

Prevalence, Causes, and Impacts of Pornography Consumption Among Adolescents in Wamakko Local Government Area, Sokoto State, Nigeria

Kamal Muhammad Sani^{a,*}, Maryam Mamman Adam^b, Fatima Mohammed^c, Madina Sani Udu^d,
Ineke Joseph Iko-Ojo^e, Ahmed Haruna Danjuma^f, Kamal Kaila Umar^g

^a Department of Sociology, Northwest University Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

^b Department of Business Administration, Northwest University Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

^c Department of Educational Management, Sokoto State University, Sokoto State, Nigeria

^d Department of Business Administration, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto State, Nigeria

^e Khalifa College of Advanced Studies, Sokoto State, Nigeria

^f IHP-USAID (Palladium), Nigeria

^g Jaiz Bank Plc, Dutse Branch, Jigawa State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper aims to study the prevalence, causes, and impacts of pornography consumption (PC) among adolescents in Wamakko Local Government Area (WLGA), Sokoto State, Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather data for this study. A randomized sampling technique was used to select a total of 550 respondents from the 11 political wards in WLGA, comprising 330 males and 220 females. Microsoft Word and Excel (2016 version) were used for data entry, editing, and cleaning. Furthermore, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) software was used to analyze the quantitative data. The results show that 63.3% of the sampled respondents reported being exposed to pornographic content on the internet, primarily through websites and social media platforms. Additionally, the study found that factors like peer influence, the lack of comprehensive sex education, and adolescents' natural curiosity contribute to adolescent engagement in PC. In conclusion, the study recommends implementing comprehensive sex education in schools, promoting open communication between parents and their children, and raising awareness about the potential consequences of PC.

Keywords: prevalence, pornography, consumption, adolescents, Wamakko, Sokoto State, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The issue of pornography consumption (PC), particularly among young adults, has attracted significant attention. Studies have highlighted a concerning increase in adolescent PC, underscoring the need to study its impact on mental health and general well-being (Pandey & Teotia, 2023). Developments in information and communication technology have brought about increased life complexities. The processes of modernization and urbanization have played a role in the erosion of traditional family structures, giving rise to significant challenges (Paranjape, 2019). This breakdown has exacerbated issues like sexual delinquency, which has become more prevalent among young people. Easy access to the internet through smartphones, laptops, and various electronic devices has made web content, including sexually explicit materials, readily available to adolescents and adults alike (Thornburgh & Lin, 2004; Oddon-Paolucci et al., 2017).

Over the past thirty years, there has been a substantial increase in PC worldwide (Yar, 2019). A recent study conducted in the United States revealed that a notable portion of adults and teenagers have intentionally viewed sexually explicit content (Smith & Lesuer, 2023). In 2021, Pornhub, a leading pornography website, reported an average of 130 million daily visits (Barbero, Estevez-Garcia, Madrona-Bonastre, Renart Vicens, Serra, & Vives-Cases, 2024). Additionally, in January 2024, Pornhub recorded over 3 billion visits from United States pornographic consumers, with Indonesia, Brazil, and France following with 765 million, 503 million, and 470 million visits, respectively (Ceci, 2024). This data demonstrates the magnitude of the demand for sexually explicit content.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: kamalmsani92@gmail.com

Despite being a religious country, Nigeria was among the highest consumers of pornography. The presentation of sexually explicit materials has become common in Nigeria, and internet pornography continues to grow (Okafor, Elijah, & Andrew, 2015). The historical data highlighting Nigeria's evolving relationship with internet PC to the latest statistics in 2022, indicate a significant transformation in the landscape of PC in Nigeria, with the country now boasting the highest number of internet pornography viewers in Africa (Ajayi, 2022).

