

The Relationship Between Religiosity and High Porn Consumption in the United States

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Introduction

Since 2000, there has been an overall rise of 91.10% in pornography consumption (Irizarry et al., 2023). Studies have found that porn usage causes higher rates of loneliness, depression, and unhealthy attitudes and expectations about sex (Privara et al., 2023).

Many religions have explicitly negative attitudes toward sexual promiscuity and pornography usage and have even launched campaigns against porn (Flanagan, 2024).

However, some studies have reported higher rates of porn consumption among religious people, Christian people.

There is still a dearth of research on the relationship between religiosity, beyond specific mainstream religions such as Christianity, and porn consumption.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between religiosity level, or level of religiousness, and high porn consumption?
2. Is there a difference in frequency of porn consumption between men and women across religiosity levels?

Methods

Sample

The sample is the 2024 General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative survey of U.S. adults conducted each year by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. The subjects were all individuals over the age of eighteen living in noninstitutional housing at the time of participation. 3309 people completed the survey.

Measures

Religiosity was measured with the question, “to what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?” with four ordered responses, from “not religious at all” to “very religious.” Porn consumption was measured with the question, “about how often did you look at porn in the last year,” and subjects were offered ten ordered responses, from “never” to “several times a day.” These categories were collapsed into “never,” “low,” and “high.” Religiosity was measured primarily in relation to the “high” category.

Results

Univariate

- 8.51% of respondents reported a high level of porn consumption.
- 28.8% of respondents reported that they were very religious.

Bivariate

- Increase in religiosity levels is significantly associated with higher levels of porn consumption, according to the Chi-square analysis ($p < 0.001$) and post-hoc tests.
- The predictive graph, using the ordinal regression results, revealed that those who are more religious are significantly more likely to consume porn frequently; as religiosity increases, so does the probability of high porn consumption.

Multivariate

- Men report substantially higher levels of high porn consumption than women across every religiosity category.
- For women, porn usage is not as affected by religiosity—it stays low overall across religiosity levels—which contrasts the significant relationship observed in men.

Figure 1: Relationship Between Religiosity Level and Probability of High Porn Consumption (Ordinal Model)

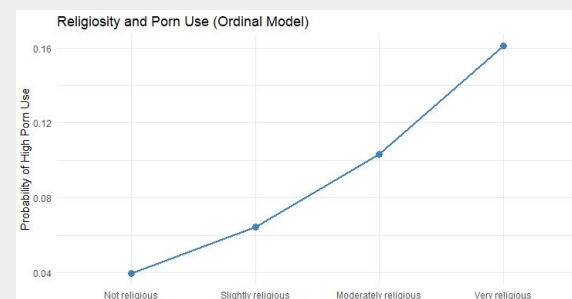
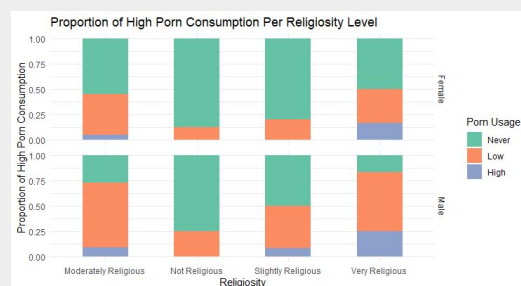


Figure 2: Proportion of High Porn Consumption Per Religiosity Level Across Gender



Discussion

The data suggests that people with higher levels of religiosity, or dedication to religion, are more likely to use/watch porn frequently than those who are less religious or not religious at all.

When gender is incorporated, the data shows that women are less likely to have high frequency of porn consumption, and that this rate changes less across religiosity levels than it does for men.

The response variable, porn consumption, was collapsed into three more basic categories, which presents limitations to the study and could potentially detract nuance from the results.

This suggests that religious men are a group worth studying for researchers interested in porn consumption and its effects, as this group appears to have a higher likelihood of consuming porn frequently than some other groups.

References

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