

The Mediating Role of Sexual Arousal and Gratification in the Relationship Between online Pornography Motivation and Tendencies towards Internet-Pornography-Viewing Disorder (IPD)

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Abstract

This study explores the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD) among young adults who reported watching pornography. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey of 405 participants, data were collected through online questionnaires distributed via pornography-related groups and websites. The results indicate that online pornography motivation significantly predicts tendencies towards IPD, with sexual arousal and gratification serving as crucial mediators. Young adults with higher motivations to view online pornography experience greater sexual arousal and gratification, which in turn increase tendencies towards problematic use. This highlights the importance of addressing motivations for pornography use and the reinforcing effects of sexual arousal and gratification in interventions aimed at reducing IPD. Practical strategies suggested include implementing cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), psychoeducational programs, and mindfulness-based interventions such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). In conclusion, the study provides empirical evidence on the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD. By understanding these dynamics, mental health professionals can develop targeted strategies to support young adults in managing problematic pornography use, ultimately improving their overall wellbeing. These findings offer valuable insights for both academics and practitioners in mental health and behavioral intervention.

Keywords: Internet Online Pornography Motivation, Sexual Arousal, Gratification, Internet-Pornography-Viewing Disorder (IPD), Behavioral Intervention

Introduction

The advent of the internet has revolutionized access to sexual content, resulting in a significant increase in online pornography consumption. The pervasive availability of such content has raised concerns about its potential for fostering problematic behaviors, including internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD). IPD is characterized by compulsive use, withdrawal symptoms, and adverse impacts on daily life and mental health (Grubbs et al., 2015). Understanding the dynamics behind online pornography consumption is crucial for identifying individuals at risk and developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Online pornography consumption is driven by various motivations, including sexual curiosity, emotional coping, and seeking pleasure (Carvalho et al., 2015). Sexual arousal is a primary motivator, often driving individuals to repeatedly seek out sexually explicit material. This can lead to habitual viewing patterns and potentially problematic use (Weinstein et al., 2015). Additionally, some individuals use pornography as a means of coping with stress, anxiety, or loneliness, turning to it as a form of emotional escape (Kraus et al., 2016). These diverse motivations highlight the complex nature of pornography consumption and the necessity for multifaceted research approaches.

The psychological and behavioral effects of pornography consumption vary widely among individuals. For some, moderate use does not lead to significant negative consequences. However, for others, particularly those with predisposing factors such as high levels of stress or poor emotional regulation skills, pornography consumption can become problematic (Kor et al., 2014). This problematic use can interfere with daily functioning, relationships, and overall mental health, leading to the development of IPD (Brand et al., 2011). Exploring the factors that contribute to these different outcomes is essential for understanding the pathways to IPD.

The role of internet accessibility in facilitating pornography consumption cannot be overstated. The internet provides an anonymous, convenient, and often free platform for accessing a vast array of sexual content (Duffy et al., 2016). This ease of access can lower the threshold for use and increase the frequency and duration of consumption, particularly among young adults who are highly adept at using digital technologies (Peter & Valkenburg, 2016). The implications of this accessibility for developing problematic viewing habits are significant, warranting further investigation into how internet use patterns contribute to IPD. Young adults are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of online pornography due to their developmental stage, which is characterized by identity exploration and heightened sexual curiosity (Brown & L'Engle, 2009). The exposure to and consumption of online pornography during this formative period can shape sexual attitudes, behaviors, and expectations (Willoughby et al., 2019). Additionally, young adults may lack the maturity and self-regulation skills necessary to moderate their consumption, increasing the risk of developing problematic use patterns (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). Understanding the unique vulnerabilities of this age group is crucial for developing age-appropriate interventions.

Given the multifaceted nature of online pornography consumption and its potential for leading to IPD, comprehensive research is essential. Such research should aim to disentangle the complex interactions between motivations for use, consumption patterns, and the

development of problematic behaviors. By examining these dynamics in detail, researchers can identify key risk factors and protective factors, informing the development of targeted interventions to prevent and treat IPD. Additionally, understanding the role of individual differences, such as personality traits and coping styles, can provide deeper insights into why some individuals are more susceptible to developing IPD than others.