Studies on PC have revealed a strong correlation between high religiosity and adherence to conservative religions like Islam (Aulia, Rizqi, & Usmani, 2023). Within Islamic beliefs, pornography is considered a gateway to adultery and fornication. According to Ashraf and Othman (2019), the prohibitions within Islam are intended to guide individuals away from sinful behavior and serve as constant reminders to maintain devotion to Allah (God). Islamic teachings unequivocally prohibit activities that endanger human life, including PC. Ashraf and Othman (2019) summarize the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), highlighting that every individual is born free from sin and emphasizing parent's or guardian's duty to educate their children about immoral and forbidden practices, such as viewing sexually explicit content.

Engaging in PC by young individuals can be influenced by several factors. Adolescents, are naturally curious about human sexuality and may turn to pornography as a way to satisfy their curiosity and understand their own bodies and desires (Jhe, Addison, Lin, & Pluhar, 2023). In today's digital world, teenagers can easily access pornographic material, often without robust measures in place (Ballester et al. 2020). Peer pressure and influence also play a significant role, as teenagers may be swayed by peers already involved in PC (Paranjape, 2019). The lack of sexual education further contributes to the prevalence of PC among young individuals. In the absence of proper sexual education, young individuals and even adults may resort to pornography as a misguided source of information about sexuality, leading to increased consumption (Miller, 2023).

The harmful effects of pornography on individual mental health, relationships, and well-being are extensively documented (Manaf et al., 2013; Peter & Valkenburg, 2016). PC, particularly among youths, poses significant social and health problems in Nigeria and beyond (Okunola, Oduntan, Adaoye, and Olutayo, 2022). The consequences of this behavior include addiction, boredom, sexual violence, premarital pregnancies, abortions, and the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Desmond, Titilayo, & Owaje, 2018), as well as loss of respect, sexual assaults, incest, shame, and humiliation (Flood, 2009; Norman & Othman, 2019; Olaleye & Ajuwon, 2022).

In WLGA in particular and Sokoto State in general, there has been a noticeable increase in teenage pregnancies, premarital sexual relationships, adultery, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual misconduct, primarily attributed to widespread PC. These issues have significantly impacted many young individuals in the area, underscoring the urgent need for interventions to address this troubling trend and safeguard vulnerable members of society from harmful influences.

1.1. Study Objectives

- To find out the prevalence rate of PC among adolescents in WLGA, Sokoto State.
- To explore the reasons behind adolescents engaging in PC in WLGA, Sokoto State.
- To examine the consequences of PC on adolescents in WLGA, Sokoto State.
- To propose recommendations aimed at alleviating the impact of PC among adolescents in WLGA, Sokoto State.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Pornography

Pornography, also known as explicit content, has been defined and explained by various researchers. According to Pandey and Kumar (2023), these depictions may include various acts such as masturbation, oral sex, anal sex, and vaginal penetration. Adarsh and Sahoo (2023) define pornography as the display of nude content intended to elicit sexual arousal in different ways, such as images, videos, magazines, books, and video games. It is important to note that any commercial product aiming to stimulate sexual behavior through fictional scenarios falls within the definition of pornography (Kumbhare, 2022). Furthermore, Oddon-Paolucci et al. (2017) classified pornography into three categories: mild pornography (nude images, non-explicit sexual acts, and aggressive sexual behavior without visible genitalia), exotica pornography (videos of consensual, non-violent sexual acts with visible genitalia), and violent pornography (explicit content depicting rape, degradation, and sexual aggression).

2.2. Consumption

In the context of this study, consumption refers to the act of viewing, watching, or engaging with pornographic material or other explicit content. This consumption can take place through various platforms, such as websites, streaming services, or physical media.

2.3. Adolescence

In this study, adolescence refers to individuals in the stage of puberty (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015), typically ranging from 10 to 29 years of age. When adolescents engage in pornographic consumption, it raises concerns about the potential impact on their psychological development, attitudes toward sex, relationships, and overall well-being. It is crucial to acknowledge that adolescents are in a critical stage of development where exposure to explicit content can have an enduring effect on their perceptions and behaviors (Kar et al. 2015).

