



Sissy Hypno: Conceptualisation of Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP) and an Investigative Exploration of the Experiences of its Consumers

Sundara Kashyap Vadapalli¹ · Daria J. Kuss¹

Accepted: 17 June 2023 / Published online: 6 July 2023
© The Author(s) 2023

Abstract

Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP) is a type of pornography that is characterised by its unique autogynephilic and persuasive traits. Autogynephilia refers to the sexual pleasure one derives by imagining themselves as women. Known in the subculture as *Sissy Hypno*, this type of pornography is an altered mishmash of conventional licensed studio/mainstream pornography found on the internet, designed to interact with/persuade the user (by text or audio) and aid in the process of erotic self-feminisation. AGPP is consumed by a wide range of individuals and for a wide variety of reasons. Yet, there is little to no empirical research aimed at describing this novel form of media, the motivations of its consumers and the effects of its consumption. Therefore, this research study qualitatively explores the experiences of 16 participants (N=16, age>19), who consumed AGPP at the time of the study, by phenomenologically interpreting self-reported behaviour and self-described inclinations regarding AGPP use. The participants were recruited from *Reddit*, and the participant sample is an ethnically diverse sample consisting of men and transwomen. The key findings were categorised into the following superordinate themes: (1) Influence of AGPP on personality and individual lifestyle (2) Exploring femininity and submissive sexual behaviour and (3) Influence of AGPP on gender and sexuality. The analysis of these themes (and their subordinate themes) allows for the conceptualisation of AGPP and an analysis of its reported effects, contributes to the limited evidence of cisgender men strongly relating to Autogynephilia or erotic self-feminisation, alongside Autogynephilia being a frequent motivation for consuming AGPP. Some of the positive and negative effects of consuming AGPP (primarily focusing on gender identity, sexual attitudes and sexuality) were also identified through self-report, thereby, necessitating the need for widening the scientific exploration of Autogynephilia amongst AGPP consumers (not limited to gender categories) and the clinical implications of consuming AGPP (e.g., compulsive AGPP consumption).

Keywords Autogynephilia · Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP) · Sissy Hypno · Compulsive consumption · Erotic self-feminisation

Introduction

The internet subculture surrounding the consumption of *Sissy Hypno* pornography or erotic hypnosis or sissy porn and feminisation is prevalent and a worldwide phenomenon that is gaining notable traction (Mackay & Mackay, 2021). *Sissy Hypno* pornography is characterised by instructive and persuasive mishmashes of user-edited licensed mainstream pornography, rendered by digital multimedia (audio, video, .gif, image), and designed to interact with/persuade the user. The persuasive or suggestive aspect of the media is delivered through text-based captions appearing on the images/video or background audio, often containing instructive/suggestive messages (incorporating popular-culture driven tropes of hypnosis) communicated to the user. For example, messages such as ‘It’s okay to be girly’, ‘Live the life you want’, ‘Be a good sissy and wear panties and heels’, ‘You were born to please men’ and ‘You crave *cocks*’, may appear as text-based captions on images or videos or narrated as audio messages.

This type of mostly non-commercial pornography deserves its own categorisation amongst pornographic media as it serves the unique purposes of its viewers, those which have not yet been ‘explicitly’ expressed within the cultural history of mainstream pornography consumption. Gilbert (2020) described the type of pornographic media as Trans Porno Remix (TPR) and explained the practice of consuming it as a ritual of creating a personalised mental environment which invigorates the sensory relationship between the user and the media, which itself further extends the intimacy of the sex/gender negotiations experienced by the user through the media. In simple terms, this type of pornography provides the viewer with the appropriate environment to envision or imagine themselves as transgender individuals. However, despite the heavy transgender persona/transitioning overtones defining the subculture and the pornographic media (Ekins & King, 2010), the category of pornography and the individual consumers it caters to are far too diverse for it to be regarded solely as pornographic medium which allows viewers to see themselves as transgender individuals. While it purportedly provides a medium for certain individuals to recognise their transgender identity (Chu, 2018, 2019), it also creates an environment for viewers to engage in forms of sexual experimentation driven by gender/sexuality bending concepts stemming from erotic hypnosis and feminisation (Mackay & Mackay, 2021). Therefore, a more comprehensive nomenclature is necessary and Autogynephilia serves an appropriate basis for speculation.

Autogynephilia (or loving oneself as a woman) is defined as the predilection some men have towards being sexually aroused by the thought of identifying themselves as a woman (Blanchard, 1989). The history of Autogynephilia is rife with controversy and it is a widely impugned one, both within and outside the bounds of academia, mainly due to its suggestion of a fetishistic motivation for gender transition in some MtF (Male to Female) transgender individuals. Autogynephilia formed the basis for a typology of MtF gender dysphoria presented by Blanchard (1989), in which two

subtypes of gender dysphoric men were suggested: MtF transgender individuals who are exclusively attracted to men (*Androphiles*) and MtF transgender people who are aroused by the thought of being women (*Autogynephiles*). The hypothesis sparked controversy and has since garnered severe criticism from transgender activists for misrepresenting an already disenfranchised minority, apart from conflating gender with sexuality – some of these impressions were recorded in later academic research (Veale et al., 2012). Moser (2010) criticised Autogynephilia theory for its misrepresentation of the transgender community and cited the lack of concrete evidence in case studies and clinical observations, which are too limited to be generalisable – as in Blanchard (1991, 2005) – while also crucially criticising the idea that Autogynephilia is always absent in MtF transgender people who are attracted to men and always present in MtF transgender people who are not exclusively attracted to men. There are a few proponents of Autogynephilia theory within academia. Lawrence (2011, 2017), wrote extensively about the association of Autogynephilia with erotic target identity inversion – a concept defined by Blanchard (1985) – which attempted to suggest and explain the shift in erotic target from women to oneself in Autogynephiles, and recognised Autogynephilia as a clinical construct that is useful to understand the experiences of some transwomen. Though some researchers have later explored the concept of erotic target identity inversion (ETII) within and outside the context of Autogynephilia (Brown et al., 2020), others have suggested plausible alternative hypotheses (such as masochism), while recognising the usefulness of ETIIs to explain other paraphilias (Hsu & Bailey, 2022), and some others have criticised the concept on the grounds of limited evidence (Pfaus et al., 2020).

While some transgender individuals relate to Autogynephilia (Veale et al., 2012; Lawrence, 2005), the evidence is too limited to establish a typology of MtF Transgender typology based on sexuality (Blanchard, 1989), and moreover can be reduced to exceptions in the face of the generalisable, broadly recognised and critically validated experiences of most transgender individuals (Cohen-Kettenis, 2003; Cooper et al., 2020). The current study does not aim to resolve the controversial debate of Autogynephilia. Rather, it recognises the value of Autogynephilia as a heuristic construct which may not be particularly limited to the realm of MtF transgenderism. Very few studies have touched upon the construct outside the transgender context (Moser, 2009; Veale, 2010), and that too sufficiently in a targeted way. The current study presumptively addresses this gap by exploring the experiences of *Sissy Hypno* pornography consumers.

Within the context of *Sissy Hypno*, Autogynephilia, in its literal definition (of loving oneself as a woman) and heuristic construct, serves as a potentially valid descriptor for scientific exploration. While there is neither empirical evidence nor past research on the subject suggesting that the consumers of this novel category of pornography are experiencing Autogynephilia, nor is there significant amount of data to suggest that the said pornographic media is hypnotic to follow the subculture nomenclature endorsed by the subculture (Mackay & Mackay, 2021), the most generic format of ideas communicated through this type of media are those that relate to erotic self-feminisation (and also emasculation). Apart from the above themes, the content heavily focuses on submissive feminisation and/or the assumption of a (mostly submissive) feminine identity and persuasion (Gilbert, 2020; Johanssen,

2021; Mackay and Mackay, 2021). Racial, submissive male homosexuality/bisexuality, cross-dressing and gender transition subtexts are also not uncommon.

