EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES, ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUALITY, AND ADOLESCENT PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION

by

Cassandra Hesse

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the dissertation entitled:

**Exploring the Relationship Between Parenting Styles, Attitudes Towards Sexuality, and Adolescent Pornography Consumption**

submitted by **Cassandra Lynne Hesse** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts**
in **Human Development, Learning, and Culture**

**Examing Committee:**

__________________________  
Jennifer Shapka  
Supervisor

__________________________  
Laurie Ford  
Supervisory Committee Member

__________________________  
Danielle Law  
Supervisory Committee Member
Abstract

The objective of the current study was to explore parents’ perceptions about the influence of pornography consumption on adolescent sexual development. Additional factors that may impact parents’ perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption were also examined, including parenting style, age, gender, ethnicity, education level, religious beliefs, and beliefs about sex and sexuality. Data was collected from 500 participants who had adolescents between the ages of 13-18 years, through an online survey. Findings indicated that parents who practice more authoritative child rearing styles perceive pornography to be more harmful for their adolescent(s). As well, the strength of the relationship between authoritative parenting, and the belief’s that pornography is harmful for adolescents changed as a function of permissiveness. Conversely, parents who exercise more authoritarian parenting styles believe pornography to be less harmful for adolescents. In addition, as permissive attitudes increased for our authoritarian parents, beliefs that pornography is harmful for adolescents decreased. Our results imply that permissive sexual attitudes, and various predictors such as age, gender, ethnicity are important moderators of the association between parenting styles and perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption.
Lay Summary

Research examining parents’ perceptions about their adolescent viewing pornography is often scarce, or at most, anecdotal. Since pornography is becoming a widely used phenomenon among adolescents, it’s imperative we explore how parents’ beliefs, attitudes, and child rearing styles influence how they feel about their children using pornography. Therefore, this study sought to explore how factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual attitudes and child rearing styles influence beliefs about adolescent pornography consumption. Findings from this study indicate that parents who endorse more authoritative parenting styles believe pornography to be harmful for adolescents. Conversely, parents who practice more authoritarian style parenting believe pornography to be less harmful for adolescents. Factors such as sexual believes, religion, age of adolescent, and gender also play a significant role in determining parent’s beliefs about the harmful effects of pornography.
Preface

This document is a master’s thesis for the author, Cassandra Lynne Hesse, in the program: Human Development, Learning, and Culture, in the department of Education and Counseling Psychology and Special Education under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Shapka. It is original, unpublished, independent work by the author. All research and data presented as part of this thesis was approved by The University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board [certificate #H19-00489].
Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. iii
Lay Summary .......................................................................................................................... iv
Preface ........................................................................................................................................ v
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. vi
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... ix
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................ x
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................. xi
Dedication ............................................................................................................................... xii

Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of the Literature ..................................................... 1
  1.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Adolescent Pornography Consumption ........................................................................ 3
  1.3 Parental Influence and Adolescent Sexuality ............................................................... 6
    1.3.1 Parenting Styles ..................................................................................................... 8
    1.3.2 Differences by Ethnicity ....................................................................................... 10
    1.3.3 Differences by Religiosity/Conservatism ............................................................... 12
    1.3.4 Differences by Gender and Age ...........................................................................13
  1.4 Parent Perceptions of Adolescent Sexual Activity ..................................................... 14
  1.5 The Current Study ....................................................................................................... 16

Chapter 2: Methodology .................................................................................................... 17
  2.1 Participants ................................................................................................................... 17
  2.2 Design and Procedure ................................................................................................. 17
2.2.1 Social Media Data Collection ................................................................. 17
2.2.2 Mechanical Turk .................................................................................... 18
2.2.3 Independent Samples T-Tests Comparing Social Media and Mechanical Turk Participants ........................................................................................................ 19
2.2.4 Completing the Questionnaire ................................................................ 20
2.3 Measures .................................................................................................... 23
2.3.1 Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012) .................. 23
2.3.2 The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS; Hendrick et al. 2006) .......... 23
2.3.3 Modified Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire (MATEQ; Lottes, Weinberg, & Weller, 1993) .......................................................................................... 24
2.3.4 Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version (PSDQ; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart 2001). .................................................................................. 25

Chapter 3: Results........................................................................................ 28
3.1 Correlations .................................................................................................. 28
3.2 Regression Analyses ................................................................................. 31
3.2.1 Research Question 1 and 2: Parenting Styles and Attitudes Towards Pornography .............................................................................................................. 31
3.2.2 Research Question 3: Interaction Effects ............................................ 32

Chapter 4: Discussion....................................................................................... 39
4.1 Authoritative and Authoritarian Style Parenting ..................................... 39
4.2 Permissiveness Interaction......................................................................... 45

Chapter 5: Conclusion....................................................................................... 48
5.1 Strengths, Limitations, & Future Directions ............................................ 48
5.2 Significance & Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 51

References ........................................................................................................................................ 53

Appendices ...................................................................................................................................... 69

Appendix A Recruitment Message Online .......................................................................................... 69
Appendix B Informed Consent Form ..................................................................................................... 70
Appendix C Participant Thank you Letter ............................................................................................ 73
Appendix D Demographic Questionnaire ............................................................................................ 74
Appendix E Centrality of Religiosity Scale .......................................................................................... 75
Appendix F Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale ............................................................................................. 76
Appendix G Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Scale ......................................................................... 77
Appendix H Manipulation Check ........................................................................................................ 78
Appendix I Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire ................................................................. 79
List of Tables

Table 2.1 Distribution of demographic characteristics split by gender ................................................. 22
Table 2.2 Descriptive Statistics for Measures .......................................................................................... 27
Table 3.1 Correlations among Dependent, Covariates, and Predictor Variables .......................... 30
Table 3.2 Summary of hierarchal regression analysis for variables predicting parents’ perceptions about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption ........................................ 34
Table 3.3 Summary of hierarchal regression analysis for variables predicting parents’ perceptions about the positive effects of adolescent pornography consumption ........................................ 35
Table 3.4 Summary of Hierarchal Regression Analysis Examining the Relationships between Parenting Styles and all Subscales of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale on the Harmful Subscale of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire ......................................................... 36
List of Figures

Figure 1 The Relationship Between Authoritarian Parenting Style and the Perceptions of the Harmful Effects of Pornography, as a Function of Permissiveness ........................................... 37

Figure 2 The Relationship Between Authoritative Parenting Style and the Perceptions of the Harmful Effects of Pornography, as a Function of Permissiveness ........................................... 38
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my best friend Erica Minisini who experienced extremely tough years as a teenager, and therefore sought to understand the complexities of how parenting styles effect adolescent development. Your loving spirit, and praiseworthy resilience is admirable.
Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of the Literature

1.1 Introduction

The recent propagation of Internet-enabled technology has drastically changed the way adolescents encounter and consume pornographic material (Owens, Behun, Manning & Reid, 2012). Indeed, research has shown that over 50% of adolescents actively seek out pornographic material online (Brown-Courville & Rojas, 2009), and that by age thirteen, two-thirds of adolescents have already had some kind of contact with pornographic representations (Wolak et al., 2007; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006a; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Conseil Superieur de l’audiovisual, 2004; Icon Kids and Youth, 2009; Liau et al., 2008; Braun-Corville & Rojas, 2009). In recent years, the ease of accessibility, availability, and approachability of online pornography has raised concerns over its effect on adolescents (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005; Weber, Quiring & Daschmann, 2012). Unfortunately, insight into the ways in which adolescents perceive and consume pornographic material remains vastly understudied (Hald and Malamuth 2008; Lo and Wei 2005; Malamuth and Huppin 2005; Peter and Valkenburg 2006, 2010).

In addition to lacking elucidatory data, very few studies have addressed parents’ attitudes, values, and childrearing styles in relation to adolescent’s consumption of pornography. This is regardless of research highlighting the fact that parents play a pivotal role in the promotion of their children’s reproductive health (Rothman, Paruk, Espensen, Temple & Adams, 2017; Jankovic, Malatestinic & Striehl, 2013). In fact, the small body of research that does exist when looking at parent-child relationship in conjunction with adolescent sexuality is based on adolescents observations about their parents perceptions about their pornography use, not the
actual views of the parents themselves (Overbeek, Van De Bongardt & Baams, 2018; Parkes, Wight, Hunta, Henderson, & Sargent, 2013; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Sorbring & Lundin, 2012). For example, in a study on parents, peers, and pornography, Weber, Quiring and Daschmann (2012) examined the use of pornography relative to adolescent perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. Although this study emphasized the notion that adolescents who felt less independent in their environment used pornography more frequently, it failed to address the attitudes and values of the parents themselves, and how they felt pornography is influencing their adolescent(s). Furthermore, a study that looked at parenting styles around internet use discovered that parental engagement was an important protective factor and was associated with less frequent pornography use and lower acceptance of sexual permissiveness (Tomic, Buric & Stulhofer, 2018). Unfortunately, this study did not capture the attitudes and values held by parents about adolescent pornography consumption, which leaves a gap in our understanding of how parental attitudes might influence this relationship.

Given that the relationship between parental insight and attitudes towards online pornography use is relatively unexplored, there remains a substantial lack of knowledge concerning the role of the parent in adolescent online pornography use. The objective of the current study was to begin to address this. More specifically, the overarching objective of this study was to explore whether parenting style, and attitudes and beliefs about sex and sexuality, are related to views about adolescent pornography consumption. Importantly, this work used a representative sample of parents in order to avoid previous limitations regarding sampling bias and adolescent recall. The following sections provide an overview of the current state of the literature on adolescent pornography consumption, the relationship between parental influence,
as well as adolescent sexuality and parenting style, with particular attention concerning the gap in the literature on parents’ attitudes towards adolescent online pornography use.

1.2 Adolescent Pornography Consumption

Since the birth of the Internet, pornography use has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon, with cross sectional surveys suggesting that more than 88% of male and 44% of females have used pornography in the last 12 months (Hald, Kuyper, Adam, & de Wit, 2013). This coincides with research examining Croatian adolescents who have reported being exposed to pornography well before the age of 15 (Sinkovic, Stulhofer, & Bozic, 2013). Given that adolescent development can largely be characterized by reproductive and sexual development (both physically and psychologically), adolescent fascination with pornography consumption is not a new phenomenon (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). Indeed, when the effects of pornography exposure are discussed, opponents of pornography often suggest that since adolescence is such a pivotal stage of sexual growth, youngsters may misinterpret the unrealistic sexual ideals perpetuated in pornography because their sexual identities are still developing (Hesse, & Pedersen 2017; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Stulhofer, Busko, & Schmidt, 2012).

