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# Young Women's Attitudes and Concerns on Pornography and Their Sexual Experiences: A Qualitative Approach

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Article

# Young Women's Attitudes and Concerns on Pornography and Their Sexual Experiences: A Qualitative Approach

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**Abstract:** This study explores female university students' attitudes and concerns toward pornography, based on their experience watching it and on sexual encounters with men. It used a qualitative descriptive design. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 participants between March and April 2020. Thematic data analysis was performed using COREQ reporting guidelines. Three themes emerged from the data: 1) the sexual learning process, 2) the role of pornography in women's sexuality, and 3) sexual experiences. Participants reported how they learned about sexuality and how pornography influenced sexual experiences. Self-esteem issues and societal norms regarding hair removal, and difficulty saying "no" to unwanted or humiliating sexual practices were found. Young women were not comfortable with women's representations in mainstream pornography. They blame pornography for negative sexual experiences and claim it influences them and young men. Participants usually assumed submissive roles during sex and permitted aggressive sexual behaviors. The study reveals valuable information on how young women learn about sex, difficulty in refusing unwanted sexual activities, and even aggressive practices. Sexual education programs should include assertiveness training to improve sexual health, consent, and well-being.

**Keywords:** pornography; qualitative research; sexual behavior; sex education; sexual health; young women

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past four decades, public worry about the connection between pornography and sexual assault and aggressiveness spurred debate on a global scale and continues to be an important and contentious issue today [1]. Mainstream pornography is distinguished from feminist pornography by its emphasis on pleasing a large audience while making a profit [1]. On the Internet, mainstream pornography is easily accessible. Male dominance, aggression, and female subservience are common themes in mainstream pornography [2]. De Miguel-Álvarez [3] calls it "the sex school for the youngest" [p. 380]. According to Owen et al. [4], Internet pornography consumption at very early ages distorts reality in terms of sexuality and sex. Early sexual initiation is constant in recent studies [5]. A recent research review concluded that adolescent sexual and reproductive health is influenced by pornography viewing [6]. Ballester et al. [7] have demonstrated pornography's negative impact on sexual behaviors and gender relationships in young people in Spain.

Four thousand heterosexual scenes from Pornhub and Xvideos websites were analyzed and it was found that, in 97% of aggressive scenes, the object of aggression was the woman [1], who even reacted to these behaviors neutrally or positively in most cases. Moreover, similar conclusions were drawn in a recent systematic review, highlighting that "dominating and violent behaviors were nearly always directed toward women" [8]. This may cause consumers to adopt a sexual script that supports learning violence against women [1]. Other studies have shown that sexually explicit media (SEM) exposure modifies attitudes toward women and sexuality [9] and have been associated with

engaging in sexually aggressive behaviors [10]. Healthy sexuality formation is crucial for how we interact with others and ourselves in adulthood. There are aspects of sexuality absent from pornography, such as emotional intimacy, negotiating consent, and discussing contraception; thus, it seems that SEM is not a comprehensive sexuality educator.

Sexuality is a fundamental human dimension that comprises sexual orientation, sex, gender roles and identity, pleasure, intimacy, eroticism, and reproduction [11]. Sexual health goes well beyond the mere absence of sexually transmitted infections; it includes respect and enjoyment of all sexual rights. Likewise, it influences the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of people [11]. The setting of desire, sexual motivations, and affective and sexual bonds are influenced by the environment and context surrounding young people [12]. Farré et al. [5] reported that adolescents' psychosexual development may be affected by pornography exposure.

More than 50% of Spanish adolescent aged between 14 and 17 are regular pornography consumers [13]. In a recent Spanish investigation [14], it was reported that boys are the main pornography consumers (86.9%) compared to girls (54.8%), with a consumption initiation age of 8 years. Also, pornography consumption's impact on interpersonal relations is greater in boys than girls. Other Spanish authors [15] highlighted the need for a quality and comprehensive sex education, as there are still myths and misinformation about sexuality, and the current sex education programs continue to focus only on unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) prevention. Finally, García-Vázquez et al. [16] gathered data on the evolution of sexual health in the Spanish adolescent population, which included the use of contraceptives, number of sexual partners, coition and first sexual intercourse, voluntary interruption of pregnancy, STI, and number of victims of gender violence.