Due to the nature of the media and the ideas it communicates to its consumers, it is useful to bring it closer to the construct of Autogynephilia for scientific exploration. With that rationale, the current study conceptualises *Sissy hypno* as a form of Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP). AGPP is becoming an increasingly popular form of pornographic media. The most popular AGPP hosting website (“Hypnotube”, 2022) has – at the time of the study – an aggregate of 4.8 million monthly visitors from all over the world (Cardoso et al., 2022). Aside from content hosting websites such as this, AGPP has engendered sprawling subculture communities on Reddit (“r/Sissyhypno”, 2013; “r/Sissyperfection”, 2014) and other social networking websites. The current study aims to conceptualise and contribute towards the scientific understanding of AGPP and explore the effects of AGPP consumption on its consumers. The conceptual relevance of Autogynephilia in these key points of inquiry is also explored. In summary, the following research questions have been identified as gaps in current knowledge:

1. What are the motivations for consuming AGPP media?
2. What are the effects of consuming AGPP media?
3. Is there a conceptual relevance of Autogynephilia within the context of AGPP consumption?

Methods

Research Methodology

Since the research study aimed to gain qualitative insights into the consumption of AGPP, the study explored participant experience through IPA - Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012).

IPA was chosen because it allowed for the study to place the participants at the centre of their experiences and provided an ideal environment for them to interact with and make sense of those experiences, a process which in turn aided the study to gain rich qualitative insights into participant experiences regarding AGPP consumption and subsequent theorisation. The IPA approach further aimed to gather meaningful insights on self-reported behaviour within the context of the psychological research and self-perceived concerns.

Participants

For the study, sixteen adult participants were recruited (participants were over the age of 19 years; no detailed age data available). The participants were recruited online via recruitment adverts and notices made on Reddit. All the participants were active consumers of AGPP at the time of the study. The participant sample is multi-racial, consisting of 11 men and 5 transwomen, allowing scope for potential qualitative com-

parison. Their names have been anonymised (and replaced by coded pseudonyms with alphanumeric characters) to protect their confidentiality and identity.

Procedure

Upon robust survey of the current literature and analysis of the gaps in knowledge, a primary script for the semi-structured interviews was designed to address the research aims of the current study. The sample questions included: *How did you encounter AGPP? How often do you consume AGPP? Why do you consume AGPP?* One-to-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted for the IPA. The interviews were conducted by the authors through online video-conferencing applications (Teams, Zoom, Skype etc.) and *Reddit*, and lasted sixty minutes on average per participant. Thorough first-hand accounts were assimilated and qualitatively analysed through IPA to gain deeper subjective perspectives on the nature and motivations surrounding AGPP use. The methodological basis and guidelines for conducting IPA were derived from Smith and Shinebourne (2012). The analysis was conducted sequentially. In the preliminary stage of the analysis, the interview transcripts were thoroughly studied for the development of emergent themes by assimilating significant segments of information. The emergent themes were further developed as they were mapped and integrated in accordance with the thematic similarities and connectedness of the semantic information. The developed themes were then classified into superordinate and subordinate themes based on the congruence, integrity, and recurrence of the emergent themes and their relevance to participant experiences. In the later stage of the analysis (discussion section) the thematic content was interpreted by incorporating existing scientific theories in view of the lived experiences of the participants to empirically deduce the nature and relevance of the themes.

Results

Based on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the following themes were identified in the data.

Note: Other demographic data such as exact age, nationality and country of residence were collected, but were withdrawn from the final report after requests for confidentiality.

Table 1 Participants demographics

Total number of participants and inclusion criteria	Race	Sexuality	Gender Identity
16 (N= 16)	Asian: 2	Bisexual: 3	Cisgender men: 11
<u>Inclusion criteria:</u> Consumers of AGPP (Age > 19)	Black: 1	Heterosexual: 6	Trans-women: 5
	Multi-racial: 3	Homosexual (Lesbian): 2	
	White: 10	Other: 5	

Table 2 IPA theme distribution

Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Percentage of people who identified with the subordinate theme
Influence of AGPP on personality and lifestyle	'The internet made me who I am'	100% (total in number: 16)
	Life before and after AGPP	100% (total in number: 16)
	Craving and compulsive use of AGPP of 'AGPP is taking over my existence'	31.25% (total in number: 5)
Exploring Femininity and submissive sexual behaviour	Autogynephilia	81.25% (total in number: 13)
	Submissive sexuality and submissive femininity	62.5% (total in number: 10)
Influence of AGPP on gender and sexual identity	'AGPP made me realise I am trans'	31.25% (total in number: 5)
	Influence on sexual identity	68.75% (total in number: 11)

Superordinate Theme 1: Influence of AGPP on Personality and Individual Lifestyle

That Autogynephilic persuasive pornography (AGPP) has been a significant driver of influence and persuasion was identified as a common theme amongst all participants. The impact of AGPP both as a medium and as a tool of self-recognition and exploration are of primary focus.

Subordinate Theme: The Internet made me who I am

All participants noted that they would not have been the individuals they were (at the time of the study) in reference to AGPP and the independent experiences they have derived from it without the existence of the internet. This is because the internet has been their first point of contact with the experiences, they derived from AGPP (and for some the only medium of engagement with the experiences). Some participants have additionally expressed that they engage with their desires much more actively owing to the access and limitlessness the internet expounds in terms of the proliferation of content, streams of information, engagement with communities and interaction with likeminded individuals.

IS03: 'Without the internet I wouldn't have discovered any of it (AGPP) really, so I don't think it would have ever become a part of my life.'

Here, IS03 viewed the internet as a significant tool in their personal discovery. It is crucial to consider that the internet has not just catalysed their interest in AGPP, but also allowed them to engage with it and the desires which subsequently stem from it. It seems that the internet also made IS03 susceptible to change and incorporate AGPP as part of their life and established it as the primary element of their relationship with AGPP.

LI04: ‘The internet’s ability to search for AGPP, to recommend it consistently, to give years of content to me within hours, connect with like-minded people globally, has definitely made my desire for AGPP increase exponentially.’

LI04’s comments added further depth to the influence of the internet in the context of AGPP consumption. They not only highlighted the proliferation of content, but also how the internet served as an archive of all the AGPP ever produced over the years. Ultimately, for LI04 the desire for AGPP was kindled by the ability to access all that content with ease. Additionally, the ability to connect with people who shared a similar (unconventional) inclination from anywhere in the world, normalised consuming AGPP regularly.

Subordinate Theme: Life Before and life After AGPP

All participants noted that AGPP had a recognisable and significant impact on their lives and that there was a life before and a life after AGPP. The general idea is that AGPP revealed deeper aspects about themselves and/or has allowed them to embrace certain ideas and aspects about themselves (primarily sexuality and identity) and positive worldviews about others, which was difficult for them before encountering AGPP. This leads to the self-professed notion that life without AGPP would have been significantly different.

KN13: ‘When I listen or watch the videos (AGPP), I get really horny and suggestive and whatever pops up on the screen, I would usually do. The main point here is, I could turn off my brain and not think. AGPP significantly changed me in that way.’

Persuasion is part of the appeal of AGPP for KN13 stated. AGPP made them receptive to (sexual) suggestions and aided them to act upon those suggestions. While ‘losing control’ may have non-sexual connotations, for people like KN13, AGPP led to positive consequences due to them willingly following sexualised instructions. For most participants like KN13, the persuasive space which AGPP provides, allowed them to engage with latent sexual desires or newfound sexual desires which AGPP introduced.

WL11: ‘It has opened my eyes to a lot of things and has greatly affected my lifestyle, taking up most of my waking day.’

WL11 not only described AGPP as a significant tool in their personal discovery, but also indicated how AGPP has become a significant facet of their everyday existence through frequent engagement. For people like WL11, it seems that AGPP consumption was much more than an activity as it informed a lifestyle. For others, AGPP was influential for overcoming sexual shame and enabled the normalisation of contrarian worldviews.

LZ06: ‘A lot of my current views are derivatives of AGPP. I was closed to everything before AGPP (I was a closed Christian kid). Even though I don’t indulge in AGPP fully, it did change my worldview. I didn’t turn into a transsexual, but I understand why others would because of my indulgence with AGPP.’

LZ06 associated their current worldview with their experiences of viewing AGPP. Coming from a Christian environment, they gave an account of how their upbringing and religiosity influenced their sexual attitudes and experiences. Being a type of pornographic media, which sometimes features transwomen and which features gender-bending overtones, AGPP allowed LZ06 to reshape their worldview regarding sex, gender and sexuality and positively impacted their attitude towards trans people.

