
Factors Associated with Pornographic Materials Use among Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

Authors: Michael Njeru¹, Solomon Nzyuko (Ph.D)² and Stephen Ndegwa (Ph.D)³

¹Department of Clinical Psychology, Daystar University
P. O. Box 44400 - 00100, Nairobi - Kenya
Email: njerumik2@gmail.com

²Department of Clinical Psychology, Daystar University
P. O. Box 44400 - 00100, Nairobi - Kenya
Email: snzyuko@daystar.ac.ke

³Department of Clinical Psychology, Daystar University
P. O. Box 44400 - 00100, Nairobi - Kenya
Email: ngarisnn@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Pornography addiction is a behavioral challenge that may expose adolescents to psycho-social problems in their developmental stage. The purpose of this study was to determine factors associated with pornography addiction among the students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. This study considered Classical Conditioning and Social Learning theories in explaining the pornography addiction among adolescents. A quantitative research approach was employed in this study in the selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. The sample size comprised 666 students who were purposively sampled from the two schools. Data collection was done using a questionnaire and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The study findings indicated that a significant number of students were engaged in pornography. Factors attributed to pornographic material use include; time spent watching online content, availability of pornographic materials and accessibility to internet enabled devices. Majority of the respondents indicated mentorship and counseling as the most helpful ways to help in overcoming addiction problems instead of punishment. Based on the findings from this study, it is important that parents and guardians of adolescents to monitor online activities that are being done by their children. Additionally, it is important that parents and teachers to familiarize themselves with current trends on adolescent sexuality for purposes of proper mentorship and parenting.

Keywords: *Pornographic materials use, pornographic addiction, pornography prevalence, students and pornography, adolescents and pornography*

INTRODUCTION

Pornography is sexual behavior represented in media such as statues, books and motion pictures which result in sexual excitement. Matters regarding sexuality and explicit content are subjective, vary from one culture to another and are also a reflection of changes in moral standards. Pornography is subjective and its history is not easily explained such that images that are condemned in one society may be acceptable for religious purposes in another culture (Jenkins, 2017).

The mainstreaming of pornography over the last 2 decades, especially through the Internet, has had great impact on youth culture and adolescent development in unprecedented and diverse ways (L'ofgren-Martenson and Mansson, 2010). Excess consumption of pornographic materials leads to addiction. Some individuals report a loss of control regarding their pornography use, which is frequently accompanied by increasing using times and negative consequences in several life domains, such as school/academic/job functioning (Duffy, Dawson, & Das Nair, 2016).

Studies on pornographic materials use among adolescents have been done in different countries worldwide. In the United States of America, Gilkersen (2013) reported that there were many websites with over 4 million pages of pornography material. With reference to the onset of pornography viewing, the first exposure usually takes place at around 11 years of age and the largest consumers of pornography are 12 to 17-year olds (Gilkersen, 2013).

Pornographic materials use among high school students may be as a result of many complex or interrelated factors. It is critical to have proper information on the developmental, psychosexual changes that come about with adolescence and this gives a basis for understanding why adolescents engage in pornographic materials use. The psychosexual stages according to Freud describe the dynamics of sexuality in development as they focus on different biological functions. Sigmund Freud postulated that during the genital stage which begins at adolescence, there is emergence of sexual impulses as a common occurrence characterized by sexual feelings towards other people (Berstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy 2008)

Students in high schools have to deal with the reawakening of sexual energies and the dawning of adulthood coupled with earlier conflicts and desires. Rosenthal and Moore (1995) explain this further by discussing about a male adolescent who at this stage has physical ability to display oedipal fantasies although the restrictions, societal norms and the superego cannot permit the consummation to proceed. In such a case, the male adolescent may result to the secret practice of watching pornographic content in hiding from anybody who may disapprove the act. At an unconscious level, Rosenthal and Moore (1995) add that the adolescent must be helped to employ good social skills which will make him to function appropriately in adult sexuality. The manner in which unconscious conflicts are handled during adolescence will be greatly determined by how well the burgeoning sexual feelings are addressed (Rosenthal & Moore 1995). Cognitive changes may not be conspicuous during adolescence and may be seen in changes in self-concept and relationships with people. These transitions may cause many

challenges to the adolescents especially if they are not properly assisted to negotiate or cope with changes that may arise which leaves room for exploration and experimentation with pornography.

