

**EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION ON ADOLESCENTS'
MENTAL HEALTH IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAJIADO
NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

There is concern on the steady increase of poor mental health among adolescents in Kenya. The majority of young people are introduced to pornography during their adolescence, and for many people it becomes a habit and for others it almost becomes an addiction. This study's objectives were to establish the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya, assess the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, and evaluate measures to curb pornography addiction among adolescents in these schools. The study was guided by the social cognitive theory and the ecological systems theory. The research design for the study was descriptive. The target population for the study comprised secondary school adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. The population included boys-only, girls-only, and mixed day and boarding public and private schools in the sub-county. The study employed the Yamane (1973) formula to determine a sample size of 366 adolescents. The researcher purposively sampled six secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. The target population consisted of 4,337 guidance and counselling teachers and students, from which a sample of 382 respondents was selected through stratified sampling to determine the number of respondents in each school. In each of the six schools, respondents were randomly selected from each class. The study employed a census for the guidance and counselling teachers. Data was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and an interview guide. A pilot study was conducted at Ole Kasasi Secondary School. Data was recorded in Microsoft Excel before being coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample, while thematic analysis was employed to examine qualitative data. Findings were presented in tables, pie charts, and graphs. The study established that easy access to the internet, lack of parental control, peer influence and emotional distress were significant causes of pornography addiction among adolescents. Addiction had significant negative effects on adolescents' mental health. Schools implemented measures against adolescent pornography addiction, including internet restrictions, digital literacy, counseling, parent workshops and engaging extracurricular activities. This study recommends that schools should implement advanced digital monitoring systems that prevent students from accessing explicit content. Parents and guardians should educate adolescents about sexuality and responsible internet use. Schools should introduce peer-led intervention programs and community-based mentorship initiatives should be established.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NACOSTI	National Council of Science and Technology
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TV	Television

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Addiction	A manageable, long-lasting medical condition that involves intricate connections between brain circuits, genetics, the environment and an individual's life encounter (Burke & Miller, 2020). Individuals experiencing this condition may exhibit side effects which may be detrimental to their health.
Adolescent	Age between ten and nineteen, where individuals go through a period of development , characterized by psychosocial and mental health challenges (Wood, 2021).
Mental Health	A state of mental wellness that empowers individuals to effectively manage life's stressors, recognize their capabilities, acquire knowledge efficiently, perform effectively, and make meaningful contributions to their community (Yu & Chao, 2018). It is the well-being of individuals to make informed choices in their daily lives.
Pornography	Printed or visual content that provides a clear depiction or detailed account of sexual organs or activities with the purpose of arousing sexual desire (Cho, 2018).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The chapter presents the background of the study, concepts of pornography addiction and adolescents' mental health are explained. The problem is defined, objectives outlined, research questions presented and hypothesis highlighted. The significance, assumptions and scope of the study are discussed. In addition, study limitations and delimitations are highlighted.

Background to the study

Approximately twenty percent of adolescents worldwide have a mental health issue (Wood, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 9.5% of adolescents suffer from a mental illness (Zulu & Tembo, 2020). According to studies conducted in Kenya, the prevalence of various mental health issues among adolescents in schools ranges from 10% to 50% (Maga et al., 2018). Mental health problems can impair learning and result in poor academic achievement (Weigle, 2020).

Adolescence is a time of heightened sexual development and curiosity (Waterman et al., 2022). It is a period of significant change in the way one thinks, their mental wellness social interactions, hormonal changes and their brain structure and the way it functions (Dahl et al., 2018). This is a period between childhood and adulthood. It is a stage where many young people experience identity crisis. Most adolescents experience negative feelings towards themselves and sometimes cause anxiety in them. This is because they are conscious about how other people see them. This period is critical for the mental, physical and social wellbeing of a person (Iversen et al., 2021).

In the contemporary world, adolescents are responding to many personal changes or broader societal events (Salkowski, et al., 2021). Research suggests that there are many factors that can contribute to different forms of crisis in one's life- they include poor health, lack of social support among others (Chang, 2018). Pornography's influx is a common global threat that necessitates global cooperation. Before the victims are aware that they have been kept captive, it is actively infiltrating and encroaching every setting of human society.

Changes brought about by the pressures from the global culture enable the flow of pornographic materials. Given the rise in usage of phones and the Internet, it has become easy to access pornographic materials. Pornography exposes young individuals to sex before they are sexually ready. This puts them in jeopardy well before reproductive age (Zulu & Tembo, 2020).

According to Kuss, Kristensen, and Fernandez (2021), a significant proportion of people with online sexual problems or issues related to pornography use that are not typically seen in the general population reported having contact with a mental health professional either recently or in the past for both current and previous psychiatric medication and counselling. Furthermore, Camilleri, Perry, and Sammut (2021) pointed out that pornography addiction may warrant psychiatric assistance to adolescents.

There is a dearth of literature on the effects of pornography addiction and mental health among adolescents. There is also conflicting literature on the cause of pornography addiction. Hence, there is need for a more focused approach to examine the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health (Weigle, 2020).

In the United States of America, young people spend on average, nearly 7.5 hours each day with digital space looking for entertainment or searching for information (Ellis et al., 2020). There is the likelihood of an increase in the amount of time the adolescents spend on the internet due to ease of access of smart devices. This is an indicator that pornographic sites are easily accessible by the young people. The rapid spread of Internet-enabled technology, according to Owens et al. (2022), has drastically altered how adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit content. The Internet is now accessible on mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Camilleri, Perry, and Sammut (2021) assert that studies are still being done to determine the possible causes of the ongoing rise in reports of poor mental health among university students. This also refers to the rising prevalence of unsafe sexual practices. Predictors of mental health outcomes include different demographics, indicators of diminished control and social impairment, and other factors related to pornography usage.

The main factors that help decrease pornography consumption are faith, morals and individual motivation. There is a strong correlation between pornography addiction and mental health. This includes behaviors that are indicative of behavioral addictions, stressing the need for greater awareness of how internet pornography may affect adolescents' mental health (Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

Internet users have greater access to sites that let them view pornography than they do through print sources, and they can also feel more anonymous online. More people are investing in websites that allow them to participate in sexual exploration as a result of easier access to pornographic content (Husain & Trepal, 2021), which has been

observed to have a detrimental effect on a person's day-to-day existence. Yu and Chao (2018) pointed out that the internet offers fresh knowledge and online social activities in Taiwan. Yet, frequent social interactions and improper mental and physical behavior can have an impact on an individual's physical and mental health. Internet addiction, cyberbullying, and pornography all have a substantial positive impact on people's physical and mental health.

The relationship between cyberbullying, pornography, and people's physical and mental health is significantly moderated by internet addiction. Adolescents should receive increased attention from parents and instructors, especially those who have regularly reported encountering cyberbullying. They should also receive counselling, support, and training on how to use the Internet responsibly. To ensure good physical and mental health, adolescents should be encouraged to pursue other hobbies and engage in outdoor activities (Esho, Datta, & Muniu ,2018).

Wood (2021) notes that using internet pornography in the United Kingdom combines the exploration and development of sexual desire with masturbation. Pornography has devolved into a monotonous, repetitive activity that primarily serves a protective rather than a constructive purpose (Hendriks et al., 2020). It is at adolescence stage when this defensive usage of pornography typically begins in reaction to both explicitly sexual and more general emotional difficulties.

The physical act of sexual excitement and masturbation, the use of an electronic device, the timing of the act, and the viewing of pornographic images may all work together to create a mental defense mechanism (Estrada et al., 2019). Nieh et al. (2020) contend that early puberty in Taiwan was linked to earlier exposure to pornography and

later, more frequent exposure. Adolescents were prevented from using porn by parental supervision, but psychological control increased the likelihood of exposure. Adolescent pornography use and parenting style were all mediated by peer pornography use.

Zulu and Tembo (2020) affirm that due to the rise in teens internet usage over time, countries in Africa have begun to tighten their regulations by incorporating online protection measures. Studies on internet addiction disorder provide evidence that excessive internet use can have a negative impact on children's and adolescents' experiences in life, academic performance, overall well-being, and physical health. Additionally, research reveals a connection between adolescent internet use and depression. It would be easier to say that nowadays, adolescents are leading digital lives (Grubbs et al., 2022). They express themselves and interact with others through online space, hence making the internet a major contributor to their self-image.

This scenario increased rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ellis et al., 2020). There is also social acceptability of pornography use worldwide over the past years. High-speed network services, for example 5G are available hence previous barriers to accessing pornography have been removed (Mead, 2020).

In comparison to non-pornography users, pornography users reported higher levels of depressed symptoms, a lower quality of life, and more days when their mental and physical health was suppressed, according to studies on the relationship between pornography use and mental health conditions (Burke & MillerMacPhee, 2020). Moreover, studies have shown that pornography consumers have greater levels of anxiety (Prause & Williams, 2020) and that pornographic content itself contains cases of narcissistic personality disorder (Maheshwari & Preksha, 2018). General psychological

symptom severity has also been associated to self-reported everyday issues that are connected to pornography use (Infante, 2018; Gopalan, 2018).

According to the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK), the consumption of pornography among adolescents in Kenya, much like in other parts of the world, is rapidly spreading due to the widespread availability and affordability of such content (CAK, 2017). Pornographic materials can be easily accessed through various mediums such as the internet, television, videos, and print materials. CAK (2023) reported that the number of internet users in Kenya reached 47.96 million by December 2023. Consequently, the proliferation of unregulated internet access raises concerns about the potential for increased exposure to pornography, particularly among adolescents. In traditional Kenyan culture, discussions about sexuality were typically managed by elders at appropriate stages of a person's development.

Cultural practices, such as initiation ceremonies (Magai, Malik, & Koot, 2018), provided avenues for both boys and girls to receive education on sexual matters, aiding in their preparation for adulthood. However, in modern society, these traditional methods of sex education have become less accessible, and the traditional roles of societal figures as educators on sexual topics have diminished. This shift can be attributed, in part, to the rural-urban migration experienced by many families.

The internet may cultivate an environment conducive to sexual orientation, evident in sexual content. This could lead young people to engage in impulsive behaviors, with sexual encounters being among the most common (Muhingi, Mavole, & Nzau, 2020). Adolescents may struggle to understand the complexities of substance abuse, often lacking awareness of the correlation between drug use and behavioral

consequences due to their immature perceptual reasoning (Njeru, Nzyuko, & Ndegwa, 2019). This highlights the association between time spent viewing pornography, the availability of pornographic materials, and internet accessibility with adolescent pornography consumption. According to Esho et al. (2018), adolescence is a time when a person is curious about sex and sexuality. Today's environment, which includes public media, contains material that is sexually suggestive.

Many adolescents have engaged in various kinds of sexual activity. Adolescents value ethics and morality, even when a small percentage of them have had sexual experiences when they were very young. The church in Kenya and parents must act quickly to close the information gap about sexuality (Esho et al., 2018).

Kajiado North Sub- County is a cosmopolitan region that borders Nairobi and Kiambu counties—areas known for rapid urbanization and widespread internet access. According to the

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2019 Census, Kajiado North has a population of over 200,000 people, with a significant proportion being youth and adolescents. Proximity to Nairobi, where internet penetration stands at over 85% (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023), increases adolescents' exposure to smartphones, social media, and unsupervised online content, including pornography.

This geographical and digital connectivity puts adolescents in Kajiado North at heightened risk of pornography exposure and addiction. This study, therefore, examined the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county.

Problem Statement

There is concern on the steady rise of poor mental health among adolescents in Kenya (African Population and Health Research Center, 2022). The majority of young people are introduced to pornography during their adolescence, which becomes a habit and for others, it almost becomes an addiction (Njeru, Nzyuko, & Ndegwa, 2019).

Pornography is growing in popularity as simple, unsupervised access to the internet is made possible by smartphone ownership, which is now common among adolescents (Wanjiku, 2021).

Pornography has replaced traditional sex education as the primary source of sexual education for many young people. Adolescents are increasingly exposed to aggressive and violent sex through pornographic material (Maheshwari & Preksha, 2018). The misuse of digital technologies for sexual exploitation and abuse is one of the risks of the internet (Global Partnership to Stop Violence Against Children ,2021). Internet grooming, distribution of sexually explicit content, and pornographic live streaming are violations that require an immediate, multi-sectoral and international response (Zulu & Tembo, 2020). These are typically documented permanently in the form of digital photos or movies, which are then circulated online incessantly (Gopalan, 2018).

Prevention and protection of adolescents have grown increasingly challenging as dangers of harm continue to adapt and rise exponentially (Muhingi, Mavole, & Nzau, 2020). Pornography addiction among adolescents may lead to adverse behavioral and emotional tendencies, thereby affecting their overall psychosocial well-being (Wanjiku,

2021). Consequently, their academic performance may deteriorate, due to mental health challenges.

Adolescents' comprehension of what is real and what is staged in pornographic videos has been found to be quite weak (Magai et al., 2018). Parents greatly underestimate the quantity and variety of material their children have access to. Adolescents' conceptions of sexual norms involving dangerous sexual practices are influenced by their exposure to pornography (Muhingi et al., 2020). Online pornography exposure among adolescents is now considered to be a normal scenario. Experiences with pornography have a serious negative impact on adolescents' mental health (Weigle, 2020). Pornography is a common source for adolescents to learn sexual performance scripts or sexual behaviors. Despite various studies conducted on adolescent pornography addiction, this continues to be a pressing issue in Kenya, driven by the increased pornographic content on social media platforms.

Mehmood et al. (2023) assessed the reasons for online pornography and revealed that watching pornography was primarily driven by boredom, sexual gratification, and the desire to adopt new fashion and behavior ideas from these movies. A methodological gap is evident as it was a desktop review of literature. Njeru, Nzyuko, and Ndegwa (2019) investigated the prevalence of pornography addiction among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. The study presents a contextual gap as it was conducted in Nairobi. Wanjiku (2021) employed discourse analysis to investigate the motivations behind non-consensual pornography and the factors contributing to its prevalence and recommended reforms in legal framework to address non-consensual pornography mediated by digital technology tools.

The study presents a conceptual gap as effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health was not addressed. This creates a knowledge gap, to be filled by this study, which examined the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county. The study established causes of pornography addiction, assessed its effects on adolescents' mental health and evaluated the effectiveness of measures aimed at addressing the problem.

Objectives of the study

This study's objectives were:

- i. To establish the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county.
- ii. To assess the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county.
- iii. To evaluate measures to curb pornography addiction among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county.

Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county?
- ii. How does pornography addiction affect adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county?
- iii. What measures could be used to curb pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county?

Justification of the study

Adolescents in Kenya face a rise in poor mental health due to increased exposure to pornography, facilitated by easy access to the internet through smartphones.

Pornography has become a primary source of sexual education for many young people, leading to exposure to aggressive and violent sexual content (Magai, Malik, & Koot, 2018). This misuse of digital technologies poses risks such as internet grooming and distribution of explicit material. Preventing harm and protecting adolescents from pornography addiction has become more challenging as dangers evolve (Galindo, 2020). The effect of pornography on adolescents' mental health can lead to adverse behavioral and emotional tendencies and affect academic performance.