There are only a few qualitative researches on women's perception or experiences regarding pornography. Of that small subset, two Australian studies recently explored women's experiences and pornography's interaction with intimacy, relationships, [17] and pleasure [18]. Additionally, women's orientation toward pornography has been outlined in a Canadian study [19]. However, to date, we have not found qualitative studies that explore issues related to women's emotions, perceptions, and attitudes toward sexuality and, specifically, pornography, in Spain. This is increasingly important because in Spain, pornography has been recently defined as a new sex educator [3]. Therefore, these relationships need to be clarified. The present research addresses this gap.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Design

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The exploratory and descriptive nature of the study allows us to address people's realities and understand their perspectives. Qualitative research seeks to comprehend, describe, and, at times, explain social phenomena from the perspective of the individual, as well as society as a whole [20], recognizing the interpretive nature of data coding [21]. Qualitative work may be useful in explaining behaviors and attitudes toward sexuality.

### 2.2. Participants

The decision to interview women was based on the fact that the main author is a woman and the study object was highly gender-sensitive. Concerning the rest of the inclusion criteria, participants were required to 1) have had sexual relationships with men 2) have watched pornography, and 3) be studying at the university or have some level of a university education.

Participants were selected through the non-probabilistic method of snowball sampling and were first contacted via phone calls. Participants' ages ranged between 19 and 29 years, and they were all Spanish. Twenty-two young women participated. Participants' sociodemographic characteristics are shown in Table 1. None dropped out of the study.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants.

Participants	Age	Marital status	Sexual orientation	Studies
I1	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	University Master's Degree of Teacher Training in Spanish as a Foreign Language
I2	25	Single	Bisexual	Degree of Early Childhood Education
I3	27	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Physiotherapy
I4	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Criminology
I5	24	With a partner	Heterosexual	Master of Psychopedagogy
I6	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Psychology
I7	23	Single	Heterosexual	Degree of Bilingual Primary Education
I8	22	Single	Heterosexual	Degree of Social Education
I9	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Social Education
I10	23	Single	Bisexual	University Master's Degree of Sexology Sciences
I11	19	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Law
I12	19	Single	Heterosexual	Degree of Early Childhood Education
I13	26	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Early Childhood Education
I14	26	With a partner	Heterosexual	University Master's Degree of occupational risk prevention
I15	21	Single	Bisexual	Degree of Nursing
I16	26	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Early Childhood Education
I17	29	Single	Heterosexual	Degree of Early Childhood Education
I18	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Pharmacy
I19	26	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Criminology
I20	25	With a partner	Heterosexual	PhD in Chemistry
I21	27	Single	Heterosexual	University Master's Degree of Early Intervention
I22	26	With a partner	Heterosexual	Degree of Law

Source: prepared by the authors.

### 2.3. Data collection

Data were collected online, as it took place between March and April 2021. The instrument used to collect data was semi-structured individual interviews. The main researcher adapted herself to the electronic resources that the participants had; thus, the interviews were conducted via Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook, Discord, and Google Duo. The researcher ensured the establishment of ideal contact continuously, listened carefully, and showed interest in what participants said.

The question script was designed ad hoc based on a literature review, and two content blocks were distinguished. Eight questions addressed participants' sexual experiences and sex education. Another eight questions specifically related to pornography. Part of the script is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Questions of the interview script.

Content	Questions
Sex education	How did you learn what you currently know about sexuality?
Pornography	Do you consider that pornography influences the sexual behavior of those who consume it and that of their partners?
Pornography	What is your opinion on pornography?
Sex experience	Could you tell me about a negative sexual experience or a sexual encounter in which you did not feel comfortable?

