

Why Do Individuals Watch Pornographic Content? Influential Factors and Key Motivations for Watching Pornographic Content

Bireyler Neden Pornografik İçerik İzler? Pornografik İçerik İzlemenin Etkili Faktörleri ve Temel Motivasyonları

Harun İsmail İncekara¹, Servet Bayram¹, Enver Ulaş²

¹Istanbul Medipol University, Istanbul

¹Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine why individuals who watch pornographic content watch pornography and to explore the motivations underlying their watching behavior. The research was conducted based on phenomenological design which is one of the qualitative research methods. The research was determined by having semi-structured interviews with 8 participants (6 males and 2 females) who engage in problematic consumption of pornographic content and by purposive sampling method. In the study, researchers used a Personal Information Form and a semi-structured interview form as data collection tools. Semi-structured interview questions were posed to participants through online video conferencing using the "Zoom" program, and the responses given by the participants were recorded. These recordings were analyzed using the content analysis method. The data analyses of individuals who watch pornographic content were grouped under six themes named (1) watching motivations, (2) watching outcomes, (3) perspectives on content, (4) effects of content, (5) knowledge and (6) different pursuits. The study results indicate that curiosity and information-seeking, traumatic family life, role models and lack of social skills, emotional avoidance, stress, and boredom constitute the motivations for watching pornographic content. The participants were observed to report experiencing intense feelings of guilt, shame, and regret after watching pornographic content, and to have difficulties with adaptation to the work, school, or social environment in daily life. The research is thought to contribute to both experts and individuals interested in the research on providing psychological support for problematic consumption of pornographic content in the matter of deciding on which information can be used.

Keywords: Pornography, pornography addiction, sexuality, motivation

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, pornografik içerik izleyen bireylerin neden pornografi izledikleri ve bu izleme davranışlarının altındaki motivasyonlarının neler olduğunun incelenmesidir. Araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan olgu bilim deseni temelinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma sorunlu pornografik içerik izleyen 8 katılımcı (6 erkek ve 2 kadın) ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ve amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenmiştir. Çalışmada veri toplama araçları olarak araştırmacılar tarafından Kişisel Bilgi Formu ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları çevrimiçi (Zoom) programı üzerinden video konferans yöntemiyle görüşülerek katılımcılara sorulmuş ve verilen cevaplar kayda alınmıştır. Bu kayıtlar içerik analizi yöntemiyle çözümlenmiştir. Pornografik içerik izleyen bireylerin veri analizleri (1) izleme motivasyonları, (2) izleme sonuçları, (3) içeriklere bakış açısı, (4) içeriklerin etkileri, (5) bilgi birikimi ve (6) farklı arayışlar olarak isimlendirilen altı tema altında toplanmıştır. Çalışma sonuçları, merak ve bilgi arama, travmatik aile yaşamı, rol model ve sosyal beceri eksikliği, duygusal kaçınma, stres ve can sıkıntısı izleme motivasyonlarını oluşturduğu görülmüştür. Katılımcıların pornografik içerik izledikten sonra, suçluluk, utanç ve pişmanlık duygularını yoğun şekilde hissettiği, gündelik yaşamdaki iş, okul veya sosyal çevreye adaptasyonlarında başarısız olduklarını belirttiği görülmüştür. Çalışmanın sorunlu pornografik içerik izlemeye yönelik sunulacak psikolojik destek araştırmalarında hangi bilgilerin kullanılabileceği hususunda hem uzmanlara hem de ilgili bireylere katkı sunabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Pornografi, pornografi bağımlılığı, cinsellik, motivasyon

Introduction

Currently, the deliberate production and widespread consumption of pornographic content within the industrial sector, along with resultant addiction, are recognized as significant societal concerns (Rahman et al. 2022, Hanseder and Dantas 2023). Ongoing studies aim to understand the motivations driving individuals to engage with such materials (Healy-Cullen et al. 2022, Jhe et al. 2023). Generally, motivation refers to purposeful, goal-oriented behavioral drivers that initiate and guide actions toward desired goals (Boies 2002). Research indicates that the motivations for consuming pornographic content are multifaceted and linked to various factors (Paul and Shim 2008). These factors encompass an individual's core values, belief systems, gender, and sexual orientation (Brown et al. 2017). For instance, specific positive sexual motivations unique to individuals were found to correlate with increased sexual satisfaction, intimacy, desire, and positive emotional experiences during sexual activities (Impett et al. 2005, Muise et al. 2013, Tóth-Király et al. 2019). These positive emotions were observed to be mutually reinforcing. Conversely, negative sexual motivations were associated with consequences such as avoidance behaviors (Muise et al. 2018, Tóth-Király et al. 2019). While existing literature has explored the motivations behind consuming pornographic materials (Healy-Cullen et al. 2022, Jhe et al. 2023), research into their effects on sexual outcomes has been relatively limited (Brown et al. 2017).