Parents underestimate the extent of their children's exposure to pornographic material, influencing adolescents' understanding of sexual norms (Muhingi, Mavole, & Nzau, 2020). Experiences with online pornography can have serious negative consequences on adolescents' well-being, highlighting the need for immediate, multi-sectoral intervention on a global scale (Zulu & Tembo, 2020). Previous studies have not conclusively examined the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health, hence the justification for this study; which examined the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools.

Significance of the study

The information from this study will be used by the school principals and other education stakeholders on curbing pornography addiction in adolescents. The schools' administrators will use the findings of this study to formulate rules, regulations and policies to guide schools in curbing the vice. Policy makers in the education sector will

formulate policies to deal with pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. The findings of the study will enhance the understanding of the topic of study. The recommendations of this study will be used by policy makers to institute policy that would help curb pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in secondary schools. The study findings and recommendations will be a point of reference that would be useful to the policy makers.

The study will be important to parents, who will better understand the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. Counselling professionals will benefit from the findings of the study as they will be better informed on the dangers of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. The study will form a basis for further research for other scholars who will further examine the subject. The study will contribute to knowledge on causes of pornography addiction, effects of pornography addiction and measures to curb pornography addiction among adolescents.

Assumptions of study

The study made various assumptions. It was assumed that the respondents were aware of the concept of pornography addiction and were qualified to provide pertinent and accurate facts and information. The study also assumed that pornography addiction affected adolescents' mental health in the selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. Additionally, it was assumed that the sample had a clear understanding of adolescents' mental health and possessed the skills necessary to distinguish it from other health issues. Lastly, it was anticipated that the respondents would provide truthful and unbiased responses.

Scope of the study

The study only covered selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. It relied on data from school principals, teachers, and students. The study was conducted over a period of four months. It was confined to examining the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited to the examination of the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. It focused on the geographic region of Kajiado North Sub-County. The quality of the data collected may have been limited by the respondents' inability to articulate themselves clearly in the language chosen for data collection. This limitation was minimized by the researcher incorporating oral questionnaire administration and giving respondents enough time to consider their answers.

Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to examining the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. It acknowledged that other factors might influence adolescents' mental health; however, only those within the scope were focused on. The study was carried out within a specified time frame and scope, targeting pornography addiction's effects on adolescents' mental health. Questionnaires were issued, and interviews were conducted only with respondents who were willing and comfortable to participate.

This approach was aimed at ensuring the reliability of the findings and conclusions.

Chapter summary

The chapter presents the background to the study and defines the problem statement. The study highlights objectives and outlines corresponding research questions and hypothesis of the study. The significance, assumptions and scope of the study are discussed. Study limitations and delimitations are also highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature on the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. It further assessed the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents, examined its effects on their mental health, and evaluated measures to curb the addiction. Theories that guided the study were also discussed, and a conceptual framework was presented. Research gaps exhibited by previous studies were then examined, followed by a summary of the chapter. This chapter was important as it placed the study within academic literature, thereby enhancing its credibility.

Adolescents' mental health

Adolescence signifies a transitional phase marked by numerous transformations in young individuals. These changes encompass cognitive, biological, physical, and emotional shifts. This developmental stage is also marked by a strong inclination toward experimentation, curiosity, and risk-taking behaviors. It's a period that can elevate vulnerabilities, including a heightened propensity for psychological disturbances, often culminating in suicidal tendencies (Keyho et al., 2019). Additionally, there exists a proclivity to assert independence from various forms of authority.

Globally, statistics indicate that 10-20% of adolescents grapple with mental health. However, a considerable portion of these cases goes undiagnosed for various reasons. Symptoms of mental health often go unnoticed due to limited awareness surrounding these issues or the pervasive social stigma tied to such conditions (Majumder et al., 2019). Research suggests that approximately half of psychiatric disorders manifest during adolescence, typically around the age of fourteen. Common

disorders encompass conditions like depression, stress, anxiety disorders, oppositional defiance disorder, conduct disorders, personality disorders, among others (Galindo, 2020). The following sections will delve into the impact of pornography addiction on the mental well-being of adolescents.

Pornography addition

The increased availability of the internet and the growing online engagement among adolescents may contribute to the consumption of pornographic materials. Jenkins (2017) notes that the emergence of the internet, particularly since the 1990s, has significantly expanded the accessibility of pornographic movies and images. In the United States, research by Babar (2023) indicates that 93% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 use the internet, with 63% accessing it daily and 36% logging on multiple times per day. Similarly, findings from the World Internet Report, which surveyed 12 to 14-year-olds from thirteen different countries, revealed high levels of internet usage among youth, with 100% of British youth, 98% of Israeli youth, 96% of Czech youth, and 95% of Canadian youth reporting regular internet use (Tamayo & Vargas, 2019).

Moreover, the prevalence of mobile devices among American teens, with an average ownership of three devices per individual, underscores the significance of online activity, which is portable and therefore not subject to restrictions (Yang & Sanborn, 2021).

Musmundiroh (2022) noted that South Africa faces similar challenges regarding adolescent pornography consumption as other regions. Through an empirical qualitative study conducted with ten male students aged 14 to 18 years from a secondary school in the Eastern Cape, they identified substance abuse, peer pressure and lack of parental supervision as factors contributing to the use of pornographic materials. In Kenya, venues

such as alcohol joints and pubs may foster an environment conducive to sexual fantasies, evidenced by patrons' provocative attire and the presence of sex workers. Intoxication in such settings can lead young people to engage in impulsive behaviors, often centered around sexual activities.

Adolescents may struggle to comprehend the complexities of substance abuse and may be unaware of the link between drug use and behavioral consequences due to their immature perceptual reasoning (Muhingi et al., 2020). This highlights the association between time spent on pornography consumption, the easy accessibility of pornographic materials and internet availability among adolescents (Esho et al., 2018).

Empirical Review

Identification of causes of pornography addiction to adolescents

Online pornography has experienced a rapid expansion, facilitated by digital devices that grant unprecedented access to individuals, including adolescents (Hendriks et al., 2020). Consequently, addiction to online pornography has emerged as a peril of the digital era, often characterized as a public health crisis (Gopalan, 2018). Over a span of fewer than three decades, the notion of the "pornography addict" has become a commonplace and largely accepted manifestation of the consequences of excessive pornography consumption (Husain & Trepal, 2021), ingrained in the public consciousness (Burke & MillerMacPhee, 2020). While acknowledging the inconclusive nature of pornography addiction, Weigle (2020) outlines risk factors, causes, symptoms and potential complications, ranging from feelings of shame to occupational instability and substance abuse, along with various treatment options such as therapy, medication, and addiction support services (Sharpe & Mead, 2021). In the United States, 17 states

have passed resolutions since 2016, categorizing pornography as a public health crisis, with concerns about its addictive nature being prominent among the cited reasons (Guggisberg & Holt, 2022).

Sexual abuse among adolescents has been identified as one cause of mental health. The use of the internet and social media platforms has given adolescents an avenue of socialization and communication with one another (Keyho et al., 2019). These digital platforms have revealed the ability of the adolescents' brain to accommodate new technologies. A study done indicated that 90% of the adolescents make use of the net in video calling messages, blogging, posting photos and videos among others (Majumder et al., 2019). Mental disorders have become a great burden globally (Patel et al., 2018) The Lancet commission on global health identified mental health as a fundamental human right, which must be emphasized for the development of nations.

It is important to analyze how mental health affects the general development of a country (Thornicroft, 2019). When adolescents are exposed early to online pornography, they are likely to experience negative effects on their neurological, psychological, and social wellbeing (Dan, 2022). For one to comprehend the effect of pornography on the adolescent mental health, it would be important to understand an adolescent's neurological state (Charlotte, 2022).

Pornography addiction brings about adverse outcomes, not only affecting children's behavior but also causing brain damage comparable to the effects of substance-induced damage (Prause & Williams, 2020). The exposure of adolescents to pornography addiction is linked to deviant sexual behavior prior to marriage (Weigle, 2020). Musmundiroh (2022) identified the determinants of pornography addiction in adolescents

within the Indonesian context. Employing a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional study design, the research gathered data through the administration of questionnaires.

The findings unveiled that a substantial percentage, accounting for 74% of adolescents, exhibited addictive tendencies towards pornography. The results further identified key factors contributing to pornography addiction, including internet usage, personal attitudes, peer pressure and gender. Notably, among these variables, internet usage emerged as the most influential factor in relation to the development of pornography addiction. Cross-sectional research design was employed, while the current study uses a descriptive research design; hence a methodological gap.

Svedin, Donevan, Bladh, Priebe, Fredlund, and Jonsson (2022) investigated the link between viewing pornography and compromised mental well-being in high school seniors. Utilizing the same set of questions to gauge participants' history of pornography consumption and their frequency of viewing over the past year, the researchers merged this data with three distinct measurements of psychological health, alongside background variables for control. These sets of information underwent analysis using both multiple logistic regression and forward stepwise logistic regression models.

Despite conducting repeated cross-sectional surveys across different years, the findings did not consistently demonstrate connections between poor mental health and either having previously watched pornography or the frequency of such viewing (Svedin et al., 2022). However, the act of consuming deviant forms of pornography showed a correlation with diminished mental health in boys across two surveys, and in girls, this connection appeared only in one survey. In contrast, other factors such as maternal unemployment, parenting style, and experiences of sexual abuse displayed more reliable

and pronounced associations with poor mental health consistently across all three survey cycles.

In recent times, the engagement in online gaming and cyber pornography has emerged as a concern among internet users. Immersing oneself in these activities can lead to the experience of a mental state called "flow," which has the potential to exert negative effects on users' physical health, mental well-being, and interpersonal connections (Sharpe & Mead, 2021). Chao and Yu (2023) study scrutinized the intermediary roles played by self-consciousness and peer relationships in the intricate interplay among online gaming, cyber pornography, and the broader domains of physical and mental health.

The research sourced its data from fifteen senior high schools located in Taiwan. Employing statistical techniques like structural equation modeling, the study unveiled significant insights. The outcomes revealed that adolescents who engaged in online gaming displayed a positive correlation with their physical and mental health. Paradoxically, this engagement was associated with reduced self-consciousness. Furthermore, when adolescents became engrossed in cyber pornography, they tended to lose track of time and their self-consciousness, ultimately affecting their relationships with peers. Both self-consciousness and peer relationships acted as mediators in the intricate relationships between cyber pornography and the participants' physical and mental well-being. This research underscored the multifaceted relationships between online gaming, cyber pornography, the psychological state of flow, and the overall physical and mental health among adolescents.

When the adolescents indulge in potentially addictive habits like pornography, they experience an increased production of dopamine that can be likened to taking drugs (Charlotte, 2022). This neurochemical process is at its peak in teenage as their brains are producing a lot of dopamine. Mattebo, Tydén, Nordin, Nilsson, and Larsson (2018) conducted a comprehensive exploration by examining factors that predicted the sustained consumption of pornography and its correlation with psychosomatic and depressive symptoms within a cohort of Swedish adolescents. Employing a longitudinal approach within a classroom setting, the study encompassed 53 randomly selected senior high school classes.

The outcomes revealed that greater initial levels of pornography consumption and being born outside Sweden were predictive of continued pornography consumption during the followup period. Furthermore, elevated levels of pornography consumption at the baseline stage were associated with the emergence of psychosomatic symptoms at the follow-up assessment. The researchers concluded that, for certain individuals, engaging in pornography consumption might be linked to mental health concerns. The study was limited in scope as only 53 respondents were included.

Cho (2018) assessed factors tied to frequent exposure to pornography among Korean adolescents. Through use of multiple logistic regression analysis, the investigation revealed that those who exhibited frequent internet pornography usage were typically older males who had differences in their living arrangements and perceived family economic status. These individuals were characterized by heavy internet use and were also found to have mental health issues. Importantly, the study underscored their heightened likelihood of engaging in exploratory and high-risk sexual behaviors, along

with other delinquent activities, emphasizing the need for increased attention from public health professionals.

Vera and Sheridan (2022) conducted a study on the Normalization of Violence during Sex among young Mozambicans. The results indicated that a majority of male participants engaged in either physical or psychological violence towards their partners. Similarly, female participants were found to inflict physical or psychological violence on their partners during the same period. The study revealed that females experienced more pronounced negative consequences associated with the violence.

Njeru, Nzyuko, and Ndegwa (2019) investigated the prevalence of pornography addiction among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. The research incorporated Classical Conditioning and Social Learning theories to explain pornography addiction. Using a quantitative research approach, the study involved 666 students from two selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. The findings indicated a significant number of students suffering from pornography addiction, with internet accessibility and the affordability of pornographic materials being identified as contributing factors. . The study presents a contextual gap as it was conducted in Nairobi.

Effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health

The rise of the internet coincided with the surge in popularity of sexually explicit content accessible online. Globally, the pornography industry amassed an estimated revenue of approximately 97 billion dollars in 2021 (Yu & Chao, 2019). Research efforts aimed at understanding the clinical and sexual implications of pornography exposure, both during adolescence and adulthood, have yielded conflicting findings. Adolescence marks a phase of development characterized by

growth and exploration, particularly in the realm of sexuality, as individuals navigate pubertal changes and hormonal shifts (Cho, 2018). Studies have investigated the significant correlation between media exposure and the heightened adoption of sexual scripts among adolescents, thereby influencing their perceptions and attitudes toward sexuality (Chao & Yu, 2023).

With the proliferation of the internet, pornography has become increasingly widespread globally, prompting significant research into its effects. Drawing on existing research and the pornography problems due to moral incongruence model, Su, Zheng and Zheng (2023) investigated problematic pornography use as a mediator and moral disapproval of pornography use as a moderator in the relationship between pornography use frequency and mental health issues in a sample of Chinese individuals.

Findings revealed that problematic pornography use mediates this relationship, while moral disapproval of pornography use moderates it. Specifically, pornography use frequency is strongly linked to problematic pornography use when participants experience high moral incongruence, with the indirect effect of problematic pornography use weaker at lower levels of the moderator and stronger at higher levels of the moderator.

Consumption of pornography among adolescents is on the rise (Grubbs et al., 2022). It is also evident that most of the young people have not realized the effect of pornography on their mental health. It is argued that pornography has a way it influences how the consumers behave socially and especially their sexual views. However, from another research young people reported that watching pornography has

given them exposure to their sexuality and it has created self-awareness (Musmundiroh, 2022). Regardless, pornography has links to potential dangers like mental health (Chao, Kao, & Yu, 2020).

Early exposure to pornography brings confusion to the young people because they feel that they do not measure up to what they see in pornography (Charlotte, 2022). Chao, Kao and Yu (2020) examined the moderating influence of community bond on the connections between cyberbullying, internet pornography, internet fraud, and problematic internet use. Employing a cross-sectional survey approach, the researchers administered self-report questionnaires to adolescents. The findings highlighted that internet pornography exhibited noteworthy positive impacts on the manifestation of problematic internet use.

