

The Impact of Frequency of Pornography Viewing on Interoceptive Awareness Among Young Adults

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research is to correlate the frequency of pornography viewing with interoceptive awareness among 200 individuals of young adults, between the ages of 18-25 years old, in Chennai, India. Data were collected using the PPUS (Problematic Pornography Use Scale [M= 31.58, SD 11.592]) and the Brief MAIA-2 (Brief Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness, 2nd version [M= 52.78, SD 13.924]). A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and demonstrated a significant positive correlation ($r=.448$, $p<.01$) where increased frequency of pornographic material viewed was associated with higher interoceptive awareness. This finding challenges previous assumptions that suggested reduced sensitivity to one's own bodily sensations due to an outward focus or emotional avoidance. The data imply that there exists a complex, and possibly bi-directional, connection between the variables being studied, along with many moderating individual factors, and that longitudinal studies will be necessary to assess potential causal relationships and provide context for any identifying moderating variables.

Keywords: Pornography viewing, Interoceptive awareness, Young adults

1. Introduction

The study within the age of 18 to 25, feelings shift unpredictably. Here begins the making of choices alone guided less by others, more by personal discovery. Identity takes form slowly, alongside a growing awareness of sexual feelings. Screen hours rise sharply during these years. Digital spaces dominate daily routines now. Accessible online material draws frequent visits pornography fits that pattern. What makes it appealing ties back to privacy and expense. To watch porn is to decide on interacting with erotic content, typically through online means, seeking arousal. Now and then, curiosity leads certain people toward this experience; frequent use appears among different groups. For some, interest fades quickly; continued patterns show up across varied demographics. Motivations differ - education about intimacy appears alongside desires for enjoyment, relief from tension, moments of emptiness, or isolation. Because consumption tends to happen privately and leans strongly on sight-based triggers, focus shifts toward the display instead of inner experience. This shift prompts inquiry among scientists into whether repeated exposure affects how young adults recognize emotions within themselves or grasp their internal states.

Noticing what happens within the body like breath rhythm, muscle tightness, or shifts in digestion is part of how humans perceive inner states. Such perception forms a foundation for identifying feelings and handling pressure without escalation. Without clear access to these physical cues, emotional balance can become harder to maintain; reactions might instead follow ingrained patterns. One idea proposes that repeated exposure to explicit visual material may shift focus away from bodily feedback, drawing mental resources toward outside stimuli due to intense activation of neural reward circuits. Despite occasional use of porn to sidestep emotional discomfort, sensitivity to inner states can diminish over time. At times, images of perfected physiques redirect attention from sensation within to surface traits instead. Not every individual responds alike factors like temperament and background play their part too. Research into how viewing such material relates to bodily perception allows insight into mental processes, avoiding fixed conclusions about damage or safety.

2. Review of literature

A recent look at twenty pieces of research from 2024, led by Claudio Vieira, shows that how porn affects mental well-being ties closely to feelings like isolation, worry, and how someone views themselves - never just one thing alone. What you feel inside mixes with your outlook, then blends into social surroundings, shifting what happens. Earlier work often struggled with narrow methods and similar groups of people. To truly grasp what brings harm or helps guard against it, science must reach wider kinds of lives and experiences.

In 2025, Theresa M. Petrenchik looked into how rough childhoods shape a person's sense of inner bodily signals - specifically their confidence in those feelings. For kids between seven and seventeen getting help after tough experiences, teenage girls tuned out their bodies more than boys did - or even younger girls. When abuse was part of the story, particularly sexual harm, trusting what the body tells you dropped sharply. Because of this gap, helping young girls reconnect may make it easier to handle emotions and urges down the line

In 2021, KindaMalki MD led a look at how watching porn connects with sexual health in Sweden. Data came from more than fourteen thousand people between age sixteen and eighty-four. Those who viewed it three or more times weekly were studied closely. Instead of focusing on judgment, researchers mapped connections to experiences like enjoyment during sex. Using statistical methods, they traced how often someone watched linked to personal reports about intimacy issues. Patterns emerged showing how common habits may shape real-life sexual wellness across different ages. What stood out was not just usage rates but subtle ties to satisfaction levels among users

3. Research Methodology

3.1.Objectives

- To assess the frequency and pattern of pornography viewing among young adults.
- To examine the level of interoceptive awareness among young adults.
- To examine the relationship between frequency of pornography viewing and interoceptive awareness.

3.2.Hypothesis

H₀: There will be no significant relationship between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults.

3.3. Research Design

A quantitative correlation research design is used in this study to systematically investigate pornography viewing frequency with interoceptive awareness. This design is appropriate for examining both variables as their naturally occurring relationship through the strength and direction of the association between two variables without any manipulation of either. The use of standardized measurement instruments and numerical data provides an objective way to collect data and perform a statistical analysis. In addition, the results provide an empirical understanding of the selected population and demonstrate eco-psychological validity by identifying significant relationships and patterns within the sample size.

4. Sampling Design and Sample size

Participants in this research were selected using the convenience sampling methodology. This included male and females between the ages of 18 - 25 who reported different frequency levels of exposure to pornographic images. The convenience sampling method was selected as a way of obtaining access to respondents quickly. This research project had 200 total respondents. Sample size provided enough data to analyze the correlation patterns and provide adequate statistical power to analyze the data.

4.1. Inclusion Criteria

- The individuals aged between 18 and 25 years
- Capable of reading and comprehending English
- Have a voluntary willingness to participate
- Access to the internet and an electronic device

4.2. Exclusion Criteria

- No participants will be included in the sample that have no education.
- Individuals with a severe mental or nervous condition
- Participants that are unwilling do not have to consent in writing.

