



The Associations That Sociosexual Orientation and Personality Traits Have with Men's Preferences for Different Genres of Pornography

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Abstract

Men's use of internet pornography has been widely studied; however, the frequency with which men use different genres of pornography, and the individual differences associated with the use of different genres of pornography, has received less attention. The aim of the present research was to determine whether men's sociosexual orientation and personality traits were associated with use of different genres of internet pornography. Across three studies, men were asked to self-report the frequency with which they have used each genre of pornography (Study 1; $n = 126$), presented with video thumbnails representing the various genres of pornography and asked to self-report their interest in using each genre (Study 2; $n = 166$), and given brief descriptions for each genre and asked to report their interest in using each genre (Study 3; $n = 169$). These associations were examined using men's self-reported sociosexual orientation, personality traits, and use of four broad genres of pornography. Results indicated that aspects of men's sociosexual orientation and personality were correlated with men's use of various genres of pornography. Regression analyses revealed that aspects of men's sociosexual orientation and personality were uniquely predictive of their use of group sex pornography (which depicts cues to high levels of sperm competition), as well as female-specific and paraphilic pornography. Discussion considers the potential evolutionary psychological implications of these findings, as well as limitations and directions for future studies of pornography use.

Keywords Pornography · Sociosexual orientation · Personality · Evolutionary psychology

Introduction

The existing literature on pornography has primarily focused on frequency of use and its associations with attitudinal, behavioral, and relationship outcomes (Baćak a & Štulhofer, 2011; Bogaert, 2001; Carvalheira et al., 2015; Emmers-Sommer, 2018; Kennair & Bendixen, 2012). This substantial body of work has identified a wide range of correlates of general pornography consumption. Unsurprisingly, pornography use is most often motivated by the pursuit of sexual pleasure (Bóthe et al., 2021; Koós et al., 2025) and is positively associated with masturbation frequency (Baćak a & Štulhofer, 2011; Carvalheira et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2019; Perry, 2020), suggesting that pornography is commonly used as a masturbatory aid.

However, researchers have also identified alternative motivations for pornography use, such as distraction, stress reduction, and boredom avoidance (Bóthe et al., 2021). In the context of romantic relationships, pornography use also may serve as a vehicle for sexual exploration and curiosity, with some evidence suggesting it can contribute to sexual well-being (Bóthe et al., 2022; Kohut et al., 2017). Moreover, frequency of pornography use has been linked to more permissive attitudes toward sexuality, including greater acceptance of premarital sex and abortion (Franczyk et al., 2014), as well as higher levels of narcissistic antagonism (Grubbs et al., 2023), entitlement (Grubbs et al., 2018), and sensation seeking (Sinković et al., 2013; Zheng & Zheng, 2014). Demographically, pornography consumers are more likely to be male (Albright, 2008; Carroll et al., 2008), younger (Buzzell, 2005; McKee, 2007), and lower in religiosity (Carroll et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 2010).

Although this literature provides a useful foundation for understanding pornography use, it has largely overlooked genre-specific consumption and the role of individual differences in preferences for specific types of pornography. Most

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studies have examined pornography as a unitary construct, without distinguishing between genres that may serve different psychological functions or appeal to different user profiles. A notable exception is the study by Hald and Štulhofer (2016), which investigated self-reported arousal to 27 distinct genres of pornography among men and women. Their findings revealed that both sex and sexual orientation predicted arousal to particular genres. For example, men reported greater arousal than women to genres such as amateur, oral sex, big breasts, anal sex, bukkake, orgy, cumshot, and MILF. Conversely, women reported higher arousal to genres like large penises, bondage and dominance, and gay pornography.

Importantly, Hald and Štulhofer (2016) also found that genres tended to cluster into four distinct categories for heterosexual men: ejaculation-centered group sex (e.g., bukkake, gangbang), bisexual-centered group sex (e.g., threesome, orgy), paraphilic (e.g., bondage, violent sex), and female specific (e.g., MILF, large breasts). These findings are significant not only for being the first to identify meaningful genre clusters but also for highlighting the potential utility of using broader genre categories—rather than isolated genres—to investigate individual differences in pornography preferences and consumption.

Other studies of sex differences related to pornography suggest that men tend to be exposed to pornography at a younger age (Sabina et al., 2008) and prefer a wider range of pornography (Hald, 2006). This research suggests that certain genres of pornography may be more appealing to men than women. However, this research is limited in its ability to identify individual differences in the use of different genres of pornography. Although Hald and Štulhofer (2016) identified several demographic characteristics as predictors of arousal in response to certain genres of pornography, little research has investigated individual difference variables (e.g., personality traits, sociosexual orientation) as potential predictors of using specific genres of pornography.

Several individual differences appear to be associated with specific patterns of pornography use, particularly among men. For example, higher levels of impersonal sexual attitudes, a desire for sexual variety, and dominance have been shown to predict men's interest in content depicting sexually promiscuous women (Bogaert, 2001). In the same study, intelligence was negatively associated with a preference for violent pornography. More recent meta-analyses have found that problematic pornography use is positively associated with traits such as impulsivity, neuroticism, and anxious attachment (Akbari et al., 2024), as well as sensation seeking (Bocci Benucci et al., 2024).

Gender differences in pornography-related attitudes and outcomes have also emerged in the literature. Compared to women who use pornography, male users have been found to report more adversarial attitudes toward women, greater endorsement of rape myths, and more conservative sexual

beliefs (Emmers-Sommer, 2018). Conversely, other work has shown that pornography users express more gender egalitarian attitudes relative to non-users (Kohut et al., 2016).

Additional studies have linked pornography use to a range of personality traits and behavioral tendencies. For example, frequency of exposure to pornographic magazines has been shown to be associated with sexual and hostile fantasies (Malamuth & McIlwraith, 1988), and internet pornography use has been shown to be positively correlated with sensation seeking among college students (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2004). Aversive personality traits—such as psychopathy—have also been linked to a greater proclivity for engaging in revenge pornography (i.e., the non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit images or videos; Pina et al., 2017). Furthermore, a longitudinal study of married Americans found that an earlier onset of pornography use predicted a higher likelihood of divorce for both men and women (Perry & Shleifer, 2018), suggesting that pornography use may have adverse consequences for romantic relationships. However, these connections may be moderated by individual or relational factors. For example, Perry and Whitehead (2019) reported that religiosity moderated the association between pornography use and sexual satisfaction, implying that the consequences of pornography use may vary across different types of couples.