Notably, community bond demonstrated a substantial moderating impact in the relationships involving cyberbullying, internet fraud, and the problematic internet use displayed by adolescents. Furthermore, the attitudes and behaviors of parents towards internet usage were identified as significant moderators in the links between inappropriate physical and mental wellbeing, community bond, and problematic internet use. These outcomes emphasize the importance of prioritizing additional support for adolescents through public health and education policies. Additionally, it suggests that schools should enhance their understanding of pertinent psychosocial variables and internet usage patterns in order to better inform their policies.

Continuous watching or consumption of pornography by adolescents can be a sure cause of depression and anxiety (Weigle, 2020). Pornography isolates a person, and he /she is always in contact with false images (Dan, 2022). The person engaged in

pornography is not able to relate well with other people because his or her communication skills are affected too. Loss of interest in social activities and increased isolation in the adolescents is an indication of depression. Studies have found a correlation between porn usage and loneliness. As human beings, there is need for socialization, but pornography can often drive adolescents away from relationships and into seclusion (Keyho et al., 2019).

The global consumption of pornography increased dramatically during the current COVID-19 pandemic (Keyho et al., 2019). However, parents don't seem to be interested in talking to adolescents about their consumption of pornographic material. Adolescents nowadays lead digital lives. They express themselves and interact with others through online networks making the internet a central feature of their identity construction, which has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ellis et al., 2020). This includes adolescents deliberately seeking out online pornography, which (DeKeseredy & Corsianos, 2018) referred to as “the 800- pound gorilla in the room.” Scholars, clinicians and policymakers agree that online pornography consumption is on the rise (de Alarcon et al., 2019; Mead & Sharpe, 2020) during a critical time of adolescent sexual development (Waterman et al., 2022).

Yu and Chao (2019) highlight that the digital landscape offers a platform for novel information and online social interactions. However, engaging in frequent social activities and encountering inappropriate behaviors, both physically and mentally, can potentially impact an individual's overall well-being. Their research aimed to explore how cyberbullying, cyber pornography, and internet fraud influence the physical and mental health of adolescents. Analyzing data from 8,480 adolescents, the study revealed

significant positive associations between cyberbullying, cyber pornography, internet fraud, and the physical and mental health of individuals.

The outcomes underscore the need for increased attention from parents and teachers toward adolescents, especially those who frequently report experiencing cyberbullying. It suggests that these individuals should be provided with counseling, assistance, and guidance on responsible internet use. Adolescents grappling with cyber pornography addiction should be encouraged to diversify their interests and engage in outdoor activities, which contribute to fostering healthier physical and mental well-being.

On the other hand, Weigle (2020) undertook an extensive review of literature concerning the utilization of pornography among young individuals, as well as its correlation with mental health and risky behaviors. The process involved evaluating the relevance and level of evidence of various studies and consolidating the most crucial themes and findings for presentation. The review illuminated that a significant number of youths encounter pornography during their adolescent years, and for many, it evolves into a habitual behavior, sometimes verging on obsession.

The ubiquity of smartphones and unsupervised internet access has escalated the prevalence of pornography consumption among teenagers. Notably, the research points out that boys, those who spend more time online, and those with strained family relationships tend to exhibit higher levels of pornography consumption (Weigle, 2020).

Given the inadequacy of formal sex education, pornography often serves as an inadvertent source of sexual education for many youths, exerting considerable influence on their attitudes and practices related to sexuality. The exposure to explicit content, including sadomasochistic and violent depictions, has become commonplace among

adolescents. Curiously, research indicates that youths struggle to distinguish between reality and theatricality in pornography videos. Parents tend to underestimate the extent and variety of pornography their children consume. Moreover, research suggests that pornography exposure shapes adolescents' perceptions of sexual norms, especially concerning risky sexual behaviors. Some studies indicate that exposure to violent pornography is linked to sexual assault perpetration and viewing pornography is associated with sexual victimization among girls. Weigle (2020) study presents a methodological gap as secondary data was used in findings and conclusions.

Users of pornography engage with multiple sexual partners, and this leads to many such risks as exposure to sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. Mental health are being identified as leading causes of deaths in adolescents (Keyho et al., 2019). It is evident in the three studies above that mental health' challenges need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. From these studies it is also noticeable that use of internet particularly pornography can be a source of mental disorder among the adolescent. It affects the way they communicate and express themselves since most of the time they are disengaged and withdrawn from their social life.

There is a rapid advance in technology which is exposing most adolescents to social problems too. For example, digital communication has greatly altered how adolescents relate with each other, the great challenge is their interpersonal skills on how they relate (Husain & Trepal, 2021). The young people are periodically exposed to sexualized and explicit content from social media like TV, smart phones, magazines among others (Efrati, 2020). A few studies have proved that continuous exposure to sexualized content in teens may promote premature sexual behaviors in young people

(Delago et al., 2020). The research available has proved children and young people with sexualized behavior display psychopathology problems (Ensink et al., 2018).

Nowadays, sexual practices that were considered unusual have been normalized. This desensitization effect has been associated to pornography (Testa et al., 2023). Normalization is a situation whereby the adolescents conform to vices like sexual violence, rape, acceptance of gender-stereotyped attitudes among others (Boniel-Nissim et al., 2020). They consider them normal and acceptable. When it comes to online pornography, women are degraded and considered to be sexual objects, hence violence against women is also normalized (Bridges, 2019).

Pornography is a major factor that promotes sexual violence in relationships (Waterman et al., 2022). For example, young girls are forced to participate in pornographic scenes against their will. Many girls are forced to imitate what their partners have watched online against their will (Mead, 2020). This can be considered as mental torture. Pornography is associated with partner violence (Rodenhizer, 2019). Youth dating violence annually affects millions of adolescents (Kann et al., 2018). Youth dating violence has been associated with a myriad of deleterious mental and physical health outcomes. One of the greatest risk factors of adolescent dating violence is exposure to violence, through the media or one's environment.

Mehmood, Waheed, Munawar, Saeed, Abdullah, Munawar, and Babar (2023) assessed the reasons for online pornography utilization, the mechanisms leading to addiction, and the physiological, emotional, behavioral, social and substance abuse effects. The literature search, including four case studies and nine original articles from 2000 to 2022, revealed that watching pornography was primarily driven by boredom,

sexual gratification, and the desire to adopt new fashion and behavior ideas from these movies. A methodological gap is evident as it was a desktop review of literature.

Internet usage has led to widespread access to sexual content, particularly among young people. However, research on internet pornography consumption in Nigeria, its sociodemographic determinants, and its psychosocial effects on Nigerian youth is limited. Okunola,

Oduntan, Adeoye, and Fakunle (2022) assessed factors influencing pornography viewing, including socio-demographic factors and the mental health of viewers; and found a prevalence rate of 82.93% for internet pornography consumption among undergraduate students.

The study established significant relationships between gender, marital status, and pornography consumption, with a majority of respondents reporting mental health concerns. The study highlights the endemic nature of internet pornography among youths in Ogun State, Nigeria, and the need for public awareness campaigns to educate them about the risks associated with pornography consumption. The findings highlight the need for public awareness campaigns to educate youths about the risks associated with internet pornography consumption.

Wanjiku (2021) employed discourse analysis to investigate the motivations behind nonconsensual pornography and the factors contributing to its prevalence. The paper examined legal and gendered aspects that enable the perpetuation of this phenomenon. The article recommended reforms in legal framework to address non-consensual pornography mediated by digital technology tools. The study presents a

conceptual gap as effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health was not addressed.

Measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents

Early exposure to pornography brings confusion to the young people because they feel that they do not measure up to what they see in pornography (Charlotte, 2022). Continuous watching or consumption of pornography by adolescents can be a sure cause of depression and anxiety. Pornography isolates a person, and he /she is always in contact with false images. The person engaged in pornography is not able to relate well with other people because his or her communication skills are affected too. Loss of interest in social activities and increased isolation in the adolescents is an indication of depression. Research studies have found a correlation between porn usage and loneliness (Mead, 2020). As human beings, we need socialization, but pornography can often drive adolescents away from relationships and into seclusion.

Adolescents commonly engage in pornography consumption, sometimes considering it a form of sexual education. However, early exposure to pornography can potentially lead to adverse outcomes and increase the likelihood of developing problematic patterns of pornography use (Sharpe & Mead, 2021). Therefore, it is imperative to enhance our comprehension of this phenomenon and implement effective interventions to address the viewing of pornography among young individuals. Testa, Mestre, Actis, and Potenza (2023) conducted an overview of research that delved into the strategies for averting and addressing pornography addiction among adolescents, discussing both present challenges and potential future pathways.

Within the realm of prevention studies, the review highlighted the inclusion of pornography education programs that hinge on media-literacy techniques. The primary aim of these initiatives is to equip young individuals with critical thinking skills and a nuanced comprehension of the inherent nature of pornography.

Recommendations emerging from the prevention literature underscore key aspects of effective pornography-education programs. These include the importance of tailoring content to be age-appropriate and adopting participatory teaching methods, involving well-trained facilitators. In terms of treatment studies pertaining to pornography addiction in adolescents, the existing body of research is notably limited. Nevertheless, there are preliminary indications of the efficacy of approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness-based interventions, which have shown promise in addressing pornography addiction among adults. Furthermore, the review observed the potential advantages associated with online therapeutic strategies for adolescents dealing with pornography addiction, hinting at the suitability and accessibility of such approaches in this specific demographic.

Adolescents frequently seek out pornography, a behavior that impacts their attitudes and actions. Interestingly, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unparalleled surge in global pornography consumption. Nevertheless, there seems to be a general hesitancy among adults to engage children and youth in conversations about online pornography consumption. Guggisberg and Holt (2022) conducted a review that delved into various aspects of pornography use, with a particular emphasis on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors as integral components of adolescents' sexual development. The primary objective of this study was to increase awareness and advocate for the

implementation of educational initiatives that address adolescent online pornography consumption and its associated harms (Guggisberg & Holt, 2022). The review underscored the significance of online pornography use as a pertinent contemporary social concern that warrants attention. In this context, the recommendations put forth encompassed the necessity for educational endeavors that shed light on the negative societal, behavioral, and legal ramifications linked to pornography use. Furthermore, recognizing the critical importance of openly discussing sexual consent was highlighted as an effective approach to engage adolescents in prevention efforts (Guggisberg & Holt, 2022).

The experience of online pornography is multifaceted and intricate. Identifying the determining factors that shape this experience holds the potential to mitigate its adverse effects and enhance preventive interventions among young individuals. In this vein, Ballester, Rosón, Noya, and Calderón (2022) study sought to understand the fundamental characteristics of pornography, the repercussions associated with its consumption, and the most effective interventions to counteract its detrimental outcomes in adolescents and young people. The research methodology entailed the administration of a comprehensive questionnaire that inquired into multiple dimensions, encompassing not only the definition of pornography but also its features, effects, and potential interventions to counteract the negative consequences of its consumption among adolescents.

Through this investigation, a range of significant features associated with pornography came to light, including its accessibility, the presence of explicit and violent content, and its potential to shape attitudes and beliefs concerning matters of gender

equality and sexuality. The study's proposed interventions to alleviate the negative repercussions of pornography consumption encompassed the implementation of mechanisms like social support during the maturation process and educational initiatives that emphasize the exploration of emotions, affections, and healthy expressions of sexuality.

Sharpe and Mead (2021) conducted a comprehensive review that synthesized recent research concerning pornography addiction and its correlation with the prevalence of sexual violence. The article also offered guidance to governmental bodies regarding possible health policy measures and legal actions that could hinder the development of pornography addiction and alleviate the incidence of sexual violence within society. The research pinpointed significant associations between pornography addiction and certain individuals' behavior, particularly indicating links to domestic violence. Artificial intelligence algorithms were identified as playing a pivotal role in the pornography industry, contributing to the escalation towards more violent content and fostering heightened sexual dysfunction in consumers.

Moreover, such algorithms were found to be fostering appetites for viewing child sexual abuse material. The readily available nature of internet pornography was implicated in the surge of both pornography addiction and sexual violence. Strategies to curb pornography addiction encompassed measures such as age verification for pornography websites, public health campaigns, and incorporating health and legal warnings for users at the commencement of pornography viewing sessions (Sharpe & Mead, 2021).

Addressing the challenges that adolescents encounter in the digital sphere, Muhingi, Mavole, and Nzau (2020) examined the influence of awareness creation efforts by stakeholders on the prevalence of online abuse among adolescents. Their study, employing a cross-sectional descriptive design, involved 423 adolescents and utilized Godden's formula for sampling. Notably, the study observed that traditional methods of awareness delivery, including activities and posters, were employed in schools to educate students about cyber safety. Teachers used methods like videos and lectures to instruct adolescents on safe internet usage. The findings underscored the need for a multi-level approach to bolster awareness creation, with each stakeholder taking a role in addressing online abuse. The research concluded by advocating for collaboration among stakeholders and the promotion of awareness regarding pornography addiction and its detrimental impacts.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework consists of interlinked concepts and ideas that are built upon established theories. It serves as a logical structure of statements, derived from and backed by empirical data or evidence. A theoretical framework provides explanations for the underlying reasons behind observed occurrences. According to Kivunja (2018), theories empower researchers to draw novel conclusions, enhance practical actions, and foster the development of more advanced theories. This study is anchored on the social cognitive theory and the ecological systems theory respectively.

Social cognitive theory

Based on the social cognitive theory of addiction, Bandura (1986) recognized that individuals tend to adopt behaviors based on what they observe or witness, and if this

behavior becomes repetitive, it can lead to addiction. The theory posits that addictive behaviors often take precedence over healthy habits, ultimately leading to the development of addictions. Self-efficacy, a person's belief in their ability to accomplish a task, plays a pivotal role in determining the amount of effort an addict is willing to invest to maintain addictive behavior (Bandura, 1986). The theory also highlights the significance of goal setting and social support in modifying behavior effectively. In the current context, addiction has surged in recent times, posing severe challenges to both psychological and social well-being. Left unchecked, various forms of addiction can contribute to the deterioration of communities and societies at large (Barry, 2019).

The treatment of addicts is a multifaceted process that demands a combination of therapeutic approaches (Andersen et al., 2018). Implementing educational programs grounded in Bandura's theory could serve as a valuable means of guiding addicts towards recovery (Barry, 2019). Another angle in the application of this theory emerges from sources like Yoes and Silverman (2021), who approached it from a music theory perspective. The fundamental principle of this adaptation of the theory is that the context of a situation plays a pivotal role in shaping behavior. The theory also underscores the constructive nature of social perception and self-perception, revealing that individuals are often oblivious to the impact of situational factors (Bandura, 1986). The idea of "blindness" refers to individuals' limited awareness of the constructed nature of their social and self-perceptions, which is further influenced by social motives.

Social cognitive theory asserts that promoting healthy behaviors necessitates altering cognitive processes and fostering individuals' belief in their capacity to execute

specific actions (Beauchamp, Crawford, & Jackson, 2019). The theory emphasizes the importance of understanding an individual's unique way of acquiring and sustaining behavior, considering the social environment in which they operate (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2020). Addicts can be aided in overcoming their addictive behavior, making it a valuable approach for clients struggling to abandon behaviors that have adversely impacted their mental health.