2.4. Causes of Pornography Consumption

Studies have identified numerous factors that contribute to the widespread prevalence of PC among adolescents. These factors include, but are not limited to:

2.4.1. Media influence

Television and social media platforms significantly influence the attitudes, moral values, and behaviors of youth (Onah & Nche, 2014). Frequent exposure to explicit content normalizes and glamorizes nudity, thus influencing youth to consume pornography (Lin, Liu, & Yi, 2020). Today's digital era showcases sexual behavior in television shows, movies, and social media content, creating a culture where pornography is viewed as normal and desirable, sparking curiosity and interest in consuming explicit content (Onah & Nche, 2014).

2.4.3. Peer influence

Peer pressure and influence shape the behavior of young individuals, influencing them to engage in deviant behavior like viewing explicit content (Webber, Quiring, & Daschmann, 2012). Young individuals may succumb to the strong pressure from peers to partake in sexual delinquency, such as watching pornography (Paranjape, 2019).

2.4.4. Curiosity

Curiosity is a powerful driving force behind human exploration and discovery (Gruber & Fandakova, 2021). Adolescence is a period of curiosity and experimentation where young individuals naturally explore their bodies, relationships, and sexual experiences (Lou, 2023). This curiosity, combined with the easy online accessibility of explicit content, drives young people to seek out pornography to satisfy their questions and desires (Adarsh & Sahoo, 2023).

2.4.5. Lack of sex education

The absence of comprehensive sex education contributes to curiosity and misinformation about sexuality (Miller, 2023). Without proper education, young individuals may turn to pornography for information, shaping their perceptions of sex and intimacy based on unrealistic portrayals (Idoiaga-Mondragon, Munitis, Ozamiz-Etxebarria, & Saez, 2024).

2.4.6. Desire for pleasure

The desire for instant gratification and pleasure drives young individuals towards PC as they explore their developing sexuality (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh 2015). The explicit nature of pornographic content can stimulate the brain's pleasure center, making it appealing to seek out such content for pleasure (George, Maheshwari, Chandran, & Sathyanararana Rao, 2019).

2.4.7. Technological advancement

The digital landscape, particularly the internet, has significantly increased the availability of explicit content. According to Webber, Quiring, & Daschmann (2012), easy access to numerous explicit materials online influences young individuals to consume pornography. Social media platforms and websites inadvertently expose young people to explicit content, foster curiosity and consumption (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2013).

2.5. Consequences of Pornography Consumption

Exposure to pornographic content can have significant negative impacts on individuals' mental health, relationships, and overall well-being. Research shows that both adolescents and adults can develop distorted perceptions of healthy relationships due to PC. Sexually explicit contents often objectify women, reducing them to mere objects for sexual satisfaction (Willis, Bridges, & Sun, 2022). Harmful behaviors can influence how individuals, particularly young people, perceive and treat their partners, prioritizing physical appearance and sexual performance over emotional connection and mutual respect (Hill, 2002).

Excessive consumption of pornography can create unrealistic expectations in relationships. Gilles (2015) found that relying too heavily on explicit content for sexual gratification can diminish both physical and emotional intimacy between partners, replacing genuine connection and intimacy with scripted fantasies. Moreover, continual exposure to pornography can lead to sexual dysfunction (Kumbhare, 2022).

Studies have found that PC can lead to addiction, impacting mental health and general well-being. Exposure to explicit materials can desensitize individuals to less stimulating content, driving them to seek more extreme content for satisfaction (Lin et al., 2020). Like other addictions, pornography viewing can lead to tolerance, where individuals need increasing amounts or more explicit contents to achieve the same level of pleasure (Jha & Banerjee, 2022).