Taken together, these findings suggest that pornography use—both in general and with regard to specific types of content—is linked to a range of individual difference variables, some of which may have negative implications for sexual attitudes and relational outcomes. However, much of this work has not explicitly focused on genre-specific preferences, leaving important questions unanswered.

To our knowledge, only one study has directly examined the associations between Big Five personality traits and preferences for specific genres of pornography. In a study by Gerymski (2017), pornography users were found to score higher in extraversion and emotional stability compared to non-users. The same study also reported positive associations between openness and preferences for genres such as “BDSM,” “big penis,” and “group sex,” while openness was negatively associated with preference for “chubby women.” Extraversion showed negative associations with preferences for “transgender women” and “oral sex,” and agreeableness was negatively associated with preference for both “chubby women” and “transgender women.” However, this study did not distinguish between men and women or account for sexual orientation when assessing the connections between personality traits and genre preferences. As a result, further research is warranted to clarify how individual differences—particularly personality traits—relate to specific pornography genre preferences with more demographically defined samples.

Sociosexual Orientation

Sociosexual orientation is a measure of an individual's proclivity toward casual, uncommitted sexual relationships and may be an important predictor of men's pornography use. In a sample of Norwegian high school students, Kennair and Bendixen (2012) observed that pornography exposure was positively correlated with both sociosexual behaviors and sociosexual attitudes, but they did not examine the association between pornography exposure and sociosexual desire. Additionally, Kennair and Bendixen found that sociosexual behaviors, sociosexual attitudes, and exposure to pornography uniquely predicted both the experience of being sexually harassed and engaging in the sexual harassment of others for both men and women. Burtäverde et al. (2021) investigated reasons for watching pornography and found that sociosexual orientation was positively correlated with the "increased sex drive," "enhancing sexual performance," and "social/instrumental" (i.e., group pressures and non-sexual) reasons for watching pornography. Further, overall sociosexual orientation was negatively correlated with the "lack of relational and emotional skills" reason for watching pornography.

Sperm Competition

Sperm competition occurs when the ejaculates of two or more males simultaneously occupy the reproductive tract of a single female. Evolutionary theory suggests that the selective pressures associated with sperm competition in ancestral environments produced physiological and psychological adaptations in males—including human males—to reduce the risk of reproductive failure in such contexts (Goetz & Shackelford, 2006; Shackelford et al., 2002; Simmons & Fitzpatrick, 2012; Tourmente et al., 2011). One such proposed psychological adaptation is increased sexual arousal in response to cues of sperm competition—such as sexual scenarios involving multiple men and one or more women—which may have increased the likelihood of insemination. Conversely, men who did not experience arousal in these contexts may have missed reproductive opportunities that could have led to more genetically related offspring.

Empirical evidence from pornography research offers some support for this theoretical perspective. For example, McKibbin et al. (2013) found that pornographic DVDs with covers displaying more images of two or more men engaging with a single woman were purchased more frequently than those with fewer such images. In contrast, the number of images showing two or more women with one man did not predict DVD sales. Although limited in scope, this study was one of the first to apply sperm competition theory to men's pornography consumption, suggesting that such imagery may facilitate arousal through evolved mechanisms sensitive to sperm competition cues.

Following a similar line of reasoning, Salmon et al. (2019) explored sex differences in interest in various pornography genres, predicting greater male interest in group sex content, such as threesomes and gangbangs. As expected, men expressed more interest in these genres than women. However, 66% of men preferred threesomes featuring one man and two women—contexts indicative of low sperm competition—whereas 69% of women preferred threesomes involving two men and one woman. Salmon and colleagues interpreted these findings in light of prior work by Burch and Gallup (2019), who found that men reported greater enjoyment of, and more frequent participation in, group sex than women. However, these results contrast with Pornhub's (2018) analytics, which show that women more frequently search for gangbang pornography. Thus, the literature remains somewhat mixed regarding the extent to which men's interest in specific pornography genres reflects evolved sensitivity to sperm competition cues.

Importantly, men's arousal in response to cues of sperm competition is not limited to pornography. Research indicates that men's assessments of their partner's risk of extra-pair copulations are positively associated with the use of sexual coercion in intimate relationships (Goetz & Shackelford, 2006; Vance et al., 2022). Time spent apart from a partner—a proxy for sperm competition risk—has also been linked to increased sexual interest, greater partner attractiveness, and more persistent efforts to initiate sex (Pham & Shackelford, 2013; Shackelford et al., 2002, 2007). Additionally, Barbaro et al. (2015) found that men who suspected infidelity by their partners reported shorter durations of their most recent in-pair copulation. This finding is consistent with the idea that sperm competition cues may heighten arousal and reduce ejaculatory latency, facilitating behaviors aimed at displacing a rival's sperm.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that cues to sperm competition may elicit sexual arousal in men. However, much of this research has focused on men in long-term, committed partnerships. It remains unclear whether similar patterns would be observed among men who adopt a short-term mating strategy. Examining preferences for specific pornography genres—particularly those depicting scenarios with high levels of sperm competition—may help clarify whether men oriented toward short-term mating also exhibit heightened arousal in response to such cues.

Overview

The aim of the present research was to extend previous work examining the associations between individual differences and the frequency of using specific genres of pornography (e.g., Hald, 2006; Hald & Stulhofer, 2016; Sabina et al., 2008). Given the absence of a well-established theoretical framework to guide genre-specific predictions, we adopted

an exploratory approach to investigate the connections with pornography use across different genres. Specifically, we examined whether men's self-reported sociosexual orientation and personality traits were associated with either the frequency of pornography use (Study 1) or interest in using particular genres of pornography (Studies 2 and 3). These genres were organized into four categories identified by Hald and Štulhofer (2016): (1) ejaculation-centered group sex pornography, (2) bisexual-centered group sex pornography, (3) paraphilic pornography, and (4) female-specific pornography.

We chose to focus exclusively on men in the present research for several reasons. First, men represent the majority of video pornography consumers (e.g., Albright, 2008; Carroll et al., 2008). Second, existing evidence suggests that men's sexual arousal is more reliably elicited by visual stimuli (Chung et al., 2013). Third, the available evolutionary literature offers more developed hypotheses regarding men's use of specific pornography genres, particularly those involving sperm competition or mate value considerations (McKibbin et al., 2013).