4.3. Tools used and Description

1. Problematic Pornography Use Scale (PPUS)

The Problematic Pornography Use Scale was created by Kraus et al. in 2020. It has 12 items to measure patterns of pornography use. The scale has four subscales: distress and functional problems, excessive use, lack of control, and use of pornography to escape feelings. The scale has good internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha (0.79 - 0.92). The scale has been validated through hyper sexuality, depression, anxiety, and trauma history.

2. Brief Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness – Version 2 (Brief MAIA-2)

The Brief MAIA-2 was created by Mehling et al. It is a 24 item self-report instrument that measures interoceptive awareness in eight areas: noticing; distracting yourself from your sensations; not worrying about your body's sensations; regulating your attention; being aware of how you feel; being able to control your body's sensations; listening to what your body is telling you; and trusting your body's sensations. The Brief MAIA-2 has acceptable to good reliability based on Cronbach's alpha (0.67 - 0.89) and McDonald's omega (0.67 - 0.90). The Brief MAIA-2 has been shown to have good convergent and discriminative validity as well as measurement invariance between male and female participants.

4.3. Statistical analysis:

Using the SPSS software, the data was coded and subjected to statistical analyses. A Pearson correlation was used to assess the relationship between how often young adults reported watching pornographic material and how aware they felt about their internal body sensations (or interception).

5. Result

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
PPUS	31.58	11.592	200
IA	52.78	13.924	200

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. The frequency of pornography viewing has a sample N=200, mean=31.58 and standard deviation=11.592 and interoceptive awareness has a sample N=200, mean= 52.78 and standard deviation=13.924

Table 2

Correlational analysis showing the relationship between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults.

Variables	Pearson's correlation	r value	Decision
PPUS	1	.448**	Rejecting(H ₀)
IA			

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Table shows the values of Pearson's correlation among the both variables. There appears to be a correlation of 1 and a significance of .448** (p<0.01). There is significance at .001 level and a positive correlation between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults. It implies that the higher the frequency of pornography viewing, the higher will be the level of interoceptive awareness

As a significant relationship is noticed between the two variables, there is a relationship between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness. Therefore, the null hypothesis has been (H₀: There is no relationship between the frequency of pornography viewing and interoceptive awareness among young adults.) is rejected. This study examined the association between the frequency of pornography viewing, and interoceptive awareness among young adults. It revealed that frequency of pornography viewing, exchange has a positive and significant effect on interoceptive awareness.

6. Discussion

The research examined whether there was a correlation between the frequency of pornography usage and the ability to internally sense one's own bodily signals (i.e., heartbeat, breath, muscle tension, or arousal) among a group of young adults (ages 18-25). Pornography (i.e., videos, images, or text) was

intentionally viewed with regularity through electronic means as a result of curiosity, regulating emotions, creating habits, availability of materials, or relieving stress. On average, the sample had moderate problematic behaviours related to pornography use (mean PPUS = 31.58, SD = 11.59) as well as average levels of interoceptive awareness (mean Brief MAIA-2 = 52.78, SD = 13.92). Contrary to prior expectations that pornography would reduce an individual's ability to sense his/her own body through distractions and numbing effects, there were significant positive correlations ($r = 0.448$, $p < 0.01$) found; therefore, the more frequently an individual views pornography, the more aware he/she is of their internal body signals. This finding is contrary to prior research conducted with clinical or problematic populations and suggests that frequent pornography use in the general population does not inherently impair an individual's ability to perceive internal body signals. In fact, frequent pornography use may actually be related to stable or enhanced levels of interoceptive awareness. These interactions did not reflect one particular pattern or outcome indicating harm from the frequency of pornography viewing. Additional research should be conducted to more clearly understand the relationship between the type of behaviour (i.e., mood/curiosity driven, habitual) involved in viewing pornography and the context under which pornography is used; additionally, these two behaviours should be assessed in relation to frequency.

7. Summary

The importance of pornography viewing as a factor affecting interoceptive awareness among young adults because internet-based sexual material is now easier than ever to reach, researchers wanted to examine possible mental health links at a life stage marked by shaping self-concept, managing emotions, along with heavy digital device usage. Information came from 200 individuals who completed two tools: The Problematic Pornography Use Scale (PPUS) and the Brief Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness – Version 2 (Brief MAIA-2). Instead of experimenting, the approach focused on measuring existing patterns through numerical data, relying on volunteers readily available for participation. On average, participants scored 31.58 on the PPUS scale, with variation measured at 11.592; meanwhile, their interoceptive awareness averaged 52.78, spreading across 13.924 points. A link emerged when data were analysed Pearson's method showed values rising together, r reaching 0.448 under strict significance level (p less than 0.01). Because evidence opposed a zero connection, the assumption of no tie between watching porn and body signal perception fell away. Instead of dulling inner awareness as some models predicted from overload or emotional withdrawal more frequent use actually appeared alongside stronger recognition of physical sensations within oneself. This pattern hints not at a single effect for everyone, but an interaction moulded differently per person.

8. Conclusion

The present study shows significant correlation between the scores obtained using the said questionnaires, and indicates a positive correlation between the two variables, i.e., that frequency of pornography viewing must be high in order for young adults to experience a low level of interoceptive awareness.

9. Limitations

- Limitations to this study was restricted to a small sample ($N=150$) drawn exclusively only from Chennai.

- Due to the sample being taken from only one point in time, there are no conclusions that can be drawn about causation.
- As this is a cross-sectional study, we cannot conclude that any of the results in this study are causal; in addition, the results of self-report data could be influenced by response bias or social desirability.

10. Recommendations

- Possible next steps would include replication; for replication purposes, larger, more diverse samples with a better balance of males and females.
- Employ longitudinal designs to clarify directionality of the relationship.
- The Use t-test or ANOVA to examine gender and educational-level differences in future research.

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