



## Original communication

# A validation study of the Brazilian version of the pornography consumption inventory (PCI) in a sample of female university students



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## ABSTRACT

Although men constitute the widest consumer group of pornography, the Internet has facilitated both the production of and access to pornographic material by women as well. However, few measures are available to examine pornography-use constructs, which can compromise the reliability of statements regarding the harmful use of pornography. Our study aimed to confirm the factorial validity and internal consistency of the Pornography Consumption Inventory (PCI) in a sample of female university students in Brazil. The PCI is a four-factor, 15-item, five-point Likert-type scale. After translation and back-translation of the PCI, it was administered to 105 female medical students. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to examine the construct validity. The results supported the four-factor model of the PCI. The model showed adequate internal reliability and good fit indices (comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.95, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.94, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.07 (95% confidence interval (CI) = 0.04–0.09), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.08). Overall, the findings from this study support the use of the PCI in Portuguese-speaking women.

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## 1. Introduction

Pornography consumption has become increasingly concentrated in the home, moving from bookstores and newsstands to computers, home-video records, and cable television. Although men constitute the widest consumer group of pornography, the Internet has facilitated both the production of and access to pornographic material by women as well.<sup>1–3</sup> It is estimated that one-third of women have watched pornography within the last month,<sup>4</sup> that almost half of female university students have considered the use of pornography acceptable,<sup>5</sup> and that women aged between 18 and 24 years have consumed more pornographic material than men aged 50 or older.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, contrary to the perception that heterosexual pornography expresses the power, the pleasure, and the tyranny of men, women may not necessarily feel degraded by pornographic material; rather, they may consider it as a means of getting pleasure.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, sex manuals, instructional videos for couples, lingerie catalogues, and romance novels

seem to be the main source of erotica for women.<sup>3</sup> Based on a dominant discourse, the more conventional and less aggressive nature of female sexuality has justified the industry's small investments in producing pornography for women.

Nevertheless, pornography use is perceived as a pernicious influence on both men and women. Psychosocial concern is derived from fears that pornography consumption may have adverse effects on people, for example, by damaging emotions, intimacy, and sexuality; increasing gender inequality; and encouraging risky and unhealthy behaviors.<sup>8–10</sup> Indeed, exposure to pornography is found to be linked to drug misuse, group sex, risky sexual behaviors, and unhealthy lifestyle, particularly among male adolescents,<sup>6,11–13</sup> as well as attitudes supporting sexual violence among adult men.<sup>14,15</sup> The authors propose that pornography can amplify fantasies and, consequently, encourage viewers to perform the fantasized behavior, including violent sexual fantasies.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, other studies have failed to show a direct association of pornography exposure with risky sexual behaviors,<sup>17</sup> intimacy deficits,<sup>18</sup> or an increase in sexual aggression rates,<sup>19,20</sup> suggesting that other factors or motivations underlying consumption may better explain such deleterious effects. In the literature on the consequences of pornography use, pornography has been controversially proposed for use as a source of sexual education in youths, with an emphasis

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on safer-sex practices.<sup>21</sup> In fact, although exposure to pornography differs for men and women, both have reported learning about certain sexual practices from pornographic films and magazines.<sup>22</sup>

Given these controversial findings and proposals, studies that use validated instruments to evaluate pornography use and motivations are necessary. To date, few measures are available to examine pornography-use constructs, which can compromise the reliability of previous findings. Without established measurement tools, it is difficult to develop population norms for pornography consumption, a requirement for distinguishing between normal and deviant use.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, classifying material as pornographic has posed a challenge for researchers, with the current consensus being that pornography refers to sexually explicit material with naked or semi-naked actors engaged in sexual acts or genital stimulation.<sup>24,25</sup>

Pornography use requires a motivated user.<sup>2</sup> Previous studies have proposed motivations for pornography use, as a means of distraction<sup>26</sup>; obtaining sexually related information; establishing personal connections; being sexually entertained or aroused<sup>27</sup>; gaining fancy connections<sup>23</sup>; exploring stigmatized aspects of sexuality<sup>28</sup>; managing moods; and coping with frustration, boredom, and loneliness.<sup>29</sup> However, the potential associations between these different motivations and physical, social, and psychological problems have yet to be investigated by a sufficient number of studies using validated measures.

