their sexual scripts and what factors may be reinforcing and challenging these scripts. Pornography may be an appropriate tool for sexual fantasy for many individuals; however, it is not intended to provide a model of sexual behavior. In allowing for a place to process fantasies, therapists should also encourage clients to speak directly with partners about sexual consent, as it will not only decrease the likelihood of sexual miscommunication but it will increase sexual satisfaction (Hess & Coffelt, 2012; Timm & Keiley, 2011; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2011).

On a macro level, one could theorize that limited access to comprehensive sexual education combined with the social taboos that persist and often thwart educational conversations about sex may be impacting individuals' reliance on pornography for sexual education. Support of this theory in future research may warrant considerations to change sexual education to a more comprehensive, sex-positive, model.

Limitations and Future Directions

The demographics of the participants indicate it is difficult to generalize the results to the larger population. The study had limited racial diversity and both males and females had skewed educational backgrounds toward higher education. The females in the study are significantly younger than the males, and also make significantly less money.

Another area of limitation is that pornography is grouped into one category. Within pornography there are many genres and subgenres, some which are feminist focused while others

fetishize sexual molestation. With such variability, it is difficult to draw conclusions about pornography as a whole. Further research should explore a more nuanced understanding of pornography that divides pornography into different genres.

In this study, it was not the frequency of pornography viewing that impacted attitudes about sexual consent but rather one's perception of pornography. This is an area that has not been explored in previous research. Future studies should explore factors that influence the perception that pornography is realistic. Are viewers of pornography that is aimed to be more realistic, such as POV pornography more likely to perceive pornography to be realistic compared to those who do not watch POV pornography? Does sex education or sexual experience impact attitudes about pornography?

In conclusion, this research was the first step in exploring some of the more nuanced questions related to pornography and sexual consent. The study supported the hypothesis that perceived realism of pornography impacted beliefs about sexual consent but failed to find significant results about how the frequency of pornography consumption influences beliefs about sexual consent.

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Table 1

Research Studies About the Impact of Pornography

Citation	Topic	Type	Finding
Davies, 1997	Correlations between pornography consumption and attitudes about rape and feminism	Quantitative Survey Males In USA	No correlations found
Donnerstein, 1980	How aggressive-erotic stimuli (videos) impacts aggression toward another individual in a lab setting via electric shock levels	Experimental Males In USA	Aggressive erotic stimuli significantly increased aggression levels overall; highest levels of aggression (electric shock level) were toward a female rather than a male
Foubert, Brosi, & Bannon, 2011	Correlations between pornography consumption and intent to rape (with assurances of no punishment); bystander efficacy to intervene in rape situation and belief in rape myths	Quantitative Survey Males In USA	Pornography consumption and intent to rape were positively correlated; S&M pornography consumption and bystander efficacy were negatively correlated; S&M pornography consumption and endorsement of rape myths were positively correlated
Hald & Malamuth, 2008	Individuals' perceptions of pornography's effects	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In Denmark	Positive correlation between frequency of pornography use and self-perceived positive benefits; males report significantly more positive benefits of pornography than females; positive correlations between frequency of pornography consumption and perceived realism of pornography
Hald, Malamuth, & Yuen, 2010	Association between pornography consumption and attitudes about supporting violence towards women	Meta-analysis of non-experimental studies Males International	Overall significant positive association between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women
Lam &	Frequency of pornography use and	Quantitative	Positive correlations between pornography

Chan, 2007	impact on sexual behaviors and sexual harassment	Survey Males In Hong Kong	consumption and proclivities towards sexual harassment and pre-marital sexual permissiveness
Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988	Relationship between long-term exposure to sexually explicit images and rape myths, belief in women as sex objects, endorsement of force in sexual relationships	Experimental Males In USA	No significant relationships found between exposure to sexually explicit images and rape myths, belief in women as sex objects, or endorsement of force in sexual relationships
Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010	Exploratory study about how pornography influences ideas about gender and sexuality in teenagers	Quantitative Males & Females In Sweden	Pornography script functioned as a frame of reference to bodily ideals and sexual performances; concluded that participants were able to deal with exposure to pornography sensibly and reflectively
Luder et al., 2011	Online pornography's impact on sexual behaviors in teenagers from national survey data	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In Switzerland	Males who viewed pornography were less likely to report condom use in most recent sexual encounter
Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2011	How pornography impacts attitudes about acceptance of violence against women	Quantitative Survey Males In USA	Positive association between pornography use and attitudes about acceptance of violence against women, as moderated by individual differences in sexual aggression
McKee, 2007	Correlations between pornography use and attitudes toward women, including attitudes about rape myths, women in leadership positions, feminist identity	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In Australia	No significant correlations found between pornography consumption and attitudes about women
Peter & Valkenburg, 2007	How exposure to sexually explicit material impacts beliefs that women are sex objects in teenagers	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In the	Positive association between internet sexually explicit material and belief that women are sex objects; no gender differences