Research outcomes demonstrate that despite adolescents' susceptibility to becoming addicted to pornography, it is feasible for them to modify their behavior (Beauchamp, Crawford, & Jackson, 2019). The theory advocates treating pornography addiction as a chronic condition, requiring individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles to impede the progression of the condition. Addressing addiction not only contributes to reducing criminal activities but also enhances the mental health of those affected. The risk of relapse after quitting an addictive behavior remains high if individuals addicted to pornography fail to embrace healthier habits (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2020).

This theory postulates that people tend to imitate certain behaviors they witness, considering both the behavior itself and its consequences. Consequently, positive behaviors can be emulated, and reinforcing these positive behaviors enables addicted individuals to shed negative patterns and embrace more constructive ones. This change can arise from an individual's internal motivation or external influences from their environment (Vera & Sheridan, 2022). This theory is applicable to the study as it will help highlight the effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health, given that addictive behaviors often take precedence over healthy habits, ultimately leading to

the development of addictions (Bandura ,1986). Social cognitive theory proposes that adolescents learn through observation and modeling.

In the case of pornography addiction, exposure to explicit content may shape their perceptions and behaviors regarding sex and relationships. Observing exaggerated and unrealistic depictions of sexuality in pornographic material can lead to distorted beliefs and attitudes, potentially impacting mental health (Beauchamp et al., 2019). Additionally, repeated exposure to such content may reinforce addictive behaviors, further exacerbating negative effects on adolescents' mental well-being. Thus, social cognitive theory highlights how environmental influences, such as exposure to pornography, can interact with individual factors to influence adolescents' mental health outcomes.

Ecological systems theory

Bronfenbrenner's theory presents a perspective on human development that conceptualizes it as an ecological system comprising five distinct subsystems. These subsystems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The interactions within the microsystem, the innermost layer, hold considerable influence in determining an individual's capacity to engage with interactions in other layers, such as the mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. In the 1970s, the ecological systems theory was integrated with systems thinking perspectives.

Systems thinking involves comprehending how interconnected elements impact each other within a broader context. In natural ecosystems, this concept is evident in how various components collaborate for survival or face potential demise. In organizational contexts, systems encompass people, structures, and processes that collaborate to achieve

organizational goals (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This approach is not a singular concept but rather a collection of practices within a framework that is grounded in the idea that the components of a system are best understood within the context of their relationships with other elements and systems, rather than in isolation. One of the central tenets of systems thinking is its focus on cyclical causal relationships, as opposed to linear cause-and-effect dynamics (Meyer, 1995).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model finds application in this study as a representation of how pornography influences adolescents' sexual behaviors and, in turn, their subsequent mental health. This model illustrates various levels of interaction and adaptation within adolescents' lives. The microsystems depict the interconnectedness of individual aspects of a person's life and how they mutually influence each other (Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). The exosystem pertains to broader social systems in which adolescents interact, even if not directly present in those environments.

The macrosystem encompasses the cultural milieu that collectively impact an adolescent's life. Lastly, the chronosystem integrates the dimension of time, reflecting how temporal factors such as the timing of significant life events or physiological changes influence adolescents' experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's theory offers valuable insights as the variables under examination can be likened to distinct layers within the ecological framework (Tamayo & Vargas, 2019). The study seeks to explore how adolescents' interactions across these layers result in specific behaviors and, consequently, how these behaviors affect their mental health. The use of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model

highlights its relevance in comprehending the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents' and measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents' (Yang & Sanborn, 2021).

Ecological systems theory helps explain the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health by considering the various environmental systems that influence their development. At the microsystem level, familial and peer influences may contribute to exposure to pornography and subsequent addiction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The mesosystem encompasses interactions between these microsystems, such as parental monitoring of internet usage (Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). At the exosystem level, societal factors like media portrayals of sexuality play a role. Finally, the macrosystem includes cultural norms and values regarding sexuality. The chronosystem recognizes the effect of changes over time. Adolescence pornography addiction is thus influenced by interactions across different environmental systems, that determine adolescents' mental health outcomes.

Conceptual framework

It is an interconnected set of assumptions or hypotheses that explain how a particular phenomenon functions or how its constituent elements are interconnected (Crawford, 2019). It is often represented visually through a diagram to facilitate understanding of the proposed relationships. A conceptual framework serves as a foundation for understanding the correlational or causal connections between observations and their interpretations. Mental health indicators include self-consciousness, self-efficacy, and social competence (Nieh et al., 2020). Causes of

pornography addiction to adolescents' is indicated by exposure to the internet, relationship issues and social and cultural issues (Kuss et al., 2021).

Effect of pornography addiction to adolescents include distorted beliefs, isolation and overly aggressive behavior (Wood, 2021). Measures to curb pornography addiction is indicated by professional guidance and counselling to adolescents', sex education and awareness creation (Infante, 2018).

Independent variables

Dependent variable

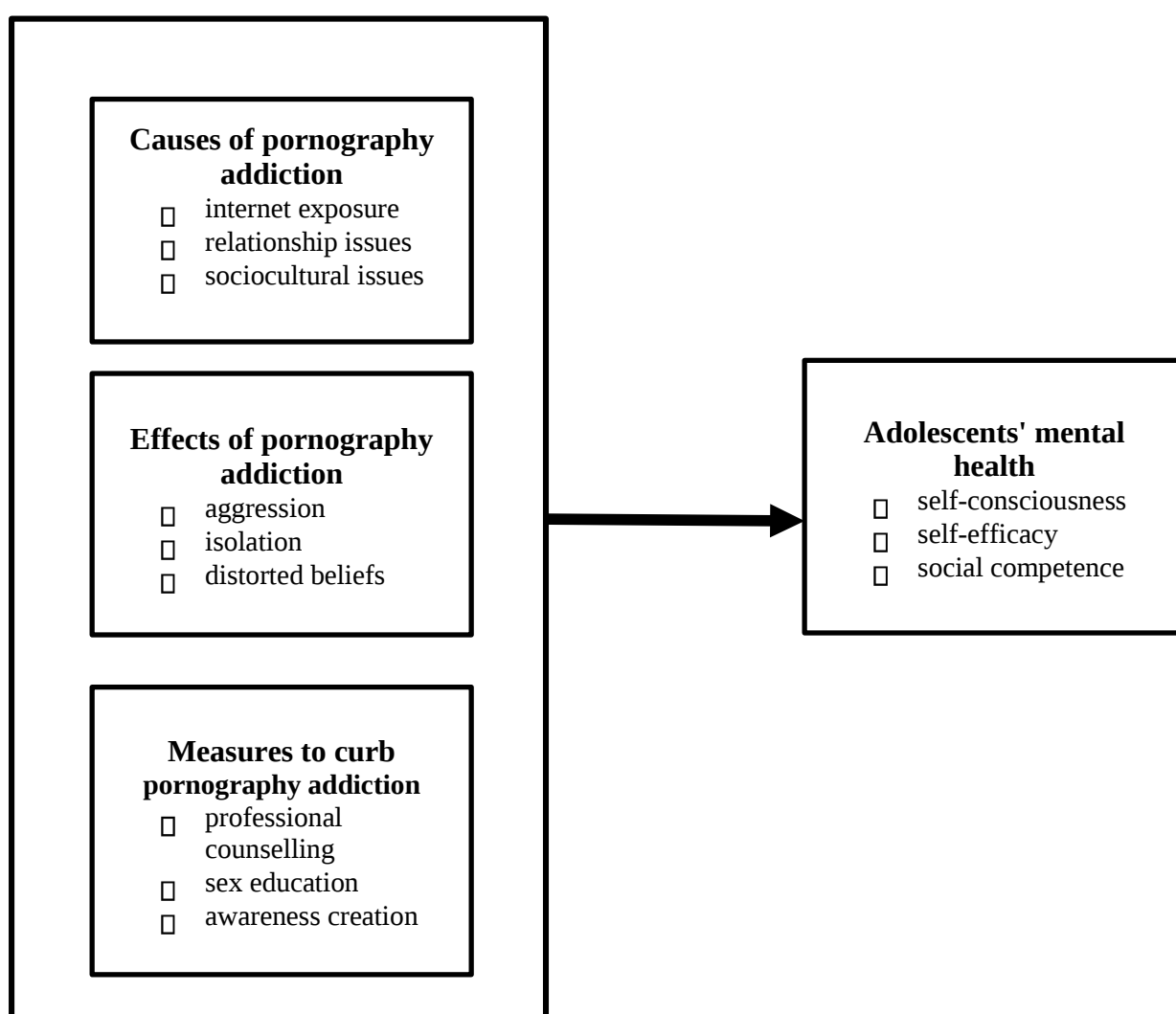


Figure 2.1 : Conceptual framework

Synthesis of research gap

Previous research has not thoroughly and definitively investigated the impact of pornography addiction on the mental well-being of adolescents. Musmundiroh (2022) conducted a study examining the factors influencing the development of pornography addiction in Indonesian adolescents. Likewise, Svedin et al. (2022) explored the correlation between watching pornography and the presence of mental health issues among high school seniors. Similarly, Mattebo et al. (2018) evaluated the predictors of ongoing pornography consumption and explored the connection between pornography usage and psychosomatic as well as depressive symptoms in a cohort of Swedish adolescents. However, these studies have limitations due to their focus on different countries.

Chao and Yu (2023) investigated how self-consciousness and peer relationships mediate mental health. Notably, this research introduces a conceptual gap as it examines distinct variables compared to the current study. Weigle (2020) conducted an extensive review of literature concerning pornography use among young individuals, along with its relationship to mental health and risky behaviors. Testa et al. (2023) carried out a review of studies that explored the prevention and treatment of pornography addiction in adolescents, discussing current challenges and future directions. However, these studies have methodological limitations as they primarily relied on secondary data sources.

Ballester et al. (2022) identified key characteristics of pornography, the associated effects of its consumption, and appropriate interventions to address negative consequences among adolescents and young people. The researchers employed a quantitative approach with a questionnaire that inquired about pornography's definition,

attributes, effects and interventions to mitigate its adverse impacts on adolescents. Nevertheless, this study has a methodological gap due to its exclusive reliance on quantitative methods.

Chapter summary

This chapter reviews literature on the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. The chapter reviews studies on the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health, examines the effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health and evaluate measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health. The theories that guide that guide the study namely; social cognitive theory and the ecological systems theory, are discussed and a conceptual framework presented. Research gaps exhibited by previous studies are also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the design for the study and justifies it. The target population for the study is identified. Sample size and methods for sampling are explained. Data collection methods are then highlighted. Procedures for data collection are also outlined. Plan for data analysis is presented. Ethical considerations are explained and a summary of the chapter is given.

Research design

Research design is a methodical and well-organized approach used by an observer to conduct a study (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). The research design for the study was descriptive. According to Siedlecki (2020), this design comprises observing and analyzing the study variables in their natural state, free from any deliberate modification or adjustment. In addition to data collection, descriptive research design entails data classification, measurement, analysis and interpretation. The design made it possible to examine the effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County. Specifically, the design helped examine causes of pornography addiction, effects of pornography addiction and measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in the sub-county.

Target population

Target population is the total number of individuals who share comparable characteristics (Adam, 2020). The target population for the current study were secondary school adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county. The sub

county has 56 secondary schools. The study purposively selected six (6) secondary schools that encompass day schools, boys' schools, girls' schools and mixed schools.

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the study population.

Table 3.1 : Target population

School	Students	Guidance & counselling staff	Population
Nkaimurunya Day school	796	3	799
Olekasasi Day school	561	2	563
Enoomatasiani Girls' school	1,085	4	1,089
Oloolua Secondary school	374	2	376
Kitengela Boys' High school	913	3	916
Kiserian Mixed Day secondary	592	2	594
Total	4,321	16	4,337

Sample size

This study used the Yamane (1973) formula to get the sample size for the adolescents. Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n is sample size; N is population and e, 0.05, the error margin. The formula yields a sample size of **366**. All guidance and counselling staff were included in the study. The distribution of the sample size is as shown in Table 3.2: -

Table 3.2: Sample size

School	Student sample	Guidance & counselling staff sample	Sample size
Nkaimurunya Day School	67	3	70
Olekasasi Day School	48	2	50
Enoomatasiani Girls School	92	4	96
Oloolua Secondary School	32	2	34
Kitengela Boys High School	77	3	80
Kiserian Mixed Day secondary	50	2	52
Total	366	16	382

Sampling methods

A sample is a sub set of a population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The researcher purposively sampled six secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. Efforts were made to ensure that the schools were well distributed in terms of geographical location (wards) and the gender of the students. Since the number of students in each school was known, the researcher employed a stratified sampling technique to determine the number of respondents in each school (strata). In each of the six schools, respondents were randomly selected from each class. In the case of mixed schools, the study alternated between a boy and a girl to ensure that an almost equal number of each gender was included in the study. A census was conducted for the guidance and counselling staff, as their population was small and they were easily accessible.

Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments are tools used in collection of data. Data collection was carried out using mixed methods. The instruments were researcher-generated. A semi-structured questionnaire, comprising items structured on the Likert scale, was provided to the respondents. Additionally, open-ended questions were incorporated into the questionnaire to allow respondents to express themselves and provide more detailed information. The questionnaire provided quantitative data on the causes and effects of pornography addiction among adolescents. Items on the questionnaire were scored using an ordinal scale. Examples of questions included in the questionnaire were: "How often do you access the internet?"; "How much do you feel influenced by your peers in terms

of accessing pornographic content?"; and "In your opinion, what is the emotional well-being of pornography addiction among adolescents?"

The study also used an interview schedule to collect data from the guidance and counselling staff in the six schools. It collected qualitative data on the causes and effects of pornography addiction, as well as measures to curb it among adolescents. The interviews included structured questions: What are the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents? ; What measures has the school put in place to curb pornography addiction among adolescents? In your opinion, what measures could be used to curb pornography addiction among adolescents?

Data collection procedures

The study had two assistants who were trained on the requirements of the study. Two weeks prior to the data collection exercise, the researcher visited the sampled schools and explained the purpose and importance of the study to the respondents. The students were then issued parental consent forms. Students who provided signed parental consent forms were issued assent forms. Data was collected from the respondents using a questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents on designated days. The respondents were given time to fill out the questionnaires, which were then collected and checked for completeness.

Interviews were used to collect information from the guidance and counselling staff, as they possessed vital information related to the study. Interviews provided additional details about the subject, as noted by Jain (2021). The interviews contained

questions aligned with the study objectives and collected qualitative data on the causes of pornography addiction, its effects on adolescents' mental health, and measures to curb it.

Instrument pre-testing

A pilot study was conducted at Ole Kasasi Secondary School. Thirty-six respondents were randomly selected to form the pilot sample. The pilot sample size was approximately ten percent of the anticipated sample size for the primary research, as recommended by Connelly (2008). The pilot respondents were given questionnaires to complete, and a time log of the questionnaire completion process was maintained. Any queries raised by the participants regarding the clarity of statements were noted for correction.