NA05: ‘I may still be the angry pissed off person that I was - if AGPP didn’t exist. The journey of transitioning took longer than I expected because of my marriage, but if AGPP didn’t exist, it would have taken even longer.’

Being a transwoman, NA05 added further context to the theme by recounting their experiences of transitioning. Considering that they were married before they transitioned, NA05 experienced difficulty in fully accepting who they were. While they believed that AGPP didn’t necessarily help them discover that they are trans, NA05 considered AGPP a significant tool which helped them overcome their personal and social barriers concerning their trans identity.

Overall, the significant influence of AGPP on the various facets of participants’ existence can collectively be construed as there being a ‘life before and a life after AGPP’ at the helm of the experience of consuming AGPP.

Subordinate Theme: Craving, Dependence, and Compulsive use of AGPP or AGPP is Taking over my Existence

More than half of the participants who self-identified as regular consumers of AGPP (i.e., daily consumers of AGPP) have also interpreted their drive for and nature of consuming AGPP as a strong urge. While they stated that AGPP itself is addictive, others have specifically recognised their experiences with AGPP as a form of ‘addiction’, although not in the strict clinical sense. While these experiences seem to manifest in different ways for different reasons (e.g., craving, escapism and coping), they largely point towards a compulsive use of AGPP. While addiction is a purely clinical issue that requires rigorous data, comparison and reproduction, the interviews generated valuable qualitative perspectives into motivations and context of use to regard self-reports as a precursor for the exploration of a potentially significant issue within AGPP consumer populations.

SS10: ‘It’s getting to a point when it’s always there. And I’m starting to get less and less secretive about [it], being a lot more daring in my sexual acts. I consume AGPP almost two/three times a day normally, maybe more.’

It's getting to a point where I'm watching it because I want to become addicted, if I'm being honest with myself.'

SS10 admitted to compulsively consuming AGPP and described how it took up significant portions of their time. Even though they felt it was not conventional, the frequency of the consumption normalised 'the lifestyle' and made them open towards risky sexual behaviour. It is also worth considering that for people like SS10, wanting to want to consume AGPP was as important as just wanting to consume AGPP out of the desire for it. Other participants have also expressed similar sentiments and ascribed this feeling to a sense of escapism.

MK11: 'AGPP offers an escape, an excuse, a freedom from the person you are now. It's all about giving in, cracking from the pressures you've felt all your life and assuming a completely new role. With the sissy lifestyle, you live a different way, and you receive sexual pleasure in a different way. I've described it to myself as an addiction.'

AGPP allowed MK11 to dwell in an alternate reality which is perceived to be more enjoyable, reassuring and comforting than the reality of their daily existence. While the persuasive and sexual component of AGPP manifested prominently, MK11 tied their experiences to the stronger motivation of escaping from who they were and assume an alternate identity that liberates them and enables them to engage in a lifestyle that's much different and appealing.

Superordinate Theme 2: Exploring Femininity and Submissive Sexual Behaviour

Most users reported that AGPP helped them express the feminine side of their sexuality and for some, explore femininity that was inherent to them but remained latent for personal and socio-cultural reasons. Most participants agreed to a common construct for a sexual inclination which allows them to restrict femininity to the sexual realm. However, a minority of participants associated their desire for sexual femininity with the need to transition. The exploration of femininity in the sample of AGPP consumers was thus multidimensional, and while not universal, there was a frequent association of femininity with sexual submissiveness.

Subordinate Theme: Autogynephilia

All but three participants related their motivation for consuming AGPP and the individual experiences they derived from its consumption with Autogynephilia or the sexual arousal stemming from the desire of seeing themselves as a woman. This was common to two participants who identified as transgender and eleven cisgender men (i.e., 81.25% of the participant sample identified with Autogynephilia) – this was confirmed through self-report. While some men participants strongly desired femininity (and feminine identity), their desire for femininity was highly sexual and consequently, they did not experience gender incongruence or desire to transition or need for socially expressing themselves as anything but men. Additionally, many par-

ticipants of the current study, like the members the larger subculture, used the word *sissy* to identify themselves. For them the word *sissy* has heavy connotations to Autogynephilia, and served as a unique epithet to distinguish between transwomen who desire femininity holistically (i.e., sex, gender, and sexuality) and others (cisgender men) who desire sexual femininity.

WL11: ‘I strongly relate with Autogynephilia. It makes me so horny thinking about myself as a woman.’

WL11’s views are sexual in nature and their gender identity is limited to their sexual inclinations, and they have thus related their experiences with Autogynephilia. Other participants have provided more depth regarding Autogynephilia and its potential connection to AGPP.

DO08: ‘On some level I think they are tied. AGPP helped me discover that world and usually Autogynephilia is a big component.’

DO08’s strongly associated AGPP consumption with Autogynephilia. For people like DO08, AGPP is directly connected to Autogynephilia. Additionally, it even translates to sexual behaviour typical of heterosexual women such as engaging in sexual acts with men.

CE16: ‘I very much enjoy imagining myself as a woman and pleasuring men. However, I do not identify as transgender and have no intentions of making changes to my public lifestyle.’

CE16 derived pleasure from feminising themselves in sexual situations and while pleasuring men, but explicitly expressed the distinction between their Autogynephilic tendencies (assuming a feminine sexual identity) and the transgender identity. They established that they have no desire to transition or make their sexual feminine identity a part of their social life. Some participants reported to even ritualising their Autogynephilic tendencies by assuming a feminine sexual identity or persona.

AK02: ‘I am a male and I have no problems with that. I will often during sex take a female role or name or pronoun, but these are kink-based interests and not identity ones.’

Assuming feminine roles, names and pronouns helped people like AK02 to express the feminine side of themselves during sexual activity. However, they stressed that their assumed feminine sexual identity is tied to fetishistic interests and like most cisgender men in the study, they did not have any desire to transition.

Both CE16 and AK02 expressed that their assumed feminine sexual identity did not translate into the social sphere or even the individual sphere, which is separate from sexual activity and sexual inclination. This expression is at the core of the construct of Autogynephilia which in their eyes is characterised by a desire for a feminine sexual identity that is not constrained to the realm of MtF transgenderism.

In contrast, for other participants who identified as trans, Autogynephilia had no connection to their gender identity.

NA05: I don't identify with it (Autogynephilia). At a very young age I discovered that I was different and at a very young age, I felt like I should have been born in a woman's body. I do have gender dysphoria.

NA05 provided a concrete account of how their experiences of being a transwoman was rooted in gender dysphoria and not Autogynephilia. For people like NA05, their relationship with their gender identity predated their relationship with AGPP. While some transwomen identified with the AGPP subculture nomenclature of *sissy*, most did not as the nomenclature followed the construct of Autogynephilia than being representational of the universal experiences of transwomen.

CA09: 'What's the best way to describe a sissy - the best way to describe it is - someone who generally identifies as male, maybe not always but generally, who takes on a submissive feminine role in a sexual relationship. I'm putting it as clinically as I can. So, I can understand the connection to Autogynephilia and there are Transwomen who identify as sissies as well. I did for a while before I realised it wasn't entirely accurate to myself. But I know Transwomen who absolutely identify themselves as this.'

CA09 provided a detailed account of what it is to be a *sissy*, as described in the subculture and it accurately relates to the experiences of most AGPP consumers who identified as cisgender men and closely follows the conceptualisation of Autogynephilia. While CA09 used to identify with the self-assigned nomenclature (*sissy*) of AGPP the subculture (which has autogynephilic connotations), they realised that it was insufficient as a concept to encompass their lived experience as a whole. Therefore, the concept of Autogynephilia was more universal amongst cisgender men who participated in this study and seldom a motivation for gender transition and significant to the gender identity of transwomen who consumed AGPP (only two out of five participants who identified as trans also identified with Autogynephilia). However, there were a few exceptions to both the trends.