In a study investigating the motivations behind pornography consumption, researchers employed the Pornography Consumption Inventory (PCI), revealing four primary motivations: (a) seeking sexual satisfaction, (b) satisfying sexual curiosity, (c) seeking excitement, fantasy, and novelty, and (d) avoiding emotional distress (Reid et al. 2011). Another study by Burns (2001) identified six significant motivations driving men's engagement with pornography: enhancing sexual experiences, relieving sexual tension, stimulating their partner's interest, experiencing sexual arousal, and obtaining knowledge about sex. It is evident that individuals' reasons for consuming pornography encompass cognitive, emotional, and social factors, leading them to view such content. Emotional avoidance as a motivation refers to using pornography as a method to distance or alleviate negative emotions like sadness, anxiety, or anger. Seeking excitement reflects a desire to escape into fantasy or seek novelty and thrills through pornography. Additionally, the motivation for sexual pleasure involves using pornography to heighten sexual arousal or engage in masturbation (Reid et al. 2011). Individuals engage in the consumption of pornographic content as a form of sexual behavior (Solano et al. 2018), shaping these actions in accordance with their sexual attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and behaviors (Attwood 2005, Kohut et al. 2017, Rissel et al. 2017).

The influence of social media on individuals' motivations to consume pornographic content is notable, as many create and share significant amounts of such content to boost their social media following. Particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant surge in the consumption of pornographic materials (Miller and McBain 2022), attributed largely to increased boredom and feelings of loneliness (Donadelli and Lalanne 2020). Individuals often consume this content with the intent of seeking information and arousing their sexual interests (Zattoni et al. 2021). While some studies focus on the production, consumption, and adverse effects leading to addiction associated with pornographic materials (Paquette et al. 2022; Rahman et al. 2022), other research endeavors seek to address and assist individuals dealing with this issue (Smaniotto et al. 2022, Grubbs et al. 2022, Antons et al. 2022, Hanseder and Dantas 2023). Studies highlight that pornography consumption adversely affects many individuals, particularly the younger demographic, prompting efforts to find solutions to mitigate these negative impacts. Concerning the detrimental effects of pornography, qualitative studies on individuals engaging in online sexual activities reveal various negative outcomes, including depression, social isolation, career setbacks, reduced productivity, damaged social networks, and financial problems (Schneider 2000). The observation persists that consuming pornography can have profoundly destructive effects on individuals. Moreover, studies explore the interconnectedness of pornographic content with diverse facets of sexuality, coinciding with the rise and widespread use of the Internet (Peter and Valkenburg 2006, Harkness et al. 2015, Grubbs and Perry 2019). Throughout this body of research, the least emphasized aspect remains the motivational reasons underlying the consumption of pornographic material.

When reviewing studies exploring the motivations behind consuming pornographic material (Paul and Shim 2008, Bóthe et al. 2021, Esplin et al. 2021, Bóthe et al. 2022), it becomes apparent that while these studies elucidate the negative effects of pornography on individuals, they fall short of fully explaining why individuals persistently engage with it. This research adopts a qualitative approach to delve into the motivations driving this behavior. The primary objective is to scrutinize why individuals watch pornography and unearth the principal motivations underlying such engagement, utilizing phenomenological data analysis. Derived from related literature in the field, the following questions form the crux of this study: "(1) Why do you watch

pornography? What are the motivations that lead you to watch pornography? (2) What kind of changes do you observe in yourself after you watch pornography? (3) What are your opinions on watching pornography (ethical, religious, social, etc.)? Explain. (4) How does your consumption of pornography affect your sexual life? (5) Do you have a moment that you remember related to sexuality that affected you? If so, what is it? (6) Do you think watching pornography leads to different sexual pursuits? How?" form the research sub-problems. This study aims to offer insights into how information gleaned from these inquiries can be employed in psychological support initiatives addressing problematic pornography use.