Some evidence in the literature supports this and has shown that exposure to pornography leads to greater acceptance of sexual permissiveness, and in turn, leads to a greater likelihood of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (Lo & Wei, 2005). According to Wingwood et al. (2001), participants who had been exposed to pornography, X-rated films, and explicit recordings had a higher chance of testing positive for chlamydia infection and were more likely to endorse high risk sexual behaviours, having greater numbers of sexual partners and lower age of sexual intercourse. Furthermore, some studies have established that exposure to violent pornography contributed to men’s aggressive behaviour against women (Donnerstein et al.1987;
Malamuth et al., 2000; Zillmann, 1998; Zillmann and Bryant, 1989). For example, a study examining pornography consumption in everyday life found that men who were high consumers of pornography, and favoured “hardcore” violent videos and images, were more likely than others to report that they would sexually harass a woman if they could get away with it (Malamuth et al., 2000). However, the study did note that perhaps “men who are relatively high risk for sexual aggression are more likely to be attracted to and aroused by sexually violent media…and may be more likely to be influenced by them” (Malamuth et al., 2000, p. 55).

Therefore, it’s important to note that that much of the research in this area has been cross-sectional, and conducted with adults, so we cannot make causal claims, nor extrapolate these findings to an adolescent population (Flood, 2009). Indeed, proponents of pornography refute such findings on the basis of methodological flaws and inherent bias (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017; Mulya & Hald, 2014), and further, argue that pornography plays a constructive role in various aspects of young people’s sexual health.

More specifically, in a recent study examining the self-perceived effects of pornography consumption on young people’s sexual knowledge and well-being, participants reported greater positive effects of sexually explicit material than negative effects (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). Both male and female participants reported that sexually explicit material helped boost their sexual knowledge and repertoire, improved their attitudes towards sex and the opposite gender, and increased their overall quality of life (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). These findings support those of Hald and Malamuth (2006), who found that when assessing participants use of “hardcore” pornography consumption in a sample of men and women age 18-30, both genders reported moderate positive effects, and little, if any, negative effects. Moreover, when assessing exposure for older individuals, Hald and Malamuth (2008) found that pornography consumption enriched
one’s sexual intercourse in a positive fashion, and increased participants overall quality of life. Finally, researchers have reported that exposure to explicit material provided support to patients who were suffering from erectile difficulties, successfully treated erectile dysfunctions in men, and therefore increased sexual and relationship satisfaction (Marokoff & Heimann, 1980; Maddox et al., 2011; Manning et al., 2006). Moreover, in further support of the positive effects of pornography consumption, research has shown that even within cultures that holds antipornographic legislation, adults reported advantageous and constructive effects resulting from viewing pornography (Mulya & Hald, 2014).

Although much of the work looking at the link between sexual outcomes and pornography consumption has been with adults, Martynuk & Stulhofer (2018) conducted a longitudinal analysis exploring the relationship between pornography use and sexual permissiveness in female and male adolescents. Over 18-24 months, in two large samples of predominantly religious Croatian adolescents, Martynuk and Stulhofer (2018) explored adolescent sexual socialization. Using a sexual permissiveness scale and frequency of pornography use measure, they observed no significant pathway connecting adolescent pornography use to sexual permissiveness. In fact, they discovered no significant correlations between consumption and permissiveness at all. Generalization of these findings need to be considered with caution. It is entirely possible that adolescent pornography consumption did not predict sexual permissiveness on the bases of societal norms, but rather the socio-religious context of growing up in Croatia (Martynuk & Stulhofer, 2018). However, Martynuk and Stulhofer’s findings are supported by other research that suggests that pornography consumption among adolescents reduces misogyny, aggression, and violence against women (Kohut et al., 2018). Indeed, when looking at sexuality specifically, researchers have concluded that
adolescents may acquire knowledge and attitudes about sex, as well as an array of sexual
behaviours similar to that of the sexual media they are consuming (Hald, Seman, & Linz, 2014).
Thus, despite the controversial evidence that pornography consumption among adolescents is
associated with positive consequences, its precise influence remains a matter of much debate.
Therefore, this studies aim is to begin to address the gap within the literature regarding
perspectives relating to adolescent pornography consumption.

1.3 Parental Influence and Adolescent Sexuality

According to socialization theory, parents and children actively participate in establishing
a line of communication through the back and forth process of questioning and answering
(Bandura, 1986, 2006; Hoffman, 2002; Kuczynski & Parkin, 2007). Through this facet of the
socialization process, parents and children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, and
expectations that allow them to become increasingly integrated into new social relationships
(Benbassat & Priel, 2012; Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). Regarding the relationship
between adolescent sexuality and parental influence, which is the focus of this work, parental
attitudes towards sexuality and their values, beliefs and expectations they hold for their children
has been shown to impact adolescent sexual activity (Sorbring, Hallberg, Bohlin & Skoog, 2015;
de Graaf, Vanwesenbeeck, Meijer, Woertman, & Meeus, 2009; Meschke, Bartholomae, and
Zentall 2002). Indeed, there are several theoretical perspectives in the field of psychology that
acknowledge the direct influence caregivers have in shaping their child’s social, emotional, and
cognitive development (Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). Bronfenbrenner (1979; Super
& Harkness, 1999) for example, discusses the bidirectional relationship between the parent and
child, bringing to light the integral part parenting styles play on the developing microsystem.
Similarly, another theory that provides insight into the parent/adolescent relationship is Bandura's social cognitive theory, which speculates that through modelling, we develop an understanding of appropriate expected behaviours by observing people to whom we would consider a role model (Bandura, 1977). This is most effective when the role model reflects similar characteristics as the observer, and when a reward is involved (Bandura, 1994). This theory coincides nicely with the evidence suggesting that there is a clear correlation between parent and adolescent attachment style, and their attitudes and behaviours to the content and conditions of sexuality (Furman & Simon, 1999).

More specifically, adolescent attachment style, which is formed in early infancy and childhood, is based upon the work of John Bowlby (1969a), who examined the disruption of affectional bonds between the parent and child, and its effects on behaviour. He argues that individuals are biologically driven to pursue relationships that create security, and the most critical of attachment relationships is that between a primary caregiver (typically the mother) and infant. With a series of reciprocal relationships between the mother an infant, internal workings of oneself is formed, which in turn, become the guiding force in future intimate relationships (Bretherton, 1990). It has been suggested that individuals who have ‘secure,’ ‘avoidant,’ or anxious-ambivalent’ attachment styles to their parents, often refer to their current romantic relationship using similar patterns (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). For example, data examining individuals who participate in sexual activity outside of their committed romantic relationship tend to fall under the category of ‘avoidant”, whereas individuals who are satisfied in their current romantic relationship, fall under the category of ‘secure’ (Furman & Simon, 1999).

Previous literature has provided insight regarding the parent/child relationship and adolescent
sexuality. However, the current study will begin to fill the gap in our understanding concerning parents’ perceptions of adolescent pornography consumption.

1.3.1 Parenting Styles

Similarly, and more pertinent to the current study, the works of Baumrind (1978, 1991, 1996) and Schaefer (1965) have found empirical evidence linking parenting styles and children’s internet use (Chou & Lee, 2017; Eijnden, Spijkerman, Vermulst, Rooij, & Engels, 2010; Tur-Porcar, 2017). Indeed, scholars recognize four major parenting styles which can bring about different reactions in children: Authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive, and emphasizes the impact each approach has on a child’s behaviour (Baumrind, 1978, 1991, 1996). For example, authoritative parenting is extensively considered as the most beneficial parenting style for children because authoritative parents typically approach child rearing with high expectations and control, tempered by warmth, support, and communication. It is well known that this type of parenting fosters the most optimal environment for healthy development and is often cited in Western literature as providing the most suitable approach for a developing adolescent (Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). Within the domain of authoritative parenting, there are three distinct constructs: behavioral control/monitoring, psychological control, and warmth and support (Buhi & Goodson, 2007; Kincaid, Jones, Cuellar & Gonzalez, 2011; Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013; Miller, Benson, & Galbraith, 2001). The behavioral control/monitoring construct is comprised of playing an active part in the child whereabouts, activities, plans and events by paying particular attention to their behaviours, and monitoring them accordingly (Li, Feigelman, & Stanton, 2000; Li, Stanton, & Feigelman, 2000; Rai, et al., 2003; Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). Whereas, psychological control utilizes appropriate, strategic, psychologically manipulating tactics, in order to exert control over
the well-being of the adolescent and encourage competent decision-making skills and self-regulation (Cummings, Davies, & Campbell, 2000; Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). As such, the warmth and support paradigm of authoritative parenting compliments both the behavioral control, and the psychological control, by maintaining a relationship that fuels positive outcomes. Praising, hugging, encouraging, and loving are a few examples of behaviours authoritative parents exert (Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). Indeed, when examining the research on adolescent risky sexual behaviours and parenting styles, control in conjunction with warmth and support encourage ethical morals that guide children in making the right decisions (Coley, Votruba-Drzal, & Schindler, 2009).

Conversely, authoritarian parenting is characterized by high expectations and control, and little support or warmth. Authoritarian parents restrict open dialogue between the parent and child and expect the child to follow a strict set of rules and expectations with no exceptions. If rules are broken, authoritarian parents typically rely on punishment in order to mandate compliance in the future. Neglectful parenting is arguably the most harmful styles of parenting that can be used on a child and typically involves ignoring their chosen role as a parent, and letting the child be, with little warmth and little control. Lastly, permissive parenting or indulgent parenting is responsive but not demanding. These parents tend to adhere to the needs of the child but are lenient to avoid confrontation. Although these parents are nurturing and loving, the lack of structure can cause children to develop little self-discipline or self-control. (Chou & Lee, 2017; Tur-Porcar, Mestre, & Llorca, 2015, 2017). As such, researchers have discovered relationships between emotional warmth and family internet use (Chou & Lee, 2017; Eijnden, Spijkerman, Vermulst, Rooij, & Engels, 2010; Tur-Porcar, 2017), compulsive internet use and neglecting parenting (Chou & Lee, 2017; Eastín et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2010; Tur-Porcar,
2017) and authoritarian parenting and internet addiction (Tur-Porcar, 2017; Ko et al., 2015). Moreover, Sorbring & Lundin (2012) revealed that parental attitudes and rules may in fact contribute to young people’s sexual activities online.