Source: prepared by the authors.

Participants received a consent form via email, and they also had the option of clarifying any doubts before starting the interview. Twenty-two interviews, with an average duration of 45 minutes, were conducted. Data collection was terminated when data saturation was reached. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. After the transcription, participants were given the chance to check their content.

#### 2.4. Data analysis

Braun et al. [22] offered three typologies of thematic analysis (TA), as it is considered a theoretically flexible method. The reflexive approach to TA emphasizes the active role of the researcher in knowledge production [21] and the predominance of the inductive approach.

Reflexive thematic analysis was performed to analyze data, and it includes six steps [23,24]: 1) transcription, reading, and re-reading (familiarization); 2) initial generation of codes (61 codes were initially generated); 3) conversion of codes to themes [after discarding the codes that were not significant, 61 codes were reduced to 45]; 4) revision of themes and generation of the conceptual analysis map; 5) labeling of the themes and determining the analysis structure (three themes and seven subthemes); and 6) elaboration of an analysis report. ATLAS.ti software (version 8.0) was used to facilitate the analysis.

The initial coding was performed independently by two researchers. The codes were subsequently agreed upon with the third researcher, after which the final number of codes was reached. The initial generation of themes was also conducted by two researchers, and the final tree of subthemes and themes was agreed upon with the third researcher. No modifications were required after participants verified the transcriptions' content.

#### 2.5. Ethical considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before commencing interviews. The ethical standards established by the Declaration of Helsinki were followed, and personal data were processed following Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 27, 2016, on the protection of natural persons concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC. This study received approval by the Ethics and Research Committee of the Department of Nursing, Physiotherapy and Medicine (No. 120/2021).

### 3. Results

The testimonies of 22 women with some level of a university education from different scientific fields were analyzed. Most were heterosexual (86.36%). The analysis resulted in the emergence of three themes and six subthemes (see Table 3).

Table 3. Codes, subthemes and themes.

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Family, friends, educational centre, pornography, prevention speeches, experience with a partner, sex education, Internet, feminist movement, teachers, social networks	Educational agents	The sexual learning process
Social networks, current pornography, easy access to the Internet, slow learning, self-learning, non-existent parental control, taboo, wrong beliefs, experience with a partner	Barriers of sex education	
Unidirectional pleasure, male pleasure, male dominance, stereotyped roles, female subordination, wrong learning, sexual abuse, female reification	Conception of pornography	The role of pornography in women's sexuality
Consumption, arousal, masturbation, lack of imagination, learning	Use of pornography	
Feminist pornography, rejection, eradicate, change, acceptance	Opinion about pornography	Sexual experiences
Foreplay, confidence, innovating, mutual pleasure, sexual practices, sexual encounters, sexual consent	Conception of sexual encounter	
Socially imposed hair removal: (genital and body hair removal, obligation to wax, requirement to have sex, hygiene).		
Self-esteem: body rejection.		
Not saying no: practices with pain, aggression, humiliation, vexation, discomfort, sexual object, guiltiness, normalising the situation, pressure, non-existing pleasure, coitocentrism, termination of the sexual relation, not verbalising, unidirectional relations	Emotional experiences	

Source: prepared by the authors.

### 3.1. Theme 1. The role of pornography in women's sexuality

The process through which participants learned about sexuality from early childhood to the present time was explored. The sexual experiences of participants were largely influenced by pornography, either by their use of pornography or by their sexual partners. They all had similar opinions about the content of pornography. They do not reject it but demand urgent changes.