Motivations for online Pornography Consumption

Sexual arousal is one of the most significant motivators for online pornography consumption. The internet provides a vast and easily accessible repository of sexually explicit material that caters to a wide array of preferences, making it a convenient source for sexual gratification (Peter & Valkenburg, 2016). Studies have shown that the physiological and psychological responses to sexual arousal can lead to repeated use of pornography, as individuals seek to replicate the pleasure and excitement experienced during previous sessions (Laier et al., 2013). This habitual consumption can escalate over time, potentially leading to more frequent and intense viewing behaviors, which are key risk factors for developing internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD) (Brand et al., 2011).

Another critical motivator for online pornography consumption is the use of sexually explicit material as a means of emotional coping and stress relief. Individuals may turn to pornography to escape from negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, or depression (Kraus et al., 2016). The temporary relief provided by pornography can create a feedback loop, where individuals increasingly rely on this behavior to manage their emotional states. This reliance on pornography for emotional regulation can lead to problematic usage patterns, as the short-term benefits often come at the cost of long-term psychological and relational health (Grubbs et al., 2015). Understanding this coping mechanism is crucial for developing effective interventions aimed at reducing reliance on pornography for emotional support.

Curiosity and the desire for sexual exploration are also significant motivators for online pornography consumption, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Brown & L'Engle, 2009). The internet allows for anonymous exploration of sexual content, which can be appealing to individuals who are in the process of discovering their sexual preferences and identities (Willoughby et al., 2019). This exploratory behavior is often driven by a natural curiosity about sex and a desire to learn more about sexual activities and behaviors in a safe, controlled environment. While this exploration can be a normal part of sexual development, it can also lead to excessive use and potential dependency if not moderated.

The pursuit of pleasure and gratification is another powerful motivator for consuming online pornography. The immediate and intense pleasure derived from viewing sexually explicit material activates the brain's reward system, reinforcing the behavior and making it more likely to be repeated (Stark et al., 2017). Over time, individuals may develop a preference for the highly stimulating and varied content available online, which can diminish their interest in real-life sexual activities and relationships (Gola et al., 2017). This shift in preference can contribute to the development of IPD, as individuals seek to achieve the same level of gratification through increasingly frequent and diverse pornography consumption.

Impact of online Pornography for Mental Health

The consumption of online pornography has been linked to various forms of psychological distress, including heightened levels of anxiety. Research indicates that individuals who engage in frequent pornography use may experience increased anxiety, particularly related

to their sexual performance and body image (Grubbs et al., 2015). The unrealistic portrayals of sex and bodies in pornography can create unattainable standards, leading viewers to feel inadequate and anxious about their own sexual experiences and appearances (Weinstein et al., 2015). This anxiety can extend beyond the bedroom, affecting overall mental health and contributing to a cycle of negative emotional states.

Frequent consumption of online pornography is also associated with higher rates of depression and feelings of loneliness. Individuals who use pornography as a coping mechanism for negative emotions often find that it exacerbates feelings of isolation and depression over time (Kor et al., 2014). The temporary relief provided by pornography use can lead to increased dependency, where individuals withdraw from real-life social interactions, exacerbating their loneliness and depressive symptoms (Voon et al., 2014). Studies have shown that this cycle can be particularly pronounced in individuals who lack strong social support networks, highlighting the importance of addressing both emotional and social needs in interventions (Duffy et al., 2016).

Online pornography consumption can negatively impact intimate relationships and sexual satisfaction. The habitual use of pornography can create unrealistic expectations about sex, which can lead to dissatisfaction with real-life sexual partners (Willoughby et al., 2019). This dissatisfaction can strain relationships, leading to decreased emotional and sexual intimacy between partners (Brown & L'Engle, 2009). Moreover, excessive pornography use has been linked to decreased sexual desire and erectile dysfunction in men, further complicating intimate relationships and contributing to a sense of frustration and inadequacy (Gola et al., 2017). These relationship issues can significantly affect overall mental health and wellbeing. The constant stimulation and gratification provided by online pornography can lead to cognitive and emotional dysregulation. The brain's reward system becomes increasingly attuned to the immediate gratification provided by pornography, which can impair an individual's ability to manage longer-term goals and emotional responses (Stark et al., 2017). This dysregulation can manifest in difficulties with concentration, decision-making, and impulse control, making it challenging to manage daily responsibilities and maintain emotional stability (Snagowski & Brand, 2015). Over time, these cognitive and emotional challenges can contribute to broader mental health issues, highlighting the complex interplay between pornography use and psychological wellbeing.

