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Damaged Goods: Perception of Pornography Addiction as a Mediator Between Religiosity and Relationship Anxiety Surrounding Pornography Use

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Recent research on pornography suggests that perception of addiction predicts negative outcomes above and beyond pornography use. Research has also suggested that religious individuals are more likely to perceive themselves to be addicted to pornography, regardless of how often they are actually using pornography. Using a sample of 686 unmarried adults, this study reconciles and expands on previous research by testing perceived addiction to pornography as a mediator between religiosity and relationship anxiety surrounding pornography. Results revealed that pornography use and religiosity were weakly associated with higher relationship anxiety surrounding pornography use, whereas perception of pornography addiction was highly associated with relationship anxiety surrounding pornography use. However, when perception of pornography addiction was inserted as a mediator in a structural equation model, pornography use had a small indirect effect on relationship anxiety surrounding pornography use, and perception of pornography addiction partially mediated the association between religiosity and relationship anxiety surrounding pornography use. By understanding how pornography use, religiosity, and perceived pornography addiction connect to relationship anxiety surrounding pornography use in the early relationship formation stages, we hope to improve the chances of couples successfully addressing the subject of pornography and mitigate difficulties in romantic relationships.

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