Study 1: Frequency of Pornography Use

In Study 1, we attempted to closely replicate the methodology of Hald and Štulhofer (2016) by asking men to report the frequency with which they use different genres of pornography. However, we also attempted to expand Hald and Štulhofer's methodology by expanding the list of genres to better capture the variation in men's use of pornography (e.g., having separate categories for "FFM or female–female–male threesomes" and "FMM or female–male–male threesomes").

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 151 men recruited from Oakland University's research subject pool who participated in exchange for course credit. Data were excluded for 25 participants due to careless or inattentive responding using approaches that had been determined prior to the start of data collection: 9 participants for completing the survey in less than 5 min, 9 participants for being univariate outliers (i.e., more than 3 standard deviations above or below the mean for any variable), and 7 participants for inconsistent responding using the inter-item standard deviation. Data were also examined for multivariate outliers as assessed by Mahalanobis distance (Maesschalck et al., 2000) and invariant response patterns as assessed by long-string analysis (Huang et al., 2012; Meade & Craig, 2012), but no participants were excluded for these reasons (see Curran, 2016, for a review of methods for detecting careless or inattentive responding). The final sample consisted

of 126 men, with a mean age of 20.92 years ($SD = 4.48$) and a racial/ethnic composition as follows: 69.8% White, 9.5% Black, 2.4% Latino, 7.9% Asian, 6.3% Middle Eastern, and 4% Other.

Measures

Sociosexual Orientation. The revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) was used to measure men's sociosexual behaviors (3 items; e.g., "With how many partners have you had sexual intercourse on one and only one occasion?" [$\alpha = 0.84$]), sociosexual attitudes (3 items; e.g., "I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying 'casual' sex with different partners" [$\alpha = 0.82$]), and sociosexual desire (3 items; e.g., "How often do you have fantasies about having sex with someone you are not in a committed romantic relationship with?" [$\alpha = 0.86$]). Participants were asked to respond to each item using a 9-point scale with specific anchors that differed across the items (e.g., 1 [*strongly disagree*] to 9 [*strongly agree*]).

Personality. The 60-item HEXACO (Ashton & Lee, 2009) was used to measure men's honesty-humility (10 items; e.g., "I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed" [$\alpha = 0.68$]), emotional stability (10 items; e.g., "I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions" [$\alpha = 0.76$]), extraversion (10 items; e.g., "I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall" [$\alpha = 0.79$]), agreeableness (10 items; e.g., "I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me" [$\alpha = 0.77$]), conscientiousness (10 items; e.g., "I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute" [$\alpha = 0.81$]), and openness (10 items; e.g., "I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries" [$\alpha = 0.75$]). Participants were asked to provide their level of agreement with each statement using a response scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Use of Pornography. Men's self-reported frequency of using different genres of pornography was assessed using items adapted from Hald and Štulhofer (2016). The original measure included 27 different genres of pornography, but we separated the "MILF/mature" item into two distinct categories (i.e., "MILF" and "Mature"). We also separated the "golden showers and enemas" item into two distinct categories (i.e., "golden showers" and "scat"). Based on the results of Hald and Štulhofer, we constructed the following four composite measures: ejaculation-centered group sex (5 items; e.g., "bukkake," "gangbang" [$\alpha = .58$]), bisexual-centered group sex (4 items; e.g., "threesome," "orgy" [$\alpha = .67$]), paraphilic (9 items; e.g., "bondage," "violent sex" [$\alpha = .70$]), and female specific (4 items; "MILF," "large breasts" [$\alpha = .73$]). Although Hald and Štulhofer focused on self-reported arousal in response to these genres of pornography, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which they

have used different genres of pornography using a response scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*an extreme extent*).

Data Analysis

We began by conducting Pearson product–moment correlations to examine the zero-order correlations between sociosexual orientation, personality traits, and pornography consumption. The preliminary analyses were followed by multiple regression analyses to assess the unique contributions of sociosexual orientation and personality traits in predicting interest in specific pornography genres. For example, we examined the extent to which sociosexual desire was associated with interest in ejaculation-centered group sex pornography when controlling for other facets of sociosexual orientation and personality traits.

Given prior evidence suggesting that pornography preferences may vary by age (Ballester-Arnal et al., 2023), we included age as a covariate in all regression models. Before conducting these analyses, we verified that the standard assumptions of multiple regression were met, including normally distributed residuals, homoscedasticity, and the absence of multicollinearity. For example, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were all below 1.85, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern (Darlington & Hayes, 2017). Effect sizes for the regression models were quantified using Cohen's f^2 and interpreted based on conventional benchmarks (Cohen, 1988; Selya et al., 2012): small ($f^2 \geq .02$), medium ($f^2 \geq .15$), and large ($f^2 \geq .35$). This analytic approach was applied consistently across all three studies. *Post hoc* power analyses indicated that the sample size provided sufficient power ($1 - \beta > .80$) to detect medium effect sizes for both overall and incremental variance explained.

Results and Discussion

Correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 2.

Ejaculation-Centered Group Sex Pornography

When controlling for other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits, sociosexual desires showed a small positive association with the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography ($\beta = .30$, $t = 3.15$, $p = .002$, $CI_{95\%} [.11, .50]$, $f^2 = 0.09$). In contrast, honesty-humility ($\beta = -.27$, $t = -2.79$, $p = .006$, $CI_{95\%} [-.49, -.08]$, $f^2 = 0.07$) and extraversion ($\beta = -.24$, $t = -2.39$, $p = .018$, $CI_{95\%} [-.49, -.05]$, $f^2 = 0.05$) were both negatively associated with use of this genre. No other sociosexual or personality variables were significantly related to the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography.

Bisexual-Centered Group Sex Pornography

When controlling for other dimensions of sociosexual orientation and personality traits, no single factor showed a unique association with the use of bisexual-centered group sex pornography.

Paraphilic Pornography

Agreeableness had a small negative association with the use of paraphilic pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = -.22$, $t = -2.21$, $p = .029$, $CI_{95\%} [-.44, -.02]$, $f^2 = 0.04$). No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of paraphilic pornography.

