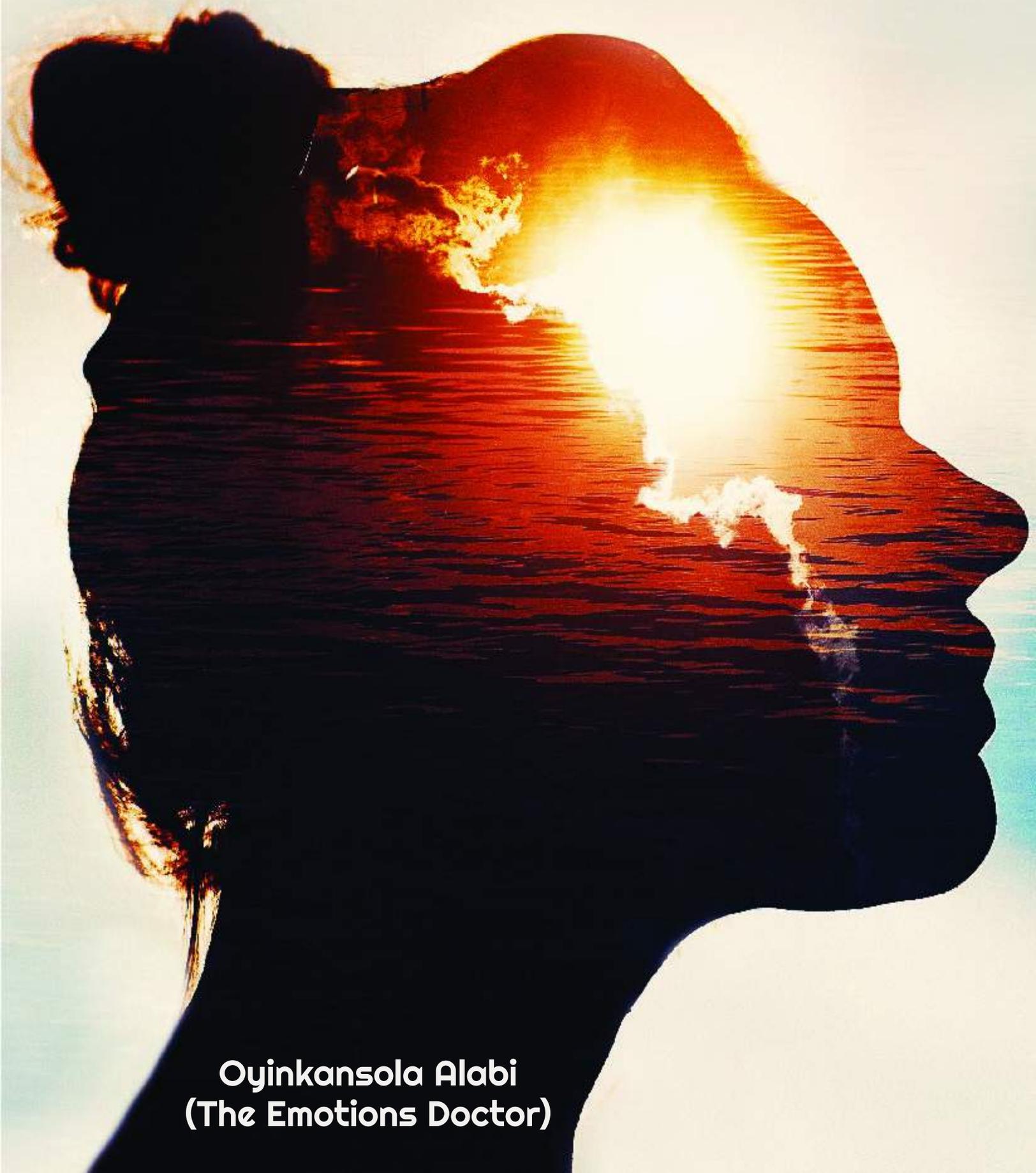


How Pornography Influences Rape



Oyinkansola Alabi
(The Emotions Doctor)

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As professionals advocating for mental and emotional health care in Nigeria and Africa; we must take the responsibility to educate the teeming public who consume pornography on how their sexual fantasies and addiction can program them to become rapists.