The Mediation Role of Sexual Arousal and Gratification in Pornography Use

Sexual arousal is a key factor driving the consumption of online pornography. It involves both physiological and psychological responses to sexually explicit material, which can lead to habitual viewing behaviors (Laier et al., 2013). The immediate and intense pleasure derived from sexual arousal reinforces the behavior, making it more likely to recur. This reinforcement process is central to understanding how individuals can transition from casual viewing to more compulsive use patterns (Brand et al., 2011). Research has demonstrated that individuals who experience high levels of sexual arousal during pornography use are more likely to engage in frequent and prolonged viewing sessions, which can contribute to the development of internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD) (Voon et al., 2014).

Gratification, encompassing the satisfaction and pleasure obtained from pornography consumption, plays a significant role in reinforcing this behavior. The reward system in the brain, particularly the release of dopamine, is activated during pleasurable activities, including viewing pornography (Stark et al., 2017). This activation reinforces the behavior, making individuals more likely to seek out pornography to achieve similar levels of pleasure. Over

time, this can lead to dependency, where individuals need increasingly frequent and varied content to experience the same level of gratification (Gola et al., 2017). This dependency is a hallmark of IPD and highlights the powerful role of the brain's reward system in the development of compulsive pornography use.

Empirical studies have provided substantial evidence supporting the roles of sexual arousal and gratification in online pornography consumption. A study by Maas et al. (2018) found that individuals who reported higher levels of sexual arousal during pornography use were more likely to exhibit problematic behaviors associated with IPD. Similarly, research by Snagowski and Brand (2015) demonstrated that the level of gratification derived from pornography was a significant predictor of the frequency and intensity of use. These studies highlight the importance of addressing both sexual arousal and gratification in understanding and treating IPD, as these factors are integral to the development and maintenance of problematic use patterns.

The interaction between sexual arousal, gratification, and IPD is complex and multifaceted. While sexual arousal initiates the use of pornography, the gratification derived from it sustains and reinforces the behavior. This cyclical process can lead to a pattern of escalating use, where individuals seek out more explicit or varied content to achieve the same level of arousal and gratification (Brand et al., 2016). Understanding this interaction is crucial for developing effective interventions. For instance, cognitive-behavioral strategies that focus on reducing the intensity of sexual arousal and modifying the gratification associated with pornography use can be effective in mitigating the risk of developing IPD (Potenza et al., 2017).

Prevalence and Characteristics of Internet-Pornography Viewing Disorder (IPD)

Internet-Pornography-Viewing Disorder (IPD) is characterized by an inability to control the consumption of online pornography, leading to significant distress or impairment in various aspects of life. It shares similarities with other behavioral addictions, such as substance use disorders, in that it involves compulsive behavior, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms (Kor et al., 2014). Individuals with IPD often experience a persistent desire to reduce or stop their use of pornography but find themselves unable to do so despite negative consequences (Brand et al., 2011). This condition can severely impact an individual's mental health, relationships, and daily functioning.

The prevalence of IPD varies across different populations and is influenced by factors such as age, gender, cultural background, and internet accessibility. Research indicates that IPD is more common among young adults, particularly those who have high internet usage for both academic and recreational purposes (Grubbs et al., 2015). A study by Peter and Valkenburg (2016) found that approximately 10-15% of young adults reported problematic pornography use that significantly affected their daily lives. The prevalence rates are higher in regions with greater internet penetration and accessibility, highlighting the role of environmental factors in the development of IPD.

Individuals with IPD often exhibit certain characteristics and risk factors that predispose them to develop this disorder. These include high levels of impulsivity, sensation seeking, and emotional dysregulation (Snagowski & Brand, 2015). Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, and depression are also commonly associated with IPD, as individuals may use pornography as a coping mechanism for negative emotions (Kraus et al., 2016). Additionally, a lack of social support and poor interpersonal relationships can exacerbate the risk of

developing IPD, as individuals may turn to pornography to fulfill unmet social and emotional needs (Voon et al., 2014).