In addition to the psychosexual factors of pornographic materials use among adolescent students, there are many other contributors. According to Strasburger (2009), print and electronic media have been the leading source of education on sex among adolescents with five longitudinal studies showing that sexy media content contributes to early onset of sex and pregnancy. Technological advancements in Europe especially in print media accelerated dissemination of pornography in the form of romance and entertainment. It is through media that pornography permeates into private lives and this affects many adolescents who are likely to embrace use of media and information technology. In regard to media as a leading source of pornography, Rich (2001) says that there is no other venture that grows as quickly as pornography through media. It is likened to a show that never closes and one which goes across all demographics. Adolescents who spend more time in media and online activities may find themselves in pornographic sites than those who do not.

Another factor associated with pornographic materials use is masturbation. Masturbation and the use of pornography, and sexually acting out, are in some respects as psychologically and physiologically inter-related as they are intoxicating and addictive as the use of some types of drugs. Laier and Brand (2016) in their research highlight many experiments that prove watching Internet pornography self-determinedly in private was unsurprisingly accompanied by strong reductions of sexual arousal and the need to masturbate. After watching pornography, many people begin to use counterfeit forms of intimacy, e.g. masturbation or other types of sexual acting out, in an attempt to fill that deep need inside. These intimacy forms never meet this need yet are so addictive in their nature that they are hard to resist. Carvalheira, Bente and Stullhofer (2014) conducted a more detailed analysis among married and cohabitating men who had experienced decreased sexual desire during the previous 6 months. Most of the men who masturbated at least once a week reported having used pornographic materials at least once a week as well (Carvalheira et. al, 2014). Their studies showed that masturbation and pornographic materials use were significantly correlated.

Availability of internet and more online activity among adolescents may be another contributing factor to pornographic materials use. According to Jenkins (2017), the advent of internet especially from the 1990s has contributed to wide handiness of pornographic movies and images. In the United States, 93% of all adolescents of ages 12 to 17 years use the internet; 63% go online daily and 36% are online several times a day (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010). The World Internet Report surveyed 12 to 14-year old from thirteen different countries and found that 100% of British youth, 98% of Israeli youth, 96% of Czech youth, and 95% of Canadian youth reported using the internet regularly (Lawskey, 2008). Given that the average American teen owns three mobile devices it can be taken as a great deal since online activity is portable, and therefore unrestricted (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005).

Pornographic materials use is also indicated as an outcome of faulty mental processes. This could originate from contemporary lifestyles which attracts in a sexual way. Barlow and Durand (2009) show that sexy lifestyles are on the rise such as evident in the theme that “sex sells”. This has enhanced atypical sexual behaviors against the will of a person. Odongo (2014) cites a former news lady on faulty mentality who regrets about her life on television. This life brands her as a “television sex siren.” The news anchor in her own words said “This idea of being forced to feature on T.V. with exposed cleavage, exposing your nudity on national television while families are in their living rooms, is not my style anymore”. This disclosure by the news anchor indicates that there could be other news anchors and media personalities who are in a similar situation of being sex sirens. The problem would be that after getting used to a lifestyle where a person is dressed in a sexually explicit way, they could accept the new way of life and lose their sensitivity to what may be considered as sexually explicit dressing style. Additionally, Jenkins (2017) states that the use of web cameras has enhanced the pornography industry further to laypersons who can now post their explicit photos freely and worse is the case in the propagation of child pornography. Exposing adolescents to sexy lifestyles may make them develop a mentality which makes them prone to pornographic materials use.

In a study carried out in South Africa, Kheswa and Notole (2014), reported that South Africa is not left out in regard to the adolescent pornography challenge as experienced in other regions. Their empirical qualitative study on ten male students aged 14 – 18 years from a secondary school in Eastern Cape found that substance abuse, peer pressure and lack of parental supervision contributed to pornographic materials use. In Kenya, alcohol joints and pubs may create an environment suitable for sexual fantasies as seen by the patrons’ sexy dressing styles and availability of sex workers. Under intoxication, young people may engage in impulsive behavior and the most common is in regard to sex. Adolescents may have inability to understand complexity of engaging in drugs of abuse. They may also be ignorant of the relationship between consequences of drug abuse and behavior because of their immature perceptual reasoning. This indicates that time spent on watching pornography, readily available sources of pornographic materials and accessibility to internet are associated with pornographic materials use among adolescents. The study therefore intended to examine factors associated with pornographic materials among students in the selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative in nature and targeted two schools in Nairobi County. This approach was used because the study comprised of numerous respondents. Moreover, data from their responses would be used objectively to analyse the factors associated with pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The study sample comprised of students who were enrolled and in session in two schools in form one to form four. Purposive sampling was adopted since the two secondary schools had dominant adolescent populations that were appropriate for the study. It is important to note that the study excluded students who were 20 years and above.