Based on the theoretical work outlined above, it is evident that when it comes to adolescent sexual socialization, parents are an important contributor in both constructive and adverse ways (Miller, 2002; Miller, Norton, Fan, & Christopherson, 1998). In fact, parents tend to be the one modeling and teaching about physical development, gender differences, sexual behaviors, marriage, physical affection, intimacy, and modesty (Jerman & Constantine, 2010; Sorbring, Hallberg, Bohlin & Skoog, 2015; Lefkowitz & Stoppa, 2006; Shtarkshall, Santelli & Hirsch, 2007; Weber, Quiring & Daschmann, 2012). For example, a study examining perceived parental attitudes toward premarital sex and attitudes towards sexuality found that having a mother who disapproved of risky sexual behavior was negatively associated with frequent sexual intercourse and initiation of vaginal intercourse among adolescents (Davis & Friel, 2001; Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 1996). Conversely however, when examining socialization and the influence of parental disapproval, a longitudinal analysis found that when adolescents perceived parents would disapprove of their sexual behaviors, they were less likely to partake in vaginal intercourse the following year. (Dittus & Jaccard, 2000; McNeely, Shew, Beuhring, Sieving, Miller & Blum, 2002). Given these mixed results, further investigations are warranted to explore the relationship between parenting style, attachment, and adolescent sexual activity online. As such, the current study will begin to do this.

1.3.2 Differences by Ethnicity

Ethnicity, together with parents’ attitudes towards sex and pornography remains a key socialization agent of children and adolescents (Wallace & William, 1997). However, a dearth of
work exists exploring the patterns of sexual communication between adolescents and parents of various ethnicities. Moreover, what evidence does exist is contradictory and only examines samples from the USA. For instance, significantly higher levels of sex-related communication have been reported among parents who are African American and Caucasian relative to parents who are Hispanic (Dilorio et al., 2003). Yet, in a study by Swain et al. (2006), researchers found that low-income, parents who were non-Caucasian reported more discussion with their children about the negative consequences of sex and where to obtain birth control than did high-income parents who were largely Caucasian. Moreover, adolescents who were Hispanic and who perceived that their parents held more conservative attitudes towards premarital sex engaged in less sexually oriented behaviour (Afable-Munsuz & Brindis, 2006). Conversely, it has been found that adolescents who were Hispanic had a higher chance of becoming a teen parent than adolescents who identified as African-American or Caucasian, and that they participated in high risk sexual behaviours over and above teens of other ethnicities (Solorio, Hongjian, Brown, Becerra, & Gelberg, 2004). Given the links between socio-economic status and ethnicity in the USA (Reeves, Rodrigue, & Kneebone, 2016), it is difficult to isolate the role of ethnicity in these findings. Indeed, Tobey and colleagues (2011) discovered that higher risk groups receive the least amount of preventative sexual communication education.

The current study also examined the role of ethnicity, with a particular focus on parenting behaviours within an Asian context. We were fortunate enough to have enough participants who identified as Asian to undertake this analysis (see methods). It has well been established in the literature that Western-based notions of parenting may not necessarily reflect the various parenting styles and behaviours of other cultures (Chao, 2001; Shapka & Law, 2013). Therefore, in accordance with the current study, it is important to recognize the value systems of several
Asian countries such as China, Korea and Japan, and South Asian countries such as India. Although Western-based value systems tend to view individuality and self-expression as important characteristics to instill upon children through parenting (Ho, 1995; Shapka & Law, 2013) these characteristics are viewed as problematic within the Asian value system because they do not reflect the community as a whole, which is an essential part of Asian traditions (Shapka & Law, 2013; Shariff, 2009). Indeed, research has shown that Chinese, Japanese and Korean families practice more authoritarian parenting styles than Western-based individualist societies (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Shapka & Law, 2013). Further, South Asian populations consisting primarily of Pakistan, India, Nepal, Kashmir, Burma, Sir Lanka, and Fiji reject Western influences, and demand self-sacrifice and obedience toward one’s elders (Shariff, 2009).

The current study, within a Canadian and North American context, attempted to explore this further, and in particular, focus on beliefs and perceptions around a parent’s role in the sexual exploration of their children’s sexual media use.

1.3.3 Differences by Religiosity/Conservatism

Researchers have queried whether, and to what extent, religion plays a role in adolescent sexual socialization (Wallace & Williams, 1997). When discussing the associations between internet use, parent-child sexual communication, and the influence of sexually explicit media, it is important to address the potential role religion may play in altering parental attitudes towards sexuality. Although there is very little research looking at religious background and parenting around sexual health, the few studies that have been done have found that mothers who have been raised in a catholic household were less willing to discuss sexual topics like sexual intercourse, pleasure, and birth control with their daughters, but were willing to discuss such topics like female morality, conception, and abstinence (Fox & Inazu, 1980). Indeed, Regnerus’
A 2005 study looking at religion, and the patterns of parent-child communication about sex, concluded that religious parents were more likely to stress the importance of sexual values, but had a difficult time communicating with their adolescents about sex in general. Although the research is lacking, faith was explored in the current study since it does appear that parental religion plays a role in parent-child sexuality and communication. Specifically, the current study will explore the contribution of religiosity in relation to parents’ perceptions of adolescent pornography consumption.

1.3.4 Differences by Gender and Age

Research exploring gender differences in sexual communication has concluded that it is much more common for parents to discuss sexuality with their daughters than with their sons (Regnerus, 2005). Specifically, when examining the perceptions of parent-adolescent closeness, female adolescents reported higher levels of maternal closeness, maternal communication, and sexual knowledge than did males (Somers & Paulson, 2000). Interestingly however, parental attitudes towards adolescent sexual activity also differ by gender in that mothers are more likely to communicate more conservative practices towards their daughters than their sons, even though males tend to be more sexually active, and hold more permissive attitudes towards sex than females (Cosby & Miller, 2002; DeGaston, Weed & Jensen, 1996; Tobey, Hillman, Anagurthi & Somers, 2011). Further, researchers have found that fathers tend to communicate more frequently with their sons than daughters, suggesting that the gender of the parent matters when it comes to sex-related communication (Tobey et al., 2011). Conversely, regardless of gender, when looking at parenting practices specifically, researchers suggest that parent’s restriction of their adolescent’s sexual media use decreased in response to their adolescent holding more permissive sexual attitudes (Schofield, 2011).
When looking at age in relation to adolescent sexuality, females with older mothers tend to report lower occurrences of communication about sexuality and risky behaviours compared to their counterparts (Hutchinson & Cooney, 1998). Likewise, Tobey and colleagues (2011) revealed that age is highly correlated with gender and ethnicity in that, with older adolescents, parents tend to communicate more frequently about sex and sexuality. This makes sense since with age increase, adolescents typically mature along with the likelihood of sexual activities. Although it is unclear as to what contributes directly to the perception’s parents hold about adolescent pornography consumption, age of parent as well as age of adolescent will be further explored in the current study since we are specifically interested in a representative sample of parents with a current adolescent.

1.4 Parent Perceptions of Adolescent Sexual Activity

As should be clear from the above literature review, knowledge concerning the link between parents’ attitudes and beliefs about adolescent online sexual activities remains limited, and research examining parent’s feelings towards adolescent pornography consumption is scarce (Sorbring, Hallberg, Bohlin & Skoog, 2015). Some researchers have speculated that “this area of research has been hampered by the lack of an ‘attitude assessment instrument’ suitable for adults and college students, and younger adolescents” (Fisher & Hall, 1988, pg. 91). Yet, few attempts have been made at developing scales to compare the sexual attitudes of early, middle, and late adolescents and their parents. Moreover, of the few studies that have examined adolescents’ perceptions about their parent’s attitudes and beliefs about internet use, parenting practices, and their views towards sexuality, most have relied on the observations of adolescents as opposed to directly questioning the parent themselves (Overbeek, Van De Bongardt & Baams, 2018; Parkes,
Wight, Hunta, Henderson, & Sargent, 2013; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Sorbring & Lundin, 2012). For example, a three-wave longitudinal study examining parenting practices and adolescent sexual behaviours targeted participants between the ages of 12-16 in order to determine if universal parenting factors (i.e., parent-child communication, parental monitoring/supervision), parental factors associated with sex (i.e., parental communication about sex, parental sexual attitudes) likely predict adolescent instigation of oral sex and vaginal intercourse (Bersamin, Todd, Fisher, Hill, Grube & Walker, 2008). Although this study shed light on potential parent-child communication about sex, a major limitation of this study was adolescent self-report data on perceived parenting behaviours, which is inherently biased. A similar study by Tur-Porcar (2017) examined the link between internet use and parenting styles in a sample of 433 adolescents age 15-18 years old by using the “The Parenting Styles and Parent–Child Relationships Questionnaire” which was adapted from the Children's Reports of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schaefer, 1965; Spanish version by Tur-Porcar et al., 2015). The principle conclusions of this study showed that neglecting parenting style was associated with addictive internet use by adolescents, but the analysis was based on self-report data from adolescents.

Notably, Newcomer & Udry (1984) suggest that parental attitudes and values can be indirectly transmitted through adolescents observing their parent’s behaviour, but the literature has made it clear that parents often report having a difficult time addressing sexuality because they lack necessary communication skills, knowledge, or comfort (Constantine et al. 2007; Diiorio et al. 2003; Lefkowitz and Stoppa 2006). Indeed, several studies have suggested that even when parents understand that discussing sexual activity leads to healthier sexual behaviour, they still opt out of having explicit conversations about sex because they feel uncomfortable,
awkward or embarrassed (Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 1996; Leland & Barth, 1993; Miller, Forhand, & Kotchick 1999; Sorbring et al., 2015). According to the evidence, adolescents themselves report that their parents discuss sexual topics very infrequently, even when discussion topics are related to reducing risky behaviors (Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 2000). Thus, it is evident that more studies with representative samples are needed to assure that findings are reflective of populations of interest (i.e., parents’ perceptions of adolescent pornography consumption).

1.5 The Current Study

Contributing to the literature on attitudes and values held by parents in relation to adolescent pornography consumption, the proposed study examined parents’ perceptions about the influence of pornography consumption on adolescent sexual development. Specifically, this study examined whether predictors such as gender, age, ethnicity, religiosity, parenting styles, and attitudes towards sex and sexuality determined participants feelings towards their adolescent viewing pornography. These predictors were selected given evidence identifying them as most relevant to parental influence on adolescent sexual development (Fox & Inazu, 1980; Jerman & Constantine, 2010; Moran & Corley, 1991; Wallace & William, 1997). This study is the first to investigate the presence of such a relationship and hinged upon the assumption that – should parenting techniques, attitudes and beliefs influence adolescents to the extent that some research indicates – it should also influence how parents feel about their adolescent use of online pornography. Thus, several research questions guided this work: 1) How are parenting styles related to views about adolescent pornography consumption? 2) Does this relationship change as a function of age, gender, religiosity or ethnicity? 3) Do parent attitudes towards sex and sexuality moderate this relationship?
Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Participants

The initial sample was comprised of 609 parents recruited through several online forums (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, Instagram; n = 100) in The Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Canada (Statistics Canada 2007; Costigan et al., 2009) and across North America. Additionally, the sample was also drawn from Mechanical Turk (an online crowdsourcing website; n = 400). As an incentive to recruit, participants were entered into a draw for a chance to with a $100 gift card of their choice. The majority of the sample were Caucasian female parents, who, on average, had an adolescent 13 years of age, and who had completed undergraduate college/university (see Table 2.1). Participants ranged in age from 28 to 70 years (M = 41.04; SD = 6.97).

