

Feminist pornography and their relationships with female self-esteem and sexual function

Pornografia feminista e suas relações com autoestima e função sexual feminina

Pornografía feminista y sus relaciones con la autoestima y la función sexual

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Abstract

Pornography has currently played a prominent role in society. This study investigated the impact of exposure to feminist pornography (typically focused on female pleasure and ethical production) and mainstream pornography (commercial content often centered on conventional heterosexual scripts) on the sexual function and self-esteem of Brazilian women. A total of 472 cisgender heterosexual women aged over 18 completed a sociodemographic form, a questionnaire addressing pornography consumption and aspects related to female sexual function (i.e., desire, arousal, lubrication, satisfaction, pain/discomfort, and orgasm), and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. The results suggest that pornography consumption (feminist and mainstream) is positively related to sexual function, specifically sexual desire and lubrication. However, the occasional consumption of mainstream pornography indicated an inverse association with self-esteem scores. Despite the small effect size, the results suggest that feminist and mainstream pornography may be positively related to sexual function. In contrast, the consumption of mainstream pornography appears to be related to low self-esteem. Hence, these findings reinforce the importance of considering the psychosocial effects of pornography consumption on women and indicate a need for further research to promote a better understanding of the relationship between pornography and females' physical, sexual, and mental health.

Keywords: Pornography; Sexual activity; Self-Esteem; Female Sexual Function.

Resumo

A sociedade atual tem apresentado um crescente consumo de pornografia na internet. Este estudo investigou o impacto da exposição à pornografia feminista (tipicamente focada no prazer feminino e na produção ética) e à pornografia mainstream (conteúdo comercial frequentemente centrado em roteiros heterossexuais convencionais) sobre a função sexual e a autoestima de mulheres brasileiras. Participaram da pesquisa 472 mulheres cisgênero heterossexuais maiores de 18 anos de idade. As participantes responderam aos questionários sociodemográfico, de caracterização de consumo de pornografia e de aspectos relacionados à função sexual feminina (desejo, excitação, lubrificação, satisfação, dor/desconforto e orgasmo), além da Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg. Os resultados indicaram que o consumo de pornografia, tanto feminista quanto *mainstream*, relacionou-se positivamente com a função sexual, especificamente com desejo sexual e lubrificação. O consumo ocasional de pornografia *mainstream* indicou associação inversa com os escores de autoestima. Em ambos os achados, os tamanhos dos efeitos encontrados foram pequenos. Estes resultados reforçaram a importância de considerar os efeitos psicossociais do consumo de pornografia por mulheres e a necessidade de mais pesquisas para compreender melhor as relações entre a pornografia e a saúde física e mental.

Palavras-chave: Pornografia; Atividade sexual; Autoestima; Função Sexual Feminina.

Resumen

La sociedad actual ha visto un consumo creciente de pornografía en internet. Este estudio investigó el impacto de la exposición a la pornografía feminista (típicamente enfocada en el placer femenino y en la producción ética) y a la pornografía mainstream (contenido comercial frecuentemente centrado en guiones heterossexuales convencionales) en la función sexual y la autoestima de mujeres brasileñas. En la investigación participaron 472 mujeres heterossexuales cisgénero mayores de 18 años. Los participantes respondieron cuestionarios sociodemográficos, de caracterización del consumo de pornografía y aspectos relacionados

con la función sexual femenina (deseo, excitación, lubricación, satisfacción, dolor/malestar y orgasmo), además de la Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg. Los resultados indicaron que el consumo de pornografía, tanto feminista como convencional, se relacionaba positivamente con la función sexual, específicamente el deseo sexual y la lubricación. El consumo ocasional de pornografía convencional indicó una asociación inversa con las puntuaciones de autoestima. En ambos hallazgos, los tamaños del efecto encontrados fueron pequeños. Estos resultados reforzaron la importancia de considerar los efectos psicosociales del consumo de pornografía por parte de las mujeres y la necesidad de realizar más investigaciones para comprender mejor las relaciones entre la pornografía y la salud física y mental.

Palabras clave: Pornografía; Actividade sexual; Autoestima; Función Sexual Femenina.

Introduction

The discussion about pornography has been persistently surrounded by controversies in the sociocultural sphere. Despite breaking taboos and representing advances in freedom of expression and sexual freedom, pornography currently focuses on the commercialization of pornographic videos. Such productions are mainly aimed at men and reiterate patriarchalism, in addition to building and reinforcing conceptions that stigmatize women and the female body (Binnie & Reavey, 2020).