#### 3.1.1. Subtheme 1.1. The school of sexuality education

All of the participants had previously consumed pornography. The reasons for this are diverse: quick masturbation due to a lack of imagination, curiosity, to get aroused, or to learn about sex. Thus, they reveal the educational role of pornography. Most of them state that their sexual learning occurred in their group of friends and their experiences with partners; the latter grew over the years and after having a diversity of sexual encounters. Many participants speak in the past tense, highlighting that they currently consume pornography very rarely since the content does not appeal them. Another reason pointed out by the participants to consume pornography is when their partners propose it in a sexual game:

*"At the beginning, I watched it a little bit, just to learn, and then I watched it to masturbate" [I7].*

*"When I watched it (pornography), I was with someone who proposed it" [I1].*

*They also assume that the majority of young people, primarily men, consume it. For them is easy to distinguish if the man does it:*

*“The way some of them act speaks volumes (when having casual sex). For example, if he spanks you, or pulls your hair back, or forgets about your clitoris” [I20]*

However, when participants were asked to explain and argue about whether they supported or rejected pornography, none rejected it outright. What they want is more control over the age of access and the removal of certain content (such as rape, the submissive role of women, pederasty, and zoophilia). Their comments highlight how they perceive the potential educational role of this sexually explicit content:

*“People have mobile phones at very early ages, without any knowledge about sexuality, so they are freely watching loads of videos that may not be appropriate” [I14].*

*“There are very nasty things, even women being beaten up and things like that, which I do not think should be on the Internet [...] nowadays children have easy access to Internet” [I15].*

However, so-called feminist pornography is highlighted as positive and less harmful for the sexuality of those who consume it. According to them, this type of porn is closer to their tastes and more realistic in terms of what they consider sexual relations. Another positive aspect of feminist pornography is that women do not suffer and are not defiled in any way:

*“It’s a porn for everyone; for women, men, transsexuals, and people of any sexual orientation, where everyone feels pleasure, however it is not easy to find free videos on the Internet” [I22].*

### 3.1.2. Subtheme 1.2. Conception of pornography

We asked, “what audience do you consider current mainstream pornography is aimed at?” Without reservation, they answered that it is aimed at men and that the role of the woman is that of subordination and reification. They dislike how women are treated in many cases, and they also mention unrealistic practices:

*“It’s sexist and outdated, and it brings the woman down to a very inferior position, where she is only an object” [I2].*

*One bisexual participant expresses anger when states that lesbian porn is not aimed at homosexual women:*

*“Lesbian sex is not for lesbian women; it is made for guys, because it is a fantasy of theirs that two women have sex with each other, and then they feel they are entitled to ask a lesbian couple to do a threesome with them” [I10].*

Some participants, whose jobs were related to social awareness of prostitution, think that the current porn promotes an increasing prostitution consumption among young men:

*“They want to perform a sexual act like the ones they see in porno, but they can’t do that with normal women, because they see it [as] inappropriate or weird, so they go with prostitutes. They pay them, and then they do whatever they want” [I6].*

Most participants considered pornography to distort what real sexuality was or how it should be. Almost all of them describe, without providing much detail, some personal experiences in which the boy attempted to carry out a fictional sexual practice:

*“It really bothered me a lot when some guys tried certain things because they’re like ‘uff’ [exclamation that denotes intense desire] I’m not [in] a porno video, dude! We are a man and a woman having sex; that’s it” [I17].*

Some participants also mentioned the great contradiction between what is promoted in pornography and the current strength of the feminist movement. The messages generated from each of these movements are valued as opposites, although the youngest people receive both:

*“I believe that porn will have a negative impact on society. It’s a bit contradictory because we’re trying to educate our society, in the best way we can, as a feminist society” [I4].*

### 3.2. Theme 2. Sexual experiences

This theme addresses participants' conceptions about how complete and quality sexual intercourse is or should be, and how they experience their sexuality and sexual encounters, influenced by pornography or compelled by current society.