For the purpose of this study, only parents with adolescents between the ages of 13-18 were invited to participate as this age is a critical period of sexual development for and adolescent (Ammerman, Perelli, Adler, & Irwin, 1992; Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). This inclusion criteria were developed in order to assure the data is robust, and the sample is representative of parents raising youth in the digital age (Schaefer, 1965; Spanish version by Tur-Porcar et al., 2015). As such, 64 survey responses were removed. Survey’s with insufficient completion rate (< 75%) were also excluded from the study (45 survey responses omitted) resulting in a final number of 500 parents (female; n = 281).

2.2 Design and Procedure

2.2.1 Social Media Data Collection

Participants in this sample (20%) were recruited via snow-ball sampling through various social media websites. Specifically, we used numerous online parent groups through Facebook in
order to recruit parents with adolescents 13-18 years old. For example, we joined exclusive groups dedicated to caretakers looking to connect with other parents in the community. To ensure participant anonymity, the group admin was made aware of the privacy concerns of the recruitment post, and comments were turned off in order to protect potential participants privacy.

Further, an existing page was used in order to recruit prospective participants on Instagram, and Twitter. This was the principle investigators Facebook, Instagram and Twitter page. A disclaimer statement was added to the recruitment message: “If people choose to post, “like” or follow this thread, they will be publicly identified with the study.”

2.2.2 Mechanical Turk

In order to obtain participants who are socio-economically and ethnically diverse, the majority of this studies sample (80%) was gathered through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an effective, reliable, and high-quality online crowdsourcing website used for conducting research in psychology and various other social sciences (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). According to the literature, since MTurk participant’s reside in various countries worldwide, the sample is more demographically diverse than traditional methods of recruitment (message boards, email, face-to-face) and significantly more diverse than standard internet samples (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Buhrmester et al., 2011). Furthermore, research examining the reliability and validity of MTurk has yielded positive results, therefore we felt confident in gathering a sample by using this online resource (Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013). For the propose of this study, we created an online profile that outlined the nature of the study, and amount of compensation to the respondent (participants were awarded $1.00 CAD for completing the survey).
In order to ensure quality data, several manipulation checks were implemented throughout the survey. These questions instructed participants to read the following question and provide a confirmation response instead of specifying a standard answer (i.e., “In the question below, please provide your MTurk verification code”) (Aust, Diedenhofen, Ullrich & Much, 2013). Additionally, two prerequisites were required in order for participants to join the study: 1) participants were required to have a rating of 95% or above on their previous survey work, and 2) participants must be a parent with an adolescent between the ages of 13-18 years old.

2.2.3 Independent Samples T-Tests Comparing Social Media and Mechanical Turk Participants

In order to account for possible differences among groups due to multiple recruitment techniques, a series of independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare participants who were recruited via social media, and those who were recruited via mTurk. Below is a detailed analysis of these results.

To begin, there were no significant differences in the scores for social media (M = 4.03, SD = 1.291) and mTurk participants (M = 3.98, SD = 1.176) on education level; \( t(498) = -0.373, p = 0.709 \). Further, there were no significant differences in the scores for social media (M = 2.99, SD = .910) and mTurk participants (M = 2.95, SD = .884) on permissive sexual beliefs; \( t(498) = -0.349, p = .728 \), or social media (M = 4.04, SD = .552) and mTurk participants (M= 3.93, SD = .635) on authoritative parenting styles; \( t(498) = -1.583, p = .114 \). However, more critical to the current study was no significant differences in the scores for social media (M = 3.62, SD = .804) and mTurk participants (M = 3.58, SD = .857) on the Harmful Subscale of the ATEQ; \( t(498) = -0.424, p = .671 \), and scores for social media (M = 2.34, SD = .944) and mTurk participants (M = 2.51, SD = .953) on the Positive Subscale of the ATEQ; \( t(498) = 1.571, p = .117 \). This suggest
that for these specific predictors, method of recruitment was not indicative of the results found in this study.

Interestingly, there was significant differences on some of the predictor variables. Specifically, there was significant differences in scores for social media (M = 42.44, SD = 6.748) and mTurk participants (M = 40.69, SD = 6.991) on age; \( t(498) = -2.251, p = .025 \), and social media (M = .79, SD = .409) and mTurk participants (M = .51, SD = .501) on gender; \( t(498) = -5.269, p < .000 \). Further, dissimilarities on social media (M = .08, SD = .273) and mTurk participants (M = .17, SD = .379) on ethnicities other than Caucasian; \( t(496) = 2.316, p = .021 \) and social media (M = .15, SD = .359) and mTurk participants (M = .32, SD = .468) on the ethnicity Asian \( t(498) = 3.441, p < .001 \). Lastly, there were also significant differences in scores for social media (M = 10.23, SD = 5.003) and mTurk participants (M = 12.95, SD = 4.866) on religiosity; \( t(495) = 4.976 \), and social media (M = 1.69, SD = .589) and mTurk participants (M = 2.08, SD = .854) on authoritarian style parenting \( t(498) = 4.265, p = <.000 \).

Although there were some significant group differences, it was determined that most of the variables measured were controlled for in the analysis (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, religiosity), so group differences would not impact the outcomes. The group difference for authoritarian style parenting might limit the generalizability of the results, therefore researchers might need to interpret the findings with caution (see discussion).

2.2.4 Completing the Questionnaire

After receiving approval from the UBC’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB), parents were directed to a survey site (www.Qualtrics.com) where an anonymous survey was accessed. Before commencing the questionnaire, all participants were promoted to consent to participating in the research. The consent form outlined the purpose of the research, the
eligibility criteria, and what will be done with the data, confidentiality, concerns, ethical considerations, withdrawal procedures (i.e., the ability to withdraw during and after participation in the study), as well as research contact information for further information about the study. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete, at which time participants were provided with a short debrief of the overall objectives of the study, and the principle researchers contact information for further details.
Table 2.1 Distribution of demographic characteristics split by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 219)</td>
<td>(n = 281)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (M_{age} = 40.89 (SD = 7.20))</td>
<td>(M_{age} = 41.16 (SD = 6.80))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Caucasian</td>
<td>96 (43.8)</td>
<td>183 (65.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) East Asian</td>
<td>6 (2.7)</td>
<td>10 (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) South Asian</td>
<td>80 (36.5)</td>
<td>43 (15.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) South East Asian</td>
<td>3 (1.4)</td>
<td>2 (.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Black</td>
<td>14 (6.4)</td>
<td>25 (8.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Latin American</td>
<td>13 (5.9)</td>
<td>7 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Mixed</td>
<td>6 (2.7)</td>
<td>11 (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Some high school</td>
<td>5 (2.3)</td>
<td>2 (.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) High school diploma</td>
<td>13 (5.9)</td>
<td>24 (8.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Some college/university</td>
<td>48 (21.9)</td>
<td>74 (26.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Completed undergraduate college/university</td>
<td>100 (45.7)</td>
<td>108 (38.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Vocational degree/certificate</td>
<td>13 (5.9)</td>
<td>27 (9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Postgraduate studies (M.A., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., etc.)</td>
<td>40 (18.3)</td>
<td>46 (16.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages appear in parentheses.*
2.3 Measures

Demographic Information was collected via self-report questionnaires. Specifically, participants were asked to respond to items about their age, gender, ethnicity, education level, and how old their adolescent(s) is/are currently. Below is a list of measures that were included in the study. Note: We did not ask participants about the gender of their adolescent based on previous literature, which suggests that parents child rearing practices hold true across genders (Schofield, 2011).

2.3.1 Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012)

The CRS is a measure of the importance, or centrality, that religion plays in an individual’s life. It contains five questions regarding the general intensities of five core dimensions of religiosity rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often), and includes items such as, “how often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?” and “how often do you pray?” Higher scores reflected greater endorsement of the items. Previous research utilizing the CRS has displayed strong internal consistency and reliability (see Everett, Haque, & Rand, 2016). In the current study, a Cronbach’s alpha of .89 was achieved (see Table 2.3).

2.3.2 The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS; Hendrick et al. 2006)

The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale is a 23-item measure which assessed the participant’s attitudes toward sex and sexuality. These attitudes were measured through four subscales consisting of: (1) Permissiveness, which is operationalized as a casual and open attitude toward sex (e.g., “I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him or her’’); (2) Birth control, defined as responsible sexual attitudes (e.g., “Birth control is a part of responsible sexuality’’); (3) Communion, operationalized as viewing sex as the ideal human experience (e.g.,
“Sex is the closest form of communication between two people”); and (4) Instrumentality, operationally defined as sex being a natural and biological part of life (e.g., “Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating”). Ten items combined to form the permissiveness subscale, three items formed the birth control subscale, five items related to communion, and five formed the instrumentality subscale. These items were assessed via a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), where higher scores reflected greater endorsement of the subscale constructs. Previous research suggests coefficient alphas ranging from .73 to .95, and test–retest reliabilities between .57 and .92 (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich, 2006). In the current study, the Subscale measuring permissiveness achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of .88. Following that, the Birth Control Subscale reached an alpha of .78, and the Communion received an alpha of .70. Lastly, the Instrumentality Subscale achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of .72 (see Table 2.3).