The researcher examined whether the tools effectively presented the intended concepts, as suggested by Taherdoost (2016). The questionnaire contained only relevant questions that fairly represented these concepts. The main goal of content validity was to ensure that the instruments accurately reflected the study objectives. Criterion validity was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. Throughout the pilot project, the researcher documented the association between the results obtained from various instruments administered to the subjects. This helped in assessing whether the tools produced accurate and reliable results.

According to Mohajan (2017), reliability is the extent of consistency with which a particular variable is measured by an instrument. When used in multiple tests, it indicates the instrument's capacity to produce comparable findings. The test-retest procedure was employed to assess the consistency of responses over time. Additionally, internal

consistency was used to determine how well the instrument's questions aligned and measured the correlation between questions that assessed the same concept. The instrument was considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.7 or higher (Coolidge & Segal , 2018).

Data analysis

Data was recorded in Microsoft Excel. It was then coded before being entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 for quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the qualitative data. The researcher carefully reviewed the recorded interviews to identify recurring themes and response patterns. Data for the findings was presented in tables, pie charts, and graphs.

Ethical considerations

The researcher acquired a letter from PAC University, securing consent to conduct the study. Additionally, permission from the National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) was sought and obtained. The students were issued parental consent forms. Students who provided signed parental consent forms were then issued assent forms. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, with respondents completing the questionnaire anonymously. The collected data was securely stored electronically and protected with passwords to ensure privacy and security.

Summary of the chapter

The chapter outlined the design for the study and justified it. The target population for the study was identified, and the sample size and sampling methods were

explained. Data collection methods were highlighted, procedures for data collection were outlined, and the data analysis plan was presented. Ethical considerations were also explained.

CHAPTER FOUR : RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study sought to examine effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. The study sought to: establish the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County; assess the effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County and evaluate measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County. This chapter presents demographics, descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, interpretations and discussions.

Response rate

The study issued 366 questionnaires to secondary school adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. Three hundred and forty-eight were filled and returned; hence a response rate of 95%. Additionally, the study sampled 16 guidance and counselling staff, out of which eight (8) were successfully interviewed, hence a response rate of 50%. The overall response rate was 93%. A high response rate enhances the reliability and applicability of study findings. According to Rosol (2023), a response rate above 80% is excellent and reduces the risk of non-response bias. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) note that survey response rates in social science research range between 50% and 70%, making the 93% response rate in this study satisfactory. The high response rate may be attributed to the relevance of the topic and the structured data collection process (Wu, Zhao & Fils-Aime, 2022). This is illustrated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 : Response rate

School	Sample size	Responses	Response rate
Nkaimurunya Day School	70	66	94%
Olekasasi Day School	50	45	90%
Enoomatasiani Girls School	96	93	97%
Oloolua Secondary School	34	29	85%
Kitengela Boys High School	80	75	94%
Kiserian mixed day secondary	52	48	92%
Total	382	356	93%

Source: Field data (2025)

Reliability results

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

It examined whether specific items in the research instruments measured the same construct (Dibekulu, 2020). It was computed for each objective to determine the replicability of the results should the research be repeated in the same study site.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above 0.7 were the cut-off reliability for the study. The reliability results from the pilot research are indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Reliability results

Variable	Item	Alpha Value	Recommendations
Causes of pornography	12	0.744	Reliable
Effects of pornography	7	0.751	Reliable

Source: Field data (2025)

The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was calculated for each variable. Coefficient for causes of pornography was 0.744 and effects of pornography was 0.751. All the variables had reliability values higher than 0.7, which was adequate.

Validity tests

The study conducted validity tests for the questionnaire. The research's instrument validity was achieved by seeking the university supervisor's professional advice. Upon adequate advice from the supervisors, the questionnaire was examined, revised and accepted. The questionnaire provided data that accurately answered the study's research questions.

Demographic data

The study assessed demographic data of the respondents. The study considered: gender, age, form and where the respondents lived.

Gender

The research established gender of the respondents. Results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Gender

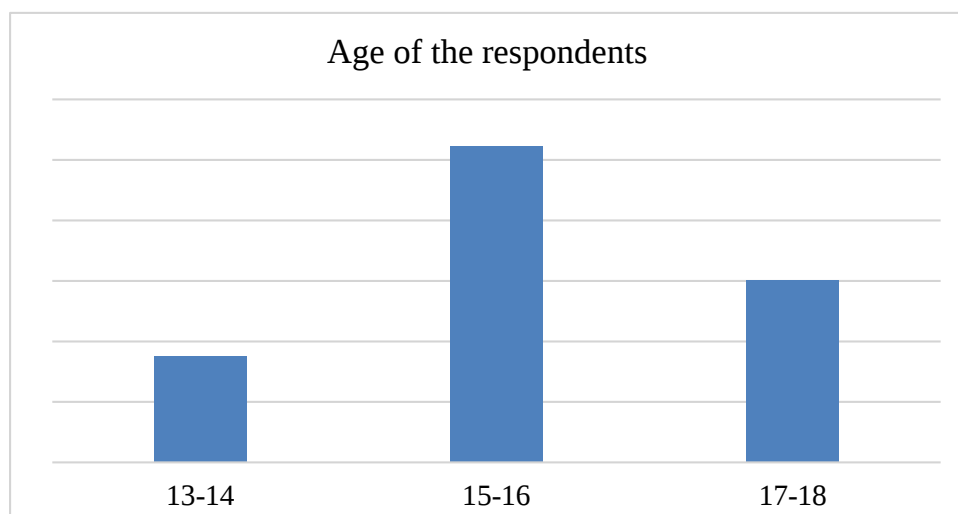
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	199	57
Female	149	43
Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.2 indicates that out of 348 respondents, 199 (57%) were male and 149 (43%) were female. The nearly equal gender distribution among respondents indicates balanced participation in the study. This parity demonstrates that male and female students were equally engaged in the study on the effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health.

Age of the respondents

The study established how old the respondents were. Results are shown in bar chart

**Figure 4.1 : Age of the respondents**

Source: Field data (2025)

According to the bar chart, 61(18%) were in the age groups of 13-14 years old, 182(52%) were 15-16 years old and 105(30%) were 17-18 years old. Most of the respondents were 15-16 years old. There was distribution of students across the age groups.

Respondents' form/class

The study established in which form/class the respondents were in at the time of the research.

Results are shown in Figure 4.2.

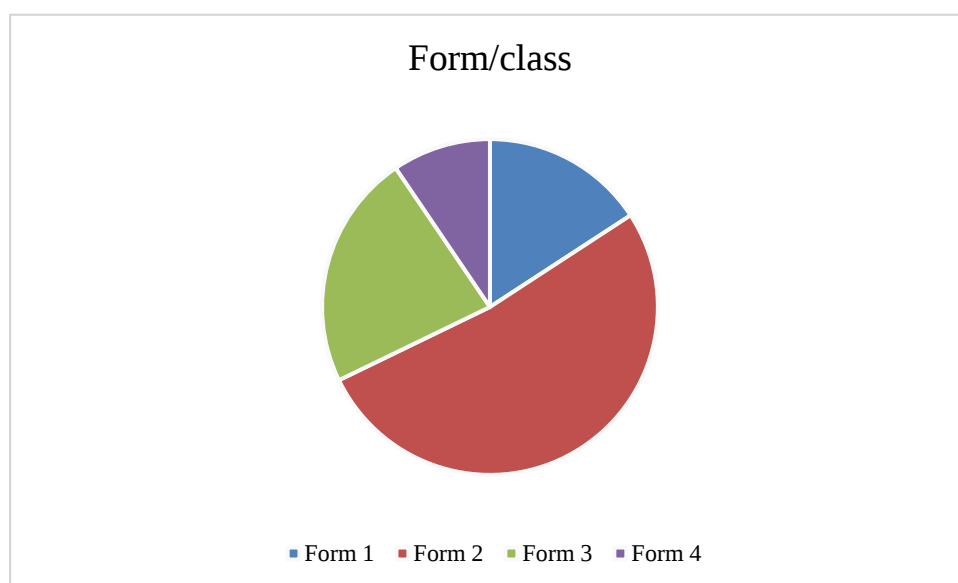


Figure 4.2 : Respondents Form/class

Source: Field data (2025)

Out of the 348 respondents, 55(16%) were in Form 1, 181(52%) were in Form 2, 79(23%) were in Form 3 and 33(9%) were in Form 4, indicating that majority of the respondents were in

Form 2. There was distribution of students across all the classes.

Respondents place of living

The study established where the respondents lived. Results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondents place of living

Live	Frequency	Percent
Urban	202	58
Rural	146	42
Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.3 shows that out of 348 respondents, 202 (58%) lived in urban areas and 146 (42%) lived in the rural areas. Most of the respondents came from the urban areas. The study sample was thus well distributed between students who lived in urban and rural environments.

Causes of pornography addiction to adolescents

The study sought to establish the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County. The questionnaire to students contained closed and open-ended statements and questions.

Access to internet and parental/ guardian awareness

The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate how often they accessed the internet and online content at home. Additionally, the students were required to indicate whether their parents were aware of their online activities. Results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Access, Content & Guardian

Category	Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Access	Rarely	159	46
	Occasionally	153	44
	Frequently	36	10
	Total	348	100
Content	Rarely	172	49
	Occasionally	132	38
	Frequently	44	13
	Total	348	100
Guardians	Yes	269	77
	No	79	23
	Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

According to Table 4.4, 159(46%) rarely, 153(44%) occasionally and 36(10%) frequently accessed the internet. Zulu and Tembo (2020) note that adolescent internet usage has increased significantly, leading to greater exposure to online content, including pornography. One hundred and seventy-two (49%) rarely, 132(38%) occasionally and 44(13%) frequently accessed online content at home. Yu and Chao (2018) highlight that frequent internet use impacts mental health, reinforcing the concern that adolescents may access inappropriate content that could affect their psychological well-being.

Further, 269 (77%) and 79 (23%) of the respondents' noted that their parents/guardians were aware of their online activities, most of the respondents' parents/guardians were aware of their online activities. Esho et al. (2018) argue that despite parental awareness, adolescents still find ways to access inappropriate content, indicating the need for more robust digital monitoring and awareness programs. The interviews sought the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents. A respondent articulated,

"... easy access to the internet and smartphones. With the advancement of technology, many students now own personal devices that allow unrestricted internet access. Without parental controls or monitoring, adolescents can easily access explicit content out of curiosity. Many students stumble upon pornographic content accidentally, but over time, they develop a habit of watching it." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 4]

Additionally, the extent of these causes to pornography addiction among adolescents was inquired.

"...almost every student has access to a smartphone or computer, which allows them to watch pornography privately. Without restrictions, students can access explicit content at any time, making it difficult for parents and teachers to control their exposure. Many students even watch pornography during school hours or late at night when they are unsupervised." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 6]

Communication with parental/ guardian on pornographic content exposure

The study examined the level of communication between respondents and parents/guardians about pornographic content exposure. Results are shown in Figure 4.3.

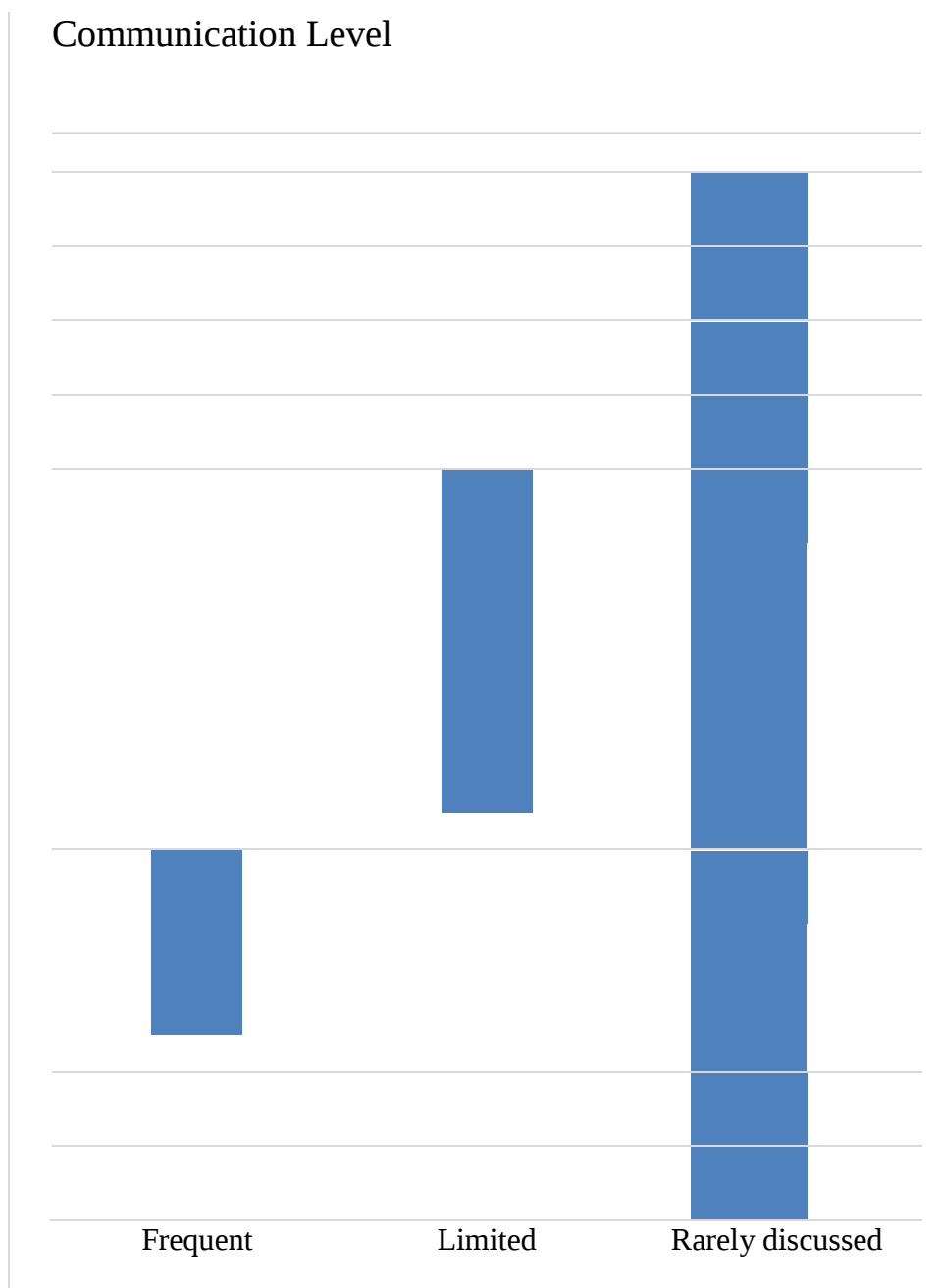


Figure 4.3 : Communication with parents

Source: Field data (2025)

Results indicate that 21% of respondents frequently, 39% had limited discussions, and 40% rarely discussed pornography exposure with their parents/guardians. This aligns with Nieh et al. (2020), who found that parental supervision reduces adolescent exposure to pornography, but psychological control can increase the likelihood of exposure. Esho et al. (2018) suggest that despite parental awareness, adolescents often access inappropriate content, highlighting the need for more proactive discussions between parents and children. Weigle (2020) emphasizes that many parents underestimate the extent of their children's exposure to pornography, which can lead to distorted sexual norms and mental health challenges. Yu and Chao (2018) highlight that open communication between parents and adolescents about internet use can mitigate the negative effects of online exposure, stressing the importance of parental involvement in guiding healthy media consumption.