In regards to data collection instruments, the study utilized questionnaires to screen and also to get socio-demographic information of the participants. The first questionnaire was used to screen the participants for pornography and use of pornographic materials. Most important in the questionnaire was information on whether the participant had engaged in pornography or in pornographic materials use. The information in the questionnaire included age, gender, class level, family details, religion they subscribed to and other pertinent information. The use of the structured and semi-structured questionnaires was helpful in gathering in-depth information as well as clarifying to the respondents what may not have been clear to them earlier.

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 21. Specifically, data collected from the questionnaire, were input into the statistical package, coded and the outcome was used to present the research findings using tables and figures. The study observed people's rights and ethical issues throughout the research process. Participants had to indicate their willingness to participate in the study through a consent granted by their school principal.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Students

In this study, data on gender, age distribution based on mean, level of study and parental status was sought. This was to ensure that the selected sample represented the entire population. More than a half (54.8%) of the students who participated in the survey were male while 45.2% were female. This shows that the selected sample had more male student than female students. This is because the population of male students is more than the female students

The age distribution of the selected student is 16.5 years. This indicates that majority of students from the represented sample were 16 years old. Slightly over one-third (35.3%) of the students were from form one, 24.5% were from form two, 25.3% were from form three and 14.6% were from form four. This indicates that the form one students were more willing to participate in the survey unlike the other classes.

Almost two-thirds (60%) of the respondents lived with both biological parents while 20.2% lived with single parents. However, 19.8% stated that they lived with step parent, alone, with a guardian, with divorced or separated parents or orphaned by one parent or both. This means that a vast majority of the participants were raised by both biological parent and single parent.

Factors Associated with Pornographic Materials Use among Students in the Targeted Secondary schools in Nairobi County

This study intended to analyze factors associated with pornographic materials use in the target Secondary schools in Nairobi County. These factors include time spent in watching pornography, readily available sources of pornography and accessibility of internet by the students.

Time Spent on Watching Pornography

The students from the selected sample were asked to indicate the average time they spend on watching pornography in a week. Figure 1 shows the summaries of their responses.

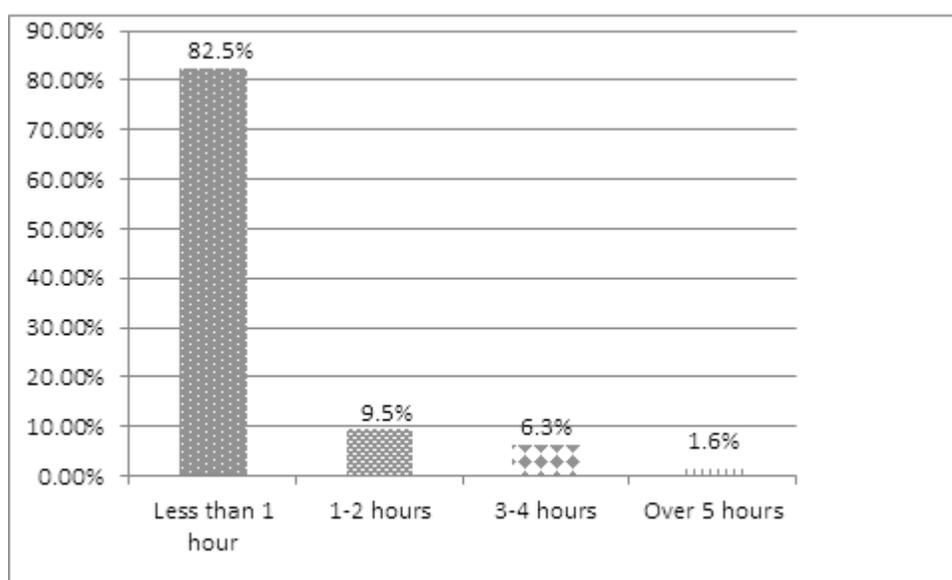


Figure 1 Distribution of students' time spent on watching pornography

Vast majorities (82.5%) of the students spend less than an hour watching pornography, 9.5% spend one to two hours, 6.3% spend three to four hours and 1.6% spend five hours. From the findings 17.5% spend more than an hour watching pornography.