JB07: 'I would say I'm trans as I am looking into HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) and seeing if I can be the woman I've always wanted to be. Being a woman is my dream and biggest turn on. I mean AGPP changed me so much, I was the captain of my high school swim team and now my dream is to be a trophy wife who cooks, cleans, only wears heels, cute dresses and lingerie and pleases her man.'

JB07 expressed starkly opposite views to other transwomen who participated in the study. They not only ascribed their desires to sexually feminise themselves (i.e., Autogynephilia) to their consumption of AGPP and but also desired to undergo transition because of Autogynephilia. Unlike other transwomen in the study, people like

JB07 associated their sexual inclinations with their desired feminine identity and expressed a highly sexualised motivation for transitioning.

Subordinate Theme: Submissive Sexuality and Submissive Femininity

More than half of the participants associated their sexual submissiveness with AGPP. The persuasive aspects of AGPP also fuelled sexual submissiveness in the participants, i.e., the loss of control through adherence to instructions and suggestions. Although some participants have associated sexual submissiveness with sexual femininity itself (i.e., to be sexually feminine is to be sexually submissive), they have also admittedly acknowledged their stereotypical thought process while consciously restricting this viewpoint to the fetishistic dimension. To these individuals, emasculation and submissive femininity is one of the primary motivations for consuming AGPP.

SS10: ‘I imagine myself as a slutty female and partly like an object and a toy to please men and that men use.’

Here, SS10 did not only express a desire to feminise themselves, but the feminisation of the self is also immediately followed by sexual self-objectification, allowing them to please men through submission. JB07 further expanded upon this notion.

JB07: ‘I definitely see men as the leader in my world and life, and I’ve become very submissive to their needs and wants. I dress more girly, and I see the world in a girly view, so to speak.’

People like JB07 explicitly linked sexual submissiveness with self-feminisation, and the desire to be submissive enabled them to be more and more submissive. Most participants also associated these tendencies with AGPP and also were aware and conscious of the potential problematic connection between femininity and submissive sexuality.

CE16: ‘I have pleased men (or a man, as it has only been a single person), without imagining myself as a woman, but if I were to do so now, I would be imagining being a woman. I do think that AGPP encouraged me to think of myself as more feminine. There is a link, perhaps (or likely) problematically, between submission and femininity with most AGPP.’

CE16 disclosed that the relationship between submissiveness and femininity was a recurrent theme in AGPP media, which in turn had a direct impact in their exploration of femininity through sexual submissiveness in their real life. Hence, it was necessary for them to be feminine in order to be sexually submissive and vice-versa.

Superordinate Theme 3: Influence of AGPP on Sexual and Gender Identity

The influence of AGPP on sexual and gender identity is a prevalent but complex theme. That AGPP has had a significant or not too significant, but recognisable, influence on the participant perception of gender or sexual identity was unanimously agreed upon. But the theme manifested differently among different participants, based on their gender and sexual identities and further broke down into subordinate themes.

Subordinate Theme: 'AGPP made me Realise that I am Trans'

For participants who identified as transgender, AGPP was described as either the 'point of first contact' for their gender identity and a tool that helped affirm their gender identity and expression.

CA09: 'I came into it (AGPP) at a time I was struggling with my gender identity. I was not sure who I was. The reason I formed a fondness for this kind of porn more than other kinds of porn is it helped me realise my gender identity. It made me feel I'm not just a cross-dressing guy, but a woman. My first reaction to AGPP was, oh this makes a lot of sense.'

NA05: 'For me, it (AGPP) helped me realise that I was trans.'

For people like CA09 and NA05 AGPP served as a revelatory tool into their gender identity and thus defined their AGPP consumption. Primarily amongst other possible reasons, the confusion between being a cross-dresser and identifying as a woman was an evident struggle in their relationship with gender identity, until they encountered AGPP. AGPP ultimately opened CA09 and NA05 to their womanhood and helped them transition. While these accounts characterise AGPP as a valuable tool of self-affirmation which contributes to gender identity acceptance as recognised by its transgender consumers, a minority of consumers like MK11 have expressed confusion and perturbation regarding this (gender non-conformation) and ascribe those feelings directly or indirectly to AGPP consumption or the desire that stems from consuming AGPP.

MK11: 'Sometimes I feel like I'm trans and I should live my life as a woman permanently. But other days I don't and wonder still if it's just a fetish or Autogynephilia that is doing this to me and makes me want to be a woman.'

MK11's confusion contrasted with self-identified Transwomen who have benefitted from AGPP use, because they felt that the desire to be a woman was not permanent even when it is very prominent on some occasions. These experiences led people like MK11 to conflate (with much uncertainty) gender with sexual inclinations, unlike participants who identified as transwomen.

Subordinate Theme: Influence on Sexual Identity

For some participants who were bisexual/heterosexual males and in one case, even a Transwoman, AGPP was described as either the ‘point of first contact’ into their sexual interest in men and/or as a tool that helped conform to their sexual desires and inclinations. To most participants who described themselves as heterosexual cisgender men, confusion was expressed about their sexual identity, and they ascribed the feelings directly or indirectly to AGPP consumption or the desire that stemmed from consuming AGPP. Apart from its gender-bending use, the term *sissy* is also a recurring term used to describe what some participants view as a unique sexual identity in the subculture.

CA09: ‘It (AGPP) helped me figure out a lot of things that I’m into. It did help me figure out that I’m bisexual. I’m honestly quite grateful to it. It helped me discover my actual sexuality and things that I’m willing to go through in sexual situations, also my attitude towards trying new things (fetishes).’

For CA09, AGPP was a window into their sexual identity. In this account, AGPP acted as medium through which they understood their bisexuality. Apart from serving as a tool of self-affirmation and self-discovery, AGPP also allowed people like CA09 to further explore the depth of their sexuality and sexual interests. Most other consumers of AGPP thought they experienced a unique sexuality and found the word *sissy* to best describe themselves and their sexual inclinations.

WL11: ‘I always felt like I wasn’t straight, but I didn’t think I was gay either and AGPP opened up this new sissy sexuality that fitted me perfectly - i.e., a biological man who is very effeminate, who wears girly clothing, often a chastity cage, who likes having sex with men and being humiliated.’

AGPP was an instrument of sexual discovery for participants like WL11 as well, yet, borrowing from subculture nomenclature (*sissy*), they treated AGPP driven femininity and sexual submissiveness as a manifestation of a novel form of sexual identity because the currently understood definitions of bisexuality, homosexuality, and transgender identities were not able to accurately describe and meaningfully accommodate their inclinations. They expressed that being a *sissy* was like being a man but assuming the role of a sexually submissive woman. Other participants reported that AGPP influenced them and altered their sexual inclinations.

SS10: ‘I use to class myself as a straight male. AGPP is the best way I find to picture myself as one of the sissies being used in porn, wishing I was one of them. I never had these feelings before I encountered AGPP.’

SG01: ‘I’ve never had these feelings before. I don’t know why it affected me in such extreme ways. If AGPP didn’t exist, I would definitely have been a normal cis-man.’

Participants like SS10, SG01 thought they were heterosexual men before they discovered AGPP, and they stated that without AGPP, they would not have been able to identify with their present sexual inclinations. This view is not uncommon amongst cisgender men, and it did not compare to the views held by those to whom AGPP has been a significant instrument of sexual self-discovery. Converse to that, these participants reported that AGPP influenced them, i.e., it changed them rather than help them discover themselves.

SG01 also added that AGPP influenced them and their sexual inclinations in significant ways, but also expressing confusion over these newfound feelings. Some participants even thought that the intensity of their confusion raised exponentially when they consumed AGPP more regularly.

OC12: ‘I became confused about my sexuality because of AGPP. These feelings started when the AGPP intake got more.’

In summary, it can be concluded that AGPP served as a tool of sexual discovery for some participants and a driver of sexual confusion for other participants.

Discussion

The primary aim of the current study was to understand the experiences of AGPP consumers. A critical analysis of scientific literature highlighted several gaps in knowledge pertaining to the research area, which were subsequently formulated into the following research questions:

1. What are the motivations for consuming AGPP media?
2. What are the effects of consuming AGPP media?
3. Is there a conceptual relevance of Autogynephilia within the context of AGPP consumption?