Frequent pornography viewing can result in social humiliation (Voss, 2015). Society often morally judges such consumption, leading to labelling and negative perception (Jin & Peng, 2021). Sexually explicit content is heavily stigmatized, often leading to shame and negative labelling of individuals who engage in such behavior (Maleeb, Hallin, & Obeid, 2023). If an individual's PC becomes known to others, especially within conservative settings, it can lead to strained relationships, gossip, or reputational harm, contributing to social stigma (Voss, 2015).

Frequent viewing of pornographic materials has been associated with unwanted teenage pregnancies. Studies have found that addiction to pornography and engagement in premarital sexual relationships can be influenced by explicit content viewing (Paulus, Ohmann, Nouri, & Popow, 2023). This has been observed in various countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia, where the impact of PC on teenage pregnancies has been documented (Norman & Othman, 2019). For instance, a study conducted in Indonesia revealed that over half of participants admitted to being addicted to pornography, leading to premarital sexual relationships influenced by explicit content viewing. Similarly, a report by the National Registration Department in Malaysia shows that over 5000 babies were born as a result of premarital sexual relationships influenced by pornography viewing among teenagers (Ashraaf & Othman, 2019).

2.6. Related Studies

Several studies have investigated the issue of pornography consumption among adolescents. A study by Wahyu (2016, as cited in Ashraaf & Othman, 2019) investigated the impact of adolescent behavior on PC. The study involved a sample of three hundred adolescents and found that two-thirds of the participants had been exposed to sexually explicit content, which had negatively affected their mental health and well-being.

In a similar vein, a study by Wolak et al. (2007) titled "Unwanted and Wanted Behavior to Online Pornography in a National Sample of Youth Internet Users" aimed to assess the extent of both positive and negative reactions towards online pornography among American adolescents. The study was conducted via telephone interviews with a sample of 1,500 active internet users aged between 10 and 17 years. The results revealed that 42% of the respondents had been exposed to online pornography in the past year.

A quantitative study by Manaf et al. (2013) examined the levels of sex education and experience among four hundred and fourteen students in Malaysia. The study found that the majority of the respondents rely on sexually explicit content such as nude images, videos, and magazines as their primary sources of sex education. These investigators

further discovered that PC had led a majority of the students to engage in premarital sexual relationships with their partners.

In a different context, Vaillancourt and Bergeron (2018) sought to understand the effects of engaging with sexually explicit content. Their study showed that excessive consumption of pornography can lead to addiction, which may affect mental health, social relationships, and the well-being of individuals. Conversely, Kumbhare's (2022) study, titled "Effect Pornography has on an Individual's Personality," explored the ways sexually explicit content may influence one's personality. The scholar opined that the act of viewing pornography can be sensual and enjoyable, seemingly having no significant impact on the personality, moral compass, or belief system of the viewers.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

2.7.1. Social Bond Theory

Travis Hirsch (1969) developed the idea of social bond theory, which underscores the role of social bonds in discouraging individuals from engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior. Hirsch identified four key components of these bonds: attachment, involvement, belief, and commitment, which can influence an individual's likelihood of engaging in such behaviors.

- a. Attachment refers to the emotional bonds and relationships individuals form with others, including those of significance to society as a whole. Strong attachments can lessen the probability of engaging in criminal or delinquent behaviors, such as PC, as individuals may wish to avoid disappointing or causing harm to those they care about (Hirsch, 1969).
- b. Belief includes societal norms, values, and religious beliefs, essentially encompassing what individuals hold in high esteem. A robust belief system that encourages conformity to societal norms and values can reduce the propensity for delinquent behavior, including PC (Hirsch, 1969).
- c. Involvement pertains to the time and energy that individuals dedicate to meaningful activities. When a person is fully engaged in such activities, the likelihood of them participating in deviant behavior, such as PC, reduces significantly. This underscores the importance of engaging youths in sports and after-school activities as constructive alternatives (Hirsch, 1969).
- d. Commitment focuses on an individual's dedication to conventional activities, such as education, work, or future goals. Thus, the more committed individuals are to these activities, the less likely they are to jeopardize their future by indulging in criminal or delinquent activities, including PC. (Hirsch, 1969).