Readily Available Sources of Pornographic Materials

The students were further asked to give the various sources of pornography they use. The distribution of responses is as presented in Figure 2.

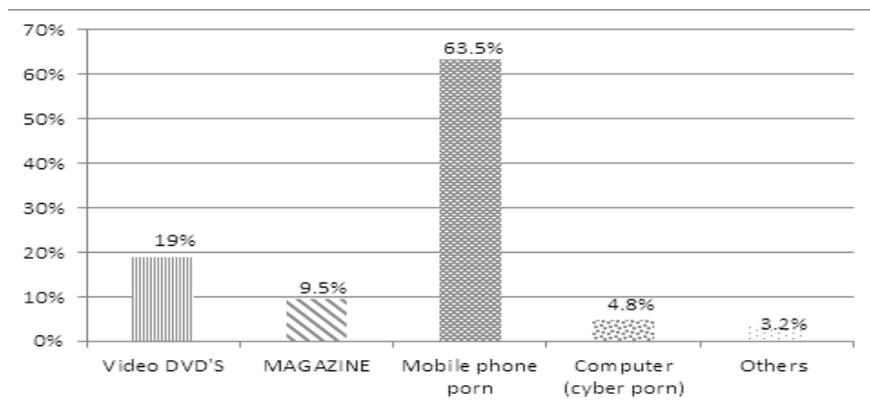


Figure 2 Students' response on the available sources of pornography

Nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of the students who watch pornography use their phones, 19% use videos from DVDs, 9.5% use magazines, 4.8% from cybers and 3.2% use other sources of pornography. This indicates that most of the students who watch pornography use their mobile phone because they can watch privately.

Accessibility of Internet

In order to establish the accessibility of internet by the students, the respondents were asked if they have access to internet. The responses are summarized in Figure 3.

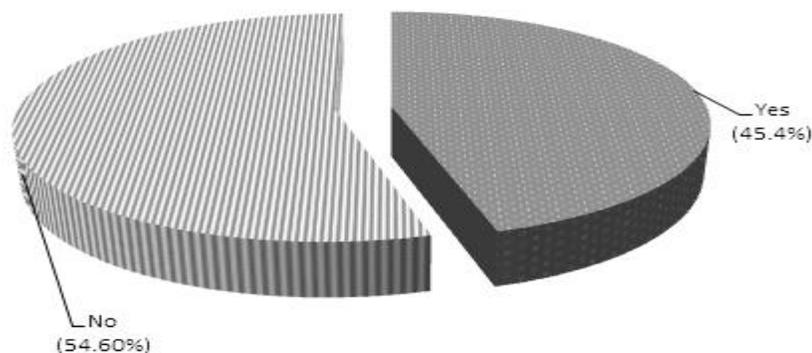


Figure 3 Accessibility of internet

Slightly over a half of the students indicated that they had no access to internet while 45.4% indicated that they do have access to internet. This shows that almost half of the students have access to the internet.

Association between Demographic Characteristics and Pornographic Materials Use

The study examined the association between demographic characteristics (sex, parental status, masturbation, access to internet) and pornographic materials use. Chi-square test for independence was used to establish association.

Association between Sex Habit and Pornographic Materials Use among Students

The study examined the association between sex habit and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. Table 1 shows chi-square test results.

Table 1

Chi-square Test for Association between Sex Habit and Pornographic Materials Use

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	96.126 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	91.782	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	62.460	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	95.982	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	666				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.13.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Chi square tests showed a significant association between sex habit and pornographic materials use, $0.05, \chi^2 (1, N=658) = 10.690, P = .001$. This implies that pornographic materials use is dependent on access to internet.

Association between Parental Status and Pornographic Materials Use

The study examined the association between parental status and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. Table 2 shows chi-square test results.

Table 2

Chi-square Test for Association between Parental Status and Pornographic Materials Use

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.991 ^a	8	.266
Likelihood Ratio	8.874	8	.353
Linear-by-Linear Association	.354	1	.552
N of Valid Cases	655		

a. 8 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .60.

Chi square tests showed no significant association between parental status and pornographic materials use, 0.05, χ^2 (1, N=658) =10.690, P= .001. This implies that pornographic materials use is dependent on access to internet.

Association between Masturbation and Pornographic Materials Use

The study examined the association between masturbation and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. Table 3 shows chi-square test results.