Rape is a non-consensual sexual penetration of a child, an adolescent or adult obtained by physical force, threat of bodily harm or when a victim is incapable of giving consent due to mental illness, retardation, or intoxication. As professionals in human behaviour space, we must share some evidence-based details on how pornography has contributed to the increase of rape epidemic in Nigeria.

According to a study of students from the Ibadan Polytechnic in 2013, it was discovered that in their lifetime 1.7% had at one point raped and 2.7% had attempted rape. In the same year, out of a sample of 295 female students from the Ebonyi State University, 36.7% had experienced sexual harassment/victimization at least once on campus and of this, 32.4% had been raped.

In 2017, a report from the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics states that there were 2,279 reported cases of rape and indecent assault, 1164 reported cases of unnatural offences (anal sex), 0 convictions reported by the police, 1 state (out of 36) reported no cases of indecent assault.

According to the World Population Review in 2020, South Africa ranks number 1 in the world with 132.4 rape incidents and a survey conducted by the South African Medical Research Council in 2020 revealed that approximately one in four men surveyed admitted to committing rape.

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As therapists, interviews with sex offenders in rehab shows clearly that the intention behind rape is to satisfy the urge for sex and secondarily demonstrate masculinity. This urge for sexual satisfaction is not the main problem, in this case, the brain of this offender had been trained over a period to satisfy a specific craving. With an eagle-eye view, let us view this phenomenon, rape, and the associated violence from a clinical context, relating it to addiction.

Visit of XNXX pornography website by subregion in Nigeria (Everywhere)

● Rape pornography ● Hardcore sex ● Pornhub ● XNXX



Source: Google Trends

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The human brain is plastic, and with every exposure, it gets trained with and/or without our conscious participation. Research from numerous MRI scans and neuro-imaging studies shows a significant change in the brain structure with every new learning. Addiction significantly changes the brain negatively in a way that impacts the prefrontal cortex responsible for planning and organizing behaviour; decreasing the prefrontal cortex's ability to inhibit maladaptive behaviours.

As the porn user navigates from genre to genre, the craving develops from mere sexual satisfaction to a search of novel experiences in the porn domain. Therefore, each high burst of dopamine acquired in the process rewires the neurons and strengthens them in addiction, critically locking the reward circuitry system into an endless quest for novelty and leading the user to a disturbing and confusing preference for fetishes rather than mere sexual satisfaction.

According to J.R. Parkitna, dopamine surges are the barometer by which humans determine the value of any experience. It tells us what to approach or avoid, and where to focus our attention. Furthermore, dopamine tells one what to remember by rewiring the brain. As the brain becomes increasingly strained by the dopamine burst acquired from a genre of pornography, and in this case fetish, humiliation or hardcore, the brain is over-turned to crave this type of reward (the dopamine burst associated with these genres) that is demonstrably detrimental to our wellbeing.

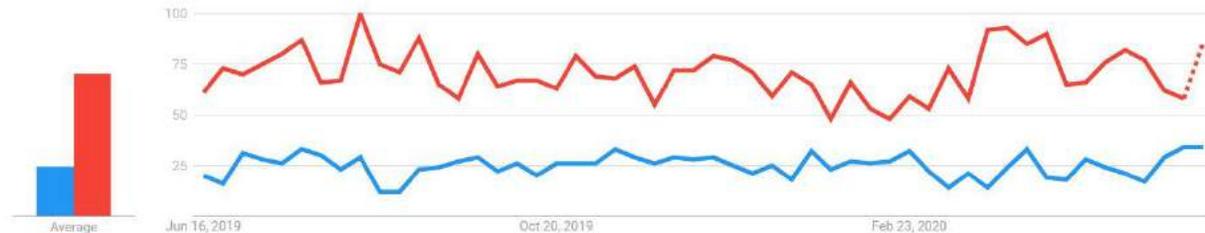
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Interest in rape pornography and hardcore sex in Nigeria

Source: Google Trend

Blue: Rape Pornography

Red: Hardcore sex



The genre of pornography usage by Nigerians is predominately focused on contents that incarnate supremacy and dominance (Forced, BDSM, Fetish, face-sitting, humiliation). This is disturbing because, in association with dopamine and novelty, the brain gradually grows bored to the regular content and wants variety - something entirely new or strange.