From Hirsch's viewpoint, the prevalence of PC among adolescents can be linked to a variety of factors, such as weak attachment to significant others, lack of commitment to conventional activities like education or personal future goals, limited involvement in legitimate pursuits such as business, sports, or hobbies, and weak belief systems that do not uphold societal norms and values. These factors may drive adolescents to seek closeness, waste their time, pursue pleasure, and explore deviant activities through PC.

3. Research Method

3.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in Wamakko Local Government Area (WLGA), which is at latitudes 13°2'16" N and 5°5'37" E. It has an elevation of approximately 226 meters above sea level. WLGA covers an area of 697 square kilometers and has a population of 179,619, according to the 2006 population census. WLGA shares borders with seven neighboring local government areas: Binji, Tangaza, Kware, Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Dangen Shuni, Bodinga, and Yabo. The area is divided into 11 political wards: Arkilla, Bado/Kasarawa, Gumbi/Wajake, Kalambaina/Girabshi/ G/Bubu/G Yaro, G/Hamidu/GYaro, Wamakko, Dundaye/Gumburawa, K/Kimba/Gedewa, Gwamaste, and Kammata.

3.2. Study Design

This study used a descriptive survey research design to gather information on adolescent PC in WLGA.

3.3. Sample

A sample of 550 respondents was selected using randomized sampling techniques. This sample included 30 male and 20 female respondents aged between 16 and 29 years from each of the 11 political wards in the area.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the absolute confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from questionnaire and interview respondents at the beginning of each process. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to opt-out at any stage. The instruments used did not collect any personal information revealing the identity of the participants.

3.5. Data Collection

Mixed methods were employed for data collection. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on pornography consumption among adolescents in the WLGA. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with selected participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

3.6. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected data. Microsoft Word and Excel (2013 version) was used for data entry, coding, editing, and cleaning. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 were used for quantitative data analysis, presenting results through frequency distribution and percentage tables.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Result

4.1.1. Demographic information

Table 1: Demographics of the Sampled Respondents

	Characteristics	N	%
Gender	Male	330	60
	Female	220	40
	Total	550	100
Age	16-22	143	26
	23-29	407	74
	Total	550	100
Education level	Primary	30	5.4
	Secondary	300	54.5
	Tertiary	220	40
	Total	550	100
Religion	Islam	520	94.5
	Christianity	30	5.5
	Traditional	0	0
	Total	550	100
Daily-used devices	Smart phone	321	58.3
	Tablet	150	27.2
	Laptop	44	8
	Desktop	35	6.3
	Total	550	100

Note: N stands for number of respondents, and % stands for percentage of responses. Source: Field Survey (2023).

The data presented in Table 1 provides insights into the characteristics of the sampled respondents in terms of age, gender, educational level, religion, and daily device usage. The study focused primarily on adolescents, as indicated by the age range of 16-29 years for the sampled respondents. The sample consisted of 60% male respondents and 40% female respondents, ensuring a balanced representation of both genders in the study. Among the sampled respondents, the majority (54.5%) were secondary school students, 40% were attending tertiary institutions, and a small proportion (5.4%) were in primary school. The study found that the majority of the respondents (94.5%) are Muslims, while a smaller proportion (5.5%) are Christians. This religious distribution reflects the dominant religious composition within the study area. The findings revealed that the majority (58.3%) of the sampled respondents report using smartphones as their primary device for daily online activities, 27.2% of the sampled respondents use tablets, and a smaller percentage (6.3%) of the sampled respondents use laptops. Only a small fraction (8%) of the sampled respondents use desktop computers.

