Charles University Faculty of Arts

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DISSERTATION THESIS PROPOSITIONS

PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION AND PARTNER SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Konzumace pornografie a partnerská sexuální aktivita

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1 Introduction

Pornography is still a contemporary issue. Although many studies claim that the consumption of pornography has negative consequences for sexuality in general (Maddox et al., 2011; Bridges & Morokoff, 2011; Štulhofer et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2018), there have also been many studies focusing on the context of pornography consumption that speak for a positive consequence in the case of shared pornography consumption in a relationship (Daneback et al., 2009; Poulsen et al., 2013; Kohut et al., 2017; Willoughby & Leonhardt, 2018; Carvalho et al., 2013; McKee, 2007). The current study focused on associations between the context of pornography consumption and partner sexual activity. Is pornography consumption in case of shared use beneficial for couples?

The current study focused on the frequency of intercourse as one of the essential areas of sexuality, which has a solid connection to overall relationship satisfaction (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005; Sprecher & Cate, 2004; Impett et al., 2014). Previous studies believed that pornography consumption reduces interest in sexual activity within relationships (Kohut et al., 2017). Grov et al. (2017) showed that shared pornography consumption can lead to higher frequency of sexual intercourse. On the other hand, we do not have enough research examining the connection between the context of pornography use in a relationship and sexual desire (Willoughby et al., 2020). Overall, studies did not indicate a decrease in sexual desire in association with pornography consumption. We can observe an increase or no effect on sexual desire (Bennet et al., 2019). Another essential area is sexual satisfaction. Research showed that shared pornography consumers are more sexually satisfied than solitary consumers (Daneback et al., 2009; Yucel & Gassanov, 2010; Willoughby & Leonhardt, 2018; Kohut et al., 2021; Lexová, 2020). Simultaneously, research showed similar results in the case of sexual communication. Shared pornography consumers communicated more with each other and experienced greater closeness than partners who did not share their pornography consumption in a romantic relationship (Kohut et al., 2018). Emotional and sexual aspects of intimacy are crucial correlates of relationship satisfaction. At the same time, sexual satisfaction corresponds to emotional intimacy (Yoo et al., 2014). Together with commitment, this is an essential and often research-related area of investigating the quality of relationships. Therefore, we focused on these areas as well. At the same time, attention is focused on infidelity, which is closely related to intimacy and commitment. A recent study (Borgogna et al., 2020) did not find any association between infidelity and pornography consumption. However, research is not consistent in this area. Thus, it was crucial to incorporate this topic into the current project. As well as the last significant area of partner sexual activity – sexual experimentation. Pornography consumption tends to be associated with greater experimentation with sexual practices in romantic relationships (Grubbs et al., 2019; Martyniuk & Štulhofer, 2018; Mattebo et al., 2016; Weinberg et al., 2010). At the same time, we can assume that shared pornography consumers communicate more about their preferences and try to inspire and enrich their sex lives more than solitary consumers or non-consumers (Lexová, 2020).

2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study asked if there is an association between the context of pornography consumption in relationships and partner sexual activity. We compared shared pornography consumers, concordant solitary pornography consumers, discordant pornography consumers and non-consumers in the frequency of intercourse, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, sexual communication and openness, intimacy and commitment, infidelity, and sexual experimentation. Based on the literature review, we set the hypotheses. At the same time, we included moderating factors and covariates in the analysis, which is more described in the dissertation.

2.1 Hypotheses

H1: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption, discordant pornography consumption, or no consumption will display a significantly higher frequency of intercourse.

H2: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption, discordant pornography consumption, or no consumption will display a significantly higher sexual desire.

H3: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship and nonconsumers, compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption, will display significantly higher levels of sexual satisfaction.

H4: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption, and non-consumers will display significantly higher levels of sexual communication and openness.

H5: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship and nonconsumers, compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption, will display significantly higher values on the scales of intimacy and commitment. H6: Individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption compared to individuals with shared pornography consumption and non-consumers will display a significantly higher rate of infidelity.