2.3.3 Modified Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire (MATEQ; Lottes, Weinberg, & Weller, 1993)

For the current study, a modified version of the Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire was used to assess participants perceptions of adolescents viewing erotica (i.e., sexually explicit material/pornography). Modifications involved primarily word insertions to reflect adolescent usage. The 21-item MATEQ instructed respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with questions pertaining to the harmful effects of sexually explicit material on adolescents (e.g., “The availability of sexually explicit material leads to a breakdown in community morals among adolescents”), its positive effects (e.g., “Pornography may provide an outlet for bottled-up sexual pressures among adolescents”), and its restriction and regulation (e.g., “Pornography should be publicly sold and publicly shown to adolescents”). Responses to each question were rated on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
agree), where higher scores reflected greater endorsement of the constructs. Nine items combined to produce a Harmful subscale (total scores ranging from 9-45), seven for a Positive subscale (total scores ranging from 7-35), and five items produced a Restriction subscale (total scores ranging from 5-25). Previous research (Lottes et al., 1993) has found coefficient alphas ranging between .84 and .90 on the Harmful subscale, between .73 and .78 on the Positive subscale, and .85 for the Restriction subscale. Note: Question 16 in the restriction subscale (This material should be protected by the 1st Amendment (freedom of speech and the press) was removed from the measure since this did not apply to all parents who participated in the study. In the current study, we were only interested in the Harmful subscale and the Positive subscale which both obtained a Cronbach’s alpha of .88 (see Table 2.3).

2.3.4 Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version (PSDQ; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart 2001).

The (short version) Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire is a 32-item measure used to assess participants parenting styles based on three global parenting dimensions (Baumrind, 1971): Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive typologies. The Authoritative parenting style factor is measured through three subfactors consisting of: (1) Connection Dimension which is operationalized as warmth and support (e.g., “Encourages child to talk about the child’s troubles”); (2) Regulation Dimension which is described as reasoning/induction (e.g., “Gives child reasons why rules should be obeyed”); and (3) Autonomy Granting Dimension which is defined as democratic participation (e.g., “Shows respect for child’s opinions by encouraging child to express them”). The Authoritarian parenting style factor is measured using three subfactors: (1) Physical Coercion Dimension (e.g., “Slaps child when the child misbehaves”); (2) Verbal Hostility Dimension (e.g., “Explodes in anger towards the child”); and
(3) Non-Reasoning/Punitive Dimension (e.g., “Uses threats as punishment with little or no justification”). Finally, the Permissive parenting style factor is measured using one subfactor: (1) Indulgent Dimension (e.g., “States punishments to child and does not actually do them”). Five items combine to form the connection dimension, five items for the regulation dimension, five items for the autonomy granting dimension, four items for the physical coercion dimension, four items for the verbal hostility dimension, four items for the non-reasoning/punitive dimension, and five items relate to form the indulgent dimension. These items were assessed via a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), with higher scores reflecting greater endorsement of the constructs. Previous literature (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995) suggest coefficient alphas of .86 on the Authoritative Parenting Style overall score, .82 on the Authoritarian Parenting Style overall score, and .64 on the Permissive Parenting Style overall score. In the current study we were only interested in the Authoritative subscale which obtained a Cronbach’s alpha of .89, and the Authoritarian subscale which achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of .92. Descriptive statistics for outcome and predictor variables are presented in Table 2.3.
Table 2.2 Descriptive Statistics for Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>$aA$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>5.010</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAS_Pemissiveness</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td>.888</td>
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<td>BSAS_Birth Control</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>4.28</td>
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<td>BSAS_CoCommunion</td>
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<td>BSAS_Instrumentality</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATEQ_Positive</td>
<td>495</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSDQ_Authoritative</td>
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<td>PSDQ_Authoritarian</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* BSAS = Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale, ATEQ = Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire, PSDQ = Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire.
Chapter 3: Results

Hierarchal multiple regressions—with participant age, gender, ethnicity, education, adolescent(s) age and religiosity partialled out—were conducted to explore the contribution of both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles, and perceptions about the effects of adolescent pornography consumption. Assumptions of multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, independent error, and linearity were all met. Further, both Mahalanobis distance and Cook’s distance suggested no significant effect of outliers or influential cases.

3.1 Correlations

For our investigation of predictors of parents’ attitudes towards adolescent pornography consumption, both correlational analyses and hierarchal multiple regression analysis were employed. Results of the correlational analysis presented in Table 3.1 illustrate that several significant relationships were found. For instance, two of the four subscales in the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (permissive and communion) were significantly negatively correlated with gender (where males = 0 and females = 1), suggesting that permissive sexual attitudes, and the belief about sex being an important part of life is higher in males. Additionally, the birth control composite in the BSAS was significantly positively correlated with gender, indicating that women view birth control as an important part of responsible sexuality – a finding consistently reported in the literature (Jaccard, Dodge, & Dittus, 2002).

The Positive and Restrictive Subscale of the Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire were significantly negatively correlated with gender, but significantly positively correlated with the Harmful Scale, demonstrating that mothers felt that pornography consumption was more harmful to adolescents, and that fathers - although believing that pornography should be restricted from adolescents - felt pornography to be less harmful for adolescents. Interestingly,
the Authoritative Subscale of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire was significantly positively correlated with gender, suggesting that mothers’ practice more authoritative parenting styles. Conversely, the Authoritarian Subscale of the PSDQ was negatively correlated with gender, providing evidence that fathers exercise more authoritarian style child rearing. The Permissive parenting style subscale from the PSDQ was not significantly associated with the outcome variables (i.e., subscales of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire) and so were not included in further analyses. Furthermore, the restrictive subscale of the ATEQ did not have a strong alpha and was also removed from further analyses.
Table 3.1 Correlations among Dependent, Covariates, and Predictor Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
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<td>Religiosity</td>
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<td>-.083</td>
<td>-.319**</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAS (Birth Control)</td>
<td>.229**</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>-.249**</td>
<td>.069</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAS (Communion)</td>
<td>-.092**</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.215**</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>.228*</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSAS (Instrumentality)</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.190**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ATEQ (Harmful)</td>
<td>.111*</td>
<td>.143**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>-.393**</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>-.092*</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATEQ (Positive)</td>
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<td>-.119**</td>
<td>.568**</td>
<td>-.125**</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.399**</td>
<td>-.482**</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATEQ (Restriction)</td>
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<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>-.181**</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>-.221**</td>
<td>.732**</td>
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<td>PSDQ (Authoritative)</td>
<td>.178**</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.127**</td>
<td>.361**</td>
<td>.288**</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>.155**</td>
<td>-.163**</td>
<td>-.174**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSDQ (Authoritarian)</td>
<td>-.265**</td>
<td>.088*</td>
<td>.260**</td>
<td>.287**</td>
<td>-.244**</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.450**</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.463**</td>
<td>.561**</td>
<td>-.236**</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSDQ (Permissive)</td>
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<td>-.014</td>
<td>.241**</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>.238**</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>.306**</td>
<td>.391**</td>
<td>-.117**</td>
<td>.563**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* **p ≤ .001; *p ≤ .05
3.2 Regression Analyses

3.2.1 Research Question 1 and 2: Parenting Styles and Attitudes Towards Pornography

In order to explore further links among these variables, and address the first and second research question (How are parenting styles related to views about adolescent pornography consumption, and does this relationship change as a function of age, gender, ethnicity, education, adolescent age, and religiosity?) two hierarchal multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess the contribution of authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles on two of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire Subscales (Positive Subscale and Harmful Subscale). To control for individual differences – and based on previous literature – age, gender, ethnicity and religiosity were entered into the analysis in Block 1. Education level, age of the participants adolescent(s), authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were then entered in the second block. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 present the results of these analyses.

For the Harmful subscale, the combined influence of age, gender, ethnicity, and religiosity accounted for 17% of the variance in parents’ perceptions of the harmful effects adolescent pornography consumption, $F(5, 429) = 17.46, p > .000$. In the second block, however, the model accounted for 20% of the total variance in perceptions about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption. Over and above the statistical significance of age, gender, ethnicity, religiosity, education and age of adolescent(s), the unique contribution of authoritative parenting style was the only statistically significant additional parenting style predictor ($R^2 \Delta = .03, p = .007$). Overall, this model suggests that over and above being a parent who is older, identifies as a woman, Asian, holding stronger religious beliefs, and with a younger adolescent, participants who practice more authoritative parenting styles, feel pornography may be more harmful for adolescents.
For the Positive subscale of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire. As can be seen in Table 5, age, gender, ethnicity and religiosity were included in Block 1, all (except for Asian) which were significantly negatively correlated with the Positive Subscale of the Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire. Education level, adolescent(s) age, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were entered in Block 2. For Block 1, the collective influence of age, gender, ethnicity and religiosity accounted for 16% of the variance in parents perceptions of the positive effects of adolescent pornography consumption, $F(5, 429) = 16.54, p < .000$. Additionally, the inclusion of education level, adolescent(s) age, authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices in Block 2 accounted for 32% of the total variance in perceptions of the positive effects of adolescents consuming pornography. Indeed, the exclusive influence of adolescent(s) age, and authoritarian parenting practices were the only statistically significant additional predictors ($R^2_A = .15, p = .000$), over and above predictors entered in Block 1. From this, we can gather that parents who are younger, identify as male, non-white, hold fewer religious beliefs, with an older adolescent, and practice more authoritarian style parenting, feel pornography to be more positive for adolescents.

### 3.2.2 Research Question 3: Interaction Effects

To address the third and final research question, hierarchical linear regressions were also used to identify whether there were interaction effects for parent attitudes towards sex and sexuality parenting styles and adolescent pornography consumption. For the positive subscale, there were no significant interactions, so these findings are not discussed. *Note:* This model is an extension of research question 1 and 2. Therefore, Block 1 and Block 2 remained the same (see Table 3.4). Block 3 was comprised of all Subscales of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (Permissive, Birth Control, Communion, and Instrumentality) which accounted for 27% of the
variance in parents perceptions about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption, $F(4, 421) = 11.97, p < .000$. Finally, Block 4 included all interaction terms for the Authoritative and Authoritarian subscales of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in parents beliefs about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption, $R^2 \Delta = .05, \Delta F(8, 413) = 4.14, p = .000$. A statistically significant relationship was found for Authoritarian parenting style and the Permissive Subscale of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale, suggesting that participants attitudes towards sex and sexuality enhanced the relationship between authoritarian parenting and the belief that pornography is harmful for adolescents. Figure 3.1 presents these results. Further, a significantly negative interaction effect was found for the Authoritative Subscale of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, and the Permissive Subscale of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale on the Harmful Subscale of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire. This suggests that the more permissive beliefs parents held regarding their own sexuality modifies the relationship between their parenting style and perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption (see Figure 3.2). Note, there was no significant interaction term found for either of the Authoritative and Authoritarian Subscales of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, and all four Subscales of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale with the Positive Subscale of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire.
Table 3.2 Summary of hierarchal regression analysis for variables predicting parents’ perceptions about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$\text{Sig.} , t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2\Delta$</th>
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<td><strong>Block 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.037*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.205</td>
<td>2.725</td>
<td>.007**</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.169***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>3.611</td>
<td>.000***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
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<td>.000***</td>
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<td><strong>Block 2</strong></td>
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<td>2.278</td>
<td>.023*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.090</td>
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*Note: PSDQ = Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.}
Table 3.3 Summary of hierarchal regression analysis for variables predicting parents’ perceptions about the positive effects of adolescent pornography consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig.t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2\Delta$</th>
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<td>.162***</td>
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<td>.001**</td>
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*Note: PSDQ = Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*
Table 3.4 Summary of Hierarchal Regression Analysis Examining the Relationships between Parenting Styles and all Subscales of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale on the Harmful Subscale of the Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Questionnaire

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<td>.082***</td>
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<td>.030*</td>
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<td>Authoritarian.Permissiveness</td>
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Note: PSDQ = Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire. BSAS = Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. 
Figure 1 The Relationship Between Authoritarian Parenting Style and the Perceptions of the Harmful Effects of Pornography, as a Function of Permissiveness.
Figure 2 The Relationship Between Authoritative Parenting Style and the Perceptions of the Harmful Effects of Pornography, as a Function of Permissiveness
Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Authoritative and Authoritarian Style Parenting

The purpose of the current study was to explore parenting styles in relation to beliefs about adolescent(s) pornography consumption. Specifically, we were interested in whether parents who practice more authoritative and authoritarian style parenting feel pornography to be more positive or harmful for their adolescent(s). Since research in this area if often interpreted through adolescent hearsay, we were particularly interested in establishing a representative sample of parents in order to avoid abovementioned limitations of bias and adolescent recall.