Methods

The study was conducted using phenomenological design which is one of the qualitative data collection methods. Phenomenological design is to focus on discerned phenomena within the society that are not yet fully known in detail (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2013). In accordance with the objectives of the study, the reasons why individuals watch pornographic content and their opinions about the motivations underlying their behaviors were described.

Sample

The participants were determined through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows for in-depth exploration of situations thought to have deep information (Şimşek and Yıldırım 2000). In this sampling method, the criteria essential for selection are defined. It is presumed that participants selected based on criteria can represent the entire population altogether (Tavşancıl and Aslan 2001). Within this context, contact has been made with the self-help group known as "Turkey NeverFap" (<https://neverfapturkiye.com>), which is regarded as one of the groups addressing pornography addiction. Information regarding the researcher's purpose and subject matter has been provided through social media (WhatsApp). After the announcement, eight voluntary participants were included in the interview. There are no inclusion or exclusion criteria about the individuals who participate in the research.

Data Collection Tools

Six Personal Information forms and an interview form consisting of 6 questions were developed with the aim of data collection. Semi-structured interview technic was used in the research. While interview questions were being prepared by the researchers, attention was paid to the principles of being multidimensional and not being directive even though the questions needed to be comprehensible (Taylor et al. 2015). It was aimed to gain detailed insights into the perspectives of individuals who watch pornographic content regarding the topic of the study through semi-structured interview questions. All the questions in the form were prepared utilizing the related field literature and evaluated by the researchers with the dimensions of aim, meaning and extent. With the aim of examining the clarity of statements, on February 18, 2023, a pilot study with approximately 30 minutes duration involving three participants was conducted online (via Zoom). The participants in the pilot study were not included in the research participant group. By doing so, internal validity (credibility) was tried to be ensured. Evaluations conducted by examining the raw data for the objectivity of the study increased the consistency of increased the consistency of the research results. For the external validity (transferability) dimension, the results of the study were presented by being described clearly and using the way of direct quotation to the participants' expressions. With the interview questions, it is focused on determining individuals' motivations and opinions regarding pornography consumption, the effect of pornography on sexual experiences, sexual memories, and the identification of different sexual pursuits. To provide examples to the questions, questions regarding to pornographic content watching behaviors were posed, such as "What, do you think, are the underlying reasons for your consumption of pornographic content?" "In your opinion, what are the effects of pornographic content on an individual?" and "How does pornographic content affect an individual's sexual experiences?"

Procedure

In order to conduct the research, the initial approval was received from the Istanbul Medipol University Social Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee (2023/26, dated 13.02.2023). With the aim of data collection, initial voluntary consent forms were recieved from 8 participants who were members of the self-help group NeverFap (which individuals expressing problematic consumption of pornographic content establish). Appointments were scheduled, and interviews were conducted between February 20-25, 2023. The interviews

were conducted by the responsible author. In the interviews conducted with the individuals consuming pornographic content, attention was paid to pose questions in an unbiased and a non-directive manner. Participants were informed about the objectives and the topic of the study, and it was indicated that their real names would not be used, and the data would only be used for scientific purposes. Interviews were conducted with video turned off, recording only the audio, with the permission of the participants. Each participant was attended to semi-structured interviews (via Zoom program) lasting approximately 35-40 minutes. The interviews lasted 292 minutes in total, and attention was paid for not to digress from the aim of the interviews. 64 pages of data was obtained from the transcription of the audio recordings, and the data were made suitable for the analysis through Microsoft Word program.

The research process was certainly not directed by the personal judgment of the researchers. All participants were informed about the objectives and the topic of the study, and a written consent form was obtained for the individuals as to participate in the study voluntarily. In addition, it was indicated that they could terminate the interview any time they like, and collected data would only be used for scientific purposes. Participants were given nicknames as "P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8".