H7: Individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption, discordant pornography consumption, or no consumption will display significantly higher values on the scales of sexual experimentation.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The current study's participants were men and women who had been in a romantic relationship for at least six months at the time of data collection and for at least 18 years old. The sample consisted of 1,742 people with an average age of 31.71 years and an average relationship length of 81.2 months. At the same time, we also collected data from 100 couples to have more detailed insight.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Sample

Men	54.6%
Women	45.4%
M	31.71
SD	8.08
Primary education	3.5 %
Vocational education	9.6 %
Secondary education	44.8 %
Higher professional education	4.5 %
University education	37.6 %
Dating	20.1 %
Cohabiting	42.4 %
Married	37.5 %
Heterosexual	96 %
Homosexual	4 %
M	81.2
SD	72.2
Heterosexual	85,5 %
Bisexual	10,9 %
Homosexual	3,6 %
	Women M SD Primary education Vocational education Secondary education Higher professional education University education Dating Cohabiting Married Heterosexual Homosexual M SD Heterosexual Bisexual

3.2 Procedure

The current study used a quantitative research design. Data were collected through an online questionnaire in Google Forms advertised on social networks (Facebook, Instagram). The questionnaire contained 126 items in total. Data collection was preceded by a pilot version of the study. Data collection started in July 2021 and ended in September

2021. Participation was voluntary and without financial reward. Informed consent and conditions of participation were at the beginning of the questionnaire.

3.3 Measures

The questionnaire contained several demographic items, relationship items, and pornography items. Frequency of intercourse was measured by asking participants, "How many times a month do you have sexual intercourse with your partner?". In the case of sexual desire, we used some items from The Partner-Specific Sexual Liking and Sexual Wanting Scale (Krishnamurti & Loewenstein, 2011) questionnaire. For sexual satisfaction, the questionnaire was inspired by The Quality of Sex Inventory (Shaw & Rogge, 2016), The Partner-Specific Sexual Liking and Sexual Wanting Scale (Krishnamurti & Loewenstein, 2011), and The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (Štulhofer et al., 2011). Sexual communication was measured by items inspired and modified from The Verbal and Nonverbal Sexual Communication Questionnaire (Santos-Iglesias & Byers, 2018), The Sexual Self-Disclosure Scale (Snell et al., 1989), and The Sexual Communication Self-Efficacy Scale (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2016). Items related to intimacy and commitment were adjusted and used from the Triangular Love Scale questionnaire (Lemieux & Hale, 2000). Regarding infidelity, we used questions: "Have you ever kissed anyone other than your partner during your current relationship?", Have you ever had any sexual activities (other than sexual intercourse) with anyone other than your partner during your current relationship?" and "Have you ever had sexual intercourse during your current relationship?". Sexual experimentation was measured with questions about how many and what different sexual practices they use in their relationship.

3.4 Data Analytic Strategy

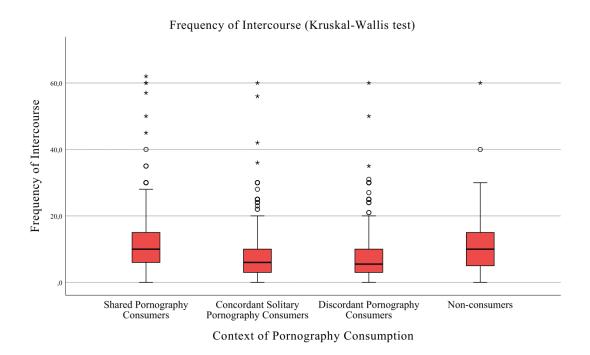
We used SPSS Statistics version 26.0 for data analysis. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was used to test whether the data were normally distributed. The distribution was violated. Therefore, we used a Two-Step Transformation to Normality to reduce negative skewness. We used the Kruskal-Wallis test, one-way and two-way ANOVA, ANCOVA, and the Chi-square test of independence for data analysis. A significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ was chosen for all tests.

4 Results

4.1 Frequency of Intercourse

A Kruskal-Wallis test indicated a significant difference in the frequency of intercourse per month in the context of pornography consumption in romantic relationships, $\chi^2(3) = 111$, p = <.001, $\epsilon^2 =.063$. The DSCF pairwise comparisons post hoc test showed that shared pornography consumers were statistically significant differences compared to concordant solitary pornography consumers (W = 10.67, p = <.001) and discordant pornography consumers (W = 13.49, p = <.001). Relationships in which pornography was not consumed were different from concordant solitary pornography consumers (W = 6.19, p = <.001) and discordant pornography consumers (W = 7.89, p = <.001) as well. Shared pornography consumers and non-consumers did not differ (W = 0.62, p = .972). These relationships had the highest frequency of intercourse per month.