4.1.2. Prevalence of Pornography Consumption

Table 2: Respondents View Regarding Pornography Consumption

Questions	Responses	N	%
Are you aware of pornography?	Yes	360	65.4
	No	102	18.5
	No Response	88	16
	Total	550	100
In the previous two years, have you watched pornography?	Yes	365	66.3
	No	110	20
	No Response	75	13.6
	Total	550	100
How often do you watch pornography?	Daily	309	56.1
	Weekly	129	23.4
	Monthly	112	20.3
	Total	550	100
Where do you usually watch pornography?	At home	143	26
	School	205	37.2
	Friend's house	105	19.1
	Others	97	17.6
	Total	550	100

Note: N stands for number of respondents, and % stands for percentage of responses. Source: Field Survey (2023).

As can be seen in Table 2, the study reveals important insights into awareness, consumption, frequency, and preferred locations for watching pornography. The majority (65.4%) of the sampled respondents indicated that they were aware of pornographic materials, highlighting the pervasiveness of pornography in society. However, it is worth noting that 18% expressed unawareness, and 16% did not provide a response. It is important to consider that some individuals may not realize they have come into contact with explicit content, directly or indirectly. These findings were corroborated during FGD. A male discussant, 17 years old and residing in Bado/Kasarawa ward, said that:

“Yes, I am aware of pornography and its presence in many forms of media and websites.”

Regarding PC over the last two years, the majority (66.3%) of the respondents acknowledge having watched sexually explicit content. However, 20% claimed they had not, and 13.6% did not respond to the question. These findings suggest that the actual figures of awareness and consumption may be higher than reported, as some individuals may not realize that they have directly or indirectly come into contact with sexually explicit content. Discussant, a female 20 years old and residing in Kalambaina/Girabshi ward, stated that:

“I had the habit of regularly watching for sexually explicit content. I was exposed to pornography for a period exceeding four years.”

Another discussant, a male 23 years old residing in G/Hamidu/GYaro ward, revealed that:

“I started watching pornography when I was 17 years old, and this continued for more than five years.”

Regarding the frequency of pornography viewing, however, among the sampled respondents, a significant majority (56.1%) report watching pornography on a daily basis. Additionally, 23.4% stated they watch pornography once a week, while 20.3% consumed explicit content once a month. These findings highlight the widespread consumption of pornography and the varying frequency of engagement with explicit materials. Participants in the FGD shared their varied viewing habits, further supporting these findings. Discussant, a female 19 years old and residing in Wamakko Ward, opined that:

“My viewing habits are quite sporadic, sometimes daily, sometimes weekly or monthly, sometimes every few weeks.”

Similarly, another discussant, a male 17 years old and residing in Arkilla Ward, disclosed that:

“I watch pornography regularly, almost every day, as it helps me relax and forget my problems.”

When asked about their preferred locations for watching pornography, the majority (37.2%) of the sampled respondents indicated that they usually consume pornography at school. Additionally, 26% reported watching pornography in their homes, 19.1% at friends' places, and 17.6% at other convenient locations. These findings were reinforced during the focus group discussions, where participants mentioned choosing specific locations for added privacy or to avoid being caught by family members. Discussant, a male 19 years old residing in Kalambaina/Girabshi ward, shared that:

“I choose to watch pornography at school in places like the toilet or library, as I fear being caught if I do so at home.”

Another discussant, a female 18 years old and residing in Bado/Kasarawa Ward, disclosed that:

“I usually watch pornography at a friend's house when I know I have a place to myself for added privacy. Sometimes when I am alone, I do that in my room, usually at night, to avoid any disturbances from my parents and siblings.”

4.1.3. Causes of Pornography Consumption

Table 3: Data on Motivations for Pornography Consumption

Question	Responses	N	%
What do you think are the factors that motivated you to watch pornography?	Curiosity	90	16.3
	Boredom	78	14.1
	Anxiety	29	5.2
	Peer influence	247	44.9
	Lack of sex education	106	19.2
Total		550	100

Note: N stands for number of respondents, and % stands for percentage of responses. Source: Field Survey (2023).