Table 3

Chi-square test for Association between Masturbation and Pornographic Materials Use

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.573 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	72.811	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	47.952	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	77.457	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	666				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.96.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Chi square tests showed a significant association between masturbation and pornographic materials use, $0.05, \chi^2 (1, N=658) = 10.690, P = .001$. This implies that pornographic materials use is dependent on access to internet.

DISCUSSION

The study established that the majority (82.5%) of students spend less than an hour per week on watching pornographic materials. Previous studies by Wallmyr and Welin (2006) found that 48.8% of 15 to 25-year-old males primarily viewed pornography to get aroused and masturbate. Another 39.5% watched it out of curiosity and 28.5% because “it is cool”. This was also supported in studies by Goodson, McCormick & Evans (2001), in which males claimed that their motivation for viewing pornography was because they were curious about sex and for sexual entertainment. The reason behind this is that adolescents and young adults who are in the psychosocial stage of developing identity and intimacy are in great need of sexuality information (Erickson, 1968).

The students also have access to the various electronic and print sources of pornography. Several studies have revealed that adolescents and young adults report using offline sexual explicit material for example books, magazines, movies and phone sex hotlines at 50% (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005). An article by Muchene (2014) confirmed that pornography had become common in our society. It further noted that various kinds of videos had found their way into the local scene provoking a major debate as to whether the boldness, sexy and eye-watering extreme artsy shown is healthy to our generation. It cited a case of a topless boys’ band dancing suggestively with female actors that had been banned from television screens yet it had received 621500 views on you tube. According to the Muchene (2014), viewing sexual explicit materials was becoming more fashionable to the youth.

Increased usage of the internet by adolescents could also result to pornographic materials exposure. The percentage of students is quite high and therefore there is a risk of exposure to pornographic materials. According to the CCK (2013) the number of internet users in Kenya stood at 21.2 million by December 2013; representing a 52.3 % of the population. There is therefore a possibility of increase in unregulated internet and this would lead to a relative increase in unlimited exposure to pornography to the adolescents. Furthermore, the Internet is present and prioritized in the lives of many youth (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickur, 2010). In the United States for instance, 93% of all adolescents ages 12 to 17 use the Internet; 63% go online daily and 36% are online several times a day (Lenhart, Purcell et al., 2010). The World Internet Report surveyed 12 to 14 year olds from thirteen different countries and found that 100% of British youth, 98% of Israeli youth, 96% of Czech youth, and 95% of Canadian youth reported using the Internet regularly (Lawsky, 2008).

The results showed a significant association between sex habit and pornography materials use. This is in line with a study by Alacron, Iglesia, Cassado and Montejo (2019) which identified clear differences in the brain functioning of patients with compulsive sexual behavior and

controls that are similar to those of drug addicts. Particularly, it points out to the fact that exposure to sexual images or hypersexual subjects indicated differences between liking (controlled) and wanting (sexual desire) that was greater. In another study by Kamaara (2005) similar findings are observed. Predominantly the study showed two crises associated with adolescence. The first one is identity crisis which is an individual's efforts to know themselves and identify their role model. The second crisis is in regard to sexuality characterized by awakening of sexual issues and specifically a strong desire for the opposite sex. Students who do not have the opportunity to express their sexuality easily end up engaging in pornography to satisfy their sex needs.

Further, results showed no significant association between parental status and pornographic materials use. From the literature review it is evident there have been a wave of studies related to behavioral addictions with some of them focusing on online pornography addiction. Nonetheless, no study has been able to profile students' background in relation to the status of their parents. This justifies the fact that the parental background has no influence on addiction to pornographic material use.

The results also illustrate a significant association between masturbation and pornographic materials use. A similar trend was observed in studies by Laier and Brand (2016) in which they highlighted many experiments that proved watching internet pornography self-determinedly in private was accompanied by strong reductions of sexual arousal and the need to masturbate. The same was noted in research by Carvalheira, Bente and Stullhofer (2014) in which a more detailed analysis was conducted among married and cohabitating men who had experienced decreased sexual desire (DSD). Most of the men who masturbated at least once a week reported having used pornography at least once a week as well (Carvalheira et. al, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was a significant association between sex habit and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Essentially, students who watch a lot of pornography purposely conjure up pornographic fantasies to uphold arousal during intercourse with a preference for pornography over realistic sexual intercourse.