		Netherlands	
Peter & Valkenburg, 2009	Relationship between use of online sexually explicit material and sexual satisfaction	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In the Netherlands	Significant negative correlations between sexually explicit materials and sexual satisfaction
Traeen, Spitznogle, & Beverfjord, 2004	Exploratory study of pornography use and perceptions of use	Qualitative Survey Males & Females In Norway	Majority of participants believed pornography viewing leads to greater openness about sexuality and is not harmful
Wright, 2012	Impact of pornography exposure on casual sex behavior over time, longitudinal, national survey	Quantitative Survey Males & Females In USA	Pornography exposure did predict over time change engagement in casual sex behavior
Zillman & Bryant, 1988	Impact of pornography on sexual satisfaction	Experimental Males & Female In USA	Exposure to pornography significantly diminished satisfaction levels in one's partner's: physical appearance, affection; sexual behaviors and overall satisfaction

Table 2

Racial Makeup of Participants

Males			Females		
Race	Frequency	Percent	Race	Frequency	Percent
Arab American	1	0.7	Arab American	0	0
Asian American	0	0	Asian American	2	1.8
Black or African American	3	2.1	Black or African American	3	2.8
Hispanic or Latino	2	1.4	Hispanic or Latino	4	3.7
Multiracial	6	4.3	Multiracial	6	5.5
Native American or American Indian	0	0	Native American or American Indian	3	2.8
White or Euro American	125	89.3	White or Euro American	87	79.8
Prefer not to say	2	1.4	Prefer not to say	2	1.8
Missing	1	0.7	Missing	2	1.8
Total	140	100	Total	109	100

Table 3

Sexual Orientation of Participants

Males			Females		
Sexual Orientation	Frequency	Percent	Sexual Orientation	Frequency	Percent
Bisexual	11	7.9	Bisexual	16	14.7
Gay	12	8.6	Gay	8	7.3
Pansexual	2	1.4	Pansexual	4	3.7
Queer	2	1.4	Queer	8	7.3
Straight/Heterosexual	107	76.4	Straight/Heterosexual	67	61.5
Other	4	2.9	Other	4	3.7
Missing	2	1.4	Missing	2	1.8
Total	140	100	Total	109	100

Table 4

Frequency of Pornography Viewing by Sex

	Men		Women	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
1 time per year	6	6%	0	0%
1 time in three months	20	18%	6	4%
1 time per month	28	26%	14	10%
1 time per week	27	25%	16	11%
2-4 times per week	19	17%	54	39%
1 time per day	2	2%	31	22%
3 times per day	1	1%	8	6%
More than 3 times per day	1	1%	1	1%
Missing	5	5%	10	7%
TOTAL	109	100%	140	100%

Note. Modal category italicized and emboldened.

Table 5

Realism Scale Scores

	Women		Men		Possible total scale score	T test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Individual	19.59	11.62	23.52	11.99	40	2.36,*
Couples	12.95	7.62	13.73	7.89	48	.684

* p = .019

Table 6

Pearson Correlations for Males

	Lack of Perceived Behavioral Control	Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent	Realism Couples	Realism Individuals
Lack of Perceived Behavioral Control	1.0			
Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent	.212*	1.0		
Realism Couples	-.05	-.056	1.0	
Realism Individuals	.260**	.221**	.000	1.0

Table 7

Pearson Correlations for Females

	Lack of Perceived Behavioral Control	Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent	Realism Couples	Realism Individuals
Lack of Perceived Behavioral Control	1.0			
Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent	.224*	1.0		
Realism Couples	.056	.207	1.0	
Realism Individuals	.092	.153	-.239*	1.0

Table 8

(Lack of) Perceived Behavioral Control Regression

Block 1	B	Standard Error	Standardized Beta	B	Standard Error	Standardized Beta
Age	.263	.113	.182 *	.257	.113	.177*
Gender	.002	.004	.037	.004	.004	.006
Realism Scale				.009	.004	.158*
Income per Capita				.0000033	000	-.150*
Model Statistics	F = .3.96, p = .021.		R ² = .040	F = 4.25, p = .003	P for F Change = .014	R ² = .083