A review of the literature helped conceptualise *Sissy Hypno* pornography as Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP) and Autogynephilia (Blanchard, 1989) provided a justified heuristic construct for the conceptualisation. The nature of AGPP media and the critical analysis of the literature provided a case to explore AGPP under the afore stated conceptualisation to empirically address the research questions highlighted by the current study.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) provided the appropriate methodological framework for exploring the research questions through a person-specific approach. A critical exploration of participant accounts relevant to their experiences of consuming AGPP have contributed to the current understanding of AGPP (and to some extent Autogynephilia) by addressing the gaps in knowledge highlighted by the current study. The following section highlights these results and their implications.

The study recovered three superordinate themes. First, Influence of AGPP on personality and individual lifestyle. Under this superordinate theme the following subordinate themes were recovered: *The internet made me who I am, Life before*

and after AGPP and Craving and compulsive use of AGPP or AGPP is taking over my existence. Second, Exploring femininity and submissive sexual behaviour. Under this superordinate theme the following subordinate themes were recovered: *Autogynephilia and Submissive sexuality and submissive femininity*. Third, Influence of AGPP on gender and sexual identity. Under this superordinate theme the following subordinate themes were recovered: *AGPP made me realise I am trans and Influence on sexual identity*.

Following is the summary of the subordinate themes falling under each superordinate theme.

Influence of AGPP on Personality and Individual Lifestyle

The Internet made me who I am

Internet pornography can be influential on its viewer's worldview, sexual attitudes and, to a lesser degree, their sexual inclinations (Mass, 2010), especially amongst adolescent viewers (Pizzol et al., 2016). This is a justified reaction to internet pornography, for it allows individual viewers to indulge in sexual exploration and sexual expression with reduced personal risk - cost, time and consequence (Daneback & Ross, 2011). This principle is even more applicable to sexual minorities (Rosenmann & Safir, 2006). All the participants reported that the internet (and internet pornography) was their point of first contact with AGPP. This is understandable because AGPP is predominantly a class of online pornographic media (Mackay & Mackay, 2021). However, the internet also allowed AGPP viewers to engage with sexual inclinations that may be widely considered unconventional even if their engagement is strictly restricted to consumption. In this context, the practical bypass between the viewer and their potential sociocultural barriers to view AGPP and to engage with sexual experiences/expressions characteristic to AGPP (like erotic self-feminisation), is facilitated by the internet through online content (AGPP media) and elements of online subcultures (like community forums and groups). Additionally, the influence of the internet (and internet pornography) on self-acceptance as evidenced by previous studies (Döring, 2009) becomes pertinent in the lived experiences of AGPP consumers. In the current context specifically, the internet's potential to sexually empower individuals with unconventional sexual tendencies or desires (Rosenmann & Safir, 2006) whether through social or individualistic means, aligns with the participants' views on the internet in relation to their association with AGPP.

Life Before and After AGPP

Considering its characteristics as a type of pornographic media, AGPP is not entirely dissimilar to other contemporary pornographic media such as mainstream internet pornography (Döring, 2009) in terms of its influence and the motivations of its consumers (e.g., sexual arousal), but owing to its unique Autogynephilic and persuasive nature, it engenders characteristics and effects that are arguably unique to itself and the experiences limited to its consumption. One of the prominent features of AGPP is the suggestive space it provides to its consumers (Gilbert, 2020; Mackay & Mackay,

2021). The participants of this study have reported that AGPP allowed them to discover their sexual inclinations, and through persuasion, pushed them to mentally (and sometimes physically) engage with their newly discovered inclinations. In the same context, some participants have even attested that AGPP was solely responsible for their self-discovery and that they would have been ignorant of their sexual inclinations in the absence of AGPP. While it is difficult to establish a concrete causal link between AGPP consumption, its persuasive effect and the subsequent sexual behaviour of its consumers, the association between pornography use and its self-perceived positive effects (particularly on the viewer's sexual attitudes) was evidenced by previous literature (Hesse & Pedersen, 2017), and can add some depth to the understanding of the theme. The 'negotiating' environment provided by AGPP through suggestions may focus some of the potential positive effects of consuming pornography towards safe exploration of unconventional sexual desires or self-acceptance.

Participants hence reported that their experiences of consuming AGPP are unique in their own right, and while these are diverse within the participant sample, ranging from the influence of AGPP on personal views pertaining to gender and sexuality to the exploration of sexual desire and gender identity, the general notion is that (contextually) - life without AGPP would have been different. In addition, the positive association between liberalisation of views on sexuality and gender and pornography use was reported by previous studies (Watson & Smith, 2012; Billard, 2019). These findings are also applicable to AGPP consumers and are underlined by the fact that some AGPP media featured transwomen and largely all AGPP media project unconventional sexual ideas (such as Autogynephilia and persuasion). The newfound feelings participants associated with their AGPP consumption, i.e., self-acceptance, safe sexual exploration and embracing contrasting worldviews can be deduced as the primary reason of the perceived significance of AGPP in their lives.

Craving and Compulsive use of AGPP or AGPP is Taking over my Existence

There is a compulsive aspect to AGPP consumption. More than half of the participants who reported to view AGPP regularly (daily viewing) subsequently reported compulsive AGPP use to the extent that some participants even described it as an addiction. However, there is limited data to establish compulsive AGPP use as a form of non-substance addiction (behavioural addiction). Moreover, the criteria for behavioural addiction (Zou et al., 2017) necessitate a critical clinical approach to deduce a repetitive, compulsive behavioural inclination as a non-substance addiction and it is beyond the scope of the current study to clinically analyse and interpret the self-described compulsive use of AGPP of the participants. Hence, the qualitative accounts (however insightful) gathered in the current study are not reliable enough to further investigate the compulsive nature of AGPP consumption. In addition to that, the criteria for porn addiction and self-perceived pornography addiction (SPPA) are a matter of unresolved academic debate (Duffy et al., 2016), contributing to further inconclusiveness in the theme.

The participant accounts also offered contextual background for alternative hypotheses. In this unique context, escapism as a motivation provides a reasonable buffer between interpretation and the overarching quantitative barrier the current

study cannot overcome. This view is based on the association between digital media engagement with the motivation to escape and seek an alternate reality (Calleja, 2010; Subudhi et al., 2020), and the link between problematic and compulsive use of digital media (Kuss et al., 2012; Young et al., 2017; Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2019; Chen & Chang, 2019) and escapism, leading to recognisable dysfunction in the individual (Igovreva, 2015; Stenseng et al., 2021). But conclusive remarks cannot be made due to the limitations of the study and the participant accounts strongly merit future exploration of compulsive use of AGPP as a concern with potential clinical significance in the subculture.

Exploring Femininity and Submissive Sexual Behaviour

Autogynephilia

A total of thirteen out of sixteen participants in the current study reported to be sexually aroused by erotic self-feminisation or the thought of seeing themselves as women - Autogynephilia (Blanchard, 1989). Of the 13 participants in the study who identified with Autogynephilia, eleven were men who did not desire to undergo gender transition - only two out of five participants who identified as transwomen identified with Autogynephilia, thereby contributing to the limited evidence of cisgender men relating to Autogynephilia and controversially, some transwomen.

That Autogynephilia can be experienced without the desire to cross dress or without any underlying gender incongruence and transition to one's *unassigned at birth* gender, renders it a unique sexual inclination among cisgender men and is a conceptualisation not sufficiently explored in scientific research. The primary idea here is that the assumed feminine identity is centred around sexual activity and sexual inclination and is constrained within that realm of identity.

Whether Autogynephilia can actually be experienced by transwomen on the other hand, either before or after transitioning to their identified gender (female) is a far more complex question and out of the scope of the present research. However, there is some qualitative insight to speculate that the self-described motivation to transition or to undergo gender transition may not be absolutely homogeneous in the light of the evidence (2 participants who identified as transgender identified with Autogynephilia) gathered in this study, aligning with limited existing literature (Nuttbrock et al., 2011; Lawrence, 2011). It is important to explore this question as an exception to the broad experience of the population of transwomen, whose lived experience of gender identity is holistic and not limited to sexual inclinations alone (Cohen-Kettenis, 2003). Thus, the self-reported sexual reasons (e.g., Autogynephilia) to undergo gender transition in AGPP consumers is a potential topic for future exploration. Additionally, if Autogynephilia can be considered as a self-reported sexual motivation for some individuals to undergo gender transition, then the question of whether Autogynephilia can be experienced post gender-transition (i.e., after achieving the desired feminine identity), becomes an immediate question. These are potential areas of exploration for future research focusing on AGPP consumers who belong to the transgender community.