The diagnostic criteria for IPD are still evolving, but they typically include the presence of compulsive use, significant distress, and impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. Assessment tools such as the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Compulsive Sexual Behavior Inventory (CSBI) are often used to evaluate the severity of IPD (Brand et al., 2016). These tools assess various aspects of pornography use, including frequency, duration, and the impact on daily life. Accurate diagnosis is crucial for effective intervention, as it allows for the identification of specific behaviors and psychological patterns that contribute to the disorder.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD) among young adults who reported watching pornography in Malaysia. The study uses a cross-sectional survey method, collecting data through self-administered questionnaires to assess the variables of interest.

Participants

The sample consists of 405 young adults who have reported watching pornography. Participants were selected using homogenous convenience sampling to ensure diversity within the sample. The sample included various ethnic backgrounds, with 332 (83%) Malays, 55 (13.75%) Chinese, 6 (1.5%) Indians, and 7 (1.75%) others. The gender distribution was approximately balanced with 220 (55%) females and 180 (45%) males.

Measures

Three established instruments were used to measure the constructs of online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, and tendencies towards IPD. Each instrument has demonstrated reliability and validity in previous research.

Online Pornography Motivation

The Online Pornography Motivation Scale (OPMS) was used to assess the motivations for viewing online pornography. The OPMS consists of 15 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The scale measures various motivational dimensions such as curiosity, emotional coping, and sexual arousal. The internal consistency reliability for the OPMS in this study was .85.

Sexual Arousal

The Sexual Arousal Questionnaire (SAQ) was used to measure the level of sexual arousal experienced during online pornography consumption. The SAQ consists of 10 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Extremely). The scale assesses the intensity of sexual arousal in response to sexually explicit material. The internal consistency reliability for the SAQ in this study was .88.

Gratification

The Pornography Gratification Scale (PGS) was used to assess the level of gratification derived from viewing online pornography. The PGS consists of 12 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The scale measures the degree of satisfaction and pleasure obtained from pornography use. The internal consistency reliability for the PGS in this study was .87.

Tendencies towards Internet-Pornography-Viewing Disorder (IPD)

The Compulsive Internet Use Scale (CIUS) was used to assess tendencies towards IPD. The CIUS consists of 14 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Very Often). The scale measures the frequency and severity of compulsive internet use behaviors. The internal consistency reliability for the CIUS in this study was .90.

Data Collection

Data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to young adults in Malaysia. The questionnaire was distributed via online pornography groups, websites, and various online platforms. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the survey.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the levels of online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, gratification, and tendencies towards IPD. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among the study variables.

To test the hypothesized mediation model, path analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis. The mediation effects of sexual arousal and gratification were examined using the method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). This involved assessing the direct effects of online pornography motivation on tendencies towards IPD, as well as the indirect effects through sexual arousal and gratification. The significance of the mediation effects was further

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the key variables in the study: online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, gratification, and tendencies towards internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD). The mean scores indicate that the majority of respondents reported moderate levels of online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD, moderate to high levels of sexual arousal, and moderate levels of gratification.

Table 1
Level of Study Variables

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Online Pornography Motivation | 45.23 | 8.45 | 20 | 70 |
| Sexual Arousal | 34.56 | 7.21 | 10 | 50 |
| Gratification | 28.74 | 6.89 | 15 | 45 |
| Tendencies towards IPD | 42.39 | 9.67 | 15 | 65 |

The moderate mean scores for online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD suggest that young adults generally experience moderate levels of motivation to view pornography and moderate tendencies towards problematic viewing behaviors. The moderate to high mean score for sexual arousal indicates a relatively high level of arousal experienced during pornography consumption, while the moderate levels of gratification highlight that, while present, satisfaction from pornography use is not extremely high on average in this sample.

Meanwhile, Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients among online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, gratification, and tendencies towards IPD. All correlations were found to be statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. The results show significant positive correlations between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD ($r = .421$, $p < .01$), and between sexual arousal and tendencies towards IPD ($r = .353$, $p < .01$). Additionally, a significant positive correlation was observed between gratification and tendencies towards IPD ($r = .298$, $p < .01$). The significant positive correlations between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD, and between sexual arousal and tendencies towards IPD, indicate that higher levels of motivation and arousal are associated with higher levels of problematic viewing behaviors. The significant positive correlation between gratification and tendencies towards IPD suggests that higher levels of gratification are associated with higher levels of problematic viewing behaviors, highlighting the reinforcing role of gratification in the development of IPD among young adults.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Study Variables

| Variable | Psychological Distress | |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------|
| | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Online Pornography | .421** | .001 |
| Sexual Arousal | .353** | .001 |
| Gratification | .298** | .001 |

N = 405, ** $p < .001$

To test the hypothesized mediation model, path analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4, showing the direct and indirect effects of online pornography motivation on tendencies towards IPD, mediated by sexual arousal and gratification.