Interviewees were asked about the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents and the extent to which these causes contribute to addiction. The interviewees noted,

"A lack of parental guidance and open discussions about sexuality Many parents feel uncomfortable discussing topics related to sex, leaving their children uninformed about healthy sexual behaviors. Without guidance, adolescents turn to the internet as their primary source of information on sexuality. In most cases, adolescents exposed to pornography at an early age develop unrealistic expectations about relationships and intimacy. The absence of parental monitoring allows students to spend long hours online, increasing their chances of engaging with explicit content. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 7]

"Parents assume their children are not exposed to pornography, yet they spend hours online without supervision. Without proper guidance, adolescents rely on pornography as a source of sexual education, which leads to misconceptions about relationships and intimacy. Many students begin to believe that what they see in pornography is normal behavior, which affects their attitudes toward relationships. This lack of parental involvement has made it difficult for schools to address the issue effectively because students are already influenced at home."

[Guidance & Counselling Staff 8]

Discussion with friends, influence and sex education

The study examined whether friends shared or discussed pornographic content, level of influence by peers in terms of accessing pornographic content and whether they had received any form of sex education in school. Results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Discussion with friends, influence and sex education

Category	Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Friends	Yes	227	65
	No	121	35
	Total	348	100
Peer influence	Not at all	145	42
	Somewhat	123	35
	Very much	80	23
	Total	348	100
Received	Yes	258	74
	No	90	26
	Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings indicate that 65% of respondents had shared or discussed pornographic content with their friends, while 35% had not. This aligns with Weigle (2020), who found that peer influence plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent behaviors, including exposure to pornography. Additionally, 42% of respondents indicated not at all, 35% somewhat, and 23% very much influenced by their peers in accessing pornographic content. This supports Nieh et al. (2020), who suggest that adolescent pornography consumption is strongly influenced by peer dynamics, as social interactions often normalize certain behaviors.

Regarding sex education, 74% of respondents had received some form of it in school, while 26% had not. This is consistent with Esho et al. (2018), who argue that structured sex education programs can reduce risky behaviors among adolescents, including excessive pornography consumption. Furthermore, Yu and Chao (2018) emphasize that open discussions in educational settings contribute to informed decision-making among adolescents, hence the importance of comprehensive sex education in mitigating the negative effects of pornography exposure.

Interviewees were asked about the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents and the extent to which these causes contribute to addiction. It was indicated,

"...adolescents often seek approval from their friends, and discussions about pornography make them curious to explore it. Some students are introduced to explicit content by their peers, who either share links or encourage them to watch together. Peer pressure is particularly strong among boys, where watching pornography is sometimes seen as a sign of maturity. As a result, students who want to fit in with their peers may feel compelled to engage in such behaviors. The lack of proper sex education in schools further exacerbates the problem, as students rely on their friends for information about sexuality. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 1]

"Students who do not engage in pornography are ridiculed or considered naïve by their peers. This social pressure forces many adolescents to watch pornography even if they were not initially interested. New students are often introduced to pornography by their older friends, creating a cycle of addiction within schools.

Some students even compete to see who can access the most extreme content."

[Guidance & Counselling Staff 3]

Comfortability of discussion on sex topics with school staff

The study assessed how comfortable the students were discussing sexual topics with teachers or school staff. Results are shown in Figure 4.4.

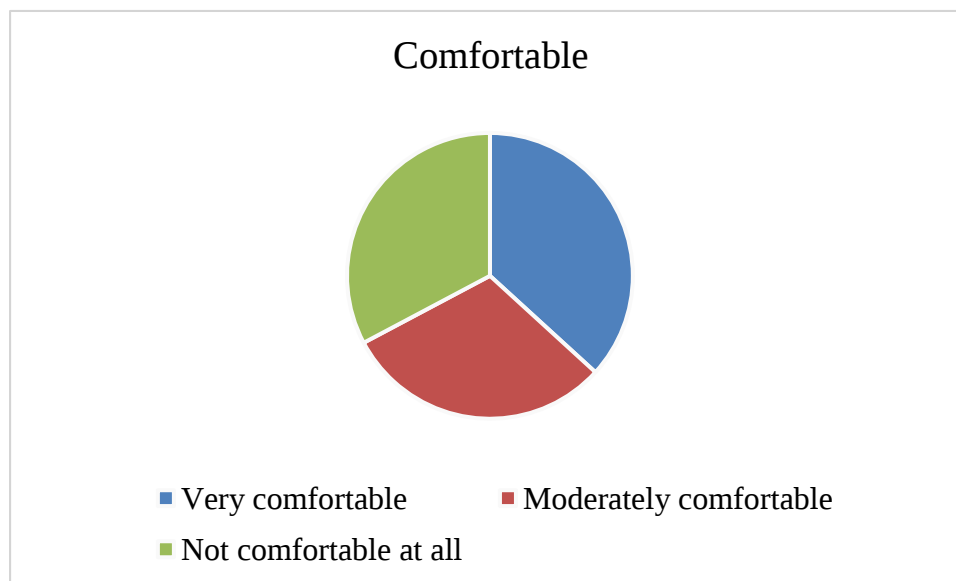


Figure 4.4 : Comfortability of discussion on sex topics with school staff

Source: Field data (2025)

The pie chart indicates that, 128 (37%) of the respondents were very comfortable, 106 (33%) were moderately comfortable and 114 (30%) were not comfortable at all, indicating that majority of the respondents were very comfortable discussing sexual topics with teachers or school staff. This aligns with Weigle (2020), who found that adolescents' willingness to discuss sexual matters is influenced by their perception of authority figures and the level of trust established in educational settings. Similarly, Nieh et al. (2020) suggest that open conversations about sexuality within structured

environments help adolescents develop healthier attitudes toward sex and reduce risky behaviors.

Additionally, Esho et al. (2018) emphasize that schools play a crucial role in providing sex education, but the effectiveness of these discussions depends on the comfort level of students in engaging with teachers. Yu and Chao (2018) further highlight that when students feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics in school, they are more likely to seek guidance, leading to improved decision-making and mental well-being.

First encounter with and motivation to explicit content

The study inquired from the students their age when they first encountered explicit content online.

Results are indicated in Figure 4.5.

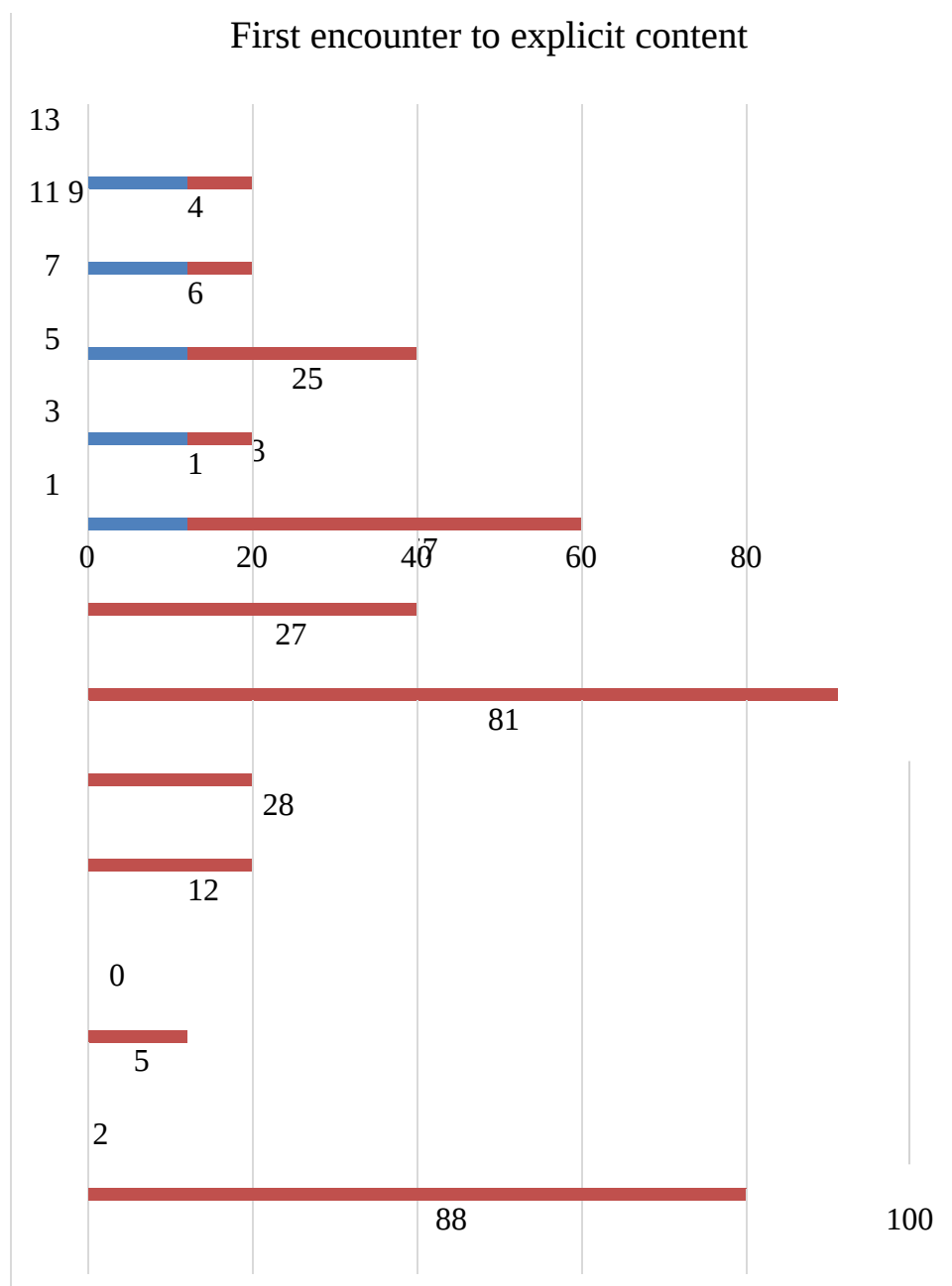


Figure 4.5 : First encounter with and motivation to explicit content

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings indicate that students first encountered explicit content online at different ages, with the highest frequency at age 10 (81 students), followed by age 12 (57 students) and age 9 (28 students). This supports the findings of Zulu and Tembo (2020), who noted the increasing accessibility of online content among young individuals due to widespread internet use. Similarly, Dahl et al. (2018) suggest that early exposure to sexualized media during adolescence can influence cognitive and emotional development, potentially shaping future attitudes toward sexuality.

Additionally, Wood (2021) emphasizes that adolescents between the ages of 10 and 12 are particularly vulnerable to exposure due to their curiosity and developmental changes. Furthermore, Nieh et al. (2020) argue that parental supervision and digital literacy programs can delay exposure and mitigating potential negative effects on adolescent mental health.

The study inquired from the respondents' motivators to view pornographic content. It was indicated that curiosity, lack of other interests, peer pressure, boredom and stress relief motivated adolescents to view pornography. This aligns with Mehmood et al. (2023), who observed that boredom and the pursuit of sexual gratification are primary reasons for engaging with online pornography. Similarly, Chao and Yu (2023) assert that peer relationships play a significant role in shaping adolescent behaviors, including exposure to explicit content.

Additionally, Esho et al. (2018) suggest that adolescents often turn to pornography as a coping mechanism for stress and emotional challenges. Ballester et al. (2022) emphasize that the easy accessibility of pornography through digital platforms increases adolescent engagement. In the same vein, Wood (2021) affirms that

adolescence is a period of heightened sexual curiosity, making exposure to pornographic material more likely as part of exploratory behavior.

The guidance and counselling staff were asked the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents and the extent to which these causes contribute to addiction. The respondents explained,

"...the increasing normalization of sexual content in mainstream media influences adolescents to seek out more explicit material online. Students who frequently watch music videos or movies with sexualized themes are more likely to develop an interest in pornography. Additionally, social media platforms expose students to inappropriate content, making it difficult for them to avoid such material.

Media literacy education is necessary to help students differentiate between reality and the exaggerated portrayals of sexuality in the media. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 1]

"... portrayal of explicit content in movies, music videos and social media has made pornography seem acceptable and even desirable among students. Many students now see sexual content as entertainment rather than something that requires responsibility. Those who regularly consume such media develop a higher tolerance for sexual content, making them more likely to seek out pornography. Social media platforms expose students to inappropriate content, making it difficult for them to avoid it. Unless media literacy is incorporated into the curriculum, students will continue to be influenced by explicit content, further increasing addiction rates." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 6]

Pornographic content risk information

The study analyzed how the respondents were informed about the potential risks and consequences of engaging in explicit content. Results are shown in Figure 4.6.

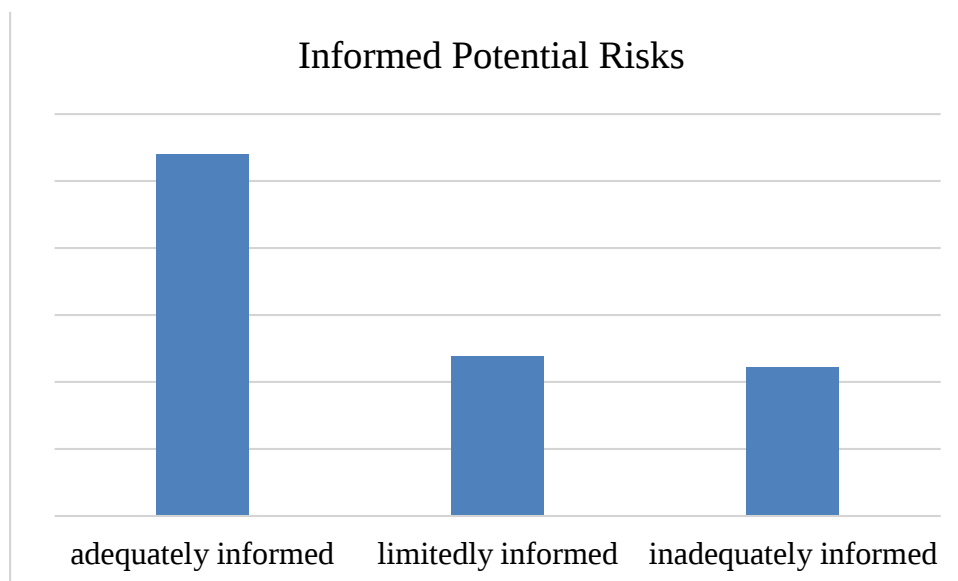


Figure 4.6 : Pornographic content risk information

Source: Field data (2025)

The bar graph shows that, 188(54%) were adequately informed, 83(24%) were limitedly informed and 77(22%) were inadequately informed about the potential risks and consequences of engaging in explicit content. Most of the respondents were adequately informed. This aligns with

Keyho et al. (2019), who found that adolescents' awareness of online risks varies depending on their exposure to digital literacy programs and parental guidance.