The impacts caused by mainstream pornography are the subject of numerous studies that show how such content may negatively affect women. Among the topics addressed, studies associate pornography consumption with harassment and sexual aggression, suggesting that these productions reproduce and reinforce unequal gender relations in society (Dines, 2010). However, there is a debate within the feminist movement questioning whether harm results from any pornography or just mainstream pornography (Pinto, Nogueira, & Oliveira, 2010).

Feminist pornography produces movies free from the degradation of the female body, providing other perspectives that mainstream pornography does not explore. In Brazil, research on feminist pornography is mainly conducted through qualitative methods, such as ethnographic methods and interviews (Mesquita, Ribeiro, & de Rezende Pinto, 2022), associated with social sciences and communication. However, the findings arising from qualitative methods restrict the establishment of generalizations or relationships between pornography and mental and sexual health variables in the population.

From this perspective, this study's objective is to explore potential associations between exposure to feminist pornography and Brazilian women's sexual function and self-esteem. Feminist pornography is expected to be free from typical aspects of mainstream pornography with the potential to affect women's mental and sexual health negatively. Therefore, we sought to analyze the following experiences: (a) not consuming any pornography, (b) consuming mainstream pornography, and (c) consuming feminist pornography. This investigation is expected to encourage a

discussion that transcends gender disparities still latent in contemporary pornographic representations and their effects on women's physical, sexual, and mental health.

According to the Michaelis Dictionary (2024), the etymology of the word pornography goes back to the Greek term *pornographos*, formed by *pornos* (prostitute) and *gráphō* (writing), designating any representation that described the lives of prostitutes. Currently, its meaning in the previously mentioned dictionary is "anything (art, literature, etc.) aimed to explore sex in a vulgar and obscene manner."

However, some authors in the 1970s, such as Andrea Dworkin, Diana Russell, and Gail Dines (Pinto et al., 2010), provided new concepts and arguments about pornography and its aspects harmful to female sexuality, constituting the feminist anti-pornography movement. This current promoted the notion that the so-called mainstream pornography comprises materials especially created for heterosexual men, promoting the exposure of sexual activities and genitals, generally based on women's abuse and degradation. Thus, the authors stated that such materials did not represent mutual sexual pleasure, as expected from a sexual relationship, in general expressing hatred and the objectification of women's bodies (Dines, 2010).

On the other hand, in the 1990s, other views opposing the anti-pornography movement emerged, with authors such as Willis (1993) defending pornography as freedom of expression and a way of questioning sex with the sole purpose of procreation, encouraging female sexuality and pleasure. With the third wave of feminism and the implementation of neoliberal policies, the notion of pornography playing an empowering role became stronger, and the so-called feminist pornography emerged, opening the possibility to multiple expressions of sexuality and desire. One example of feminist pornography is Femme Productions, which was created by Candida Royale and gained prominence with its movies aimed at heterosexual female audiences.

Women and Pornography

According to a survey conducted by the website Pornhub (2023), Brazil has the second-highest percentage of women (39%) consuming pornography in the world. This information is relevant, considering that pornography may reflect a reinforcement of patterns and behaviors that maintain beliefs of sexual violence and gender inequality (Leite Júnior, 2011). Note that 36.9% of Brazilian women have already been victims of sexual and/or physical violence committed by their intimate partners (Garcia, 2018), an information likely to be severely underreported.

Since the second half of the 20th century, several studies have suggested that pornography consumption has adverse effects, promoting violence against women. The pornographic content could unveil aggressive attitudes, possibly encouraging and resulting in aggressive behavior. Furthermore, an increased tendency to perpetrate

sexual violence would occur even when pornographic content does not explicitly portray sexual violence, characterizing violence as an element intrinsic to pornography (Check & Guloien, 2012).

Data from a study conducted by D'Abreu (2013) show that the average consumption of pornography may be even higher among perpetrators of violence against women, with the most violent content being consumed by those adept at more severe practices. Other adverse effects arising from pornography consumption include the infantilization of women (Cowan, Lee, Levy, & Snyder, 1988), the reinforcement of the sexually primitive man stereotype (Jensen, 2007), and the exploitation of Afro-descendent, Latin and Asian women who are sexually stereotyped in pornography (Dines, 2010).