Statistical Analysis

Content analysis method was used in examining the motivations of individuals for consuming pornographic content. The aim of the content analysis is to bring similar data together within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to interpret them by organizing them in a way that readers can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2013). Firstly, the data obtained from the research was analyzed and some notes were taken under the opinions of the participants related to the (research questions) determined at the beginning of the research. Then, these notes were written separately for each different purpose of the research and coded according to their similarities. The coding process was conducted by finding themes, organizing the data according to themes and codes, and interpreting the results; expressions which were not related to the topic were sorted out and a flexible approach was tried to be exhibited by considering the originality of qualitative research. Attention was paid to ensure that the themes form a meaningful integrity and have the ability to explain the data obtained. The list of themes and codes obtained from the research is given in Table 2. In addition, direct quotations were made from the responses to present the participants' opinions on the topic in an unbiased manner. Regarding direct quotations, striking (different opinion), explanatory (conformity to the theme) and diversity criteria were taken into consideration (Ünver et al. 2010).

It is indicated that reporting the data obtained in the research in detail and explaining how the researcher reached the results are among the essential criteria of validity in a qualitative study (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2013). With the aim of ensuring the validity and reliability of this study, two procedures were conducted. At first, with the aim of ensuring validity, the process of data analysis was explained in detail, and the data obtained were presented together as quantitative and qualitative in the "Findings" part. To ensure the reliability of comparisons were made by presenting the results which were obtained in the research to 2 expert opinions with the aim of confirmation. The reliability of the research was calculated by using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{agreement}}{\text{agreement} + \text{disagreement}}$) determining the number of agreement and disagreement in the comparisons. The research's reliability calculation result is 90%. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), in qualitative research, if there is 90% or more researcher and expert opinion agreement is reached, the study is regarded reliable. In this condition, the study can be claimed reliable. In addition, with the aim of determining the credibility level in the study, the responses given by the participant were included in "Findings" part. For the transferability dimension of the study, the selection and characteristics of the participants, the stages of data collection and data analysis were presented clearly. Characteristics of the participants were tabulated, and the responses given to the research questions were given through direct quotations.

Results

The results which reflect characteristics of the participants, such as gender, age, occupation, cohabitation, age of first pornography watching and the number of inactive days in the process (the number of days not watching pornographic content and not masturbating for addiction treatment with NeverFap membership) are given in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, the participants consisted of six males and three females whose ages range between the ages of 18-28. While most participants were university students (5 individuals), there was also one participant from each with a different occupation: dentist, teacher, freelance worker, and fashion sector worker. While five of them reported living with a flat mate, three of them reported living with family. As seen in Table 1, the ages at

which participants first watched pornography was listed as 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15. The number of inactive days in the defined process might range from 3-5 days to 95 days and was expressed as 1 year for one person.

Participants	Gender	Age	Occupation	Cohabitant	Age of first watching	# of process days
P1	Male	18	Student	Family	8	54 days
P2	Male	21	Student	Flat mate	10	90 days
P3	Male	26	Teacher	Flat mate	9	1 year
P4	Female	18	Student	Flat mate	13	54 days
P5	Female	19	Student	Family	12	95 days
P6	Male	28	Freelancer	Family	11	3 days
P7	Male	25	Dentist	Flat mate	12	50 days
P8	Female	25	Fashion sector	Flat mate	15	20 days

Data analyses of the individuals watching pornographic content were group under six themes named (1) motivations for pornography, (2) outcomes of watching pornographic content, (3) perspectives on pornographic content, (4) effects of pornographic content, (5) sexual knowledge, and (6) sexual pursuits. Each heading and the codes under these headings are shown in Table 2 below. The presentation of the findings of the study was made by explaining each theme and the codes under the themes within an order. The opinions of the participants were indicated with direct quotations for describing the results in detail.

Themes	Codes	Participants	f
Watching Motivations	Curiosity and Information-Seeking	P2	1
	Traumatic Family Life	P3	1
	Lack of Role Model and Social Skills	P6	1
	Emotional Avoidance, Stress and Boredom	P1, P4, P5, P7, P8	5
Outcomes of Watching	Repressed Impulses	P1	1
	Guilt and Questioning	P1, P3, P4	3
	Psychological Collapse	P4, P7, P8	3
	Focusing Problem	P4, P5, P6	3
Perspectives on Contents	Social-Cultural-Religious Pressure	P1, P2	2
	Pornography Industry	P4, P5, P8	3
	Ethical Social Isolation	P3, P6, P7	3
Effects of Pornographic Content	Sexual Performance Anxiety	P1, P6, P4, P5	4
	Negative Sexual Self-Schema	P3, P7	2
	Sexual Dissatisfaction	P2, P8	2
Sexual Knowledge	Sexual Knowledge and Lack of Experience	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7	6
	Traumatic Experience	P3	1
	Income	P8	1
Different Pursuits	Sexual Insatiability	P1, P2, P3, P7	4
	Excitement Seeking	P4, P5, P6, P8	4