Female-Specific Pornography

When controlling for other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits, honesty-humility showed a small negative association with the use of female-specific pornography ($\beta = -.26$, $t = -2.72$, $p = .008$, $CI_{95\%} [-.49, -.08]$, $f^2 = 0.06$). In contrast, emotional stability had a small positive association with the use of female-specific pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = .23$, $t = 2.53$, $p = .013$, $CI_{95\%} [.06, .47]$, $f^2 = 0.06$). No other sociosexual or personality variables were associated with the use of female-specific pornography.

Study 2: Pornographic Video Thumbnails

In Study 2, we attempted to further expand the methodology of Hald and Štulhofer (2016) and Study 1. Specifically, we presented men with 2–5 thumbnails for each of the genres used in Study 1. Rather than ask men to report their use of each genre, we asked them to self-report their interest in using the genre depicted in each pornographic thumbnail.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 242 men recruited from a university subject pool ($n = 202$) and Prolific ($n = 40$). University students received research participation credit, and Prolific users received \$4.00 USD upon completion of the study. Data were excluded for 76 participants due to careless or inattentive responding using approaches that had been determined prior to the start of data collection: 45 participants for not completing the survey, 3 participants for completing the study in less than 5 min, 3 participants for self-reporting a gender other than male, 14 participants for self-reporting

Table 1 Study 1: Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Ejaculation-centered group sex	–													
2. Bisexual-centered group sex	.57***	–												
3. Paraphilic	.46***	.36***	–											
4. Female specific	.41***	.46***	.24**	–										
5. SOI-behaviors	.16	.16	.06	.26**	–									
6. SOI-attitudes	.26**	.26**	.02	.23*	.53***	–								
7. SOI-desires	.38***	.21*	.12	.08	.17	.42***	–							
8. Honesty-humility	-.30***	-.10	-.19*	-.30***	-.17	-.30***	-.22*	–						
9. Emotional stability	-.05	-.02	.10	.10	-.29***	-.35***	-.15	.12	–					
10. Extraversion	-.12	-.08	-.08	-.04	.31***	.12	.04	-.18*	-.33***	–				
11. Agreeableness	-.14	-.11	-.30***	-.13	-.17	-.16	-.10	.13	-.01	.15	–			
12. Conscientiousness	-.06	.00	.03	-.12	-.04	-.09	-.01	.13	-.13	.30***	.14	–		
13. Openness	.00	-.03	-.05	-.21*	-.09	-.03	.19*	.28**	.28**	-.08	.26**	.19*	–	
14. Age	.05	.03	.01	.12	.30***	.01	.05	.08	-.14	.05	.08	.12	.12	–
Mean	1.93	2.11	1.37	2.25	2.21	5.12	3.97	3.22	3.03	3.18	3.27	3.46	3.22	20.92
SD	0.60	0.77	0.40	0.85	1.26	2.16	2.02	0.54	0.61	0.63	0.57	0.62	0.59	4.48

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2 Study 1: Associations that sociosexual orientation and personality traits had with consumption of pornography

	Ejaculation-centered group sex	Bisexual-centered group sex	Paraphilic	Female specific
<i>Sociosexual orientation</i>				
Sociosexual behaviors	.13	.08	.13	.20
Sociosexual attitudes	.02	.20	– .11	.15
Sociosexual desires	.30**	.14	.11	.00
Age	.02	.01	.00	.14
<i>HEXACO</i>				
Honesty-humility	– .27**	– .02	– .16	– .26**
Emotional stability	.01	.07	.08	.23*
Extraversion	– .24*	– .14	– .20	– .13
Agreeableness	.03	– .02	– .22*	.07
Conscientiousness	.05	.09	.16	.02
Openness	– .01	– .06	– .02	– .18
<i>R</i> ²	.24***	.11	.16*	.24***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, 6 participants for being univariate outliers, 4 participants for inconsistent responding, and 1 participant for reporting their age was less than 18. Data were also examined for multivariate outliers and invariant response patterns, but no participants were excluded for these reasons. The final sample of 166 men had a mean age of 25.54 years ($SD = 12.08$; range, 18–78) with 44.6% of the sample (74 participants) reporting that they were currently in a heterosexual, romantic relationship, and a racial/ethnic composition as follows: 68.7% White, 12% Black, 4.2% Latino, 5.4% Asian, 6.6% Middle Eastern, and 3% Other. The university sample significantly differed from the prolific sample in terms of age (university sample $M = 20.50$ years, $SD = 3.74$; Prolific sample $M = 45.09$, $SD = 13.37$; $t = -18.62$, $p < .001$, $d = 6.87$) and relationship status (university sample $M = 1.64$, $SD = 0.48$; Prolific sample $M = 1.21$, $SD = 0.41$; $t = 4.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.47$; i.e., 35.61% of the university sample reported being in a relationship, whereas 79.41% of the Prolific sample reported being in a relationship).

Measures

Sociosexual Orientation. As in Study 1, SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) was used to measure men's sociosexual behaviors ($\alpha = 0.86$), sociosexual attitudes ($\alpha = 0.88$), and sociosexual desire ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Personality. As in Study 1, the 60-item HEXACO (Ashton & Lee, 2009) was used to measure men's honesty-humility ($\alpha = 0.70$), emotional stability ($\alpha = 0.78$), extraversion ($\alpha = 0.75$), agreeableness ($\alpha = 0.75$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = 0.79$), and openness ($\alpha = 0.80$).

Use of Pornography. We created a set of video thumbnails representing each of the pornography genres used in Study 1. For most genres, thumbnails were selected by navigating to the “Categories” page of Pornhub, selecting the relevant category, sorting the video results by “most popular of all time,” and choosing at least two thumbnails that clearly depicted the type of content associated with the genre. For example, when selecting thumbnails for the “anal” genre, we excluded any initial thumbnails that did not clearly display anal sex.

Because Pornhub restricts certain types of content, we relied on alternative pornography aggregator sites (e.g., xHamster, YouPorn) to locate appropriate thumbnails for more niche genres, such as “scat.” All selected thumbnails were edited to obscure identifying information, such as the name or watermark of the production company.