Figure 1 Frequency of Intercourse (Kruskal-Wallis test)



4.1.1 Couple Data

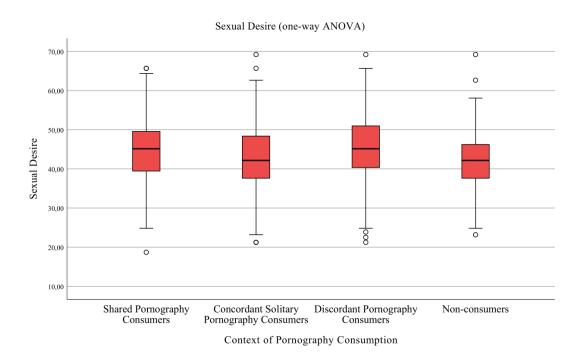
A Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was not a significant difference between the frequency of intercourse per month and the context of pornography consumption in romantic relationships, $\chi^2(3) = 0.92$, p = .822, $\epsilon^2 = .009$.

4.2 Sexual Desire

One-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant relationship between the context of pornography consumption and sexual desire, F(3,1738)=11.56, p=<.001, $\eta^2=.020$.

Tukey post hoc test indicated that shared pornography consumers had higher sexual desire than concordant solitary pornography consumers (p = .004) and non-consumers (p = .008). Shared pornography consumers and discordant pornography consumers did not differ (p = .630).

Figure 2 Sexual Desire (one-way ANOVA)



4.2.1 Gender

A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant relationship between gender and sexual desire, F(1, 1740) = 105.34, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .057$.

Two-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect of the context of pornography consumption on sexual desire, F(3,1734) = 4.65, p = .003, $\eta^2 = .008$. Gender had a significant effect on sexual desire as well, F(1,1734) = 46.99, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .026$. At the same time, no statistically significant effect was found between the context of pornography consumption and gender on the levels of sexual desire, F(3, 1734) = 0.49, p = .688, $\eta^2 = .001$.

Women had significantly lower sexual desire than men. Results may indicate that the context of pornography consumption does not affect men and women differently. It seems like gender has affected the interaction between the context of pornography consumption and sexual desire.

4.2.2 Couple Data

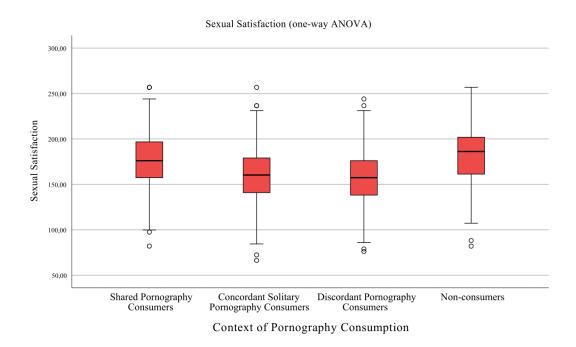
One-way ANOVA showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the context of pornography consumption and sexual desire, F(3,96) = 0.82, p = .485, $\eta^2 = .025$.

4.3 Sexual Satisfaction

One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of the context of pornography consumption in relationships on sexual satisfaction, F(3,1738)=65.18, p=<.001, $\eta^2=.101$.

Pairwise comparisons showed that participants who consumed pornography together were more sexually satisfied than participants who consumed pornography separately (p = <.001) or only by one of the partners in a relationship (p = <.001). Simultaneously, non-consumers and shared consumers did not differ (p = .463).

Figure 3 Sexual Satisfaction (one-way ANOVA)



4.3.1 Couple Data

One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of the context of pornography consumption in relationships on sexual satisfaction, F(3,96) = 4.51, p = .005, $\eta^2 = .123$.

Pairwise comparisons showed that non-consumers were more sexually satisfied than participants who consumed pornography separately (p = .003) or only by one of the partners in a relationship (p = .012). Simultaneously, non-consumers and shared consumers did not differ (p = .157).