Six themes expressed as the sub-problems of the research, the codes related to them and the frequency-repeat numbers (f) depending on which participants are observed in (P) are presented in Table 2 above. As seen, main motivations for watching are regarded as curiosity and information seeking, traumatic family life, lack of role models and social skills, emotional avoidance, stress and boredom; repressed impulses in outcomes theme, guilt and questioning, psychological collapse, focusing problems; social-cultural-religious pressure, pornography industry and ethical-social isolation in perspectives on contents theme; sexual performance anxiety, negative sexual self-schema and sexual dissatisfaction in content effects theme; lack of knowledge, lack of sexual knowledge and lack of experience, traumatic experience in knowledge theme and sexual insatiability and excitement seeking in different pursuits theme. Sample opinions of the participants related to six themes and codes are summarized under the relevant headings.

1. Motivations for Watching Pornography

In this theme, motivations of participants for watching pornographic content were curiosity and information seeking, traumatic family life, lack of role models and social skills, emotional avoidance, stress and boredom. Participants' motivation for watching pornographic content can be seen in the following sample statements:

"At first, I started by wondering. Since it gives pleasure; you get into the habit of doing that, especially in such ages, you start doing more often. Whenever one feels bad, stressed, one goes there to relax. Even if I do not do anything or I feel empty, I go there to enjoy myself. (P2- Curiosity and information seeking)

"Whenever I experience an event making traumatic impact on me, I realized watching as a result of that. I lost my dad at the age of 14 and my pornography watching behavior became more frequent. I felt bad, I watched porn; I watched porn, I felt bad. It is completely a vicious cycle. (P3- Traumatic family life)

"What's different for me... is, for example, I stayed at a dorm during secondary school, the older students in 8th grade told us "I watched it like this, I watched it like that. I did this, I did that.". Me and my friends decided to go to an internet cafe to watch it too. Then the next thing I knew was that I was watching it by myself. I moved on to high school. In high school... I didn't have much of a social circle. Then I started watching it when I was alone, hours passing without me realizing. Then university years came and there was no end to this, I kept on watching. You can go somewhere different, do other things but no, it doesn't stop, you can't get rid of it. I watched it everywhere. I mean, this has nothing to do with your friends actually. Even if you try to socialize, you can't stop.(P6- Lack of role models and social skills)

"I remember from the past that I actually always watched it when my mood was negative, I mean, it is now like this, but I remember it was like that in the past as well. Whenever I had a negative emotional state, I found myself watching pornography. I argue with my boyfriend, or something goes wrong in my life, I immediately open pornography and relax, pornography relaxes me a lot, it takes away that negative emotional state." (P8- Emotional avoidance, stress, and boredom)

2. Outcomes of Watching Pornographic Content

When the outcomes of watching content theme is examined, it is observed that participants responded as repressed impulses, guilt and questioning, psychological collapse and focusing problems. Participants express difficulties in dealing with both emotional problems and carrying out their daily responsibilities after watching pornographic content, as in the following examples.

"Frankly, it was completely regretful and there is also that I was a student in 'İmam Hatip' in middle school. Since I knew it was wrong, it gave me more pleasure but of course there was regret occurred." (P1- Repressed impulses)

"I feel like a numb person whose capacity of staying in the moment and perceiving is almost zero. I observe changes in myself, living only based on impulses, as if I've lost the meaning of life, my own values, and I'm floating in emptiness. I experience significant decrease in my patience level, not enjoying life and any type of communication, a sense of that everything is futile effort, a feeling of distancing from everybody, the condition that I should never eye-contact with anybody and feeling changes as if I became a vile person." (P7- Psychological Collapse)

"Next day, for example, fatigue is not only mental fatigue but also physical. I also have difficulties in focusing. I can't sit down and study; even if I sit, I have problem in focusing. Normally, I am a person studying for 2-3 hours but I can't sit and study for like half an hour. Additionally, recently, I talk to myself and say, "You create contents, will you do these disgusting things." (P4- Focusing Problems)

3. Perspectives on Pornographic Contents

In this theme perspectives of the participants on pornographic contents are stated as social, cultural, and religious pressure, pornography industry, ethical and social pressure. Individuals, in the following statements, express that their repressed feelings towards pornographic content play an active role in watching behavior, and that reasons such as the charming contents of the pornography industry and social withdrawal are also effective.