#### 3.2.1. Subtheme 2.1. The conception of sexual encounters

Participants presented very similar views on how complete, healthy sexual intercourse should be. Experimentation, time passing, and experience in different situations were the main sources of education. Interestingly, many of them had to go through unpleasant sexual encounters to understand how a healthy relationship functions. They began having sexual relations focusing on the coitus, although with time and experience, they now consider that, even without coitus, all sexual practices are sex:

*"What one sees at the beginning is simply the coitus, because that's what really matters, but obviously, in time and after meeting different people, one discovers other things" [I1].*

*"Ninety percent of what I know [...] I learned it with my boyfriend, my first stable relationship. In fact, I did not even enjoy sex before that" [I5].*

All participants relate satisfaction to orgasm; thus, sexual intercourse without orgasm would not be fully satisfactory:

*"For me, it's important because it's the peak of pleasure. If I don't finish, it's like something is missing" [I4].*

They also highlight that it is important for both partners in the couple to obtain pleasure during sexual intercourse and build trust and communication to behave naturally and experience enjoyment:

*"The first time I was with someone [having sex] ... but in time, I know myself better and I'm comfortable, so everything flows and I don't have to think or worry about anything" [I3].*

*"I had to say to him 'hey, are we having sex or are we doing porn?' We are two people having sex, this is not only about you" [I16].*

#### 3.2.2. Subtheme 2.2. Emotional experiences

Lastly, we present the results relative to participants' experiences in their sexual encounters from the lens of the most intimate and emotional feelings, and how they act in certain situations. These situations involve medium or high degrees of discomfort, especially in casual sexual encounters, where they accept male behaviors toward them that they dislike. This subtheme is subdivided into three sections: self-esteem, socially imposed hair removal, and difficulty saying no.

- Self-esteem

All participants interviewed in the present study reported that they had physical complexes that prevented or prevent them, at some point, from having a pleasant sexual relationship. Fear of rejection, the need to switch off the light, or refusal to do certain positions, is reflected in the following comment:

*"I tried to meet guys in the night. I was ashamed of my body and feared that they thought 'wow, this woman is fat' ... and I have been more worried about me than about enjoying that moment, and there are positions... Actually, I have felt bad, sometimes uncomfortable" [I6].*

- Socially imposed hair removal

Another aspect emerging during the interviews was hair removal. The participants admitted that they did not care whether their partners were shaved/waxed; however, in many cases, they feel that being shaved/waxed is a requirement to have sexual intercourse with a man:

*"I have been in situations in which (guys) told me 'if you're coming with me you have to come prepared', meaning 'if you come with hair, forget about it'" [I1].*

They state that this social imposition is stronger in younger males, and they blame this on the influence of early pornography consumption:

*"When my sister was 13 years old, she had a boyfriend who asked her if she was shaved and asked her to send him pictures of her pussy; he told her that, if she didn't do it, his friends would laugh at him" [I2].*

The participants knew that hair removal is a social imposition, although they admit they do it because they like it, arguing that it is more hygienic or that it must be done, according to what is seen in the videos that flood the Internet about sex. An extreme case is that of a participant who experienced health problems related to an obsession with intimate hygiene:

*"If I went to bed with a guy, I trimmed it because I thought that was what had to be done, and I also asked him to do it. I washed very frequently with soaps and all that, and I ended up with many infections" [I16].*

- Difficulty saying "no"

All participants speak of some sexual experience in which they performed a practice that they disliked. This practice is initiated by the boy, with no previous warning or negotiation, which made participants feel uncomfortable, upset, or even humiliated. It is surprising that only one participant, on one occasion, told the guy to stop because she did not like what he was doing. The rest of the participants admitted difficulties stopping a sexual act that makes them feel uncomfortable or bad:

*"I didn't want to say no to him and I couldn't say no, but I wanted him to finish because I felt horrible; I didn't want to be there, I wanted to leave, [...] even in a stable relationship I've also felt that I didn't want to do it, but I did it because he wanted to" [I11].*

Some participants, while talking about their experiences, realized that their behavior was similar to women in pornographic videos, because they had passive behavior and accepted any practice. Some reasons stated by the participants to justify this difficulty to say no referred to considering the uncomfortable practice as "normal." Therefore, they say nothing and uncomplainingly accept that "that is part of sex," as if they were obliged to do something they dislike:

*"Maybe I've felt uncomfortable sometimes... in some cases, I've done something in sexual intercourse because it's normal, everybody does it; and so, if everybody does it, even if I didn't like it, I ended up doing it, although it never convinced me" [I21].*

Another reason stated is to please a partner who insists on having sex, although they do not want to. The final result is that they feel bad for attending to the needs of the other instead of their own needs:

*"I wasn't really into it; I didn't really want to do it. However, for the other person I said yes, because he insisted a lot, but after we did it, I felt bad, thinking that I should not have done it" [I17].*

Other participants admitted that they had agreed to a sexual act that they disliked or did not stop the boy, for fear of being judged and rejected:

*"[About anal sex] I didn't like it and I wanted him to stop, but I felt that if I told him 'hey, stop' or 'I don't want to do it' he would think I wasn't good at sex or that I was a prude" [I16].*

They also share some casual sexual experiences in which they feel vexed:

*"Once, a boy held my head and he didn't tell me he was coming; it was horrible. He didn't tell me before 'I'll let you know and you step aside' or anything else; he didn't say anything and I felt very bad" [I19].*

Additionally, aggressive sexual experiences, which are frequent in pornography, were not welcomed by the participants:

*“For me, it didn’t make any sense, because there was no affection at all. It was rough and feelingless, with no kisses. I don’t like that. It was too aggressive. I even bled” [15].*

#### 4. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the perceived influence of current pornography consumption on young women in their sexuality and their sexual relations. From the analysis of the results, we obtained information about perceptions toward pornography, and own sexual experiences and behaviors, which were gathered in two themes: “the role of pornography in women’s sexuality,” and “sexual experiences.”

When the participants in the present study wanted to satisfy the sexual curiosities that emerged during adolescence, that is, when partner selection and encountering their social and sexual identities booms [25], the Internet and pornography become sources of “sex education” [3], exerting a direct influence on them and their sexuality [26]. According to participants, experimentation, time passing, and experience in different situations were the main sources of education. Interestingly, many of them had to go through unpleasant sexual encounters to understand how a healthy relationship functions. Moreover, they pointed out the double-sidedness of free Internet access: on the one hand, it acts as a facilitator of knowledge and the feminist movement and, on the other hand, it is a barrier to a comprehensive sexual education due to mainstream pornography [27].

De Miguel [3] highlighted that mainstream pornography teaches men and women different things. Men are taught what a woman is and what she is for, whereas women are taught the hegemonic physical model they must adopt and that their role is reduced to pleasing the man, at any price. Our participants, without a doubt, conceptualized pornography as undermining a healthy sexual relationship. Furthermore, their most intimate experiences and feelings referred to insecurities about their bodies [28] and problems being assertive with men and refusing practices they disliked. Johansen et al. [29], in their study with Danish women, found a concern among participants about being judged negatively if they did not show a liberal approach to sex; they worried about being called “boring” or “prudish.”

Pornography consumers may develop unrealistic sexual beliefs and values [4], and our participants suggested that boys who consume pornography approach women in their sexual encounters attempting to imitate what they see in pornographic videos [29], which the women dislike.

Dwulit and Rzymiski [30] found more pornography users among girls than boys. However, other authors have highlighted that boys consume more pornography than women [4,14]. These results were in line with our results since all the participants had watched pornography, although none considered themselves regular consumers. However, they did value pornography for women more positively. Women react more positively to non-sexist and/or explicitly feminist pornography [31], as well as to those which focus on women’s pleasure or enjoyment [32]. As in previous studies, our participants showed negative affective responses to the type of pornography that they found problematic [33]. In any case, they had a clear opinion about certain visual contents that exist in most free porn websites: the videos that violate human rights and people’s sexual rights should be removed. As argued by Tarzia and Tyler [34], “pornography facilitates, exacerbates, or perhaps even causes men’s sexual violence against women” [p. 3].