In summary, there is a strong connection between AGPP consumption and Autogynephilia based on the participant accounts. The paraphilic dimension of Autogynephilia remains underexplored and its relevance in AGPP consumers is a significant matter of scientific inquiry. Overall, the study does not make significant contributions to the Autogynephilia debate, but provides qualitative directions for more rigorous research. The primary contribution it makes in that regard is that Autogynephilia is an important motivation for the participants of this study to consume AGPP and most cisgender men and a minority of transwomen strongly identified with it.

Submissive Sexuality and Submissive Femininity

The association between taking sexual suggestions (persuasion) through AGPP and experiencing sexual submissiveness can be established by the evidence gathered by the current study. The association between sexual submissiveness and femininity is a direct progression of this subordinate theme because participants view erotic self-feminisation in likeness to emasculation, which in turn is perceived as sexually submissive by them. It is unclear whether the predilection towards femininity is being expressed through sexual submissiveness or vice versa, but that feminisation, emasculation, and submissiveness factor into the experience of consuming AGPP is a valid interpretation which can be deduced from the participant experiences. The stereotypical link between submissiveness and femininity in sex roles is a complex scholarly matter (McCreary & Rhodes, 2001; Jeffreys, 2008; Fugère et al., 2008) and the underlying motivations to explore sexual femininity through sexual submissiveness, and in view of that, the subsequent association between sexual masochism and Autogynephilia in AGPP consumers, is worth exploring but remains outside of the scope of the current study. That the exploration of femininity through sexual submissiveness and vice versa is a visible component of AGPP consumption can however be established and it follows the justification that AGPP consumers are assisted by the suggestive space of AGPP media to engage with their sexual inclinations. As AGPP consumers are assisted by the instructive/suggestive (and persuasive) nature of AGPP media to engage with their sexual inclinations (of which emasculation is a recurrent idea), this subordinate theme provides an incentive to explore the possible connection between Autogynephilia and sexual masochism amongst AGPP consumers.

Influence of AGPP on Gender and Sexual Identity

AGPP made me Realise I am Trans

The positive influence of AGPP consumption on the gender identity of transgender consumers is evidenced by the current study, based on the experiences of all the five participants who identified as transgender. It is thus possible to characterise AGPP as a valuable tool of self-affirmation which contributes to gender identity acceptance as recognised by its transgender consumers. The evidence also aligns with Gilbert's (2020) description and definition of AGPP experience as a way of engaging with the desire of a future transgender identity in a suggestible environment facilitated by AGPP. Additionally, the positive role of internet sexuality and pornography in

the expression, self-acceptance and emancipation of gender and sexual minorities (Döring, 2009) is a valid interpretation of the positive experiences of transgender participants with AGPP consumption. In contrast, 2 participants reported AGPP induced confusion and subsequent perturbation over their gender identity. It may be worth considering how sociocultural constructs of gender identity and its influence on sexuality may have negative psychological outcomes to those who are not able to positively conform to those constructs (Herek, 1986); the complexity of gender and sexuality may necessitate the need to accommodate the diverse experiences of some individuals, outside of constructs limited by traditional and not completely understood views on gender and sexuality (Jourian, 2015). However, the disparities within AGPP consumers cannot be explained through qualitative interpretation and the potential psychological distress experienced by some AGPP consumers due to induced confusion over identity is a matter of potential clinical significance. In summary, it can be established that AGPP helped participants who identified as transwomen and confused a minority of other AGPP consumers who occasionally felt they were trans because of their inclinations, but generally felt they were cisgender men.

Influence on Sexual Identity

The positive influence of AGPP consumption on the sexual identity of some consumers who discovered their sexual interest in men through AGPP is evidenced by the current study. In this context, AGPP can be established as a tool of sexual discovery and self-exploration. The positive influence of pornography on sexual self-acceptance (Döring, 2009) offers a valid justification. However, in contrast, five participants have reported AGPP induced confusion over their sexual identity and sexual inclinations. Whether it is due to the paraphilic dimension of Autogynephilia, is a matter made complex by sociocultural constructs and their potential influence on perceived sexual identity and subsequently shame, acceptance and coping mechanisms varying between consumers of AGPP (Mollon, 2005; Moser & Kleinplatz, 2020). A completely paraphilic reading of AGPP induced consumption is hence not merited.

Why AGPP served as a tool of self-discovery for some and as confusion for others may depend on the distinction between sexual orientation or other identity and paraphilic fetishism – owing to the reported distress experienced by some consumers. However, other social factors such as culture and sexual shame (Murray et al., 2007) may also be at play within this dimension, and depending on the coping mechanisms of the consumers, may be affecting their experience of their unconventional sexual interests and approach to gender identity (Mollon, 2005). Moreover, apart from being hard to study, the history of the study of paraphilias has shown that paraphilias are often misunderstood, lead to unnecessary pathologisation and don't necessarily and reliably reveal the nuances behind unconventional sexual behaviours (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2020).

Additionally, the specific sexual interests AGPP caters to makes room for the exploration of further possible sexual inclinations (e.g., conceptualisation of heterosexual men who are aroused by penises, but not men and other manifestations of flexible heterosexuality (Carrillo, & Hoffman, 2018) and heterosexual men attracted to transwomen (Weinberg & Williams, 2010) may provide some context to how several

types of consumers derive distinct sexual experiences through their consumption of AGPP. All these ambivalences amongst AGPP consumers necessitate further empirical investigation.

Sissy Hypno or Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP) is in many ways different from mainstream internet pornography. Its production, distribution, and consumption, encompasses multifarious themes and motivations that are not common to and explicitly visible in the culture and socioeconomics surrounding mainstream internet pornography. From the standpoint of viewing AGPP as a form of internet media, it can be deduced that it has undergone/is undergoing mechanisms that are not uncommon to most internet media and these are predominant in the subculture surrounding AGPP production and consumption, i.e., the widespread availability of content within communities, congregation of likeminded individuals and formation of group narratives and subjectively specific worldviews - along with universal self-descriptors/community epithets (e.g., the word *sissy*). Added to that, AGPP caters to a wide range of individuals despite the (largely) homogeneous nature of the content, i.e., the Autogynephilic and Persuasive aspects of the media. Yet, what makes AGPP deserving of being treated as a unique category of pornographic media or even internet media is to the extent of its reported influence on various facets of its consumers' lives (primarily their sexual inclinations and gender identity). The findings obtained through the objective driven analysis of demystifying AGPP establish it as a class of media encompassing distinct phenomena unique to its characteristics.

An aggregate of the analysis of the themes derived from the phenomenological interpretation of participant experiences and the superordinate and subordinate themes governing these experiences, identifies four primary implications and two fundamental limitations of the study:

First, owing to the qualitative and explorative nature of the study, findings bearing potential clinical significance – such as compulsive AGPP consumption – cannot be further evaluated due to the limited scope of the research method in that regard.

Second, while the study identified a viable sample (of AGPP consumers) to effectively explore Autogynephilia as a heuristic construct, its limited in its scope to make significant contributions to the debate on Autogynephilia theory itself. While some findings of this study offer potentially useful insights, a statistically vigorous and theoretically robust line of approach is necessary to sufficiently explore the areas highlighted by the research.

The following implications can thus be drawn from the analysis with due acknowledgement of its two fundamental limitations. First, the internet can have a lasting impact on its users owing to the limitless expanse of socio-cultural interactions it contributes towards and organises. This has been discussed, as an outcome of internet use in past academic research (DiMaggio et al., 2001; Chayko, 2014). The experiences of AGPP consumers revitalise this notion regarding the use of internet.

Second, Autogynephilia offered a useful construct to explore the experiences of *Sissy Hypno* or AGPP consumers, making the population a potential ground to widen the academic debate on Autogynephilia theory. A significant outcome of the study is its contribution to the limited evidence of cisgender males relating to Autogynephilia, as well as a minority of transgender participants relating to Autogynephilia as a self-identified motivation for undergoing gender transition (through self-report).