Similarly, Majumder et al. (2019) highlight that while some adolescents receive formal education on internet safety and sexual health, gaps remain due to inconsistent implementation across schools. Galindo (2020) emphasizes that knowledge about online risks can help mitigate exposure to harmful content, but adolescents often lack

comprehensive understanding, leading to risky behaviors. Additionally, Patel et al. (2018) argue that structured interventions, such as school-based awareness programs, significantly improve adolescents' ability to make informed decisions regarding online content consumption and sexual behavior.

These findings corroborated guidance and counselling staff interview questions on the causes of pornography addiction among adolescents and the extent to which these causes contribute to addiction. It was indicated,

"Many students use pornography as an escape from their emotional struggles, especially when they feel neglected at home or pressured at school. Adolescents who struggle with low self-esteem or social anxiety may turn to pornography as a coping mechanism. Watching explicit content provides them with temporary pleasure, which can lead to dependency over time. Students who lack support systems are more vulnerable to developing an addiction. Schools and parents should provide emotional support and engage students in extracurricular activities to keep them occupied and engaged. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 2]

"Students who experience stress from academic pressure or family conflicts are more likely to engage in pornography as a coping mechanism. Many students who watch pornography frequently report feeling isolated and emotionally withdrawn. They use pornography as an escape, but over time, it leads to increased loneliness and even depression. The longer students use pornography to cope with stress, the more difficult it becomes for them to break the habit.

Schools need to incorporate mental health support systems to help students

develop healthier coping mechanisms and to provide counseling for those already struggling with addiction." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 5]

Educational programs effectiveness

The study investigated the respondents' rate of effectiveness of existing educational programs on pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. Results are shown in Figure

4.7.

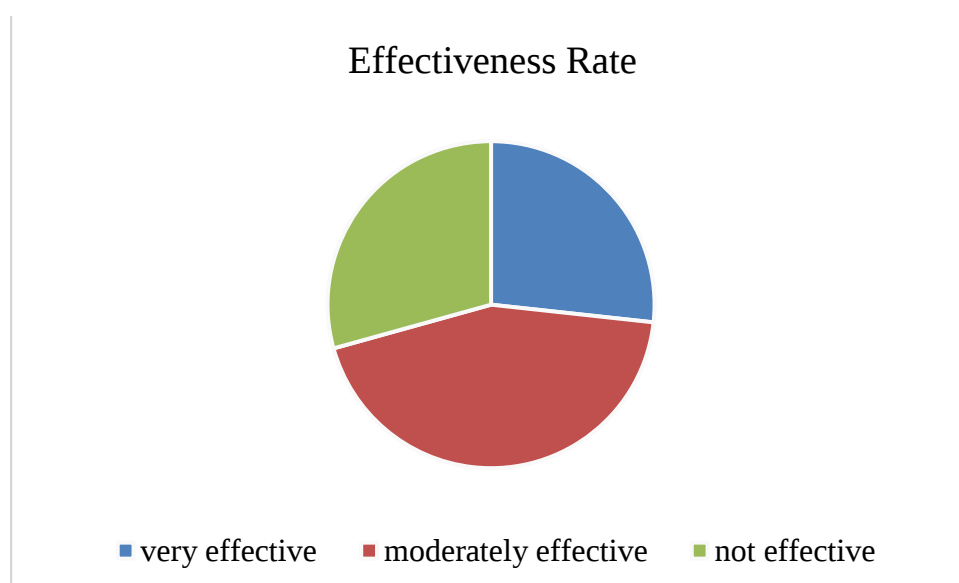


Figure 4.7 : Educational programs effectiveness

Source: Field data (2025)

The pie chart indicates that, 93(27%) were very effective, 153(44%) were moderately effective and 102(29%) were not effective about the rate of effectiveness of existing educational programs on this topic. Majority of the respondents were moderately effective. This aligns with Jenkins (2017), who suggests that the effectiveness of educational interventions depends on how well they address digital literacy and adolescent engagement. Similarly, Chao and Yu (2023) emphasize that structured

programs incorporating interactive and peer-led discussions yield better outcomes in behavior change among adolescents.

Majumder et al. (2019) found that while educational programs can improve awareness, their impact is often limited by inconsistent implementation and lack of follow-up support.

Additionally, Ballester et al. (2022) highlight that interventions that integrate media literacy and critical thinking skills are more effective in reducing risky online behaviors.

Patel et al. (2018) further stress that school-based awareness programs must be complemented by parental involvement and community support to achieve long-term effectiveness in addressing pornography addiction.

Effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health

The study investigated effects of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-county. The questionnaire to students contained closed and open-ended statements and questions.

Effects of pornography on emotional wellbeing and family relationships

The study established whether there were any disruptions in daily activities due to consumption of pornographic content. Respondents were also required to indicate the emotional well-being of pornography addiction to adolescents and the effect of pornography addiction on relationships with family and friends. Results are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Effects of pornography on emotional wellbeing and family relationships

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Disruptions	Yes	289	83
	No	59	17
	Total	348	100
Emotional	very poor	296	85
	poor	48	14
	excellent	4	1
	Total	348	100
Addiction	very poor	276	79
	poor	66	19
	excellent	6	2
	Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Results indicated that 83% of respondents reported experiencing disruptions in their daily activities due to pornography consumption, while 17% stated otherwise. This aligns with Jenkins (2017), who found that pornography addiction negatively affects adolescents' productivity and academic performance by consuming significant amounts of time and attention. Similarly, Chao and Yu (2023) posited that compulsive pornography use disrupts normal routines, reducing engagement in essential activities such as studying, sports, and social interactions.

On the emotional well-being of adolescents addicted to pornography, 85% of respondents rated their emotional state as very poor, 14% as poor and only 1% as excellent. These findings are supported by Majumder et al. (2019), who emphasize that prolonged pornography use leads to increased feelings of guilt, anxiety and depression among adolescents. Additionally, Patel et al. (2018) argue that the emotional distress associated with pornography addiction stems from unrealistic expectations about relationships and intimacy, leading to social withdrawal and self-esteem issues.

On the effects of pornography addiction on relationships with family and friends, 79% of respondents reported a very poor effect, 19% reported a poor effect, and only 2% indicated no negative effect. These findings are consistent with Galindo (2020), who found that excessive pornography consumption leads to strained family relationships, decreased social interaction, and an increased tendency toward isolation. Similarly, Keyho et al. (2019) assert that pornography addiction fosters detachment from meaningful personal relationships, as addicted individuals prioritize online content over real-world connections.

Effect of pornography on level of confidence

The study sought to establish the level of confidence of adolescents with pornography addiction. Results are shown in Figure 4.8.

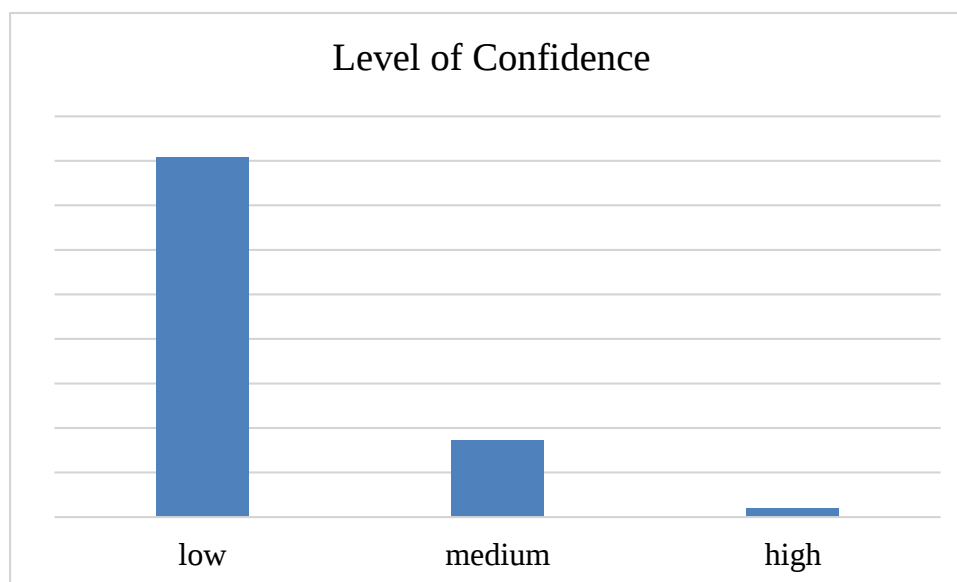


Figure 4.8 : Effect of pornography on level of confidence

Source: Field data (2025)

The bar chart shows that, 281(81%) of the respondents had low confidence, 60 (17%) had medium confidence and 7(2%) had high confidence, revealing that most of the respondents had low confidence. A guidance and counselling staff noted,

"Adolescents addicted to pornography struggle with feelings of shame. I have observed that some students become highly secretive and withdrawn, avoiding interactions with friends and family due to embarrassment. Their addiction also affects their confidence, as they begin to feel inadequate compared to the unrealistic portrayals they see in pornography. Some students develop signs of social anxiety, making it hard for them to engage in normal conversations and build meaningful relationships. The more they consume explicit content, the more they become emotionally disconnected from reality, which can lead to depression." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 5]

This aligns with Estrada et al. (2019), who established that compulsive pornography use is associated with lower self-worth and increased social anxiety among adolescents. Similarly, Hendriks et al. (2020) observed that excessive pornography consumption leads to body image dissatisfaction and unrealistic expectations about relationships. Musmundiroh (2022) found that pornography addiction exacerbates isolation, reducing an individual's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships. Additionally, Vera and Sheridan (2022) affirm that addiction to explicit content changes adolescents' perceptions of intimacy and causes them to withdraw from real-life social interactions and experience high self-doubt.

Okunola et al. (2022) suggest that factors such as personality traits, family environment and access to counseling services can moderate the negative effects of pornography addiction on self-confidence. Moreover, Guggisberg and Holt (2022) argue that adolescents who receive structured guidance on digital literacy and responsible internet use are better equipped to manage their exposure to explicit content, thereby mitigating its effects on their confidence levels.

Effects of pornography on academic performance, sleeping pattern & social activities

The study examined whether there were any changes in academic performance of students addicted to pornographic content, whether there were any disruptions in sleep patterns due to consumption of explicit content and whether the addicts of pornographic content withdraw from social activities. Results are shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.7: Effects of pornography on academic performance, sleeping pattern and social activities

Category	Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Academic	Yes	332	95
	No	16	5
	Total	348	100
Pattern	Yes	336	97
	No	12	3
	Total	348	100
Students	Yes	338	97
	No	10	3
	Total	348	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Results indicated that 332 (95%) of the respondents indicated that their academic performance had been affected due to pornography addiction, while 16 (5%) reported no changes. The respondents indicated that pornography reduces concentration and motivation for studies. It also replaces productive learning time with compulsive viewing, impairing memory retention and problem-solving skills. This aligns with Jenkins (2019), who found that excessive engagement with online pornography leads to decreased concentration and lower academic achievement among adolescents. Similarly, Chao and Li (2021) contend that frequent exposure to explicit content results in cognitive overload, impairing the ability to retain information and perform well in school settings.

On disruptions in sleep patterns due to explicit content consumption, 336 (97%) of respondents confirmed experiencing sleep disturbances, while 12 (3%) did not. Respondents noted that pornography disrupts sleeping patterns as late-night viewing leads to irregular sleep cycles. This is consistent with Patel et al. (2020), who found that late-night consumption of pornography interferes with sleep hygiene, leading to irregular sleep cycles and chronic fatigue, which further impacts mental health and daily productivity. Additionally, Hendriks and Mason (2022) emphasize that disrupted sleep patterns have been associated with increased stress and anxiety levels, reducing overall well-being among adolescents.

Moreover, 338(97%) of the respondents acknowledged withdrawing from social activities due to pornography addiction, while 10(3%) did not. Respondents indicated that pornography promoted isolation, as individuals prioritized online explicit content over real-life interactions. Interviews revealed,

"Pornography increases anxiety and stress levels. Many students who are addicted often feel guilty and ashamed, which leads to low self-esteem and emotional distress. They also experience difficulty concentrating in class because their minds are preoccupied with explicit content. Over time, this addiction can cause feelings of isolation as students withdraw from social interactions out of fear of being judged. Some adolescents also develop unrealistic expectations about relationships, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction in real-life interactions...students struggling with the addiction often exhibit mood swings, irritability, and, in some cases, symptoms of depression." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 7]

Additionally, a guidance and counselling staff said,

"Pornography addiction creates dependency ...adolescents become restless and irritable when they are unable to access explicit content. Their constant exposure to unrealistic sexual imagery distorts their perception of relationships... some students become desensitized to normal social interactions and struggle to form genuine emotional connections ... addicted students experience severe mood swings. This addiction also leads to a decline in motivation, as affected students lose interest in activities they once enjoyed." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 8]

This supports the findings of Estrada et al. (2018), who found that excessive pornography consumption leads to social isolation and withdrawal from family and peer interactions, as individuals prioritize solitary engagement with explicit material.

Similarly, Okunola and Vera (2021) argue that prolonged exposure to pornography is linked to decreased interpersonal skills, making it challenging for adolescents to engage in meaningful social interactions and maintain healthy relationships.

Measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents

The study evaluated measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents. Interviews were conducted with guidance and counseling staff of the selected schools. The interviewees were asked the measures that their schools had put in place to curb pornography addiction among adolescents. They responded,

"The school has implemented strict internet usage policies by restricting access to certain websites and monitoring students' online activities while using school devices. This ensures that students cannot access explicit content while at school, which significantly reduces exposure. Additionally, we have installed firewall

systems that block inappropriate websites and content, making it difficult for students to bypass restrictions. Teachers and administrators are also trained on how to detect signs of pornography addiction, so they can intervene early when necessary.”[Guidance & Counselling Staff 3]

“... incorporated digital literacy and awareness programs in our curriculum, where students are educated on the dangers of pornography addiction and how to use the internet responsibly. These lessons help students understand the risks associated with pornography, including its impact on mental health, relationships, and academic performance. We conduct regular workshops where experts talk to students about safe online behaviors and how to avoid explicit content. Our approach is not just about discouraging pornography use but also equipping students with knowledge to make informed decisions. We have also partnered with psychologists who provide specialized counseling to students who may already be struggling with addiction.” [Guidance & Counselling Staff 5]

“The guidance and counselling department conducts regular sessions where we engage students in discussions about the negative effects of pornography. These sessions provide students with a safe space to express their concerns, ask questions, and seek help without fear of being judged. We take a non-punitive approach, as we understand that punishing students for pornography use only leads to secrecy rather than addressing the root cause. Our team also conducts one-on-one counseling for students who are identified as having an addiction, helping them develop healthier coping mechanisms. We also work with teachers

to identify students who show signs of withdrawal, lack of concentration, or other symptoms linked to pornography addiction." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 6]

"The school works closely with parents by organizing workshops and sensitization programs to educate them on how to monitor and guide their children's internet use at home. We have realized that many parents are unaware of the extent to which their children are exposed to pornography, and some do not even know how to monitor their children's online activities. During these workshops, we train parents on how to set up parental controls, have open discussions about sexuality, and create a home environment where children feel comfortable seeking guidance. We also provide parents with reading materials and online resources to help them stay informed on trends in digital consumption among adolescents." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 7]

"We have introduced extracurricular activities, including sports, arts, and mentorship programs, to keep students engaged and reduce idle time, which often leads to pornography consumption. Many students turn to pornography out of boredom, loneliness, or curiosity, so providing structured activities gives them a healthier alternative. Our school has expanded its sports program, introduced debate clubs, and strengthened mentorship initiatives where older students guide younger ones on responsible internet use. We also encourage students to participate in volunteering activities, which instill discipline and responsibility."