As shown in Table 3, the study findings shed light on the factors that motivate individuals to engage in PC (pornography consumption). The majority (44.9%) of the respondents identified peer influence as the main factor that motivates them to engage in PC. This highlights the impact of social relationships and the desire to fit in with peers on the consumption of explicit content. A considerable proportion (19.2%) of the respondents identified the lack of sex education as a factor that encourages them to engage in PC. This suggests that the absence of comprehensive and accurate information about human sexuality may lead individuals to seek out explicit content for learning purposes. A significant number (16.3%) of the respondents reported curiosity as a factor that exposed them to exploring explicit content. Curiosity about human sexuality and the desire to satisfy one's inquisitiveness can lead individuals to consume pornography. A notable proportion (14.1%) of the respondents stated that the quest to learn testimonies from participants in the focus group discussions further illustrates the varied reasons for engaging in PC. One male discussant, 16 years old and residing in Dundaye/Gumburawa, mentioned that:

“My friends at school have been a major reason behind my PC. The desire to fit in with my friends and to be part of their conversations led me to explore explicit content on different online platforms.”

Another discussant, a male 17 years old and residing in Kalambaina/Girabshi Ward, shared his perspective, describing pornography viewing as a means of learning about human sexuality and satisfying his sexual desires. He stated that:

“The desire to understand and explore different aspects of human sexuality led me to seek out explicit contents for my personal consumption. It helps me to satisfy my immediate sexual arousal.”

4.1.4. Consequences of Pornography Consumption

Table 4: Perception Regarding the Consequences of Pornography Consumption

Questions	Responses	N	%
Are you aware of the risks of watching pornography?	Yes	282	51.3
	No	213	38.7
	No response	55	10
	Total	550	100
Have you noticed any changes in your behavior after watching pornography?	Yes	390	70.9
	No	100	18.1
	No response	60	10.9
	Total	550	100
What do you think are the consequences of watching pornography?	Anxiety	100	18.1
	Addiction	153	23.6
	Felling of shame	52	9.4
	Premarital sex	130	27.8
	Masturbation	115	20.9
	Total	550	100

Note: N stands for number of respondents, and % stands for percentage of responses. Source: Field Survey (2023).

According to the findings presented in Table 4, the study provides insights into respondents' awareness of the negative impacts of PC and their opinions on the major consequences. The majority (38.7%) of respondents were unaware of the negative impacts of PC, while 51.3% acknowledged being aware of such consequences. This highlights a significant gap in awareness among the surveyed individuals regarding the potential harm associated with PC. The study found that 7.9% of the respondents' mentioned experiencing behavioral changes as a result of viewing explicit content. This indicates a significant influence on their actions and attitudes. However, it is worth noting that 30% of the respondents do not believe they experienced behavioral changes. The surveyed respondents also shared their opinions on the major consequences of PC. According to the study findings, 27.8% of the respondents believed that PC leads many young individuals to engage in premarital sex. Additionally, 23.6% stated that PC was the main reason for their frequent viewing of explicit content, and 20.9% believed that PC is the reason why they engage in frequent masturbation to satisfy their sexual desires. A small percentage (9.4%) mentioned that PC can lead to shame if one is caught. These findings are supported by the views expressed by participants in the study. For example, a female discussant, 18 years old and residing in Arkila Ward, shared her experience and mentioned that:

“Pornography consumption has influenced my perceptions of sex, my personal experiences, and my desire. Also, it played a significant role in my decision to engage in sexual relationships with a male friend.”

Another discussant, a male 27 years old and residing in Kalambaina/Girabshi Ward, expressed concerns about the addiction to PC among many Nigerian adolescents and its impact on their perception of females as objects of sexual satisfaction. He disclosed that:

“The majority of adolescents secretly engage in PC, and they have become addicted, largely unknowingly... Addiction is making many young individuals porn addicts see females as objects

for sexual satisfaction, and for those without partners, it may bring to mind the idea of sexual assaults and risky behaviors.”