Third, there are several reasons to consume AGPP. AGPP is not consumed by a homogenous group of consumers with a universal reason for consumption. The analysis of the themes recovered in the current study highlights the following reasons of AGPP consumption: sexual gratification, self-acceptance and Autogynephilia. Under the scope of these underlying motives to consume, AGPP consumption entails positive and negative self-reported implications as highlighted by the participant accounts derived from the current study. The positive aspects of consuming AGPP were identified as: discovering an avenue for satisfying the desire to explore femininity, gender identity affirmation, sexual identity affirmation and harmless exploration of traditionally unconventional sexual inclinations amongst all the diverse categories of consumers. In contrast, negative self-reported implications, such as compulsive use of AGPP and confusion over gender or sexual identity have been identified in some participant accounts, and these are clinically significant issues that merit future exploration.

Fourth, an analysis of the influence of AGPP on gender and sexual identity reveals further complexities. An interpretation of participant experiences concerning some individuals who consume AGPP and relate to Autogynephilia highlighted that the self-reported motivation to transition to their identified gender (female) is not analogous to the experience of most MtF-transgender people who transition on account of gender identity (Dhejne, 2016), thereby justifying further empirical analysis to derive clinically vigorous evidence to understand its implications in view of the experiences of individuals who wish to undergo transition for sexual reasons (e.g., Autogynephilia). Moreover, an interpretation of the reported sexual behaviour of some of the participants revealed inclinations that do not entirely conform to the typical patterns of homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality as understood by current scientific consensus. While there has been past academic advocacy for much diverse descriptors, spectral form of categorisation and deeper understanding of orientation (Walton et al., 2016; Antonsen et al., 2020) and past academic exploration of behaviour construed as slightly or visibly divergent from a standpoint of orientation (e.g., conceptualisation of heterosexual men who are aroused by penises, but not men and other manifestations of 'flexible heterosexuality' (Carrillo, & Hoffman, 2018) and heterosexual men attracted to transwomen (Weinberg & Williams, 2010), sexual behaviour and inclinations must be viewed with wider and more accommodating constructs of sexuality and gender identity, and further understanding of orientation explored within the merit of psychology, social and cultural anthropology and medicine (under circumstances where clinical observation is feasible).

Conclusion

The current study conceptualised *Sissy Hypno* as Autogynephilic Persuasive Pornography (AGPP), and established it as a novel form of pornographic media with unique characteristics at the intersection of pleasure and identity. It subsequently gathered rich qualitative insights into the experiences of the individuals who consume AGPP. The findings of the study contributed to the limited evidence of cisgender men relating to Autogynephilia. The current study identified AGPP as a medium for self-

described Autogynephiles (*sissies*) to engage with their Autogynephilic tendencies. The study has also identified AGPP as a tool of self-affirmation for some Transwomen and as a tool of sexual identity affirmation and further sexual exploration for its consumers. The findings also provided a fertile qualitative ground for future researchers to explore some of the specific concerns highlighted on account of the experience reported by AGPP consumers, e.g., compulsive consumption of AGPP, self-reported AGPP induced confusion over gender and sexual identity. Future research can address certain areas of inquiry that were identified and were out of the scope of this study, namely (i) psychological and clinical implications of compulsive AGPP consumption, (ii) psychological and clinical implications of self-perceived sexually driven motivation for gender transition (amongst some MtF-transgender people who consume AGPP), and (iii) gaining further insights into how cisgender men relate to Autogynephilia and its implications on the wider academic debate on Autogynephilia.

Ethical Compliance

This study has been approved by the School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Nottingham Trent University.

Appendix

Semi-structured interview script (sample questions).

How did you encounter AGPP?

How did you react to AGPP?

Why do you consume AGPP?

Table 1 (*Participant demographics*)

Total number of participants and inclusion criteria	Race	Sexuality	Gender Identity
16 (N=16)	Asian: 2	Bisexual: 3	Cisgender men: 11
<u>Inclusion criteria:</u> Consumers of AGPP (Age > 19)	Black: 1 Multi-racial: 3 White: 10	Heterosexual: 6 Homosexual (Lesbian): 2 Other: 5	Transwomen: 5

Table 2 (*IPA theme distribution*)

Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Percentage of people who identified with the subordinate theme
Influence of AGPP on personality and lifestyle	'The internet made me who I am'	100% (total in number: 16)
	Life before and after AGPP	100% (total in number: 16)
	Craving and compulsive use of AGPP of 'AGPP is taking over my existence'	31.25% (total in number: 5)

Table 2 (IPA theme distribution)

Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Percentage of people who identified with the subordinate theme
Exploring Femininity and submissive sexual behaviour	Autogynephilia	81.25% (total in number: 13)
	Submissive sexuality and submissive femininity	62.5% (total in number: 10)
Influence of AGPP on gender and sexual identity	'AGPP made me realise I am trans'	31.25% (total in number: 5)
	Influence on sexual identity	68.75% (total in number: 11)

Funding The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Data Availability (data transparency) Not applicable.

Code Availability (software application or custom code) Not applicable.

Declarations

Conflicts of interest/competing interests The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

Affiliations All authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Financial interests The authors have no financial or proprietary interests in any material discussed in this article.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Antonsen, A. N., Zdaniuk, B., Yule, M., & Brotto, L. A. (2020). Ace and aro: Understanding differences in romantic attractions among persons identifying as asexual. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(5), 1615–1630 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-01600-1>.
- Billard, T. J. (2019). No shame in the game: The influence of pornography viewing on attitudes toward transgender people. *Communication Research Reports*, 36(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2018.1549539>.
- Blanchard, R. (1989). The concept of Autogynephilia and the typology of male gender dysphoria. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 177(10), 616–623. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-198910000-00004>.
- Blanchard, R. (1991). Clinical observations and systematic studies of Autogynephilia. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 17(4), 235–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00926239108404348>.

- Blanchard, R. (2005). Early history of the Concept of Autogynephilia. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 34, 439–446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-005-4343-8>.
- Brown, A., Barker, E. D., & Rahman, Q. (2020). Erotic target identity inversions among men and women in an internet sample. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 17(1), 99–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2019.10.018>.
- Callega, G. (2010). Digital games and escapism. *Games and Culture*, 5(4), 335–353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412009360412>.
- Cardoso, E., Szydłowski, S., & Breidensjö, P. (2022). *Free On-Page SEO Checker – Get Your SEO Score Now*. Sitechecker. <https://sitechecker.pro> (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- Carrillo, H., & Hoffman, A. (2018). Straight with a pinch of bi*: The construction of heterosexuality as an elastic category among adult US men. *Sexualities*, 21(1–2), 90–108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716678561>.
- Chayko, M. (2014). Techno-social life: The internet, digital technology, and social connectedness. *Sociology Compass*, 8(7), 976–991. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12190>.
- Chen, C. Y., & Chang, S. L. (2019). Moderating effects of information-oriented versus escapism-oriented motivations on the relationship between psychological well-being and problematic use of video game live-streaming services. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 8(3), 564–573. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.8.2019.34>.
- Chu, A. L. (2018). Did Sissy Porn Make Me Trans?. In *conference “Queer Disruptions (Vol. 2)*. <https://www.andrealongchu.com/s/Chu-Did-Sissy-Porn-Make-Me-Trans-QD2.pdf> (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- Chu, A. L. (2019). *Females*. New York: Verso.
- Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2003). *Transgenderism and intersexuality in childhood and adolescence: Making choices* (p. 46). Sage.
- Cooper, K., Russell, A., Mandy, W., & Butler, C. (2020). The phenomenology of gender dysphoria in adults: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Clinical psychology review*, 80, 101875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101875>.
- Daneback, K., & Ross, M. W. (2011). The complexity of internet sexuality. *Sexual Dysfunction: Beyond the Brain-Body Connection*, 31, 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000328920>.
- Dhejne, C., Van Vlerken, R., Heylens, G., & Arcelus, J. (2016). Mental health and gender dysphoria: A review of the literature. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(1), 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09540261.2015.1115753>.
- DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Neuman, W. R., & Robinson, J. P. (2001). Social implications of the internet. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 307–336. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.307>.
- Döring, N. M. (2009). The internet’s impact on sexuality: A critical review of 15 years of research. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(5), 1089–1101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2009.04.003>.
- Duffy, A., Dawson, D. L., & Das Nair, R. (2016). Pornography addiction in adults: A systematic review of definitions and reported impact. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 13(5), 760–777. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2016.03.002>.
- Ekins, R., & King, D. (2010). The emergence of new transgendering identities in the age of the internet. *Transgender Identities (Open Access)* (pp. 39–56). Routledge.
- Fugère, M. A., Escoto, C., Cousins, A. J., Riggs, M. L., & Haerich, P. (2008). Sexual attitudes and double standards: A literature review focusing on participant gender and ethnic background. *Sexuality & Culture*, 12(3), 169–182. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-008-9029-7>.
- Gilbert, A. (2020). Sissy Remixed: Trans* Porno Remix and constructing the Trans* subject. *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 7(2), 222–236. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-8143379>.
- Herek, G. M. (1986). On heterosexual masculinity: Some psychical consequences of the social construction of gender and sexuality. *American Behavioral Scientist*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10345-001>.
- Hesse, C., & Pedersen, C. L. (2017). Porn sex versus real sex: How sexually explicit material shapes our understanding of sexual anatomy, physiology, and behaviour. *Sexuality & Culture*, 21(3), 754–775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9413-2>.
- Hsu, K. J., & Bailey, J. M. (2022). Erotic target identity inversions. *Gender and sexuality development: Contemporary theory and research*, 589–612. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84273-4_20.
- Hypnotube, H. (2022). <https://hypnotube.com/>. (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- Igorevna, O. O. (2015). Escapism: Current studies and research prospects in contemporary psychology. *Austrian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(3–4), 103–105. https://www.academia.edu/15901469/Escapism_current_studies_and_research_prospects_in_contemporary_psychology (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).