Most genres were represented by two thumbnails. Exceptions included the “bizarre/extreme” genre, which featured five thumbnails to better capture the breadth of this category, “fetish” which included three thumbnails, and “other” which did not include any thumbnails. This process yielded a total of 79 thumbnail items.

Following the procedure outlined by Hald and Štulhofer (2016), we used these thumbnails to construct four composite genre categories: ejaculation-centered group sex (12 items; e.g., “bukkake,” “gangbang” [$\alpha = .93$]), bisexual-centered group sex (10 items; e.g., “threesome,” “orgy” [$\alpha = .89$]), paraphilic (21 items; e.g., “bondage,” “violent sex” [$\alpha = .91$]), and female specific (8 items; e.g., “MILF,” “large breasts” [$\alpha = .91$]). Each composite was calculated as the average of participant ratings across the relevant thumbnails for that genre. Participants rated their interest in each genre using a response scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all interested*) to 5 (*very interested*).

Data Analysis

Analyses for Study 2 closely followed those for Study 1. Because the sample for Study 2 was composed of both university students and Prolific users, and because these two groups significantly differed in terms of age and relationship status, we conducted preliminary analyses with sample type as a control variable. However, results indicated that sample type did not explain a significant amount of variance, so we did not include it in the final analyses reported below. *Post hoc* power analyses revealed that our sample was sufficient to detect medium effect sizes for overall and incremental variance ($1 - \beta > .80$).

Results and Discussion

Correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 4.

Ejaculation-Centered Group Sex Pornography

Sociosexual desire had a small positive association with the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = .31$, $t = 3.56$, $p < .001$, $CI_{95\%} [.14, .50]$, $f^2 = 0.08$). No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography.

Bisexual-Centered Group Sex Pornography

Sociosexual attitudes ($\beta = .36$, $t = 4.08$, $p < .001$, $CI_{95\%} [.19, .53]$, $f^2 = 0.11$) and sociosexual desire ($\beta = .30$, $t = 3.74$, $p < .001$, $CI_{95\%} [.14, .46]$, $f^2 = 0.09$) had small positive associations with the use of bisexual-centered group sex pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits. No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of bisexual-centered group sex pornography.

Paraphilic Pornography

Sociosexual desire had a small positive association with the use of paraphilic pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = .30$, $t = 3.53$, $p < .001$, $CI_{95\%} [.12, .43]$, $f^2 = 0.08$). In contrast, conscientiousness had a small negative association with the use of paraphilic pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.45$, $p = .015$, $CI_{95\%} [-.34, -.04]$, $f^2 = 0.04$). No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of paraphilic pornography.

Female-Specific Pornography

No individual dimension of sociosexual orientation or personality was uniquely associated with the use of female-specific pornography after controlling for the other variables.

Study 3: Pornography Genre Descriptions

Study 3 was intended to further expand on the results of the previous studies. We asked men to self-report their interest in using each genre of pornography based on a brief description of the genre.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 219 men recruited from a university subject pool ($n = 100$) and Prolific ($n = 119$). University students received research participation credit, and Prolific users received \$4.00 USD upon completion of the study. Data were excluded for 50 participants due to careless or inattentive responding using approaches that had been determined prior to the start of data collection: 20 participants for not completing the survey, 12 participants for completing the study in less than 5 min, 1 participant for reporting that their age was less than 18, 2 participants for self-reporting a gender other than male, 5 participants for being univariate outliers, 2 participants for inconsistent responding, and 8 participants for self-reporting a sexual orientation other than heterosexual (only 2 exclusions were Prolific subjects). The final sample of 169 men had a mean age of 31.4 years ($SD = 11.20$; range 18–67) with 53.8% of the sample (91 participants) reporting that they were currently in a heterosexual, romantic relationship, and a racial/ethnic composition as follows: 59.8% White, 10.7% Black, 6.5% Latino, 14.2% Asian, 0.6% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6.5% Middle Eastern, and 1.8% Other. The university sample significantly differed from the prolific sample in terms of age (university sample $M = 20.16$ years, $SD = 2.55$; Prolific sample $M = 36.88$ years, $SD = 9.56$; $t = -13.07$, $p < .001$, $d = 7.90$) but not relationship status (university sample $M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.50$; Prolific sample $M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.50$; $t = 0.40$, $p = .691$, $d = 0.50$; i.e., 51.72% of the university sample reported being in a relationship, whereas 54.95% of the Prolific sample reported being in a relationship).

Measures

Sociosexual Orientation. As in Studies 1 and 2, SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) was used to measure men's sociosexual

Table 3 Study 2: Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Ejaculation-centered group sex	–													
2. Bisexual-centered group sex	.76***	–												
3. Paraphilic	.59***	.53***	–											
4. Female specific	.59***	.58***	.35***	–										
5. SOI-behaviors	.23**	.22**	.23**	.28***	–									
6. SOI-attitudes	.27**	.49***	.31***	.25***	.55***	–								
7. SOI-desires	.38***	.46***	.41***	.26***	.33***	.48***	–							
8. Honesty-humility	–.19*	–.23**	–.28***	–.16*	–.14	–.25**	–.35***	–						
9. Emotional stability	.07	.10	.16*	.17*	.06	.06	.03	–.18*	–					
10. Extraversion	–.04	–.01	–.06	–.02	.07	.04	–.06	.04	–.11	–				
11. Agreeableness	.00	–.03	–.11	.05	–.10	–.11	–.09	.37***	–.12	.18*	–			
12. Conscientiousness	–.07	.02	–.24**	–.12	.03	.07	–.05	.27***	–.30***	.35***	.19*	–		
13. Openness	.02	.15	–.06	.06	.18*	.12	.09	.06	–.16*	.10	.19*	.30***	–	
14. Age	.12	.18*	–.01	.09	.33***	.30***	.05	.17*	–.13	.05	.04	.33***	.29***	–
Mean	2.45	2.24	1.45	2.49	2.33	4.65	3.50	3.35	2.93	3.14	3.25	3.50	3.23	25.54
SD	1.03	0.92	0.52	1.05	1.69	2.65	2.08	0.58	0.62	0.60	0.54	0.59	0.66	12.08

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 4 Study 2: Associations that sociosexual orientation and personality traits had with interest in pornography

	Ejaculation-centered group sex	Bisexual-centered group sex	Paraphilic	Female specific
<i>Sociosexual orientation</i>				
Sociosexual behaviors	.07	– .13	.05	.17
Sociosexual attitudes	.05	.36***	.14	.07
Sociosexual desires	.31***	.30***	.30***	.15
Age	.13	.11	.03	.07
<i>HEXACO</i>				
Honesty-humility	– .09	– .09	– .07	– .08
Emotional stability	.04	.09	.06	.14
Extraversion	– .01	.00	.04	.00
Agreeableness	.10	.05	.01	.14
Conscientiousness	– .06	.00	– .21*	– .11
Openness	– .07	.07	– .06	.01
<i>R</i> ²	.19***	.34***	.26***	.17***

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

behaviors ($\alpha = 0.76$), sociosexual attitudes ($\alpha = 0.82$), and sociosexual desire ($\alpha = 0.86$).