With reference to parental status, the study concluded that there was no significant association between parental status and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi. Therefore, parental background did not appear to have an influence on students' use of pornographic materials in the selected schools.

Further, the study concluded that significant association between masturbation and pornographic materials use among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Pornography is usually believed to be a solitary activity yet our study indicates that frequent viewership of the pornography is related with greater dependence on pornographic script any

form of sexual encounters and one of these encounters is self-arousal activities such as masturbation.

REFERENCES

- Alarcón, R., Iglesia, J. I., Casado, N. M., & Montejo, A. L. (2019). Online Porn Addiction: What We Know and What We Don't-A Systematic Review. *Journal of clinical medicine*, 8(1), 91. doi:10.3390/jcm8010091
- Barlow, D. H. and Durand, V. M. (2009). *Abnormal Psychology: An Integrated Approach*. Mason, Ohio: Wadsworth Cengage Learning
- Berstein, D. A., Penner, L. A., Clarke-Stewart, A., and Roy, E. J. (2008). *Psychology* (8th Edition). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Carvalho, A., Bente, T., and Stullhofer, A. (2014). Correlates of Men's Sexual Interest: A Cross-Cultural Study. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*. Vol 11, Iss 1. 154 – 164.
- Communication Commission of Kenya. (2013) *Quarterly Sector Statistics Report of 2012/13 Financial year (April -June, 2013)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cck.go.ke/statistics/>
- Duffy, A., Dawson, D. L., and das Nair, R. (2016). Pornography Addiction in Adults: A Systematic Review of Definitions and Reported Impact. *J Sex Med*. 2016 May;13(5):760-77
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Oxford, England: Norton & Co
- Goodson, P., McCormick, D., & Evans, A. (2001). Searching for sexually explicit materials on the internet: an exploratory study of college students' behaviors and attitudes. *Archives of sexual behaviors* 30 (2), 101-118
- Gilkersen, L. (2012), Your Brain on Porn: 5 Proven Ways Pornography Warps Your Mind and 3 Biblical Ways to Renew It. Retrieved from <http://www.covenanteyes.com/brain-ebook/>
- Jenkins, J. P. (2017). *Pornography*: Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pornography>
- Kamaara, E. K. (2005). *Gender, Youth Sexuality and HIV and AIDS: A Kenyan Experience*. Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications.
- Kheswa, J. G., & Notole, M. (2014). The Impact of Pornography on Adolescent Males' Sexual Behaviour in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. A Qualitative Study. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20), 2831.

- Laier, C., & Brand, M. (2016). Mood changes after watching pornography on the Internet are linked to tendencies towards Internet-pornography-viewing disorder. *Addictive behaviors reports*, 5, 9–13.
- Lawsy, D. (2008). American youth trail in Internet use: survey. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/11/24/us-internet-youth-idUSTRE4AN0MR20081124>
- Lenhart, A., Ling, R., Campbell, S., & Purcell, K. (2010). *Teens and mobile phones*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.
- Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickur, K. (2010). Social media & mobile Internet use among teens and young adults. *Pew Internet: Pew Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved from <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>
- L'ofgren-Martenson, L., & Mansson, S. (2010). Lust, love, and life: A qualitative study of Swedish adolescents' perceptions and experiences with pornography. *Journal of Sex Research*, 47, 568–579.
- Muchene, E. (2014). Full- frontal Nudity, Explicit and Raunchy Lyrics. *The Standard Newspaper*, Nairobi, Kenya: 20th June, 2014: No.29622 pp. 10-11
- Odongo, D. (2014). Arunga: TV sex sirens hurt wives. *The Nairobiian*. Retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000103084/arunga-tv-sex-sirens-hurt-wives>
- Rich, F. (2001). Growing Pornography Industry. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1124343>
- Rosenthal, D. & Moore, S. (1995). *Sexuality in Adolescence*. New York: Routledge
- Roberts, D., Foehr, U., and Rideout, V. (2010). Sustainable Happiness and Well-Being: Future Directions for Positive. *Psychology*, Vol.3 No.12A
- Strasburger, V. (2010). Sexuality, Contraception, and the Media. *Pediatrics*.126. 576-582.
- Wallmyr G., & Welin C. (2006). Young people, pornography, and sexuality: sources and attitudes. *Journal of school nursing* 22: 290–95.
- Ybarra, M. L., and Mitchell, K. (2005). Exposure to Internet Pornography among Children and Adolescents: A National Survey. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 8, 473-486