- Jeffreys, S. (2008). Women and sexuality. *Women's History: Britain, 1850–1945* (pp. 172–192). Routledge.
- Johanssen, J. (2021). *Fantasy, Online Misogyny and the Manosphere: Male bodies of Dis/Inhibition*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031581>.
- Jourian, T. J. (2015). Evolving nature of sexual orientation and gender identity. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2015(152), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20142>.
- Kircaburun, K., & Griffiths, M. D. (2019). Problematic Instagram use: The role of perceived feeling of presence and escapism. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 17(4), 909–921. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9895-7>.
- Kuss, D. J., Louws, J., & Wiers, R. W. (2012). Online gaming addiction? Motives predict addictive play behavior in massively multiplayer online role-playing games. *Cyberpsychology Behavior and Social Networking*, 15(9), 480–485. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0034>.
- Lawrence, A. A. (2005). Sexuality before and after male-to-female sex reassignment surgery. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 34(2), 147–166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-005-1793-y>.
- Lawrence, A. A. (2011). Autogynephilia: An underappreciated paraphilia. *Sexual Dysfunction: Beyond the Brain-Body Connection*, 31, 135–148. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000328921>.
- Lawrence, A. A. (2017). Autogynephilia and the typology of male-to-female transsexualism. *European Psychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000276>.
- Mackay, J., & Mackay, P. (2021). Hypnosis and pornography: A cultural history. *Porn Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23268743.2021.1978312>.
- Mass, M. (2010). The influence of internet pornography on college students: An empirical analysis of attitudes, affect and sexual behavior. *McNair Scholars Journal*, 11, 137–150.
- McCreary, D. R., & Rhodes, N. D. (2001). On the gender-typed nature of dominant and submissive acts. *Sex Roles*, 44(5), 339–350. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010933700912>.
- Mollon, P. (2005). The inherent shame of sexuality. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 22(2), 167–178. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.2005.tb00274.x>.
- Moser, C. (2009). Autogynephilia in women. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 56(5), 539–547. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918360903005212>.
- Moser, C. (2010). Blanchard's Autogynephilia theory: A critique. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57(6), 790–809. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2010.486241>.
- Moser, C., & Kleinplatz, P. J. (2020). Conceptualization, history, and future of the paraphilias. *Annual review of clinical psychology*, 16, 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050718-095548>.
- Murray, K. M., Ciarrocchi, J. W., & Murray-Swank, N. A. (2007). Spirituality, religiosity, shame and guilt as predictors of sexual attitudes and experiences. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 35(3), 222–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710703500305>.
- Nuttbrock, L., Bockting, W., Mason, M., Hwahng, S., Rosenblum, A., Macri, M., & Becker, J. (2011). A further assessment of Blanchard's typology of homosexual versus non-homosexual or autogynephilic gender dysphoria. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40(2), 247–257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-009-9579-2>.
- Pfaus, J. G., Quintana, G. R., Cionnaith, M., Gerson, C. E., Dubé, C. A., S., & Coria-Avila, G. A. (2020). Conditioning of sexual interests and paraphilias in humans is difficult to see, virtually impossible to test, and probably exactly how it happens: A comment on Hsu and Bailey (2020). *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49, 1403–1407. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01739-2>.
- Pizzol, D., Bertoldo, A., & Foresta, C. (2016). Adolescents and web porn: A new era of sexuality. *International journal of adolescent medicine and health*, 28(2), 169–173. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh-2015-0003>.
- r/Sissyhypno*. Reddit.com. Retrieved 26 June 2022, from <https://www.reddit.com/r/sissyhypno/>. (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- r/Sissyperfection*. Reddit.com. Retrieved 26 June 2022, from <https://www.reddit.com/r/Sissyperfection/>. (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- Rosenmann, A., & Safir, M. P. (2006). Forced online: Push factors of internet sexuality: A preliminary study of online paraphilic empowerment. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51(3), 71–92. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v51n03_05.
- Smith, J. A., & Shinebourne, P. (2012). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-005>.
- Stenseng, F., Falch-Madsen, J., & Hygen, B. W. (2021). Are there two types of escapism? Exploring a dualistic model of escapism in digital gaming and online streaming. *Psychology of Popular Media*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000339>.

- Subudhi, R., Das, S., & Sahu, S. (2020). Digital Escapism. *Horizon Journal of Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*. https://www.academia.edu/44780715/Digital_Escapism?auto=citations&from=cover_page. (Accessed: 26 June, 2022).
- Veale, J. F., Clarke, D. E., & Lomax, T. C. (2010). Biological and psychosocial correlates of adult gender-variant identities: A review. *Personality and individual differences*, 48(4), 357–366. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.09.018>.
- Veale, J. F., Clarke, D. E., & Lomax, T. C. (2012). Male-to-female transsexuals' impressions of Blanchard's Autogynephilia theory. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 13(3), 131–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2011.669659>.
- Walton, M. T., Lykins, A. D., & Bhullar, N. (2016). Beyond heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual: A diversity in sexual identity expression. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 45(7), 1591–1597. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0778-3>.
- Watson, M. A., & Smith, R. D. (2012). Positive porn: Educational, medical, and clinical uses. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 7(2), 122–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2012.680861>.
- Weinberg, M. S., & Williams, C. J. (2010). Men sexually interested in transwomen (MSTW): Gendered embodiment and the construction of sexual desire. *Journal of Sex Research*, 47(4), 374–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490903050568>.
- Young, N. L., Kuss, D. J., Griffiths, M. D., & Howard, C. J. (2017). Passive Facebook use, Facebook addiction, and associations with escapism: An experimental vignette study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 71, 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.01.039>.
- Zou, Z., Wang, H., d'Oleire Uquillas, F., Wang, X., Ding, J., & Chen, H. (2017). Definition of substance and non-substance addiction. *Substance and Non-substance Addiction*, 21–41. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5562-1_2.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.

Authors and Affiliations

Sundara Kashyap Vadapalli¹ · Daria J. Kuss¹

✉ Sundara Kashyap Vadapalli
sundara.vadapalli@ntu.ac.uk

Daria J. Kuss
daria.kuss@ntu.ac.uk

¹ Cyberpsychology Research Group, NTU Psychology, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, NG1 4FQ Nottingham, UK