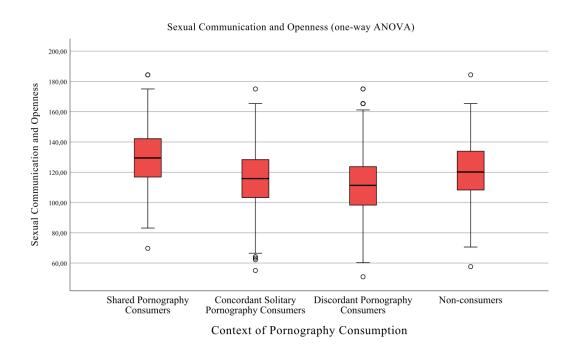
4.4 Sexual Communication and Openness

One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of the way pornography was consumed in relationships on sexual communication and openness, F(3,1738) = 84.98, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .128$.

Post hoc test showed that individuals from relationships with shared pornography consumption had higher scores of sexual communication and openness than individuals from relationships with separate pornography consumption (p = <.001), by only one of the

partners (p = <.001) or not at all (p = <.001). Discordant pornography use had the lowest score on the scale of sexual communication and openness.

Figure 4 Sexual Communication and Openness (one-way ANOVA)



4.4.1 Couple Data

One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of the way pornography was consumed in relationships on sexual communication and openness, F(3,96) = 6.03, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .159$.

The post hoc test showed that shared pornography consumers had higher scores of sexual communication and openness than couples with solitary pornography consumption (p = <.001) and couples with discordant pornography consumption (p = <.001). Shared pornography consumers and non-consumers did not differ (p = .424).

4.5 Intimacy, Commitment, and Infidelity

One-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of the context of pornography consumption in relationships on intimacy and commitment, F(3,1738) = 45.97, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .074$. The post hoc test indicated that non-consumers had the highest level of intimacy and commitment compared to shared pornography consumers (p = <.001), concordant pornography consumers (p = <.001), and discordant pornography consumers (p = <.001).

Shared pornography consumers had the second highest level of intimacy and commitment. Concordant and discordant pornography consumers (p = .960) did not differ from each other.

Figure 5 Intimacy and Commitment (one-way ANOVA)

4.5.1 Infidelity

There was a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of kissing is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 35.95$, p = <.001, Cramér's $\phi = .144$. Non-consumers had the least risk of experiencing infidelity in the form of kissing in their relationship.

Context of Pornography Consumption

There was a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of sexual activities (except sexual intercourse) is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 36.66$, p = <.001, Cramér's $\phi = .145$. Non-consumers had the least risk of experiencing infidelity in the form of sexual activities (except sexual intercourse) in their relationship.

There was a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of sexual intercourse is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 23.99$, p = <.001, Cramér's $\phi = .117$. Non-consumers had the least risk of experiencing infidelity in the form of sexual intercourse in their relationship.

4.5.2 Couple Data

One-way ANOVA showed that there was not a significant main effect of the context of pornography consumption in relationships on intimacy and commitment, F(3,96) = 2.47, p = .067, $\eta^2 = .072$.

Regarding couple data, there was not a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of kissing is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 1.56$, p = .668, Cramér's $\phi = .125$.

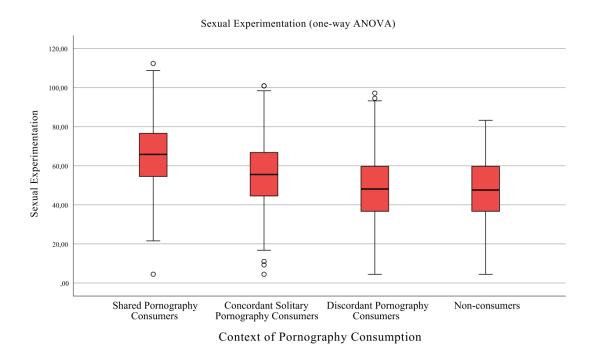
Regarding couple data, there was not a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of sexual activities (except sexual intercourse) is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 2.79$, p = .425, Cramér's $\varphi = .167$.

Regarding couple data, there was not a significant association between the context of pornography consumption and whether infidelity in the form of sexual intercourse is happening, $\chi^2(3) = 2.85$, p = .415, Cramér's $\varphi = .169$.

4.6 Sexual Experimentation

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the context of pornography consumption in relationships on sexual experimentation, F(3,1737) = 109.35, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .159$. Tukey post hoc test showed that shared pornography consumers had the highest level of sexual experimentation compared to concordant pornography consumers (p = <.001), discordant pornography consumers (p = <.001), and non-consumers (p = <.001). Non-consumers and discordant pornography consumers had the lowest level of sexual experimentation.