* p < .05

Table 9

Indirect Behavioral Approach to Consent Regression

Block 1	B	Standard Error	Standardized Beta	B	Standard Error	Standardized Beta
Age	.109	1.13	.076	.095	.114	.066
Gender	-.004	.004	-.080	-.003	.114	-.056
Realism Scale				.010	.040	.172*
Income per Capita				.0000039	.000	-.129
Model Statistics	F = .689 N. S.		R ² = .007	F = 2.44, p = .048	p for F Change = .017	R ² = .049

* p < .05

Figure 1

Education Levels of Male Participants

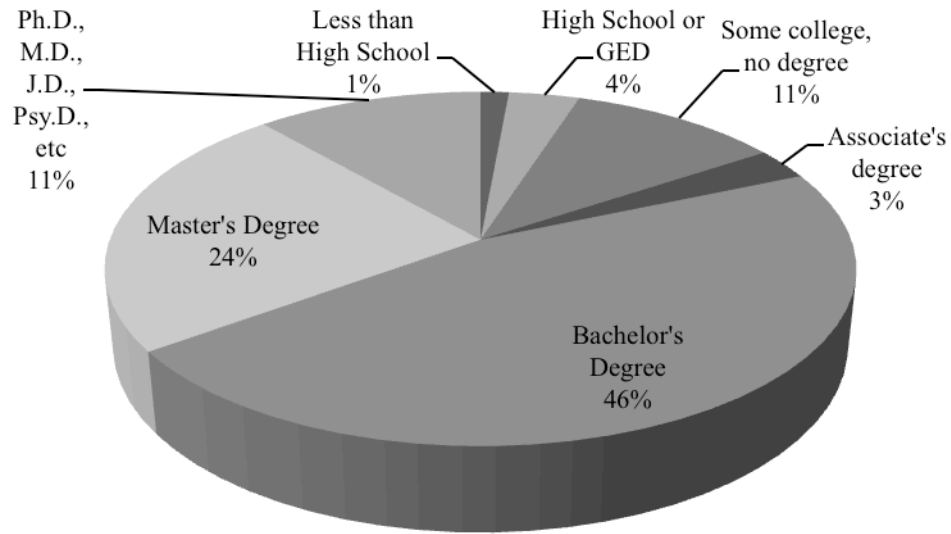
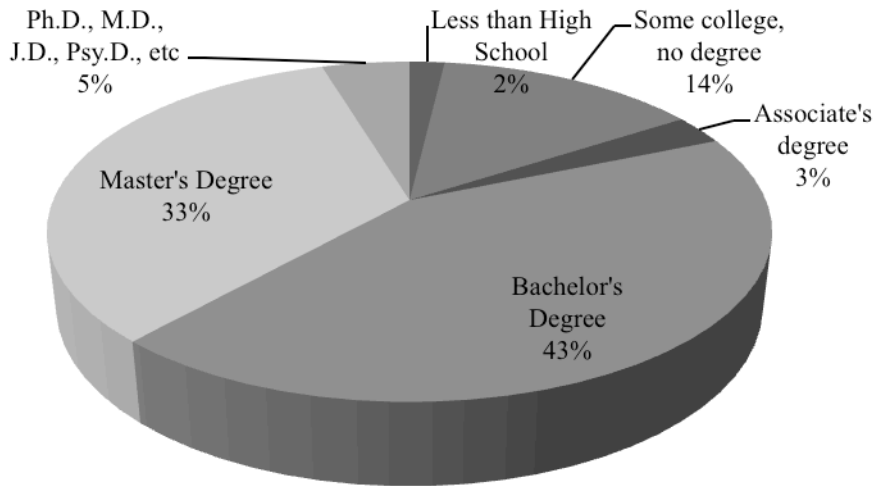


Figure 2

Education Levels of Female Participants



Appendix A

Human Subject Review Board Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

March 7, 2013

David L. Burton, M.S.W., Ph.D.
George Leibowitz, Ph.D., LICSW

Dear David & George,

Thank you for making all the requested revisions to your application. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished).

Sincerely and best of luck with your project,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marsha Pruet".