"Frankly, I used to concern about religious dimension of it. As time passed, religious part was no more important for me. Later, I started to question myself and I started to think that it was wrong. You know, my ancestors did not experience such a thing, I did not come from such a generation. It is against the nature of human being. By doing so, I thought it was wrong." (P1- Social, cultural, and religious pressure)

"At first, I used to concern only about religious dimension and I was considering myself as a sinner in my own religion. I was thinking that Allah did not love me, and I would never reach His mercy. I noticed that the sector is a disgusting sector, I mean, this sector makes use of women and turns them into object, and this also has significant damages socially and ethically. It isolates individuals from the society and completely removes them

from the society. It lowers one's self-respect and self-confidence. It is actually a system designed very cleverly. Constant differentiation of the contents makes individuals more addicted to the sector and so they gain more while we lose. It is a harmful and bad sector both ethically and socially. (P5- Pornography industry)

"For years, I have done this knowing that it was wrong considering it both religiously, ethically, and humanely. You know, there is no area -family, religion, and anything else- which it does not affect in our lives but doing such a behavior does not happen with a desire. In short, I felt isolated in terms of both religiously and ethically for years."(P3- Ethical-social isolation)

4. Effects of Pornographic Contents

Individuals express that they experience sexual performance anxiety with being under the influence of pornographic contents and thus having a negative sexual self-schema and that effects their sexual life negatively.

"Even we are watching, we know that a scenario is being followed there. In fact, it is impossible that the man made a 1.5-hour movie. No man can show such a performance in that period of time. And for my partner, at the end of the day she is a woman in our society, I cannot do such a thing against that woman; if I do, the relationship will end. So, you cannot approach and treat a woman like that. It is a direct reason for a divorce. That's why, I think relationship should be conducted with a certain level of respect, love, and courtesy. (P6- Sexual performance anxiety)

"I can frankly say that the addiction took all of my sexual functions away. It completely ended my sexual life, and I could never be successful in my sexual life again. I think I am still in the same condition because I could not get rid of it. This is the thing that scares me of marriage. I don't think I will not have a healthy sexual life even though I get married."(P3- Negative sexual self-schema)

"To be honest, during adolescence, it was making my sexual life more colorful. You know, I was being more satisfied. After all, you watch different things, different scenarios, etc. You know, as I do it, my sexual life was more colorful but when I became and adult, things did not go as it was. While I was being more satisfied with simpler things before, my sense of satisfaction with the effect of the things that I watch decreased dramatically."(P8- Sexual Dissatisfaction)

5. Knowledge

Participants expressed that pornography is related to their knowledge or experiences and that this can cause traumatic experiences for some individuals in the following examples:

"I have 4-5 memories that I experienced in the past and they are even in a level of creating traumatic impacts. I had a sexual intercourse with a person who is very precious to me. Since I was addicted to pornography, my mind worked in that way. Even so, I thought about pornography during the sexual intercourse. Once I wanted to go home as soon as the intercourse ended because I wanted to masturbate. Thus, my relationship ended, my partner immediately asked whether there was another person being in relation with me. But of course, I could not say that it was because of the masturbation and pornography." (P3- Traumatic experience)

6. Different Pursuits

In the following examples, that watching pornography can cause different pursuits and as a result of this individuals may turn to different fantastic behaviors for satisfaction and excitement are stated:

"Porn industry is a huge industry. It earns Netflix's annual capital in a month; it is always in the first place of search engines. This industry is somehow... works the threshold value of the dopamine systems of mammals. For example, when a person is a standard porn watcher, it will become extremely boring after a while because the dopamine threshold value will have risen, and the usual porn videos will not satisfy the person just as much. In addition to this, the brain will close off its dopamine receptors to protect itself from the instant dopamine intake. Thus, dopamine reception will decrease, and threshold value will increase. For these reasons, the person will search for other categories that will stimulate him - watching hardcore content, homosexual content even if unwillingly. It may become as severe as watching child porn. For this reason, I think watching porn affects one's abnormal sexual desires. Especially in puberty when the development of body and mind is so intense, the adolescent is exposed to so many homosexual contents that I think his sexual orientation may change during his search for dopamine stimulation. The watcher who thinks the people doing the act in the video are enjoying

it... will want to try it unfortunately. In my opinion, pornography will affect his intense sexual fantasies and his abnormal desires.” (P7- Sexual Insatiability)