[Guidance & Counselling Staff 8]

Interviewees were asked whether these measures had been effective. They said,

"Yes, restricting internet access at school has significantly reduced cases of students accessing explicit content during school hours. Teachers report fewer cases of students being distracted by pornography-related discussions, and students seem to be more engaged in class." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 1]

"The digital literacy programs have raised awareness among students, and many have reported voluntarily reducing their pornography consumption after learning about its harmful effects. Students who previously saw pornography as harmless entertainment now understand its psychological and social consequences. We have also seen an increase in students seeking help from guidance and counselling offices, which indicates that awareness is creating a safe space for discussions." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 2]

"The guidance and counselling sessions have been effective in providing support to students struggling with addiction. Some students now seek help when they feel overwhelmed rather than resorting to pornography. We have noticed that students who attend counseling sessions show improvement in their emotional well-being and academic performance." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 4]

"Parental involvement has made a big difference. Parents who attend our workshops become more proactive in monitoring and guiding their children's internet use, reducing exposure to pornography at home. Students with supportive parents tend to have better control over their digital habits compared to those whose parents are uninvolved." [Guidance & Counselling Staff 5]

"Extracurricular activities have provided a healthy distraction for students. Those who actively participate in sports and creative clubs are less likely to engage in

pornography, as they have structured activities keeping them busy. Teachers have reported improved student engagement, with many students showing higher levels of discipline." [Guidance

& Counselling Staff 6]

The study inquired from the guidance and counselling staff the measures that could be used to curb pornography addiction among adolescents. The staff explained,

"Schools should implement more advanced digital monitoring systems to track students' online activities and block access to explicit content across all school-related devices. Current restrictions, such as basic website blocking, are useful but not foolproof, as students often find ways to bypass them using VPNs or proxy servers. A more advanced system with AI-powered monitoring could detect inappropriate searches, sending alerts to administrators for immediate intervention. Schools should also integrate real-time content filtering that adapts to new threats, ensuring that students cannot access explicit material even when new sites emerge... digital monitoring should extend beyond just blocking access and include awareness programs that educate students on safe and responsible internet use. Teachers and IT staff must also be trained to manage and enforce digital policies effectively. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 1]

"Parents and teachers should have open conversations with students about sexuality and online safety instead of avoiding the topic. When discussions about sex are considered taboo, adolescents often turn to unreliable sources, such as pornography, to satisfy their curiosity. Honest conversations equip young people

with accurate knowledge about human relationships, reducing the temptation to seek explicit content online. Schools should incorporate sex education into their curriculum, ensuring that students receive ageappropriate guidance from trained educators. Parents, on the other hand, need to create a home environment where children feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics without fear of judgment or punishment. Instead of relying solely on schools to address these issues, parents should take an active role in guiding their children's understanding of relationships and media influence...involve psychologists or health professionals in discussions on sexuality..."[Guidance & Counselling Staff 2]

"More peer-led intervention programs should be introduced, where students mentor each other and discuss the dangers of pornography addiction in a relatable manner. Adolescents often respond better to advice and guidance from their peers than from authority figures, as they find them more relatable and approachable. Schools should establish peer education groups that provide a safe space for students to openly discuss the challenges associated with pornography use. These programs could be facilitated through mentorship initiatives, group discussions, or even social media campaigns that raise awareness in an engaging way. Peer-led initiatives would also help remove the stigma around pornography addiction, making it easier for affected students to seek help...students trained in digital literacy and responsible internet use can influence their peers to adopt healthier online behaviors. Teachers and counselors should oversee these programs to ensure they provide accurate information and remain productive. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 3]

"Counseling services should be strengthened by employing more trained professionals who specialize in handling digital addictions among adolescents. Many schools lack enough counselors to handle the growing concerns related to pornography addiction, leaving affected students without the necessary support. Digital addiction is a complex issue that requires specialized intervention, as it often stems from deeper emotional or psychological challenges. Schools should prioritize hiring counselors who are trained in adolescent psychology, digital media influence, and addiction recovery strategies. Additionally, counseling sessions should be made more accessible by allowing students to seek help confidentially without fear of stigma. Schools should also consider integrating mental health awareness programs into their curriculum to help students recognize unhealthy behaviors and seek help early. Partnerships with external organizations or online therapy platforms could also provide additional support where in-school resources are limited. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 4]

"Religious and community organizations should collaborate with schools to promote positive values and provide mentorship programs that discourage exposure to harmful content. Faith-based organizations and community leaders play a significant role in shaping the moral and ethical development of young people. Community-based initiatives, such as youth support groups, workshops, and mentorship programs, can offer adolescents a sense of belonging and guidance outside the school environment. Additionally, faith-based teachings on self-control and ethical decision-making can reinforce the lessons taught in schools about responsible internet use. Collaboration between schools and

community organizations can also help provide alternative activities that engage adolescents in positive ways, reducing idle time that might otherwise be spent consuming explicit content. These partnerships should focus on education rather than punishment, helping young people understand the long-term impact of their digital choices. "[Guidance & Counselling Staff 7]

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of results of the research and makes conclusions. The chapter then proposes recommendations and provides areas for further research.

Summary of findings

This section provides a summary of results as per the research objectives that is to: establish the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County, Kenya; assess the effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County and evaluate measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County.

Causes of pornography addiction in adolescents

The study found that easy access to the internet, lack of parental control, peer influence and emotional distress were significant causes of pornography addiction among adolescents. Many students owned smartphones and accessed the internet freely. Additionally, peer pressure was a major factor and there was sharing or discussing pornographic content with friends. Emotional distress, including stress and boredom, was also a major motivator for viewing pornography, as students sought temporary relief from their struggles. Most parents and guardians were aware of their children's online activities but were often ineffective in preventing exposure to explicit content.

Effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health

The study established that pornography addiction had significant negative effects on adolescents' mental health. Daily activities were disrupted due to pornography consumption. Students rated their emotional well-being as very poor, with many experiencing anxiety, low self-esteem and withdrawal from social interactions. Pornography addiction had a very poor effect, leading to strained relationships and social isolation. Pornography caused low confidence levels and negatively affected academic performance. Pornography caused sleep disturbances, and most students withdrew from social activities due to excessive pornography consumption.

Measures to curb pornography addiction in adolescents

The study found that schools had implemented several measures to curb pornography addiction among adolescents. These included restricting internet access, incorporating digital literacy programs, and providing counseling services. Schools also worked with parents by organizing sensitization workshops on monitoring and guiding children's online activities. Additionally, extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, and mentorship programs were introduced to keep students engaged. Existing educational programs on pornography addiction were moderately effective.

Conclusions

The study concludes that pornography addiction among adolescents in Kajiado North SubCounty is primarily driven by easy internet access, lack of parental control, peer influence and emotional distress. The absence of strict digital regulations, combined with social and psychological factors, contributes to high rates of pornography consumption. Many adolescents access explicit content out of curiosity, peer pressure, or

as a coping mechanism for stress and boredom. Additionally, the study highlights that discussions about pornography between adolescents and their parents are limited, leaving students to rely on friends and online sources for information.

Pornography addiction significantly affects adolescents' mental health, leading to emotional distress, social withdrawal, and poor academic performance. The majority of respondents reported experiencing disruptions in their daily activities, with many struggling with guilt, low self-esteem, and relationship problems. Additionally, pornography addiction was linked to a decline in school performance, as most respondents indicated difficulties concentrating and retaining information. The study also found that pornography disrupts sleep patterns, contributing to fatigue, stress, and poor mental well-being.

While schools have taken steps to curb pornography addiction through internet restrictions, counseling, and digital literacy programs, the effectiveness of these measures varies. Although some students benefit from these interventions, a significant number still struggle with addiction due to insufficient parental involvement, lack of peer-led interventions, and inadequate monitoring of internet use. The study highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach that includes school-based education, community awareness programs, and stricter digital monitoring policies to effectively address pornography addiction among adolescents.

Recommendations

This study recommends that schools should incorporate structured digital literacy programs that educate students on safe internet use. Teachers and IT staff should also receive training on how to detect and intervene when students exhibit signs of addiction.

A balance should be maintained between monitoring and privacy to ensure that students feel supported rather than policed.

Parents and guardians should educate adolescents about sexuality and responsible internet use. Open discussions about sex and digital safety should be encouraged to prevent students from relying on pornography as a source of information. Schools should organize regular parental workshops on digital safety, parental controls and effective communication strategies. Additionally, psychologists and health professionals should be involved in these discussions to provide a scientific and non-judgmental perspective on the impact of pornography on adolescent development.

Schools should promote peer-led intervention programs and community-based mentorship initiatives should be established. Adolescents often relate better to their peers, making peer education an effective tool in raising awareness. Schools should train student mentors who can lead discussions on pornography addiction and digital responsibility. Additionally, religious and community organizations should collaborate with schools to provide mentorship and positive value-based education.

Areas for further research

This study focused on selected secondary schools in Kajiado north sub-county. Further studies could include all schools in the subcounty and the county to better understand how pornography addiction affects adolescents' mental health. The study did not statistically find the relationship between various factors and pornography addiction. Further studies should test hypothesis to assess the relationship between variables. This study only comprised students and guidance and counselling staff; further research could incorporate other stakeholders, especially parents. This would give a better understanding

of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health. Further studies could incorporate focus group discussions to get more information on pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Respondent,

My name is Veronicah Kibe. I am a Master's degree student at PAC University, conducting a study titled: *effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health-a case of selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County, Kenya*. The study seeks to: establish the causes of pornography addiction, effects of pornography addiction and measures to curb pornography addiction to adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County. The study is important on development of policies to curb pornography addiction to adolescents. I seek your consent for your child to be a participant in the study. If you have any questions or would like clarity, kindly don't hesitate to ask. Kindy note that this is an academic exercise and the information obtained with be treated anonymously and with confidentiality.

If you agree that your child be a participant in the study, please fill the attached form below:

Name.....Signature..... Date.....

Thank you.

Veronicah Kibe

MACP/19282/0/21

APPENDIX II: STUDENTS ASSENT FORM

My name is Veronicah Kibe. I am a Master's degree student at PAC university, conducting a study titled: *effect of pornography addiction on adolescents' mental health-a case of selected secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County, Kenya*. The study is important on development of policies to curb pornography addiction to adolescents. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in the study. This is an academic exercise and you are assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

If you agree to be a participant in the study, please fill as below:

Name.....Signature..... Date.....

Thank you.

Veronicah Kibe

MACP/19282/0/21

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADOLESCENTS

Section A: Background information

In the following section indicate using a tick (✓) your choice in the appropriate categories.

1. What is your gender?

Male ()

Female ()

2. How old are you?

13-14 ()

15-16 ()

17-18 ()

Above 18 years ()

3. In which form are you?

Form 1 ()

Form 2 ()

Form 3 ()

Form 4 ()

4. Where do you live?

Urban ()

Rural ()

Section B: Causes of pornography addiction to adolescents

5. How often do you access the internet?

- i. Rarely ()
- ii. Occasionally ()
- iii. Frequently ()

6. How often do you access online content at home?

- i. Rarely ()
- ii. Occasionally ()
- iii. Frequently ()

7. Are your parents/guardians aware of your online activities?

i. Yes ()

ii. No ()

8. How would you describe the level of communication with your parents/guardians on
pornographic content exposure?

i. Frequent ()

ii. Limited ()

iii. Rarely ()

iv. discussed ()

9. Do your friends share or discuss pornographic content with you?

i. Yes ii. No

10. How much do you feel influenced by your peers in terms of accessing pornographic content?

i. Not at all ()

ii. Somewhat ()

iii. Very much ()

11. Have you received any form of sex education in school?

i. Yes ()

ii. No ()

12. How comfortable do you feel discussing sexual topics with teachers or school staff?

i. Very comfortable ()

ii. Moderately comfortable ()

iii. Not comfortable at all ()

13. At what age did you first encounter explicit content online

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14. What motivates an individual to view pornographic content? (Select all that apply)

i. Curiosity

ii. Peer pressure

iii. Boredom

iv. Stress relief

v. Lack of other interests

15. How are you informed about the potential risks and consequences of engaging in explicit content?

i. Adequately informed

ii. Limitedly informed

iii. Inadequately informed

16. How would you rate the effectiveness of existing educational programs on this topic?

i. Very effective

ii. Moderately effective

iii. Not effective

Section C: Effects of pornography addiction to adolescents' mental health

17. Are there any disruptions in daily activities due to consumption of pornographic content?

i. Yes

ii. No.

If yes, please describe these disruptions.

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18. In your opinion, what is the emotional well-being of pornography addiction to

- i. Very poor
- ii. Poor
- iii. Excellent

19. What is the effect of pornography addiction on relationships with family and friends?

- i. Low
- ii. Medium
- iii. High

20. What is the level of confidence of adolescents with pornography addiction?

- i. Low
- ii. Medium
- iii. High

21. Are there any changes in academic performance of students addicted to

pornographic content?

22. i. Yes

iii. No.

If yes, kindly elaborate

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.....

22. Are there disruptions in sleep patterns due to consumption of explicit content?

i. Yes

ii. No. If yes, please describe these disruptions.

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23. Do the addicts of pornographic content withdraw from social activities?

i. Yes

ii. No. If yes, please expound

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**APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING STAFF**

- i. What are the causes of pornography addiction to adolescents?
- ii. What is the extent of these causes to pornography addiction among adolescents?
- iii. How does pornography addiction affect adolescents' mental health?
- iv. What measures has the school put in place to curb pornography addiction among adolescents?
- v. Have these measures been effective? If yes, how?
- vi. In your opinion, what measures could be used to curb pornography addiction among adolescents?

APPENDIX V: WORKPLAN

Activity/Month	Feb- 24	Mar- 24	Apr- 24	May- 24	Jun- 24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Topic Identification							
Writing of Proposal							
Proposal Presentation							
Data Collection							
Data Analysis							
Submission of project Report							

APPENDIX VI : ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item Description	Cost in Kshs
Stationery	8,450.00
Photocopying Services	17,535.00
Binding	14,820.00
Travel Costs	47,500.00
Researcher's subsistence	108,470.00
Data Analysis	10,000.00
Total	206,775.00