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## **Predicting the Tendency to Marital Infidelity Based on the Use of Internet Pornography with Mediating Role of Marital Quality**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **Aim**

The pervasive influence of the internet and audio-visual media has led to the emergence of online pornography, contributing to physical and mental health concerns among individuals engaged in this activity (Mauer-Vakil & Bahji, 2020). While some mental health studies suggest that pornography may be a harmless pursuit, research consistently highlights that compulsive usage patterns and an escalating proclivity toward pornography can disrupt sexual function and jeopardize marital relationships (Shuler et al., 2020). Consequently, a thorough exploration of the cognitive repercussions of pornography on marital relationships is crucial. Research in the domain of pornography's impact on romantic relationships indicates that heightened consumption may adversely affect romantic life, diminish physical intimacy, and increase the likelihood of marital infidelity (Bridges & Morokoff, 2011; Yucel & Gassanovs, 2010). Factors such as marital dissatisfaction, engagement in extramarital relationships, and communication challenges are identified as potential contributors to this scenario. Furthermore, certain studies assert that pornography can function as a robust predictor for extramarital sexual involvement, divorce probabilities, and participation in non-familial relationships. Within the factors contributing to marital infidelity, marital dissatisfaction emerges as a predominant element strengthening connections outside the marital framework, often linked to systematic communication issues like monotony in relationships and sexual dissatisfaction. The present study aims to scrutinize the cognitive implications of pornography on marital relationships within the specific context of Iran.

#### **Methodology**

This study adopts a descriptive approach and employs path analysis. The study population includes all married women and men in Isfahan city during the fall of 2021. A sample of 400 individuals from this population was carefully selected using convenience sampling methods, with data collection conducted online through social networks due to the prevailing conditions of the COVID-19 crisis. The research tools used include the Compulsive Pornography Use Internet (CPUI) questionnaire (Grubbs et al., 2010; comprising 31 items and 3 subscales), the Inclination to Infidelity Questionnaire (TIQ) (Beshirpour et al., 2018; containing 45 questions and three individuals, family, and social scales), and the Relationship Assessment and Satisfaction Scale (RDAS) (Busby et al., 1995; consisting of 14 items and 3 subscales). Descriptive statistical methods were employed to portray the data, while correlation and path analysis methods were utilized for inferential data analysis. A meticulous analysis of data was conducted using SPSS and Amos software, incorporating path analysis techniques.

#### **Findings**

The study's findings unveiled a significant and positive predictive relationship between online pornography consumption and marital infidelity. Additionally, marital quality emerged as a substantial

and negative predictor of marital infidelity. Furthermore, the results underscored the mediating role played by the quality of marital relationships in the association between pornography and marital infidelity. Essentially, the proclivity toward marital infidelity is demonstrated to be influential through the nuanced dynamics of diminished or enhanced quality in marital relationships. As the satisfaction of couples with their marriage decreases and the overall quality of their relationship diminishes, the likelihood of resorting to pornography increases, rendering it a more accurate predictor of a proclivity towards marital infidelity.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion and conclusion sections of this article illuminate that the quality of marital relationships serves as a pivotal intermediary in the complex relationship between pornography and marital infidelity. In essence, the inclination toward marital infidelity may exert its influence through the nuanced fluctuations in the quality of marital relationships. This article establishes that a decline in couples' satisfaction with their marriage and the diminishing quality of their relationship correspondingly elevate the likelihood of leaning towards marital infidelity. Adhering to Marks's framework (1989) for assessing the quality of relationships, married women and men are characterized by three internal, marital, and influential dimensions. A decline in the quality of marital relationships and the unbalanced organization of relationship dynamics may inadvertently lead to an augmented investment in influential individuals, particularly those involving sexual content, thereby facilitating and potentially catalyzing pornography consumption. Theoretical considerations expounded in this study underscore that the quality of marital relationships and sexual satisfaction exert a profound impact on the consumption of pornography (Olmstead et al., 2013). Individuals might turn to pornography as a means to fulfill their specific needs, particularly the imperative need for a gratifying sexual life. The utilization of sexual content might function as a coping mechanism to compensate for deficiencies or act as a form of escapism from the often-challenging realities of marital life. In summation, the conclusion posits that a reduction in satisfaction with marital life can precipitate a recourse to pornography, and a diminishing quality of marital relationships can pave the way for a proclivity towards relationships outside the bounds of marital commitment. Finally, the study's limitations have been thoughtfully discussed, encompassing aspects such as gender heterogeneity in the sample and the potential taboo effects that may influence participant reports. It is strongly recommended that future research endeavors employ complementary methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, to mitigate the inherent limitations associated with self-report questionnaires. This approach would enhance the depth, richness, and reliability of research findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between pornography, marital relationships, and the cognitive landscape of individuals.

**Keywords:** Internet Pornography, Marital Infidelity, Marital Quality.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To adhere to ethical considerations, participants in this study were informed about the research objectives and voluntarily, fully, and consciously responded to the questionnaires. Additionally, individuals were assured that their personal information would remain confidential.

### **Acknowledgments**

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### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest in the present study.

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