“If we talk about sexual life, you know, after a certain aspect, one may not be satisfied with his partner, and they may want the sexuality to cross the line or they may seek a different fantasy.” (P4- Excitement seeking)

“I actually did not want to mention this but... University’s first years were a period in which I was having hard times economically. Some content creators pay you if you send something to them and they share such things. I tried something like this for a while, so when I think of sexual memories, I remember this short-term adventure. (P8- Economic Anxiety)

Discussion

This study scrutinized the primary motivations driving individuals who consume pornographic content, yielding diverse findings. Participants' reasons for watching pornography were linked to various factors, including curiosity, information-seeking, a history of traumatic family experiences, the absence of role models, deficient social skills, emotional avoidance, stress, and boredom. Moreover, individuals tended to experience feelings of guilt, shame, regret, and psychological distress after viewing pornography. The research also identified associations between pornography consumption and social, cultural, and religious pressures.

The research highlighted "curiosity and information seeking, traumatic family life, lack of role models and social skills, emotional avoidance, stress, and boredom" as fundamental motivations driving individuals to watch pornographic content. Essentially, it uncovered that individuals turn to pornography as a coping mechanism for the challenges encountered in their daily lives. Additionally, the study revealed that past trauma and introverted personality traits also influence viewing behaviors. Consistent findings were evident in the broader literature: increased pornography consumption correlated with depression, emotional avoidance (Baltieri et al. 2014), and a decline in quality of life. Other studies emphasized the pivotal role of motivations in pornography use (Grubbs et al. 2019, Tóth-Király et al. 2019), indicating that individuals consuming pornographic content associated positively with motivations related to emotional avoidance, excitement seeking, and sexual pleasure. These motivations were strongly linked to coping-related motivations (such as distress avoidance, emotional avoidance, and stress reduction) and problematic pornography use, while showing no correlation with sexual curiosity and self-discovery (Reid et al. 2011).

In this research, “repressed impulses, guilt and questioning, psychological collapse and focusing problems” were expressed in relation to the outcomes of watching pornography. Individuals stated experiencing intense feelings of guilt, shame, and regret after watching pornographic content, and failing at adaptation to the work, school, or social environment in daily life. On the other hand, it was observed that individuals try to suppress their sexual urges due to the social and cultural norms in which they live, and as a result, they engage in undesired behaviors. When the field literature was examined, similar findings to the results of this research were observed. It was observed that watching pornographic content is a “compulsive, addictive, impulsive and uncontrollable” behavior (Bancroft and Vukadinovic 2004) which is relevant to the problems resulted from the discordance of “anxiety, shame, guilt, potential legal problems, loneliness, self-blame and behaviors and personal values or beliefs (McBride et al 2008). According to findings of another research, watching pornographic content in the society, was observed to be more socially accepted by men compared to women in Western societies and that this situation is associated with repressed impulses as a result of social and cultural context (Gagnon and Simon 2005).

In the study, participants' perspective on pornographic contents was examined. It was revealed that participants' perspectives are “social, cultural, and religious pressure, pornography industry, ethical-social isolation. Participants felt being under pressure with the negative perspectives of social, cultural, and religious mechanisms towards pornography. It was stated that pornography industry has a great power in the Internet environment and leads viewers to have unlimited sexual impulses. In addition, it was revealed that watching pornography increases the feelings of guilt and shame and as a result of that individuals have lives isolated from the society. Women's perspectives on pornography in the field literature, it is only acceptable when it is watched within a socially appropriate environment and person (Gagnon and Simon 2005), cultural scenarios related to pornography are shameful and objectionable religiously and ethically but acceptable socially (Grubbs et al. 2019). In a study examining the extent to which pornographic contents affect men, it was observed that participants were influenced by the sexual performance of male actors in the contents and started to question their own sexual performance (Tydén and Rogala 2004, Häggström-Nordin et al. 2005).