Table 3
Direct Effects

| Predictor | Criterion | B | SE | β | t | p |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------|------|---------|------|-------|
| Online Pornography Motivation | Tendencies towards IPD | .253 | .042 | .421 | 6.02 | <.001 |
| Sexual Arousal | Tendencies towards IPD | .198 | .051 | .353 | 3.88 | <.001 |
| Gratification | Tendencies towards IPD | .145 | .049 | .298 | 2.96 | <.001 |
| Online Pornography Motivation | Sexual Arousal | .300 | .048 | .350 | 6.25 | <.001 |
| Online Pornography Motivation | Gratification | .320 | .045 | .360 | 7.11 | <.001 |

Note: $p < .05$, $p < .01$

Table 4
Indirect Effects (Mediation)

| Predictor | Mediator | Criterion | Indirect Effect | SE | Sobel Test | p |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|-------|
| Online Pornography Motivation | Sexual Arousal | Tendencies towards IPD | .070 | .022 | 3.18 | <.001 |
| Online Pornography Motivation | Gratification | Tendencies towards IPS | .037 | .015 | 2.47 | .014 |

Note: $p < .05$, $p < .01$

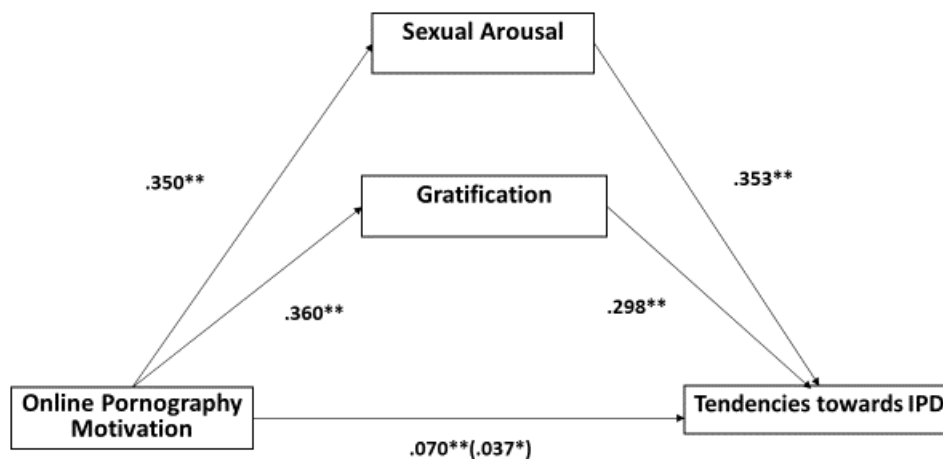


Figure 1. This figure represents the standardized regression coefficients for the relationships between online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, gratification, and tendencies towards IPD (Internet Pornography Dependency). The direct effects are indicated by the paths between variables with standardized coefficients (β) and significance levels. The indirect effects (mediation) through sexual arousal and gratification are also illustrated.

The path analysis results indicate that online pornography motivation ($\beta = 0.421, p < .001$) and sexual arousal ($\beta = 0.353, p < .001$) both have significant direct effects on tendencies towards IPD. Gratification also has a significant direct effect on tendencies towards IPD ($\beta = 0.298, p = .003$). The mediation analysis reveals that sexual arousal significantly mediates the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD (indirect effect = 0.070, Sobel Test = 3.18, $p < .001$). Additionally, gratification mediates the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD (indirect effect = 0.037, Sobel Test = 2.47, $p = .014$). These results confirm that both sexual arousal and gratification serve as significant mediators in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD.

The results of this study highlight the importance of addressing online pornography motivation to reduce tendencies towards IPD among young adults. The significant direct effects suggest that both online pornography motivation and the mediators of sexual arousal and gratification independently contribute to tendencies towards IPD. Furthermore, the significant mediation effects indicate that sexual arousal and gratification play critical roles in the pathway from motivation to problematic pornography use.