Figure 6 Sexual Experimentation (one-way ANOVA)



4.6.1 Couple Data

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the context of pornography consumption in relationships on sexual experimentation, F(3,96) = 8.24, p = <.001, $\eta^2 = .205$.

Tukey post hoc test showed that shared pornography consumers had the highest level of sexual experimentation compared to concordant pornography consumers (p = .002), discordant pornography consumers (p = .001), and non-consumers (p = .023). Non-consumers, concordant and discordant pornography consumers had the lowest level of sexual experimentation and did not differ from each other.

5 Discussion

The popularity of pornography is constantly growing. Pornography consumption within relationships is still a current topic, even in couple therapy. That being the case, we focused on the association between pornography consumption and areas of partner sexual activity.

The hypothesis that shared pornography consumers, compared to concordant solitary pornography consumers, discordant pornography consumers, and non-consumers, will display a significantly higher frequency of intercourse was only partially supported as our results showed that shared pornography consumers and non-consumers had the highest frequency of intercourse per month. Results are inconsistent with previous studies (Grov et al., 2010; Benjamin & Tlusten, 2010; Willoughby & Leonhardt, 2018; Willoughby et al., 2020; Huntington et al., 2020), according to which our hypothesis was formed.

Our hypothesis that individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship, compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption, discordant pornography consumption, or no consumption, will display a significantly higher sexual desire was not supported to the full extent as well. Results showed that together with shared pornography consumers, discordant pornography consumers also had the highest sexual desire. Results are not consistent with previous study (Lexová, 2020). Through a detailed analysis of moderating factors, it was shown that men generally had more sexual desire and, at the same time, were more in the discordant pornography consumers group. Therefore, it affected the observed results in this way.

In the case of sexual satisfaction, our hypothesis that participants with shared pornography consumption in relationships and non-consumers, compared to participants with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption, will display significantly higher levels of sexual satisfaction was fully supported. Results are consistent with previous studies (Lexová, 2020; Maddox et al., 2011; Yucel & Gassanov, 2010; Willoughby & Leonhardt, 2018; Daneback et al., 2009; Kohut et al., 2021).

The findings in our study indicated that partners from relationships in which pornography is consumed at least partly together had the highest levels of sexual communication and openness among all. Thus, our hypothesis that individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption, discordant pornography consumption, and non-consumers will display significantly higher levels of sexual communication and openness was fully supported.

Findings are consistent with previous studies (Daneback et al., 2009; Willoughby et al., 2016; Kohut et al., 2018; Lexová, 2020).

Our hypothesis that individuals with shared pornography consumption in a relationship and non-consumers, compared to individuals with concordant solitary pornography consumption and discordant pornography consumption, will display significantly higher values on the scales of intimacy and commitment was fully supported. Shared pornography consumers and non-consumers had the highest level of intimacy and commitment, which is consistent with previous findings (Minarcik et al., 2016; Maddox et al., 2011). We also observed with a moderate effect size that partners in which relationships pornography is not consumed have the least risk of experiencing infidelity in the form of kissing, other sexual activities, and intercourse in their romantic relationship. Therefore, our hypothesis was fully supported, and results are consistent with previous research (Maddox et al., 2011) stating that pornography consumers reported more infidelity than non-consumers.

Current findings fully supported our hypothesis that shared pornography consumers, compared to concordant pornography consumers, discordant pornography consumers, and no consumers, will display significantly higher values on the scale of sexual experimentation. Results are consistent with previous study (Lexová, 2020). As in the earlier studies (Daneback et al., 2009; Kohut et al., 2017; Rausch et al., 2017; Olmstead et al., 2013; Martyniuk & Štulhofer; 2018), we can assume that pornography consumption, in general, is associated with learning new sexual practices and sexual experimentation.

Couple data were consistent with individual data in the case of sexual satisfaction and sexual experimentation. Couple data and individual data were similar in sexual communication and openness. A couple data showed that together with shared pornography consumers, non-consumers had the highest sexual communication and openness score as well. In contrast to individual data, couple data did not show any significant differences between the context of pornography consumption and frequency of intercourse, sexual desire, intimacy, commitment and infidelity.