The main differences between recent female-friendly pornographic categories and traditional pornography include the exchange of glances, seduction, foreplay, sexual arousal before sexual intercourse, and the absence of violence (Batista, 2020). However, some authors question the reasons it is called “pornography for women,” such as assuming that these movies’ characteristics would be the only way a woman would feel sexually aroused and enjoy pleasure (Barros, Machado, de Sena Biá, & Guerreiro, 2020; Sevegnani, 2018).

Self-Esteem and Female Sexual Function

According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem concerns a negative or positive belief towards oneself. High self-esteem manifests a feeling of “being good enough”; that is, the individual knows and respects herself/himself, not needing others’ admiration. On the other hand, low self-esteem manifests rejection, dissatisfaction, and contempt toward oneself. Self-esteem is composed of factors established since childhood. It involves family, relational, and genetic issues, leading to self-perception, which determines one’s positive or negative self-image (Medeiro, França, & Hernandez, 2021).

Female Sexual Function comprises physical, psychological, and emotional aspects that also determine sexual satisfaction and self-esteem. As assessed by the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI; Rosen et al., 2000), such a function usually involves aspects related to desire, arousal, lubrication, satisfaction, pain/discomfort, and orgasm. Changes in female sexual function involve organic and psychological processes, as described by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM-5 (2014)], which associates sexual dysfunctions with socio-cultural, situational, and self-esteem factors.

In addition to the aspect concerning sexual violence and gender inequalities, the preponderant representation of idealized bodies and performance in mainstream pornography may lead women to hold unattainable expectations in terms of sexual

development, impacting their self-esteem (Pinto et al., 2010). Simultaneously, pornographic scenes do not portray a communication of consent, which may distort women's perceptions of their desires and boundaries (Foubert, Blanchard, Houston, & Williams, 2019). A potential effect is the deterioration of women's sexual and emotional experiences, impacting aspects of their sexual function; for example, experiencing discomfort when trying a sexual position typical of mainstream pornography that is unrealistic and uncomfortable in practice (Böthe et al., 2021).

In this sense, this study's general objective is to investigate the potential effects of watching feminist and mainstream pornography on Brazilian women's sexual function (i.e., desire, arousal, lubrication, sexual satisfaction, pain/discomfort, and orgasm) and self-esteem. The results are analyzed according to the frequency in which types of pornography are consumed, ranging from no consumption to frequent consumption. The specific objectives are to analyze associations between the female sexual function and self-esteem variables, comparing groups of women consuming and not consuming pornography in terms of levels of female sexual function and self-esteem. Additionally, regarding the type of pornography, the mainstream and feminist pornography groups were compared in terms of the frequency in which pornography was consumed (never or frequently) and in terms of levels of female sexual function and self-esteem.

Method

Participants

To participate in the study, respondents were required to confirm that they were heterosexual cisgender women aged 18 years or older; those who did not meet these criteria were directed to the end of the questionnaire without completing it. The final sample consisted of 472 cisgender heterosexual Brazilian women between 18 and 65 years old ($M = 29.7$, $SD = 8.17$), recruited via digital media. Table 1 presents the sample's sociodemographic profile.

Table 1. *Sample's sociodemographic characteristics*

		<i>n</i>	%
Region	North	4	0.8
	Northeast	51	10.8
	Midwest	19	4
	Southeast	329	69.7
	South	56	11.9
	Overseas	13	2.7
Education	Graduate degree/Specialization	149	31.6
	Complete High School	36	7.6
	Some graduate/specialization studies	51	10.8
	Bachelor's degree	118	25
	Some undergraduate studies	115	24.4
	Incomplete High School	2	0.4
	Complete Middle School	1	0.2
Marital Status	Married	82	17.4
	Dating	145	30.7
	Stable union/Cohabitate	87	18.4
	Single	134	28.4
	Engaged	2	0.4
	Did not answer	2	0.4
	Separated/Divorced	18	3.8
	Widowed	2	0.4

Note. *n* = frequency.

Instruments

The team developed a questionnaire addressing the participants' sociodemographic data (age, race/ethnicity, education level, relationship status, and place of residence) and their relationship with pornography, i.e., questions asking the types of pornography they consumed (mainstream, feminist, or other) and the frequency and duration of consumption. Definitions of the terms cisgender, heterosexual, mainstream pornography, and feminist pornography were provided for clarification.