Personality. As in Studies 1 and 2, the 60-item HEXACO (Ashton & Lee, 2009) was used to measure men's honesty-humility ($\alpha = 0.74$), emotional stability ($\alpha = 0.77$), extraversion ($\alpha = 0.84$), agreeableness ($\alpha = 0.77$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = 0.81$), and openness ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Use of Pornography. We used the same set of pornography genres as in Studies 1 and 2, but we modified the procedure by providing participants with brief textual descriptions of each genre before asking them to rate their interest. For example, the description provided for “Bukkake” read: “Typically features a group of men ejaculating semen on the face, hair, and body of a willing woman.” These descriptions were developed by examining the corresponding categories on popular pornography aggregator websites (e.g., Pornhub, YouPorn) and summarizing the typical sexual acts or performer characteristics featured in each genre. Our goal was to use consistent, clear, and neutral language that would be easily understood by a lay audience.

Using these descriptions, we constructed four composite genre categories based on the framework established by Hald and Štulhofer (2016): ejaculation-centered group sex (6 items; e.g., “Gangbang: Typically features multiple partners, often five or more having sex with one specific individual at the same time, or sequentially, and usually characterized by one woman and many men. Gangbangs differ from group sex in that most [if not all] sexual acts during the event are centered on or performed with just the central person” [$\alpha = .84$]), bisexual-centered group sex (5 items; e.g., “Orgy: Typically features sex between 3 or more persons of each gender in the same setting, often involving partner swapping, and sometimes featuring lesbian or bisexual sex acts” [$\alpha = .79$]), paraphilic (9 items; e.g., “Bondage: Typically features tying up

or binding of a consenting sex partner. The restraining is performed by the dominant role-play partner [the Dom], whereas the submissive role-play partner [the Sub] is the one who is tied up or tied to bed posts using rope, leather, chains, or by other means specially designed for the purpose” [$\alpha = .86$]), and female specific (4 items; e.g., “MILF: MILF is the acronym for ‘Mother I’d Like to Fuck’. Typically features female porn actors or amateurs who are depicted as being relatively older, possibly with children, but who are still considered sexually attractive” [$\alpha = .79$]). Participants rated their interest in each genre using a response scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all interested*) to 5 (*very interested*).

Data Analysis

Analyses for Study 3 closely followed those for Studies 1 and 2. Again, the sample for Study 3 was composed of both university students and Prolific users, and these two groups significantly differed in terms of age (but not relationship status). Thus, we conducted preliminary analyses with sample type as a control variable. However, results indicated that sample type did not explain a significant amount of variance, so we did not include it in the final analyses reported below. Post hoc power analyses revealed that our sample was sufficient to detect medium effect sizes for overall and incremental variance ($1 - \beta > .80$).

Results and Discussion

Correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 6.

Table 5 Study 3: Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Ejaculation-centered group sex	–													
2. Bisexual-centered group sex	.77***	–												
3. Paraphilic	.61***	.57***	–											
4. Female specific	.60***	.52***	.47***	–										
5. SOI-behaviors	.15	.20*	.06	.22**	–									
6. SOI-attitudes	.26***	.30***	.14	.26***	.59***	–								
7. SOI-desires	.32***	.31***	.17*	.32***	.28***	.38***	–							
8. Honesty-humility	.00	.03	–.09	–.06	–.01	–.05	–.15	–						
9. Emotional stability	.07	.02	.08	.00	–.27***	–.20**	–.11	.00	–					
10. Extraversion	.07	–.05	.09	.06	.11	.12	.00	–.14	–.30***	–				
11. Agreeableness	–.16*	–.16*	–.19*	–.18*	–.15	.00	–.23**	.28***	.11	.07	–			
12. Conscientiousness	.12	.04	–.09	.00	.14	.09	.00	.31***	–.25**	.22**	.12	–		
13. Openness	.11	.11	.02	.10	.22**	.14	–.07	.24**	–.15*	.22**	.14	.33***	–	
14. Age	.12	.21**	–.05	–.01	.27***	.22**	.07	.43***	–.12	–.14	.09	.31***	.34***	–
Mean	2.50	2.46	1.74	2.86	2.52	5.29	3.68	3.25	2.95	3.01	3.27	3.68	3.38	31.14
SD	1.05	1.01	0.75	1.08	1.49	2.37	2.08	0.66	0.65	0.74	0.63	0.62	0.69	11.20

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 6 Study 3: Associations that sociosexual orientation and personality traits had with interest in pornography

	Ejaculation-centered group sex	Bisexual-centered group sex	Paraphilic	Female specific
<i>Sociosexual orientation</i>				
Sociosexual behaviors	− .08	− .06	− .08	.06
Sociosexual attitudes	.20*	.24*	.16	.16
Sociosexual desires	.26**	.21*	.11	.25**
Age	.05	.14	− .03	− .12
<i>HEXACO</i>				
Honesty-humility	.02	.03	.02	.04
Emotional stability	.17*	.08	.11	.07
Extraversion	.08	− .03	.14	.02
Agreeableness	− .13	− .15	− .17*	− .12
Conscientiousness	.10	− .01	− .10	− .02
Openness	.09	.10	.06	.14
<i>R</i> ²	.19***	.19***	.10	.17***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Ejaculation-Centered Group Sex Pornography

Sociosexual attitudes ($\beta = .20$, $t = 2.09$, $p = .038$, $CI_{95\%} [.01, .39]$, $f^2 = 0.03$), sociosexual desire ($\beta = .26$, $t = 3.25$, $p = .001$, $CI_{95\%} [.10, .42]$, $f^2 = 0.07$), and emotional stability ($\beta = .17$, $t = 2.16$, $p = .032$, $CI_{95\%} [.02, .33]$, $f^2 = 0.03$) had small positive associations with the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits. No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography.