Not surprisingly, the present study determined that participants who reported that they engaged in more authoritative child rearing styles felt pornographic material to be more harmful for their adolescent(s). This is in line with several studies that suggest parents who practice more authoritative parenting tend to express disapproval of inappropriate behaviours that a child may engage in such as drug and alcohol abuse (Baumrind, 1991). Indeed, since authoritative parenting is child-centered, complemented by temperateness, encouragement, and reasonable control over the child (Carlson & Tanner, 2006), it is understandable that parents who are authoritative would express concern over their adolescents(s) sexually explicit material consumption.

Contrary to expectations however, this study discovered that participants who practiced more authoritarian style parenting felt pornographic material to be more positive for their adolescent(s). We do know from previous literature that parents who practice more authoritarian style parenting generally show a lack of concern about their adolescents sexual behaviour when compared to their authoritative counterparts (Carlson & Tanner, 2006). Though, it is not entirely clear as to why parents who have high expectations, strict rules and excessive control over their
children believe pornography to be more positive for their adolescent(s). Perhaps authoritarian parents, who hold unrealistic expectations for their children, underestimate the child’s ability to conceal risky online experiences, therefore resulting in authoritarian parents being completely unaware of their adolescent’s pornography consumption – assuming it is not a topic worth apprehension (Byrne, Katz & Lee, 2014).

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings coincide nicely with the idea that parenting styles – in conjunction with the process of socialization - influence the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of adolescent sexual behaviours (Newman, Harrison, Dashiff & Davies, 2008). For instance, it has been well established in the literature that caregivers (i.e., parents or guardians) are the primary socialization agent for adolescents (Baumrind, 1980). Furthermore, since popular media, and various religious groups have deemed pornography to be “risky sexual behaviour”, anecdotally, parents tend to assume pornography would be negative for adolescents. As such, it seems reasonable that parents who are attentive, communicative, consistent, and practice issue-related authority, have a strong stance on matters pertaining to their adolescent consuming such material that may lead to a “breakdown in morals, or exploit women” when compared to their restrictive, over-controlling, authoritarian equivalents.

Furthermore, since our authoritarian parents felt pornography was more positive for their adolescent(s), it could be argued that because they are typically nonpermissive, controlling, and less communicative with their adolescents, perhaps they see pornography from a harm reduction perspective and deem it a better outlet than the alternative – having sex. Likewise, it is clear that pornography is commonly used as a source of sexual information and stimulation (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017; Mattebo, Larsson, & Tyden et al., 2012). Perhaps then, authoritarian parents may feel that pornography is a way adolescent can receive sexual information and stimulation
without having to have the uncomfortable, and embarrassing sex talk (Wallace & Williams, 1997). Indeed, perhaps the parents who scored higher on measures of authoritarian style parenting felt pornography was more positive for their child because it can enhance the pleasure for masturbation for both boys and girls – which more than likely occurs in the home under a controlled, protected roof. Though the regularity of this is not well established in the literature, and it is not entirely clear as to why domineering, stringent parents would prefer methods that promote masturbation instead of sex, it is conceivable that our sample of parents may feel this approach is better than the alternative. Equally, as alluded to above, parents who practice authoritarian parenting might feel that they have such complete control over their child that they are in denial or unaware about what’s happening from a sexual standpoint in their adolescent’s life (Byrne, Katz & Lee, 2014).

Perhaps unsurprising, our findings indicated that religious beliefs played a meaningful role in projecting parents’ discernments about adolescent pornography consumption. Indeed, examining both the positive and harmful perceptions parents held about their adolescent watching porn, religiosity contributed significantly to both outcomes. Specifically, as religious faith increased in our sample of authoritative parents, attitudes’ that pornography was harmful for their adolescent also increased. In conjunction with this finding, participants who were less religious, and applied more authoritarian style parenting, also felt pornography was more positive for their adolescent. Although previous investigations are essentially uncorroborated with parents, and little, if not any consideration has been given to examining whether religiosity and parenting styles contribute to parents’ perceptions about their adolescent consuming pornography (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017), we can now begin to bridge the gap within the literature.
Particularly, confirming that parenting style along with religious beliefs, are key contributors in determining parents’ attitudes towards their adolescent viewing pornography.

It is well documented in the literature that pornography use is common among religious populations and believed to be a problematic behaviour (Baltazar et al., 2010). In tandem with this finding, religious parents’ have been found to demonstrate extremely effective parenting practices (Landor, Simons, Brody & Gibbons, 2011; Snidefr, Clements, & Vazsonyi, 2011). Perhaps highly religious, authoritative parenting strengthens the parent-child relationship, but these parents who view pornography as harmful feel this way because their faith is telling them that consumption of pornographic material is wrong. In partial support of this finding, some researchers have looked at the interaction between pornography use among parents with strong religious faith, and parent-child relationship quality (Perry & Snawder, 2017). In Perry and Snawder’s (2017) study, researchers sought to determine whether attending religious services and frequent pornography use among parents predicted negative parent-child relationships. Although these findings only partially supported their hypothesis, and the study was examining the pornography use of parents, they did discover an association between religious parents, and the negative effects of pornography consumption on parent-child relationship quality (Perry & Snawder, 2017). Moreover, we also know that religiosity plays a major role in shaping adolescents’ belief’s about premarital sex, contraception, and pornography (Wallace & Williams, 1997). As such, our findings suggest that this relationship may not be restricted to an adolescent population.

One study that also supports our findings argued that public religiosity impedes parents’ abilities to discuss matters pertaining to sexuality and birth control (Regenerus, 2005). Indeed, parents who frequently attend church have a difficult time discussing sex-related issues with
their children. Could it be that our highly religious authoritative parents, who believe pornography to be harmful for their adolescent, feel as such because their faith is convincing them so? Conversely, could it be that our less religious authoritarian parents, who believe pornography to be more positive, feel as such because they do not have the pressure of religion pushing them to believe in such negative ideologies? What may certainly be concluded from our study is that religiosity is just one variable, among several, that may influence parents’ perceptions about their adolescent(s) viewing pornography. Indeed, these findings just begin to address the gap in the literature in that, religiosity, along with parenting styles deserve closer scrutiny. Further research may benefit from incorporating qualitative interviews that would further flesh out the theoretical underpinnings between perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption, and caregivers, particularly for people with strong religious affiliations that shame pornography use (Perry & Snavder, 2017).

Aside from religiosity which has been previously identified as a predictor of parent’s attitudes towards sex and sexuality – age, gender, and ethnicity also explained additional variance in authoritative parents beliefs about the harmful effects of adolescent pornography consumption – that is, being female, older, with Asian descent, and a younger adolescent. Since most family systems within a traditional Asian family function under hierarches, and constrained gender roles - with women typically discouraged from exploring their own sexuality (Eunjung, 2005, Bacchus, 2017) - it is unsurprising that our findings indicate that females who are Asian believe pornography to be harmful for their young adolescent(s). Indeed, some feminist researchers exploring women of Asian descent, suggest that pornography perpetuates a racially constructed beauty standard (i.e., large breasts, blonde hair, and light skin) that does not reflect
conventional female, Asian characteristics (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Bridges, Bergner, & Hesseon-McInnis, 2003; Schneider, 2000).

In further support of our findings, scholars have proposed that gender, along with age of both the parent and adolescent must be taken into account when exploring parent-child communication of sexual topics (Jaccard, Dodge & Dittus, 2002). Indeed, several theorists have discovered striking differences between genders (Weber, Quiring & Daschmann, 2012). Therefore, one possible explanation for our finding is evident in past pornography literature written from a radical feminist perspective (Brownmiller, 1975; Diamond, 1985; Longino, 1980). According to this standpoint, women are depicted in porn as “anonymous, panting playthings, adult toys, dehumanized objects to be used, abused, broken and discarded” (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 394). Indeed, these perspectives suggest that pornography perpetuates the notion that women are inferior to men and contributes to sexual inequality within our society (Russo, 1998).

Although this research has since been challenged, and more recent studies have discovered positive effects of pornography consumption (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017), it is reasonable to assume why older females in our sample follow suit with the propagating impression that pornography is negative – especially for their budding adolescent(s).

While exploring the perceived positive effects of adolescent pornography consumption, age, gender, and ethnicity also explained some additional changes in parents’ perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption. That is – young, male, authoritarian style parents with Caucasian or Asian descent, and an older child – predicted parents’ attitudes towards pornography as a positive outlet for adolescents. In light of this thought-provoking finding, several conclusions can be drawn. Arguably, parents who value more authoritarian style parenting tend to come from Asian descent as measured by Western developed parenting style
measures (Hoskins, 2014). Moreover, previous literature has found that males tend to view pornography as more positive than their female counterparts (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). Since researchers argue that authoritarian parents tend to have a difficult time communicating about sexual information with their adolescent (Regnerus, 2005), perhaps our sample of authoritarian parents feel pornography is positive because they see it as a source of sexual information for their aging adolescent. For instance, sexual socialization theories suggest that as adolescents age, parents tend to have a difficult time creating an open line of communication with their adolescent (Andre et al., 1989). Using a socialization theory framework, it may be that young fathers who practice strict, obedient parenting may not necessarily feel that pornography is inherently bad for their adolescent as they get older, therefore they do not feel the need to have an open line of communication about it. It could be that they see it as a positive way for their child to learn about sex and sexuality. Therefore, the results of this study can begin to provide evidence that parental perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption may depend on the age, gender, and parenting approach of the caretaker.