In Brazil, no validated instrument is currently available for evaluating pornography use in women. Thus, our study aimed to confirm the factorial validity and internal consistency of the Pornography Consumption Inventory (PCI) in a sample of female university students in Brazil. The PCI was originally tested among hypersexual males, showing high internal consistency and reliability. In this inventory, the developers hypothesized four main reasons for pornography consumption: (1) to cope with uncomfortable emotions and stressful experiences; (2) to satisfy sexual curiosity; (3) to facilitate sexual pleasure; and (4) to satisfy desires for excitement, fantasy, novelty, and variety.<sup>30</sup> For the purposes of this study and following the definition given by the original developers of the PCI, the material was considered pornographic if it (1) creates or elicits sexual thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, and (2) contains explicit images or descriptions of sexual acts involving the genitals (e.g., vaginal or anal intercourse, oral sex, or masturbation).<sup>30,31</sup>

Given that our study involved a nonclinical sample of women, we hypothesized that the average total PCI scores would be lower than those found among men.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, based on the literature concerning sexual curiosity, mood management, sexual pleasure, and search for variety as motivations for pornography use in nonclinical samples,<sup>27,29</sup> we hypothesized that the potential motivations for using pornography are qualitatively (but not quantitatively) similar to the sample where the PCI was originally studied.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Procedure

Permission to use the PCI was obtained from the developers. The original version was translated using back translation in accordance with standard processes.<sup>32,33</sup> The English version of the instrument was translated into Portuguese by a team including one professor, four psychiatrists, and two psychologists with experience in sexual disorders and competency in both English and Portuguese languages, as well as two independent bilingual native speakers. The team worked collaboratively to ensure that the instrument had semantic equivalence across the languages and conceptual equivalence across cultures. The translation coordinator compared both

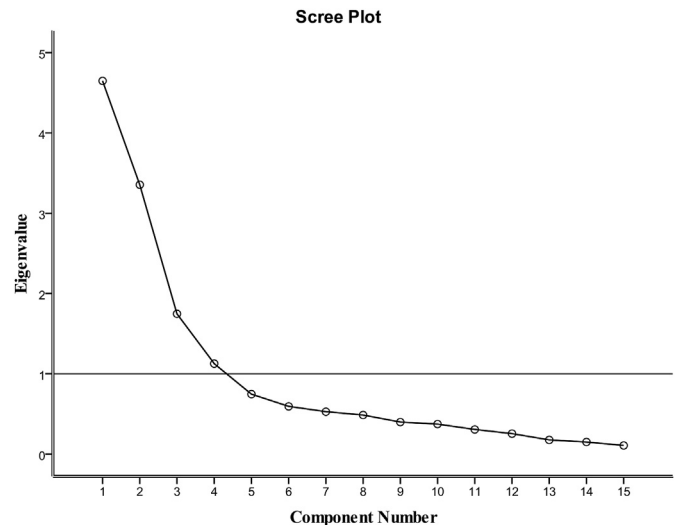


Fig. 1. Scree plot for the pornography consumption inventory in a sample of female Brazilian university students.

versions and reconciled any differences. Finally, the team compiled the Portuguese version and chose the most appropriate wording for clarity and similarity to the original. The final Portuguese version was formalized after the team discussed culturally problematic issues.

The Portuguese version was then independently back-translated to English by two separate translators, neither of whom had previously seen the original scale. The back-translated versions were also evaluated and discussed by the team. A pilot study was then conducted on a small sample ( $N = 10$ ) of healthy individuals from both genders and different educational levels to examine whether any items on the PCI were perceived as difficult. No problematic items requiring revision were found.

A cross-sectional study was then performed to confirm the factorial validity and internal consistency of the PCI in a sample of female university students in Brazil. The investigators were specially trained medical graduate students. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the ABC Medical School, Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil.

### 2.2. Participants

For this study, 250 subjects from a total of 500 first-to fifth-year medical students aged 18 and above at the ABC Medical School were randomly recruited. A total of 110 male students and 140 female students were then invited to answer the questionnaire. As the present study aimed to validate the PCI among women, only the female students were included.

They were assured that their participation was voluntary, that only the researchers would be privy to the data, and that all data would be kept confidential. A financial reward was not provided because this is not allowed under Brazilian law. The aims of this study were explained to the participants, both orally and in writing through a consent form. After agreement, all participants then signed the consent terms.

### 2.3. Measures

This was a cross-sectional study wherein subjects were provided information through a self-reported questionnaire. This

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