Bisexual-Centered Group Sex Pornography

When controlling for other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits, sociosexual attitudes ($\beta = .24$, $t = 2.53$, $p = .012$, $CI_{95\%} [.05, .43]$, $f^2 = 0.04$) and sociosexual desire ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.56$, $p = .011$, $CI_{95\%} [.05, .36]$, $f^2 = 0.04$) had small positive associations with the use of bisexual-centered group sex pornography. No other sociosexual or personality variables were significantly associated with use of this genre.

Paraphilic Pornography

Agreeableness had a small negative association with the use of paraphilic pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = -.17$, $t = -2.08$, $p = .039$, $CI_{95\%} [-.31, -.01]$, $f^2 = 0.03$). No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of paraphilic pornography.

Female-Specific Pornography

Sociosexual desire had a small positive association with the use of female-specific pornography when controlling for the other aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality traits ($\beta = .25$, $t = 3.01$, $p = .003$, $CI_{95\%} [.08, .40]$, $f^2 = 0.06$). No other aspects of sociosexual orientation or personality traits were associated with the use of paraphilic pornography.

General Discussion

The results of the present research provided mixed support for the associations that aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality had with the use of different types of pornography; however, one pattern emerged consistently across all three studies: the unique positive association between sociosexual desire and men's use of ejaculation-centered group sex pornography. Although no other unique associations emerged across all three studies, other associations did emerge. For example, both sociosexual attitudes and desire had unique positive associations with bisexual-centered group sex pornography in Studies 2 and 3, and agreeableness had unique negative associations with paraphilic pornography in Studies 1 and 3.

Overall, the results of the present studies provided consistent support for the idea that men who desire more sexual partners more frequently use, and are more interested in using pornography featuring oral sex, ejaculation (i.e., “bukkake” and “cumshot”), and a woman having sex with multiple men (i.e., “gangbang”). Thus, these results also tentatively support the idea that men who desire more sexual partners are more interested in and aroused by pornography that depicts cues to sperm competition. However, there are a few important

caveats that should be addressed before any firm conclusions are drawn. First, the composite measures of different types of pornography adapted from Hald and Štulhofer (2016) do not appear to clearly distinguish between “high sperm competition” and “low sperm competition” genres of pornography. For example, “orgy” pornography depicts multiple men, but is included in the bisexual-centered group sex category. Additionally, the “anal” and “oral” genres do not seem to clearly depict cues to either high or low sperm competition, but were still included in the ejaculation-centered group sex category. Second, Hald and Štulhofer grouped several genres together where greater distinction might have been warranted. Specifically, Hald and Štulhofer did not distinguish between “MILF” and “mature” (each of which seems to incorporate women of different age groups), between “cunnilingus” and “fellatio,” or between female–female–male (“FFM”) threesomes and female–male–male (“FMM”) threesomes. Although we did make these distinctions for Studies 2 and 3, we did not separate genres with seemingly distinct levels of sperm competition into different categories. For example, both “FFM” and “FMM” were included in the bisexual-centered group sex category, even though each genre depicts arguably distinct levels of sperm competition. Similarly, “cunnilingus” and “fellatio” were both included in the composite measure for ejaculation-centered group sex, even though the “fellatio” category arguably depicts greater sperm competition risk. Thus, the present research is somewhat limited in its ability to draw connections between sociosexual desire and men’s arousal toward depictions of sperm competition. Future research attempting to investigate similar associations should clearly differentiate between genres of pornography that clearly depict cues of high sperm competition (e.g., “gangbang”) and genres that depict no sperm competition (e.g., “lesbian”).

Some tentative insights may be drawn from the patterns that emerged across the present studies, although these patterns were not always consistent. For example, findings from Studies 2 and 3 suggest that men who express a desire for more sexual partners and who hold less restricted attitudes toward casual sex tend to show greater interest in pornography depicting multiple partners of both sexes—genres such as “orgy,” “bisexual,” and “threesomes.” The positive association between unrestricted sociosexuality and these genres may reflect a heightened openness to sexual experimentation and engagement in activities that extend beyond strictly heterosexual dynamics.

Studies 1 and 3 also revealed that lower levels of agreeableness were associated with increased interest in paraphilic pornography (e.g., “scat,” “bondage and dominance,” “violent sex”). These findings contrast somewhat with those of Gerymski (2017), who reported negative associations between agreeableness and both “chubby women” and “transgender women,” along with a positive association between openness

and “BDSM.” However, Gerymski’s study included participants of varied genders and sexual orientations, whereas the present research focused exclusively on heterosexual men. This difference may help account for the discrepancies. The present findings align more closely with research linking personality traits reflecting low agreeableness—such as psychopathy and narcissism—to various aspects of sexual aggression and coercion (e.g., Robertson & Knight, 2014; Zeigler-Hill & Andrews, 2021). That said, further research is needed to clarify whether interest in paraphilic pornography is primarily driven by low agreeableness, high openness, or a combination of both, and whether these associations differ across sex and sexual orientation.

Some associations that aspects of sociosexual orientation and personality had with different types of pornography were inconsistent across the present three studies. For example, a unique negative association between honesty-humility and interest in ejaculation-centered group sex pornography emerged only in Study 1, whereas a negative association between conscientiousness and paraphilic pornography was only observed in Study 2. These inconsistencies mirror patterns found in other research on personality and sexual behavior. For example, Brazil (2024) reported that honesty-humility was negatively associated with both sociosexual behaviors and attitudes, and that sociosexual desire was negatively associated with conscientiousness. Similarly, Strouts et al. (2017) found that both honesty-humility and conscientiousness were negatively linked to short-term mating orientation. These findings suggest that lower levels of these traits may be associated with greater sexual promiscuity, which could partially explain their associations with interest in ejaculation-centered group sex and paraphilic genres in the present research. However, because these associations did not replicate consistently across all three studies, we are hesitant to draw firm conclusions.