Furthermore, one female medical practitioner interviewed at public primary healthcare in Arkilla Ward emphasizes the severity of PC on both adolescents and adults’ mental health and general wellbeing. She mentioned that:

“Excessive consumption of explicit contents can have a detrimental effect on the mental and general wellbeing of individuals, especially adolescents. This behavior affects their ability to have a healthy relationship in the future and causes mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, among others. Premarital sexual relationships are associated with PC, which leads to unwanted pregnancy and the spread of diseases like erectile dysfunction, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other sexually transmitted diseases.”

4.2. Discussion

The primary aim of this paper was to explore the factors influencing the prevalence of PC among adolescents in WLGA, Sokoto State, Nigeria, and to understand the causes and consequences associated with pornography viewing. The findings, comprising both quantitative and qualitative data, revealed that the majority of sampled respondents in WLGA (64%) stated that they were exposed to pornographic contents. This prevalence rate aligns with previous research conducted by Ballester et al. (2020), who found a high prevalence rate of PC among adolescents in Spain.

The study identified several motivating factors that influence adolescents to engage in the consumption of pornography. Peer pressure accounted for 45% of the total responses, as shown by the study results. These findings are consistent with a study by Ballester et al. (2020), which reported that peer influence plays a significant role in adolescents engaging in sexually explicit content viewing. Other notable factors include the lack of sex education (19.2%) and curiosity (16.3%), highlighting the need to educate young individuals about the risks associated with this issue (Miller, 2023). Thus, the study findings suggest that factors such as peer influence, a lack of comprehensive sex education, and curiosity motivate young adults to engage in PC in WLGA, often influenced by their friends who are pornography users. They believe that watching sexually explicit content may help them understand different aspects of human sexuality.

On the effects of PC among adolescents in WLGA, statistical findings revealed that more than half (51.3%) of the sampled respondents believed that PC has significant effects on mental health and overall well-being. Findings reveal that a significant proportion (28%) of the sampled respondents indicated engaging in premarital sexual relationships as the major consequence of PC. These findings are similar to those of Yunengshi and Setiawan (2021), who found that frequent exposure to pornographic materials influences young individuals to engage in risky behaviors such as engaging in sexual relationships with multiple partners, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and domestic violence. Similarly, a study conducted by Norman and Othman (2019), found that adolescents who frequently consume sexually explicit content are more likely to engage in premarital sexual relationships. Bhana (2016) argued that premarital sexual relationships could be associated with teenage pregnancy, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, 23.6% of respondents identified addiction as a significant challenge, followed by 21% recognizing masturbation. According to Grubbs, Stauner, Exline, Pargament, and Lindberg (2000), exposure to pornographic materials can lead to masturbation, addiction, and potential issues with sexual dysfunction in the future.

5. Conclusion

Sincerely speaking, PC among young individuals is a prevalent social problem that can have significant negative consequences for individuals' mental health, relationships, and overall well-being. Based on the current study results, the majority of the adolescents in WLGA were exposed to internet pornography. The study also found that factors such as peer pressure, ignorance, and the desire to experience human sexuality are the major factors motivating young individuals to engage in PC in WLGA. Furthermore, the study discovered that exposure to pornographic content contributed to a rise in premarital sexual relationships, teenage pregnancy, and other mental health issues among adolescents in WLGA. To combat this issue, it is suggested that:

- There is a need for schools to incorporate sex education into the curriculum.
- There is a need for schools to organize seminars and lectures regarding the consequences of PC.

- There is a need for the WLGA council to carry out mass awareness campaigns aimed at sensitizing adolescents about the risks associated with PC.
- There is a need for parents or guardians to monitor and supervise their children's online and offline activities.
- There is a need for collaboration between parents, schools, community members, and other stakeholders to provide support and guidance to adolescents struggling with PC.

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