When porn becomes boring and cannot meet this need, the user, due to decrease in the functionality of the frontal lobe and reduction in the ability to concentrate and exhibit rational behaviour, becomes a potential rapist in a new quest for novelty associated to the acquired preference obtained through repeated porn use. With this level of violence-porn consumption, there is already a neuro-hijack in which the reticular activating system participates with the primitive reward circuitry system to perceive; be it female, male, old or young as an object for sex-related novelty.

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In *Dangerous Relationships*, Diana Russell's reviews research shows pornography's close relationship to violence against women and children:

“A woman was raped by two men. They were acting out the pornographic video game *Custer's Revenge*. She was American-Indian; they were white. They held her down and as one was running the tip of his knife across her face and throat he said, ‘Do you want to play *Custer's Last Stand*? It's great. You lose but you don't care, do you? You like a little pain, don't you’ They both laughed and then he said, you should be grateful, that all-American boys like us want you. Maybe we will tie you to a tree and start a fire around you.’ Her name is Jayne Stamen, she is currently in jail. In 1986, she hired three men to beat up her husband. She wanted him to know what a beating felt like. He died. She was charged with second-degree murder convicted of first-degree manslaughter; sentenced to eight-and-a-half to twenty-five years. The sentences are to run consecutively. She was tortured in her marriage by a man consumed by acting out pornography. He tied her up when he raped her.”

For the human brain, exposure is critical. Research has shown that a significant percentage of baby boomers in Nigeria had the first contact with sex education through pornography (Dauda the sexy guy aka Nackson, Ikebe Super, Bembela and Lulu, playboy etc.) or peer conversations. This means that the risk of continued rape is higher today due to the poor quality of sex education and the increased availability of the internet than ever.

Nigeria currently enjoys 65.1% internet penetration with about 92.3 to 96 million users of which a significant portion are young adults. This means that without active intervention, young adults are more likely to learn about sex from high-speed internet pornography considering the easy access than from sex educators or parental conversation. And with this exposure comes a search for unhealthy novelty and sexual content which in-turn raises the number of rape cases, PTSD, anxiety, depression and potentially suicide.

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As a matter of urgency, caregivers have no choice but to lead the education of their loved ones in the subject matter and build the bonds required for rapport, especially with teenagers and youths. This will significantly reduce the exposure to explicit content and increase the chances of developing healthy sexuality. Adults currently addicted to porn use should seek help with the understanding that regarding the use of porn, there is no such thing as “healthy addiction.”

Every burst of dopamine rewires the brain and negatively impacts the frontal lobe, and at every stage the crave for novelty changes and it is only a matter of time before the user begins to prefer sadomasochist contents seeking to act it out with and/or without consent.

About the Author

Oyinkansola Alabi, popularly referred to as the Emotions Doctor, is the lead researcher and facilitator at Emotions City, Africa's leading emotional intelligence centre. She is the only female founder of an Emotional Intelligence Academy in Africa and is the convener of Africa's first Emotional Intelligence Week.

Oyinkansola is a high impact trainer who has taught tens of thousands of executives in organisations such as KPMG, Guinness, Multichoice, Interswitch, First Bank, Stanbic IBTC and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture among others. Her work has taken her to 30 States in Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, UAE, United Kingdom and the United States.

Oyinkansola is the first African Master Trainer in Yale University's RULER approach. She is also a Cornell University-trained Human Resource Executive, a Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapist, a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, a Six Seconds Network Licensed Emotional Intelligence Practitioner, A Goldman Sachs Scholar, and a Pastor at the Fountain of Life Church. She is a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), & the British Psychological Society.



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(The Emotions Doctor)