The results indicate that shared pornography consumers have the highest sexual experimentation and sexual communication. Along with non-consumers, shared pornography consumers had the highest intimacy and commitment, sexual satisfaction, and frequency of intercourse per month. Partners who did not consume pornography were the least likely to experience infidelity in their relationship. Based on the obtained results, we present a possible explanation that the consumption of pornography itself is not a source of difficulties in romantic relationships but can be an indicator of the overall quality and satisfaction of the relationship.

Conclusion

The current study provided insight into the connection between the context of pornography consumption and partner sexual activity. Findings showed that shared pornography consumers had the highest sexual communication and sexual experimentation. Together with non-consumers, shared pornography consumers were the most sexually satisfied and had the highest frequency of intercourse, intimacy, and commitment. In addition, non-consumers had the least risk of experiencing infidelity in their relationship. Lastly, shared pornography consumers and discordant pornography consumers had the highest sexual desire. Nonetheless, the effect was most likely influenced by gender. Couple data were also explored and discussed throughout the project. Based on the obtained results, the thesis presents a possible explanation that the consumption of pornography itself is not a source of difficulties in romantic relationships but can instead be an indicator of overall relationship quality and satisfaction. Current research findings could be used in practice, mainly in couple counselling. Future studies should investigate moderating factors further, preferably through couple data only.

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Publication, Academic and Pedagogical Activity

Internships:

February – March 2024 Internship at Research Laboratory in Human Sexuality (SexLab), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal

Participation in Congresses:

- Lexová, E. & Weiss, P. (2020). Pornografie a partnerská sexuální aktivita. 28. Celostátní kongres k sexuální výchově v České republice, Pardubice, Česká republika.
- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2020). Pornografie a partnerská sexuální aktivita. Symposium České společnosti pro sexuální medicínu, Český Krumlov, Česká republika.
- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2022). Pornografie a spokojenost v partnerských vztazích. Symposium České společnosti pro sexuální medicínu, Český Krumlov, Česká republika.
- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2023). Pornography and Sexual Satisfaction in Relationships. 24th Congress of the ESSM, Rotterdam, Netherlands.
- Burian Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2023). Sexual Communication and Pornography Consumption in Romantic Relationships. 26th Congress of the World Association for Sexual Health, Antalya, Turkey.
- Burian Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2024). Pornography Consumption and its Association with Intimacy, Commitment, and Infidelity in Romantic Relationships. 25th Congress of the ESSM, Bari, Italy.
- Burian Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2024). Konzumace pornografie a partnerská sexuální aktivita. Symposium České společnosti pro sexuální medicínu, Český Krumlov, Česká republika.

Publications:

- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2020). Dosavadní poznatky v oblasti konzumace pornografických materiálů a partnerské sexuální aktivity. *Sexuológia: časopis Slovenskej sexuologickej spoločnosti*, 20(2), 25-30.
- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2021). Souvislosti mezi konzumací pornografických materiálů a partnerskou sexuální aktivitou. *Česká a Slovenská Psychiatrie*, 117(1), 20-25.
- Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2023). Pornography and Sexual Satisfaction in Relationships. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 20.
- Burian Lexová, E., & Weiss, P. (2023). Context of pornography consumption and sexual desire in romantic relationships. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 1-20.

Academic Experience:

February – May 2023 Teaching the subject "How to write and publish articles".

February – May 2023 Supervision of student scientific projects within the subject "Psychological Methodology"

Since July 2024 Supervision of bachelor's thesis: "Prevalence, postoje a povědomí o deepfake pornografii v České republice: Replikace mezinárodní studie" - Ondřej Ulrich

Participation in the organisation of entrance exams

Oppositions of bachelor's theses:

- Matějová, M. (2022). Sexuální násilí na mužích specifika a copingové strategie. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.
- Zíková, K. (2022). Psychologické aspekty předstírání orgasmu. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.
- Vodičková, Š. (2023). Strach z pohybu u pacientů s chronickou bolestí krční části páteře validizace Tampa Scale. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.

- Neuhöferová, J. (2023). Mind-body terapie pro podporu zvládání komorbidní deprese u pacientů s chronickou bolestí. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.
- Sládková, J. (2023). Souvislost mezi citovou vazbou terapeuta, terapeutickou aliancí a výsledky terapie. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.
- Bendová, L. (2023). Krizová intervence u mužských obětí sexuálního násilí. Bakalářská práce FF UK, Praha.