Items inspired from the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI; Rosen et al., 2000) were used in the questionnaire developed by the team to assess aspects related to female sexual function (i.e., desire, arousal, lubrication, discomfort/pain, satisfaction, and orgasm) and rated on a five-point Likert scale. The question "How would you classify your level of sexual desire or interest?" was used to assess the participants' desire level; "How would you rate your level (degree) of arousal during sexual activity

or sexual intercourse?” assessed the participants’ sexual arousal; lubrication was assessed by “How many times were you lubricated (wet) during sexual activity or sexual intercourse?”; the question “How many times did you reach orgasm (climax) when you were sexually stimulated or had a sexual intercourse?” addressed orgasm; satisfaction with a sexual partner was assessed by “How satisfied were you with sexual intercourse with your partner?”; satisfaction with sexual life was assessed by the question, “How satisfied were you with your sexual life as a whole?”; and finally, discomfort was assessed by the question, “How would you classify your level (degree) of discomfort or pain during or after vaginal penetration?”

Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (1965) was also adopted. It is an instrument used worldwide to measure self-esteem according to self-evaluation expressed in terms of an approval or disapproval attitude towards oneself. The scale comprises ten statements: five refer to positive self-image and five to negative self-image or self-depreciation, rated on a four-point Likert ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Ethical and Data Collection Procedures

This study was submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Committee, CAAE 61171222.6.0000.5282, in accordance with the resolutions of the National Health Council (CNS), nº 466/2012 and 510/2016, report nº 5.577.971. The data were collected online using Google Forms between October 2022 and January 2023, and the participants took approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the researchers’ names, affiliations, contact information, and the study’s objective, justification, duration, procedures, potential risks and inconveniences, and potential benefits. The informed consent form also ensured the participants’ rights and provided clarification that data would be used for academic purposes only and personal information would remain confidential. Additionally, the participants were informed of their right to information and were free to withdraw from the study without penalty.

The study and questionnaire were disseminated through digital media like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The link to the questionnaire was posted in groups on different topics: women on Facebook, research groups from several public and private universities in Brazil, and Instagram pages related to sexuality and others.

Data Analysis

First, sociodemographic variables were treated using descriptive statistical tests. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests revealed that the study’s variables were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), which required non-parametric tests. The Spearman bivariate correlation analyses were performed considering the female sexual function

(desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, intrapersonal sexual satisfaction, interpersonal sexual satisfaction, and pain) and self-esteem variables.

Mann-Whitney test was applied to investigate the extent to which the levels of female sexual function and self-esteem were equivalent between the groups consuming and not consuming pornography. The effect sizes ($r = z/\sqrt{n}$) were calculated for all statistically significant variables. Next, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to verify the extent to which the levels of female sexual function and self-esteem were equivalent between the groups consuming mainstream pornography and feminist pornography. The groups were divided according to the frequency in which they consumed mainstream/feminist pornography, measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'very often.'

Results

Regarding pornography consumption, the number of participants consuming pornography was higher than that of participants not consuming pornography. Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages of overall pornography consumption and according to mainstream and feminist pornography consumption in the sample. Most participants consuming pornography reported doing so for more than a year ($n = 307$).

Table 2. *Overall pornography consumption and mainstream and feminist pornography consumption*

Question	Option	<i>n</i>	%
Do you watch pornography?	No	170	36
	Yes	302	64
Do you watch mainstream pornography?	Never	155	32,8
	Rarely	132	28
	Occasionally	122	25,8
	Often	49	10,4
	Very often	14	3
	Never	249	52,8
Do you watch feminist pornography	Rarely	117	24,8
	Occasionally	79	16,7
	Often	22	4,7
	Very often	5	1,1

Note. *n* = frequency.

Table 3 presents the Spearman bivariate correlation coefficients between the female sexual function and self-esteem variables. A strong correlation was found between the Intrapersonal sexual satisfaction and interpersonal sexual satisfaction ($r_s=0.73$) variables and a moderate correlation between the arousal and lubrication

($r_s=0.56$) variables, while. Nonetheless, most variables showed weak correlations, ranging from 0.30 (pain and arousal) to 0.49 (desire and arousal).