Women’s experiences of intimate partner sexual violence “and their sense of direct connection to pornography consumption” is an underexplored area [34] [p. 6], and our participants shed some light on this gap. When they discussed their negative sexual experiences, they did not judge or criticize the boy or the sexual act, and they never used the word “violence.” However, they did describe what they intimately felt (vexation, humiliation, being treated as a sexual object), and, in agreement with the aforementioned authors, they associated men’s pornography consumption with these sexual attitudes, of which they disapproved. They justified the men’s actions in most cases, thinking that what they do must “be normal” (or “it is what is expected of me as a woman”). In their

testimonies, two important aspects appeared: 1) the difficulty of refusing to perform sexual practices that they dislike or to stopping an unwanted action toward them, and 2) fear of rejection, which paralyzes them and prevents them from respecting their wishes. We could not accurately determine whether the difficulty in saying “no” is related to the fact that women assume and internalize the submissive role played by women in pornography, or whether it is due to a deficit of social skills or other factors. Lundgren and Amin [35] suggest that low consent negotiation skills and a lack of positive communication relate to dating violence. Moreover, the results of Johansen et al. [29] align with ours, as they found that women were concerned about being treated with respect and cared for their needs in sexual encounters. Adolescent men tend to report being perpetrators of sexual coercion more frequently, even to be committed to sexual violence against their partner [36]. Apostolou and Khalil [37] also found a much greater desire to engage in aggressive or humiliating sexual play in men than in women.

In participants’ testimonies in the present study, there was an issue that had never been specifically delved into: pornography’s influence on hair removal. A study conducted in New Zealand [38] revealed factors of hair removal practices among men and women, and the authors found no relationship between pubic hair removal (PHR) and regular viewing (or reading) of pornography. However, societal norms (hairlessness and femininity) were the most commonly identified reasons for women’s hair removal in our study. Moreover, Stone et al. [39] reveal the partner’s preferences and partners’ consumption of pornography as reasons for women’s PHR. Along those lines, our results showed that societal and gender norms were the main reasons for women’s PHR, specifically and very significantly the partners’ preferences [even constituting an indispensable requirement] and hygiene. Regarding the fashion of hair removal practices in Western society, Williamson [40] highlighted the potential negative consequences of PHR on health.

In Spain, there is a considerable lack of effective sex education and dating violence prevention programs, even though sex education has been a cross-curricular subject for decades. Teachers in schools and high schools claim to have very little training in the scope of sex education [41]. With respect to nursing, there are very few Spanish studies that explore the knowledge and competency level of these professionals in terms of effective sexual education. We found only one study, in which participants demanded more training [42]. Therefore, it is fundamental to know the sexuality of young people, as well as their practices and needs, to adjust health education programs aimed at sexuality.

#### *4.1. Limitations*

Ethnicity and religion are factors to consider in participant selection, as they could have influenced our results. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the researchers’ first idea was to perform focal groups, in addition to individual interviews. Focus groups would likely generate more interesting results. Moreover, due to the pandemic, the principal investigator was forced to gather the information virtually instead of face-to-face, and this may have altered some participant answers.

Future research on the phenomenon of sexual violence, sexual coercion, the inability to say “no” and societal norms and expectations imposed on women could clarify the study object. Additionally, qualitative research on young men would clarify the many aspects suggested in this study.

## **5. Conclusions**

Spanish young women are not comfortable with the role women represent in mainstream pornography. They reject sexual violence against women and the submissive role they play. Nevertheless, they subconsciously adopt socially-expected/pornographically normalized behaviors, such as hair removal or submission to the male partner’s sexual desires, due to the fear of rejection and judgment. Thus, participants provided clear insights into the aspects of sex education that must be approached. Professionals could apply the study results to the public/private system of sex education including: education on gender-based violence, education on making responsible choices regarding communication technologies on sexual behavior and education on rights-based approach.

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