There are several potential explanations for these inconsistencies. One possibility is that our samples differed in meaningful ways across studies. Although we statistically accounted for sample type (i.e., university vs. Prolific) in Studies 2 and 3, the underlying participant characteristics may have still varied. For example, Study 1 consisted entirely of university students, who were relatively young, whereas Study 3 included the highest proportion of Prolific participants and had the oldest average age. These demographic differences could influence both personality traits and pornography preferences.

Another potential source of variability lies in the methodological differences across studies. One limitation of Study 1—and of the original methodology used by Hald and Štulhofer (2016)—was that participants were asked to estimate their use of specific pornography genres based solely on genre labels (e.g., “ threesome”), which may not have provided enough contextual information to ensure accurate

self-reporting. To address this issue, we used representative thumbnails in Study 2 and brief written descriptions in Study 3, with the goal of offering clearer depictions of each genre and improving the accuracy of self-reports. Future research should explore which of these methodological approaches—genre labels, visual stimuli, or descriptive text—produce the most reliable and valid data when measuring self-reported use of, and interest in, different pornography genres.

Indeed, future investigations may benefit from using a multi-method approach that incorporates genre labels, representative thumbnails, and descriptive summaries within the same study. This would allow researchers to determine whether different item types elicit different levels of self-reported interest among the same participants and may help resolve inconsistencies observed across studies such as the present one.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present research offered an exploratory investigation of the associations between several individual difference variables and men's use of—and interest in using—various genres of pornography, guided by an evolutionary perspective informed by sperm competition theory. Given the exploratory nature of this work and the lack of a well-established theoretical foundation for genre-specific predictions, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Further research is needed to replicate and extend these results before strong conclusions can be drawn. Additionally, several limitations of the current studies should be addressed in future work aiming to build upon these findings.

One limitation concerns the nature of our samples. Across all three studies, we relied on relatively small, convenience-based samples drawn from undergraduate psychology students and users of the Prolific platform. College student samples, in particular, may not generalize well to the broader population, as students tend to be younger, more educated, wealthier, and more politically liberal than average. This concern is especially salient for Study 1 and the university-based portions of Studies 2 and 3, as the average age of student participants across all three studies was under 21 years. Future studies should attempt to replicate these findings using more diverse and representative samples of men across a wider age range and socioeconomic background.

A second limitation involves missing demographic information in Study 1. Although our recruitment materials specified that participants must be male, heterosexual, and at least 18 years old, we did not collect self-reported sexual orientation or relationship status in this initial study. In contrast, Studies 2 and 3 required participants to select “heterosexual” in a prescreening item in order to participate, allowing us to better ensure sample consistency. As a result, we cannot be certain that all Study 1 participants met the

intended inclusion criteria. Furthermore, because we did not assess relationship status in Study 1, we are unable to explore potential differences in pornography preferences between partnered and unpartnered men in that sample.

A third limitation is the relatively low internal consistency of some pornography genre composites, especially in Study 1. These low reliability estimates suggest that men's reported use of genres within a given composite (e.g., ejaculation-centered group sex) may not have been strongly intercorrelated. This could indicate that the composite measures did not adequately capture broader interests in genre categories. In contrast, Studies 2 and 3 yielded higher reliability estimates for the same composites, possibly due to methodological differences. Specifically, in Study 1, participants were asked to report frequency of use based solely on genre labels, whereas Studies 2 and 3 incorporated thumbnails and written descriptions, respectively, to provide clearer context. These differences suggest that genre labels alone may be a less reliable method for assessing pornography preferences.

A fourth limitation concerns the representativeness of the genre categories and labels used in our measures. It is unclear whether men conceptualize the pornography they consume in terms of the specific genres included in our study. Some users may search for specific genre terms, whereas others may browse until a particular image or video captures their attention. Pornhub's annual Year in Review data highlight discrepancies between the most viewed categories and most searched terms—for example, in 2024, “Latina” was the third most viewed category but only the ninth most searched term (Pornhub, 2024). We attempted to address this issue in Study 2 by including at least two thumbnails per genre to provide a more ecologically valid browsing experience. However, those thumbnails were selected by a member of the research team based on popularity and visual fit, which may introduce additional bias. Future research could enhance ecological validity by presenting a broader array of thumbnails and identifying those that are most representative of each genre, ideally simulating the naturalistic experience of browsing a pornography website.

A fifth, related limitation involves the thumbnail selection process in Study 2. We did not control for potentially confounding characteristics such as the attractiveness of performers, their familiarity to participants, or the types of acts depicted in each thumbnail. Because our primary goal was to ensure that each thumbnail clearly represented its genre, some images prominently featured close-ups of sexual acts, whereas others emphasized full-body or front-facing shots of performers. Furthermore, using thumbnails from the most viewed videos in each category may have inadvertently included well-known performers. If participants recognized certain performers or had strong preferences for them, this could have influenced their ratings of interest, independent of genre.

A sixth limitation is that we relied exclusively on men's self-reported frequency of use and interest in various genres of pornography, which may not accurately reflect their actual sexual arousal to different types of pornography. For example, participants may have underreported their interest in stigmatized genres (e.g., paraphilic content) or may be more aroused by content they use infrequently. Future studies should consider supplementing self-report measures with physiological assessments of sexual arousal, such as penile plethysmography. Given prior evidence of a high degree of concordance between men's self-reported and physiologically assessed sexual arousal (Wincze et al., 1980), such measures could provide a more accurate understanding of how sociosexual orientation relates to arousal in response to cues of sperm competition and other genre-specific stimuli.

In sum, although the current research offers preliminary insight into the connections between individual differences and pornography genre preferences, these findings must be interpreted in light of the methodological limitations discussed above. Continued refinement of measurement strategies and replication with more representative and diverse samples will be essential for clarifying the psychological mechanisms that shape men's interest in different types of pornography.

Conclusion

We conducted an exploratory investigation of the correlates of men's use of different genres of pornography. The results of the present research suggest that several aspects of men's sociosexual orientation and personality may be important predictors of their interest in different genres of pornography. By applying an evolutionary perspective, we were able to suggest several potential explanations for the results of these exploratory analyses. The present research provides preliminary evidence that men's sociosexual orientation and personality traits may partially explain their interest in certain genres of pornography.

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Availability of Data The data presented in the present study are available on Open Science Framework at the following link: <https://osf.io/buzp9/>.

Code Availability Not applicable.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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