Table 3. *Spearman Correlation Coefficients between Female Sexual Function and Self-Esteem*

Factor	Des	Aro	Lub	Org	S_a	S_e	Pain	self
Des	1.00	0.49**	0.30**	0.15**	0.28**	0.31**	0.23**	0.04
Arou		1.00	0.56**	0.40**	0.47**	0.46**	0.30**	0.17**
Lub			1.00	0.29**	0.40**	0.41**	0.38**	0.12**
Org				1.00	0.34**	0.32**	0.16**	0.13**
S_a					1.00	0.73**	0.18**	0.20**
S_e						1.00	0.25**	0.28**
Pain							1.00	0.23**
Self								1.00

Note. * = $p < 0.05$. ** = $p < 0.01$. Des = Desire. Arou = Arousal. Lub = Lubrication. Org = Orgasm. S_a = Intrapersonal sexual satisfaction. S_e = Interpersonal sexual satisfaction. Self = Self-esteem.

The results of the Mann-Whitney tests reveal significant statistical differences in the desire ($U=21594.0$, $z = -3.01$, $p<0.01$) and lubrication ($U=22727.0$, $z = -2.23$, $p<0.05$) variables between women consuming pornography and those not consuming pornography; a small effect size was found for desire ($r=-0.14$) and lubrication ($r=0.10$). Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and the mean rank for the variables presenting differences between the groups. Note that the group consuming pornography obtained higher mean scores in the desire and lubrication variables than the group not consuming pornography.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics of the Female Sexual Function and Self-Esteem variables for the groups consuming pornography (Yes) and not consuming pornography (No)*

Factor		M	SD	Md	Mean Rank
Desire	Yes	3.50	0.93	3	250.00
	No	3.20	1.02	3	212.52
Lubrication	Yes	4.23	1.07	5	246.25
	No	4.02	0.99	4	219.19

Note. M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. Md = Median.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to analyze the frequency with which mainstream pornography was consumed; statistically significant results were found for the desire ($H(4)=17.05$, $p<0.01$) and self-esteem ($H(4)=9.88$, $p<0.05$) variables. Hence, the desire ($z=-3.43$; $p<0.01$) and self-esteem variables ($z=2.83$; $p<0.05$) differed between women who never watched mainstream pornography and women who watched it occasionally. Table 5 shows that women who occasionally watched mainstream pornography presented higher mean ranks concerning desire than women who never

watched it. As for the self-esteem variable, women who never watched mainstream pornography presented higher self-esteem than those who watched it occasionally.

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics of the Desire and Self-Esteem variables according to the frequency with which mainstream pornography is consumed*

	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>DP</i>	<i>Md</i>	Mean Rank
Desire	Never	3.16	.99	3	206.81
	Rarely	3.37	.96	3	234.71
	Occasionally	3.58	.90	4	260.54
	Often	3.55	1	4	257.13
	Very often	3.92	.91	4	300.43
Self-Esteem	Never	31.27	5.89	32	261.27
	Rarely	29.82	5.70	30	226.67
	Occasionally	28.85	7.07	30	214.61
	Often	30.71	6.47	33	247.28
	Very often	28.71	7.55	29	208.00

Note. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard deviation. *Md* = Median.

Regarding the frequency in which feminist pornography is consumed, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed statistically significant results for the arousal ($H(4)=18.82$, $p<0.01$) and lubrication ($H(4)=13.59$, $p<0.01$) variables. The results reveal that women who never watched feminist pornography differed from those watching it occasionally in the arousal ($z=-3.31$; $p<0.01$) and lubrication ($z=-2.98$; $p<0.05$) variables. Table 6 shows that women occasionally consuming feminist pornography obtained higher mean scores in the desire and lubrication variables than those who never watched it.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics of the Desire and Self-Esteem variables according to the frequency in which feminist pornography is consumed*

	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Md</i>	Mean Rank
Arousal	Never	3.75	0.95	4	218.10
	Rarely	3.89	0.89	4	236.28
	Occasionally	4.16	0.74	4	273.10
	Often	4.18	1.05	4	290.39
	Very often	4.60	0.54	5	342.60
Lubrication	Never	4.02	1.08	4	221.00
	Rarely	4.17	0.95	4	235.35
	Occasionally	4.39	0.95	5	269.61
	Often	4.54	0.80	5	288.20
	Very often	4.60	0.54	5	284.60

Note. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard deviation. *Md* = Median.

