

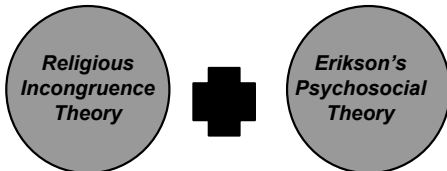
The Impact of Individual and Family Religiosity & Perceptions of a Higher Power on Pornography Consumption

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Introduction

Pornography consumption has a significant impact on those who are religious and their perceptions of a Higher Power (Borgogna, Isacco & McDermott, 2020; Perry, 2016). Moral incongruence occurs when personal beliefs surrounding pornography consumption and religious messaging regarding pornography consumption are not aligned. Implications from this research demonstrate strategies that clinicians, religious leaders, and practitioners can use to support families in addressing and recovering from unhealthy pornography consumption.

Conceptual Framework



Religious Incongruence Theory states that incongruence occurs due to misalignment with personal behavior and religious beliefs (Chaves, 2010). This is supported by stages five (identity vs. confusion) and six (intimacy vs. isolation) from Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (Erickson, 1968). According to Erikson, as humans, we attempt to establish our identity and how it relates and aligns to the world around us, which can lead to confusion. As we develop, we share more of ourselves intimately with others. Pornography viewing in isolation can lead to avoidance of intimacy. Together the two theories build a unique conceptual framework through which to view pornography consumption.

Research Question

Does religiosity influence the frequency of pornography consumption when controlling for gender? And do perceptions of a Higher Power such as being angered by sins, punishing, or forgiving impact the frequency of pornography consumption?



Methods

Data: Baylor Religion Survey Wave 5 dataset, 2017.

Participants: ($N = 1,501$).

- 56.9% females, 40.8% males
- 63% moderately or very religious.
- 82 White%, 11 Black%, 3 Asian%
- 52% married, 42.4 single%

Variables: All responses were on a 4-point Likert-type scale, with lower numbers being less in agreement to the statement.

DV:

- Porn viewing

IVs:

- God is angered by my sins
- God is punishing
- God is forgiving
- Religiosity

Covariate:

- Gender

Results




Analysis: A Multivariate analysis revealed:

- forgiveness was significantly related to pornography viewing ($\beta = -.07, p < .05$), while controlling for religiosity and gender. As perception of God as forgiving increases by 1 standard deviation, pornography viewing decreased by .07 standard deviations, while controlling for religiosity and gender.
- religiosity was significantly related to pornography ($\beta = -.19, p < .001$). As religiosity went up 1 standard deviation, pornography viewing went down .19 standard deviations, while controlling for gender.
- significant negative correlations between pornography use and religion ($r = -.20, n = 1098, p < .01$), pornography use and perception of God being angered by personal sins ($r = -.11, n = 1098, p < .01$), and pornography use and a perception of God as forgiving, ($r = -.18, n = 1098, p < .01$).
- for men there was a significant negative correlation between pornography use and religion ($r = -.24, n = 447, p < .01$), a significant negative correlation between pornography use and a perception of God as angered by personal sins ($r = -.22, n = 447, p < .01$), and a significant negative correlation between pornography use and a perception of God as forgiving ($r = -.23, n = 447, p < .01$).
- for women there was a significant negative correlation between pornography use and religion ($r = -.17, n = 651, p < .01$).

Discussion

From a gendered perspective, religious men who view pornography see a Higher Power as more angered by their sins than women. This is consistent with reports of pornography consumption resulting in significant negative outcomes for religious men, such as guilt, shame, depression, pornography addiction, and fear of sin (Borgogna, Isacco & McDermott, 2020; Grubbs et al., 2015; Perry, 2018). The results align with Erikson's stage of intimacy development for women as research shows they most often view in tandem with a partner, as opposed to men who often view in isolation. Men who view porn also see a Higher Power as more forgiving than women. And for both men and women, the greater their religiosity, the less frequently they view porn.

Programmatic Implications

-  **Objective 1:** Evaluating, creating, & implementing support around problematic porn viewing in religious households.
-  **Objective 2:** Increasing awareness in religious families of positive perceptions of a Higher Power.
-  **Objective 3:** Developing healthy family relationships and resilience by implementing family media plans.



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