The findings from this research highlighted the impact of pornographic content on individuals, revealing manifestations such as "sexual performance anxiety, negative sexual self-schema, and sexual dissatisfaction." Participants were noted to develop negative sexual self-schemas influenced by unrealistic scenarios depicted in pornography. These findings resonated with several studies within the field literature, consistently demonstrating similar outcomes. In the study by Lamber and Nagash (2017), it was noted that men consuming pornographic content exhibited lower levels of sexual satisfaction. Another study by Sun et al. (2016) revealed a mixed response, with half of the participants reporting increased sexual satisfaction while the other half experienced sexual dysfunction. Particularly among young adults, pornographic scenarios were found to construct a frame of reference for physical and sexual performance. These scenarios often presented an unequal portrayal of men and women, emphasizing thin women with augmented features as more attractive (Grubbs et al. 2019). Furthermore, individuals consuming internet pornography were found to experience heightened excitement and sexual satisfaction (Young 2008). However, the frequency of pornography use exhibited weak to moderate negative associations with levels of sexual satisfaction (Yucel and Gassanov 2010, Brown et al. 2017, Willoughby and Leonhardt 2020).

The research results also underscored the significance of "lack of sexual knowledge and experience, traumatic experiences, and economic earnings" in relation to participants' understanding. A majority of the participants had limited or no sexual experience. One participant chose not to revisit a past sexual experience, attributing it to the influence of pornographic content. Additionally, a participant mentioned resorting to selling sexual content during past financial struggles for monetary gain. The influence of pornographic content seemed to contribute to negative perceptions about individuals' sexual lives, potentially leading to traumatic sexual experiences. This impact extends beyond current well-being, potentially affecting past and future experiences. Similar findings within the field literature suggested that individuals created and shared pornographic material on social media platforms to gain followers and generate income (Raja Nur Faznie Aida 2020).

Upon analyzing the study's outcomes, it became evident that individuals consuming pornographic content tended to harbor opinions revolving around "sexual insatiability and excitement-seeking." These individuals expressed heightened excitement, a sense of limitlessness, attractiveness, and intensified sexual desires while engaging with pornography. Similar patterns emerged in the field literature. For instance, Black et al. (1997) highlighted various motivations behind pornography consumption: 58% of participants cited distraction from other worries, 42% found it reduced daily concerns, 22% felt temporarily better, 14% associated it with feeling important, 11% sought temporary empowerment, and 8% pursued it for excitement. Additionally, research indicated a correlation between high usage of visual sexual stimuli and behaviors linked to excitement-seeking, emotional distress, loneliness, impulsivity, and compulsiveness (Ley et al. 2014).

Several limitations must be acknowledged in this research, potentially affecting its generalizability. These include non-random participant selection, a narrow average age range, an uneven gender distribution, limited marital status and sexual experiences among participants, and the use of online (Zoom) interviews. Furthermore, the brevity of participant responses to some research questions adds to the study's limitations.

Conclusion

In diagnostic manuals such as the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), the classification of "pornography addiction" isn't officially recognized as a distinct psychiatric disorder. Nonetheless, some experts in the field have proposed that excessive consumption of pornography might fall within the scope of "hypersexual disorder" (APA 2013, Roehr 2013). Despite this suggestion, the DSM-5 opted not to include it, citing a lack of sufficient terminology and experimental evidence (Spenhoff et al. 2013). Nevertheless, there's a growing interest among researchers and clinicians in studying problematic patterns associated with the consumption of pornographic content. Understanding the motivations behind individuals' engagement with such content despite its adverse effects across multiple dimensions is considered vital.

Based on the outcomes of this study, several recommendations are put forward for future research. Firstly, conducting quantitative studies to investigate factors contributing to the increasing use of pornography, such as the widespread accessibility of the Internet, declining costs of devices, cultural shifts, etc., could yield valuable insights. Secondly, placing emphasis on the psychological impacts of pornography use on mental health could prove pivotal. Exploring whether heavy consumption of pornography correlates with conditions like depression, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, and other psychological aspects would be advantageous.

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Authors Contributions: The author(s) have declared that they have made a significant scientific contribution to the study and have assisted in the preparation or revision of the manuscript

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was declared.

Financial Disclosure: No financial support was declared for this study.