4.2 Permissiveness Interaction

Finally, in support of our third research question, results from this study indicated that the strength of the relationship between authoritative parenting, and the belief’s that pornography is harmful for adolescents changed as a function of permissiveness. That is, parents’ attitudes, feelings, and thoughts about sex and sexuality influenced how they felt about their adolescent(s) consuming pornography. Specifically, parents who endorse behaviours like casual sex, one-night stands, and sex with many partners - yet parent with control and warmth - felt pornography was less harmful for their adolescent(s). This held true for both high authoritative parents and low authoritative parents.
With regards to authoritarian parenting, permissive beliefs also influenced whether parents felt pornography was harmful for their adolescent. Similar to our findings above, as permissive attitudes increased for our authoritarian parents, beliefs that pornography is harmful for adolescents decreased. However, this relationship was stronger for parents who score low on authoritarian measures, suggesting that parenting style, along with permissive belief’s about sex and sexuality, modify parents’ perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption.

Although a dearth of work exists exploring the sexual attitudes and beliefs of parents in relation to their adolescent(s) pornography consumption, several conclusions can be drawn from the current data. First, we do know from previous literature that parenting plays a significant role in determining adolescent media use and sexual behaviours and attitudes (Nikken & De Graff, 2013). In addition, parents are the primary source of sexual health information for their adolescents (Moore, Raymond, Mittelstaedt, & Tanner, 2002). What we did not know was how parents believes about sexuality influence their perceptions about their child’s pornography consumption. In accordance with socialization theory (Bandura, 1986, 2006) and Baumrind’s parenting styles (1978, 1991, 1996), it is evident that caregivers have a strong influence in shaping their child’s social, emotional, and cognitive development (Kincaid, Jones, Sterrett & McKee, 2013). Supplementing these established findings, according to our research, the beliefs and attitudes parents hold about adolescent pornography consumption is shaped by their socialization with our society. That’s is, their permissiveness, religion, ethnicity, gender, and age all have a direct influence on how they perceive sexual media.

This study has important implications for theory development and begins to fill the gap in the literature by proposing a strong relationship between parenting styles, beliefs about sex and
sexuality, and how this may influence the positive and negative perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Strengths, Limitations, & Future Directions

The results must be viewed in the light of certain methodological limitations. Firstly, our sample was predominately Caucasian and therefore, the results should be considered with caution due to concerns surrounding generalizability. That said, we obtained a gender diverse group of participants (219 males and 281 females) so this was not a major concern in our study.

Secondly, our study relied on self-report measures, so it is therefore possible that participants misinterpreted questions due to recall bias, social desirability bias or simply misunderstood the self-assessment measure. Indeed, it has been noted that although the survey is anonymous, respondents may inherently want to ‘look good’ for the researchers (Rosenman, Tennekoon, & Hill, 2011). Perhaps taking a qualitative approach, in combination with quantitative data such as this, future researchers can probe about these topics with a smaller, more representative sample of parents and adolescents growing up in the digital age, in order to provide useful information and insights from both a parent and adolescent perspective.

In addition, due to the sensitive nature of pornography, it is probable that participants may be hesitant to fully disclose their beliefs about their adolescents’ viewing pornography. Although people who participate in human sexuality research tend to be more sexually liberal, and open towards matters pertaining to their own sex (Strassberg & Lowe, 1995), little, if any, research is known about participants reflection of their children’s sexual behaviours.

Thirdly, since this research is cross-sectional, it is impossible to provide causal connections. However, the intent of the current study was to get an impression of whether parenting styles, and various predictors are linked with perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption and to build on these ideas for future studies.
Of additional note, our study did not provide participants with an operational definition of pornography. This may have been useful in order to avoid potential confounds related to gender differences since research suggest that males tend to consume more pornography than females (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017). Thus, it could be that males and females have different definitions of what is considered pornographic. Previous literature has used the operational definition: “any material aimed at creating or enhancing sexual feelings or thoughts in the recipient and, at the same time (1) containing explicit exposure and/or descriptions of the genitals and, (2) clear and explicit sexual acts, such as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, bondage, sadomasochism, rape, urine sex, animal sex etc” (Hald, 2006). However, our study was not particularly interested in the differences between male and female caregivers, so this was not of major concern to the current study. Future studies will want to include an operational definition when exploring differences between gender in studies examining beliefs about adolescent pornography consumption.

Fourthly, our study did not ask parents about the gender of their adolescent(s). Previous literature has suggested that gender may influence parental approaches in relation to adolescent sexual risk taking (Kincaid et al., 2012). For example, it has been suggested that boys benefit more from monitoring (i.e., knowledge of whereabouts, supervision), and structured households with consistent rules (Werner, 1995). Whereas girls, may benefit more from positive parenting (Kavanagh & Hops, 1994). Specifically, that, strong parent-child relationships with warmth and support may be a protective factor for young girls (Henrich et al., 2006; Kapungu et al., 2006; McNeely et al., 2002; Miller et al., 1997; Pearson et al., 2006). Moreover, some studies have even suggested that parents are less restrictive of their son’s media usage if they know their sons are sexually active (Schofield, 2011). However, according to Schofield (2011), parents restrictive
and active mediation of their adolescent’s sexual media use decreased in response to their adolescent holding more permissive sexual attitudes – regardless of gender.

Thus, although our study was not particularly concerned about the gender of our participants adolescent(s), it is unclear whether this was a potential deciding factor for parents when determining whether pornography was positive or harmful for their child. Nevertheless, this survey was purposefully brief to not overburden respondents. Future research may want to consider the role of adolescent gender in parents’ beliefs about their child’s pornography consumption.

Finally, the current study did not analyze the Permissive Scale of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire. Incorporating this scale may have provided more insight as to why the authoritative parents felt pornography was more harmful, and the authoritarian parents felt pornography was less harmful for their adolescent. Research indicates that permissive/indulgent parents support and encourage their child yet fail to provide a structured environment (Chou & Lee, 2017; Tur-Porcar, Mestre, & Llorca, 2015, 2017). Perhaps then, parents who run a lenient household may feel pornography is positive for adolescents because they simply do not care about the potential repercussions. Nonetheless, due to previous literature suggesting that authoritative and authoritarian parenting are the most common child rearing styles (Baumrind, 1978, 1991, 1996), we chose to focus solely on those specific constructs. Future research may want to include the Permissive Scale in future analyses in order to provide a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between parenting styles and the perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption.

One cautionary note in the current study was our findings which suggested that there was a significant difference between the participants who were recruited via social media, and the
participants who were recruited through mTurk, on their beliefs about authoritarian parenting. Although several measures were taken in order to control for individual differences, it is possible that our chosen style of recruitment restricts the generalizability of this study. Future researchers want to ensure that proper protocol is taken when controlling for parenting styles among various populations.

5.2 Significance & Conclusion

This study was, to our knowledge, the first to explore parenting styles in relation to adolescent pornography consumption. Specifically, we used a diverse sample of parents in order to construct an empirical prediction of the perception’s parents have about their adolescent consuming pornography. Anecdotally, researchers, educators, and parents speculate that there are adverse effects with adolescent pornography use, yet previous investigations fail to address parents directly, relying only on adolescent recollection. From this current study, we can now confirm that a parent’s approach to child rearing influences their perceptions about adolescent pornography use. In addition, our results imply that permissive sexual attitudes are an important moderator of the association between parenting styles and the perceptions about adolescent pornography consumption. Moreover, several factors such as religiosity, ethnicity, gender, and age all contribute to the negative and positive beliefs of adolescent pornography consumption, respectfully.

It has long been suggested that prolonged exposure to pornography is harmful and may result in adolescents seeking more extreme stimuli to initiate the same response (Zillman & Bryant, 1986). Yet, more recent, longitudinal data failed to find a significant association between pornography use and the predilection for antagonistic content over time (Landripet, Busko, and Stulhofer, 2019). Thus, previous results on adolescent pornography consumption remain
inconclusive, and more concrete evidence is needed in order to untangle the tumultuous web of confusion that is pornography research.

The empirical findings from the current study make several theoretical contributions to research on pornography use. At a large scope, this literature begins to fill the gap in several theoretical models that fail to account for the sexual attitudes of parents in relation to their adolescent’s consumption of pornography. At a small scope, this research is a steppingstone for future scholars interested in expanding the current climate of the negative effects of adolescent pornography use. Perhaps with rigorous, empirical testing such as this, we can work towards creating a positive sexual understanding of the benefits of adolescent pornography consumption.

At a practical standpoint, this research will help educators in developing appropriate parenting programs that address pornography consumption for adolescents growing up in the digital age. Specifically, educators can implement support programs aimed at helping parents understand how we can tackle the effects of adolescent pornography consumption from an empirical perspective.
References


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Appendices

Appendix A  Recruitment Message Online

Are you a parent with an adolescent between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age? If so, we would appreciate your thoughts on adolescent online pornography consumption. We will be examining the relationship between parents and pornography. This study is voluntary, confidential and completely anonymous. If people choose to post to this thread, they will be publicly identified with the study. Please see below for the link to the survey:
https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4PxKkn1ccTql9nL
Principal Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Shapka
Appendix B  Informed Consent Form

**Title of Study:** Adolescents, Parents and Pornography: Exploring the Relationship Between Parental Attitudes, Values and Child Rearing Styles in Relation to Adolescent Pornography Consumption.

**Principal Investigator:**

Cassandra Hesse is conducting this research for her Master of Arts in Human Development Learning and Culture, in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education at the University of British Columbia, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Shapka (XXX-XXX-XXXX, XXXX@XXX). If you have any questions you can contact the principal investigator by emailing XXXXXX@XXXX.

**This Study:**

You are invited to take part in this research study if you are a parent with an adolescent between the ages of 13 years old to 18 years old. Your participation is voluntary. If you wish to participate in this study, you will be asked to click the box at the bottom of this form which states “I consent to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire.” Before you decide, it is important for you to understand what the research involves. This consent letter will tell you about the study, why the research is being done, and what is involved with being part of the study.

**What’s the purpose?**

The purpose of this study is to learn about parents’ attitudes, values and childrearing styles in relation to adolescent’s consumption of pornography. From past studies, we know that parents play a pivotal role in the promotion of their children’s reproductive health, and as we shift towards an increasingly technologically saturated world, there has been a call for more robust research examining parents’ attitudes towards adolescent pornography consumption. As such, this research aims to examine parents’ attitudes towards sexuality, and adolescent pornography consumption.