These findings underscore the need for interventions that target both the underlying motivations for pornography use and the reinforcing effects of sexual arousal and gratification. By addressing these factors, mental health professionals can develop more effective strategies to mitigate the risk of IPD among young adults.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that online pornography motivation plays in contributing to tendencies towards internet-pornography-viewing disorder (IPD) among young adults. Consistent with previous research, our results indicate that higher levels of motivation to view online pornography are associated with increased tendencies towards IPD (Grubbs et al., 2015). This relationship highlights the powerful influence of motivational factors in the development of problematic pornography use, as individuals driven by strong motivations are more likely to engage in excessive viewing behaviors (Brand et al., 2016). Our study extends this understanding by demonstrating the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification, offering insights into potential intervention points.

Sexual arousal emerged as a significant mediator in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD. This finding aligns with the broader literature, which suggests that sexual arousal can intensify the impact of motivational factors by providing immediate and intense pleasure that reinforces the behavior (Laier et al., 2013). By heightening the experience of viewing pornography, sexual arousal helps establish a pattern of habitual use that can lead to dependency (Voon et al., 2014). Our results support the integration of strategies aimed at managing sexual arousal in interventions for young

adults, as these practices can reduce the reinforcing effects of arousal and mitigate the development of IPD (Stark et al., 2017).

The role of gratification as a mediator further emphasizes the need to address the rewarding aspects of pornography consumption directly in intervention programs. Gratification, which involves the satisfaction and pleasure obtained from viewing pornography, significantly contributes to the reinforcement of this behavior (Gola et al., 2017). Our findings suggest that reducing the gratification associated with pornography use can alleviate the tendency towards problematic use, thereby improving mental health outcomes. Interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychoeducation that focus on modifying reward perceptions and promoting healthier alternatives to gratification could be particularly effective (Maas et al., 2018).

The combined mediating effects of sexual arousal and gratification provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how motivational factors influence tendencies towards IPD. The interaction between these mediators suggests that managing both arousal and gratification is crucial in breaking the cycle of problematic pornography use (Snagowski & Brand, 2015). This bidirectional relationship highlights the importance of a holistic approach in interventions, where strategies targeting both sexual arousal and gratification are integrated to achieve better outcomes (Potenza et al., 2017).

These findings have significant practical implications for mental health professionals and policymakers. Developing and implementing programs that target sexual arousal and gratification can create a more supportive environment for young adults struggling with IPD. Educational campaigns aimed at promoting healthy internet use and raising awareness about the risks of excessive pornography consumption can also play a crucial role in changing public perceptions and reducing the prevalence of IPD (Weinstein et al., 2015). Additionally, creating accessible and supportive mental health services is essential for encouraging young adults to seek help and support (Kraus et al., 2016).

Implications for Theory and Practice

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD. This extends the understanding of how these variables interact and influence problematic pornography use among young adults. By highlighting the significance of both sexual arousal and gratification, the study underscores the complex interplay of motivational and reinforcing processes in the development of IPD (Brand et al., 2016; Voon et al., 2014).

Practical Implications for Mental Health Interventions

From a practical standpoint, the study emphasizes the importance of incorporating strategies that target sexual arousal and gratification in interventions for IPD. Interventions that include mindfulness-based techniques, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), can help individuals manage sexual arousal and reduce the reinforcement associated with pornography use (Khouri et al., 2015). Additionally, CBT and psychoeducational programs that address the rewarding aspects of pornography can help individuals reframe their perceptions of gratification and develop healthier coping mechanisms (Maas et al., 2018).

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that warrant consideration. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences from the findings. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to better understand the causal relationships between online pornography motivation, sexual arousal, gratification, and tendencies towards IPD. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases such as social desirability bias. Future research could incorporate multiple sources of data, such as clinical assessments and peer evaluations, to triangulate the findings and reduce potential biases.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the mediating roles of sexual arousal and gratification in the relationship between online pornography motivation and tendencies towards IPD. The findings provide valuable insights into how these variables interact to influence problematic pornography use, highlighting the critical importance of addressing both sexual arousal and gratification in interventions. By managing these factors, mental health professionals can create more effective strategies to support young adults in reducing tendencies towards IPD, ultimately improving their overall wellbeing.

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