Marsha Pruet, PhD, MSL
Vice Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

David Burton, PhD is a professor at Smith College School for Social Work in Northampton, MA, and George Leibowitz, PhD is a professor at the University of Vermont. We are doing research with a group of students and colleagues to try to understand how pornography use is related to attitudes about sexual beliefs and behaviors. The information we collect will be used for graduate-level theses and in possible future presentations, publications, and/or dissertations.

To participate you must:

1. be 18 or older,
2. be able to read and write in English,
3. currently live in the United States, and
4. have viewed pornography in the last 12 months.

The study will be conducted with an online survey that will be available on a secure web page. We are asking some very personal and sensitive questions. You will be asked a series of questions regarding your age, race, sexual identity, income level, current state residence, and relationship status. You will also be asked about some of your sexual beliefs and behaviors, as well as questions about pornography use, emotions, personality, religion, and self esteem. If you indicate that you are a sexual offender, you will be asked specific questions about your offenses. You will not be asked for any information that would tell us who you are, and all your answers will be anonymous.

There is a risk that your participation in this study could cause uncomfortable or negative emotions to arise. If you feel a need or desire to leave the survey at any time, please do so. Our goal is not to upset you. We have included some referrals below for you to use if you feel a need to get help.

Possible benefits include the opportunity to reflect on your use of pornography and sexual behaviors and to enter into a lottery to get one of forty \$30 Amazon.com gift certificates to be drawn at the end of the project in September, 2013. You may also receive some satisfaction by helping to contribute to an understanding of the use and effects of pornography, which is an under-researched area.

This survey is totally anonymous. It will take about 30 to 40 minutes. All data from the questionnaire will be kept in a secure location for a period of three years, as required by Federal guidelines. Data stored electronically will be fully protected in encrypted files. If the material is needed beyond a three year period, it will continue to be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed when it is no longer needed.

If you enter the lottery for one of the \$30 gift certificates, you will be asked to do so using another database- we will not be able to link your survey responses to your name or email in any

way. We will have your email address to be used ONLY for the drawing. It will not be shared with anyone for any purpose. In other words, while your answers will be anonymous, your participation will not be if you enter the drawing. Only we will see the list and we will destroy it after the drawing.

Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any question on the survey. You may also withdraw from the study at any time by navigating away from the webpage on your browser. If you do this and have completed less than 25 percent of the survey, any answers you provided to any previous questions will be immediately deleted. However, once you complete 25 percent or more of the survey, it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us directly at dlburton@smith.edu or gleibowi@uvm.edu . Should you have any concerns about your rights or any aspect of the study, you are encouraged to contact Dr. David Burton at (413) 585-7985 or the Co-Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

*

BY CHECKING THE BOX BELOW THAT SAYS “I AGREE,” YOU ARE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS; AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Please print a copy of this page for your records.

I disagree

I agree

Appendix C

Participation Plea

Dear potential participant,

I am currently working on my Masters in Social Work at Smith College, School for Social Work. Over the past nine months I have been working with a team of MSWs and PhDs to craft a survey about Internet pornography use. Our hope is that this survey will produce new researching findings that will shed light onto the multifaceted world of this under-studied area.

You are receiving this email because you, or someone you know, may qualify to participate in my quantitative research study. To be eligible for participation one must meet all of the following criteria:

- Are 18 or older
- Are able to read and write in English
- Are currently living in the United States
- You have viewed pornography in the past 12 months and/or you currently view pornography

This survey is completely anonymous.

Researchers do not understand how pornography affects people. Correlations between pornography and beliefs about sex and sexual consent have not been tested. Or about effects on self esteem, positive or negative. Almost nothing has been written about women, clergy members, mental health providers, or LGBT people, and pornography.

If this sounds interesting to you, and even if it doesn't, we would be delighted if you would take part in this study! **All participants are eligible to enter into a raffle for \$30 [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) gift cards.**

If you qualify to participate in the anonymous survey, you can take the survey by following this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HYVM2JP>

The survey will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete.

Because the questionnaire asks for information regarding your sexual beliefs and behaviors as well as questions about pornography use, there is a small risk that your participation in this study could cause uncomfortable or negative emotions to arise. Our website (see link below) has a referral list should you feel you need help.

Your help is vital to us! Thanks for forwarding this to other potential participants!

Best,
Hannah

Check us out online (survey, facebook, website):

Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HYVM2JP>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Potential-Multiple-Meanings-of-Pornography-Research-Project/563188263696093>

Website: <http://pornsurvey.info/>