**What happens in this study?**

To participate in this study, you can complete an anonymous survey online. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. No further participation will be required upon completion of the survey.

**What are the benefits of participating in this study?**

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to the scientific literature on human sexuality. Specifically, the outcomes of this work will ensure that existing sexual health
programs are adapted, and/or new programs developed that are targeted at parents as well as adolescents who are growing up in a digital age. Further, everyone who participates, even those who withdraw, will be allowed to enter a draw for a $100 gift card of their choice.

**What are the risks of participating in this study?**

There are no serious risks to this study and you may withdraw from this study at any point with no penalty or consequence. If you would like to discuss anything about this study, you may contact the researchers via the contact information at the top of this page.

If you feel any discomfort as a result of this study, please consult the resources listed below:

- **University Counselling Services** (on campus counselling services)
  - UBC Counselling Services: [https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services](https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services)
- **Help Lines** (online and phone counselling)
  - BC Crisis Centre [https://crisiscentre.bc.ca](https://crisiscentre.bc.ca)
  - [http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)

**What will happen with my information?**

The results of this study will be reported in one student’s graduate thesis and may also be published in academic journal articles and conference presentations. If you are interested in receiving these results, please contact the researchers at the email addresses listed above.

**Is my information private and confidential?**

No information or records that disclose your identity will be published. You, like all participants in this study, will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. To make sure this is the case, and since Open Access research requires the data to be publicly made available at the time of publication, you will be assigned a unique study number as a participant in this study to ensure that participation is de-identified. Only this number will be used on any research-related information collected about you during the course of this study, so that your identity as a participant in this study will be kept confidential. Any potential future use of this data will only refer to the assigned unique number of each participant. All of the information we collect will be securely stored on a secure computer server at UBC. We will be using a UBC Survey Tool provided by Qualtrics to collect data, which complies with the BC and Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act since the survey data is kept secure and is stored and backed up in Canada. This data server is located in Canada and subject to Canadian laws. If you choose to participate in the survey, you understand that your responses to the survey questions will be stored and accessed in Canada and that your rights to privacy are legally protected by federal and provincial laws that require safeguards to ensure that your privacy is respected. Once the data is made publicly available, you will not be able to withdraw your data.

**How can I withdraw from this study?**
Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason, without any negative impact. If there are certain questions that you do not want to answer that is okay – you don’t have to answer them. You do not have to give a reason for not answering questions or withdrawing from the study. Since this survey is anonymous, you cannot withdraw your data once submitted.

What if I have questions about the study?

If you have any questions or would like further information with respect to this study, you may contact, Cassandra Hesse (XXX-XXX-XXX, XXX@XXX)

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598. The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board has issued certificate H19-00489 for this study.

I have read the contents of this form and understand what participation in this study involves. I have been provided the opportunity to ask any questions related to my participation and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate in this study or withdraw at any point, without any negative impact.

Please check one of the following:

- I consent to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire
- I do not consent to participating in any part of this study
Appendix C  Participant Thank you Letter

Thank you for participating in this study!

You are invited to participate in a draw for a $100 gift card of your choice. To enter this draw, please click here or email XXX-XXX-XXXX@XXX with the subject line “Parent’s and Pornography Study” and include your name and email.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, please contact Cassandra Hesse at XXXX@XXXX

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason. Since this survey is anonymous, you cannot withdraw your data once submitted.

By participating in this study, you are contributing to the scientific literature on human sexuality. If you would like to receive information about the results of this study, please contact the researchers.

If you feel any discomfort as a result of this study, please consult the resources listed below:

- **University Counselling Services** (on campus counselling services)
  - [UBC Counselling Services](https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services)

- **Help Lines** (online and phone counselling)
  - [BC Crisis Centre](https://crisiscentre.bc.ca)
  - [http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598. The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board has issued certificate **H19-00489** for this study.
Appendix D  Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions:

1) Are you currently a parent with an adolescent between the ages of 13 years of age and 19 years of age?
   a) Yes
   b) No

2) What is the current age of your adolescent(s)? (select more than one if needed)
   a) 13
   b) 14
   c) 15
   d) 16
   e) 17
   f) 18

3) What is your age (in years)?
   a) __________

4) How do you identify your gender?
   a) Male
   b) Female
   c) Other (please specify) __________

5) Which ethnic group(s) do you identify with? (select more than one if needed)
   a) White (e.g., Caucasian, European)
   b) Black (e.g., Haitian, Trinidadian, Caribbean, African)
   c) Latin American (e.g., Mexican, Brazilian, Colombian)
   d) East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
   e) South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Sir Lankan, Pakistani)
   f) West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
   g) Southeast Asian origins (e.g., Filipino, Thai, Vietnamese, Malaysian)
   h) Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, Metis)
   i) Other (please list):

6) What is your postal code?
   a) __________

7) What is your highest level of completed education?
   a) Some high school
   b) High school diploma
   c) Some college/university
   d) Completed undergraduate college/university
   e) Vocational degree/certificate
   f) Postgraduate studies (M.A., Ph.D, Ed.D., M.D., etc.)
Appendix E  Centrality of Religiosity Scale

1. How often do you think about religious issues?
2. To what extent do you believe that God, dieties or something divine exists?
3. How often do you take part in religious services?
4. How often do you pray?
5. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?

Response format: (0) Never, (1) A few times a year, (2) Once a week, (3) More than once a week, (4) Several times a week
Appendix F  Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale

Listed below are several statements that reflect different attitudes about sex. For each statement, fill in the response that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Some of the items refer to specific sexual relationships, while others refer to general attitudes and beliefs about sex. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you are not currently dating anyone, answer the questions with your most recent partner in mind. If you have never had a sexual relationship, answer in terms of what you think your responses would most likely be like. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. We are only interested in what you think and feel.

1. I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him or her. (-)
2. Casual sex is acceptable. (-)
3. I would like to have sex with many partners. (-)
4. One-night stands are sometimes very enjoyable. (-)
5. It is okay to have ongoing sexual relations with more than one person at a time. (-)
6. Sex as a simple exchange of favors is okay if both parties agree to it. (-)
7. The best sex is with no strings attached. (-)
8. Life would have fewer problems if people could have sex more freely. (-)
9. It is possible to enjoy sex with a person and not like that person very much. (-)
10. It is okay for sex to be just good physical release. (-)
11. Birth control is part of responsible sexuality. (-)
12. A woman should share responsibility for birth control. (-)
13. A man should share responsibility for birth control. (-)
14. Sex is the closest form of communication between two people. (-)
15. A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction. (-)
16. At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls. (-)
17. Sex is a very important part of life. (-)
18. Sex is usually an intensive, almost overwhelming experience. (-)
19. Sex is best when you let yourself go and focus on your own pleasure. (-)
20. Sex is primarily the taking of pleasure from another person. (-)
21. The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself. (-)
22. Sex is primarily physical. (-)
23. Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating. (-)

Note: (-) Indicates reversed scores
Response format: (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neutral, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly Disagree
Appendix G  Modified Attitudes Towards Erotica Scale

Thinking about your own adolescent(s), please indicate how much you Strongly Disagree (1) Strongly Agree (5) with the following statements about pornographic material:

1. I don’t/wouldn’t want my adolescent to view pornographic material because the material exploits women.
2. The material should be publicly sold (magazines) and publicly shown (movies) to adolescents.
3. The material should be available to adolescents.
4. The availability of the material leads to a breakdown in community morals among adolescents.
5. The material can improve sex relations among adolescents.
6. I feel the material is offensive for adolescents.
7. I don’t/wouldn’t want my adolescent to view pornographic material because the material exploits men.
8. The material should be available to minors (under 18).
9. The material increases the probability of sexual violence among adolescents.
10. I don’t/wouldn’t want my adolescent to view pornographic material because in this material, the positioning and treatments of men is degrading to them.
11. The material may provide an outlet for bottled-up sexual pressures among adolescents.
12. I don’t/wouldn’t want my adolescent to view pornographic material because in this material, sex and violence are often shown together.
13. I want my adolescent to watch pornographic material because this material can enhance the pleasure of masturbation for adolescent girls.
14. This material should be made illegal for adolescents.
15. The material may teach adolescents sexual techniques.
16. This material should be protected by the 1st Amendment (freedom of speech and the press).
17. I want my adolescent to watch pornographic material because adolescents should be made aware of the positive effects of this material.
18. This material serves a more positive than negative function among adolescents.
19. I want my adolescent to watch pornographic material because this material can enhance the pleasure of masturbation for adolescent boys.
20. Adolescents should be made aware of the negative effects of this material.
21. I don’t/wouldn’t want my adolescent watching pornographic material because in this material, the positioning and treatment of women is degrading to women.

Response format: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree
Appendix H  Manipulation Check

1. If you are an mTurk participant, please provide your mTurk worker ID:
   a) ____________
Appendix I Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire

Please identify how often you exhibit this behavior with your child:

1. I encourage my child to talk about the child’s troubles.
2. I guide my child by punishment more than by reason.
3. I take my child’s desires into account before asking the child to do something.
4. When my child asks why (he)(she) has to conform, I state: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.
5. I explain to my child how I feel about the child’s good and bad behavior.
6. I spank when my child is disobedient.
7. I encourage my child to talk about my child’s troubles.
8. I find it difficult to discipline my child.
9. I encourage my child to freely express (him/herself) even when disagreeing with parents.
10. I punish by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations.
   11. I emphasize the reasons for rules.
11. I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset.
12. I yell or shout when my child misbehaves.
13. I give praise when my child is good.
14. I give into my child when (he)(she) causes a commotion about something.
15. I explode in anger towards my child.
16. I threaten my child with punishment more often than actually giving.
17. I take into account my child’s preferences in making plans for the family.
18. I grab my child when being disobedient.
19. I state punishments to my child but do not actually do them.
20. I show respect for my child’s opinions by encouraging my child to express them.
21. I allow my child to give input into family rules.
   23. I scold and criticize to make my child improve.
1. I spoil my child.
2. I give my child reasons why rules should be obeyed.
   26. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.
   27. I have warm and intimate times together with my child.
22. 28. I punish by putting my child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.
29. I help my child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.
30. I scold or criticize when my child’s behavior doesn’t meet my expectations.
31. I explain the consequences of the child’s behavior.
25. 32. I slap my child when the child misbehaves.

Response Format: (1) Never, (2) Once in a while, (3) About half the time, (4) Very often, (5) Always