Discussion

This study's objective was to investigate the potential relationships between the consumption of feminist and mainstream pornography on female sexual function (i.e., desire, arousal, lubrication, sexual satisfaction, pain/discomfort, and orgasm) and self-esteem among Brazilian women. The results revealed significant correlations between pornography consumption and different aspects of female sexual function and self-esteem.

The results obtained in the Mann-Whitney U tests indicate that the group of women consuming pornography obtained higher mean scores in desire and lubrication than the group not consuming pornography. The same result was found in the Kruskal-Wallis test, which also indicates that women who occasionally watched pornography (either mainstream or feminist) obtained higher mean scores in desire than those who never watched it.

As argued by Ashton, McDonald, and Kirkman (2019) and Daskalopoulou and Zanette (2020), discussing the relevance of different types of pornography for female desire and pleasure is vital. The association between these study's results and the findings reported in the literature reinforces the positive role of pornography, i.e., women exposed to pornographic images (regardless of the type) may experience higher desire levels.

Daskalopoulou and Zanette (2020) suggest that research addressing women's consumption of pornography must go beyond the "negative effects" paradigm. This study highlights the possibility of pornography reproducing and promoting patriarchal discourses and gender stereotypes; however, it may be used to achieve states of pleasure and enhance sexual activity. In this sense, pornography—regardless of type—may enhance understanding of female sexuality.

In a study addressing how Australian women understood pornography, Ashton et al. (2019) revealed that pornography both increased and interfered with sexual pleasure, with participants reporting that pornography played a role in amplifying feelings of pleasure, both in solitary experiences and when shared with a partner. Furthermore, many of the participants in the previously mentioned study emphasized that pornography helped them to discover new sexual preferences. Nonetheless, some reported the notion that pornography interfered with pleasure due to a perception that it often distorts the representation of bodies and sexual performance.

Even though, in this study, different types of pornography were positively associated with desire levels, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed a statistically significant association between self-esteem and pornography; i.e., women who never watched mainstream pornography obtained higher mean scores in self-esteem than women who occasionally watched pornography. Although the effect sizes were weak, this

finding is relevant as it reinforces what was theoretically presented in this study's literature review. As indicated, mainstream pornography is chiefly composed of productions aimed at cisgender heterosexual men's pleasure. Thus, they are based on the objectification and disparagement of women, based on images that mainly include violence and submission scenes, including the female representation only through stereotypical beauty standards (Pinto et al., 2010).

Thus, the findings showing lower levels of self-esteem among women who watch mainstream pornography may be an indication of the negative impact that these images reinforce. Unattainable beauty standards, disparaging and degrading scenes, non-consensual violence, and sexual practices that do not represent the multiple possibilities to promote female pleasure may have consequences and implications for women's self-esteem (Foubert et al., 2019). Furthermore, other studies suggest that the more women perceive their partners to have a problematic consumption of pornography, the more affected their self-esteem, relationship quality, and sexual satisfaction (Stewart & Szymanski, 2012).

This study's limitations include the fact that feminist pornography is a recent phenomenon and is seldom nominated. Hence, identifying women who watch feminist pornography is a difficult task, further reinforced by the taboos and prejudice such a topic entails among the female audience. Moreover, this type of pornography has only recently become more widespread; thus, the short time it has been consumed may also have influenced the predicted outcomes.

Another relevant aspect is that women who consume feminist pornography usually consume mainstream pornography, as this study's results show, which hinders understanding of the potential differences in the effects of each. We also should note that the relationship between pornography consumption, Self-Esteem, and Female Sexual Function is influenced by various individual factors, such as past experiences, beliefs, sexual education, and personality (Carrano & Castro, 2019).

Therefore, it is vital to highlight the importance of future research addressing feminist pornography and its repercussions on women. These studies must adopt approaches that enable understanding in greater depth the content represented in these materials, carefully analyzing the representations of different types of bodies and portrayed sexual practices.

Additionally, the importance of scientific research addressing other forms of independent productions that have currently gained prominence, such as home videos widely disseminated on platforms such as OnlyFans, is highlighted. The inclusion of these content modalities in scientific studies may provide insights into emerging dynamics in contemporary pornography.

Finally, longitudinal studies are essential to more deeply address the lasting effects of pornography consumption. Long-term investigations may promote a broader

understanding of the psychological, emotional, and social impacts of pornography consumption on women. In summary, research on this topic must evolve to capture the diversity and complexity of feminist pornography and other contemporary manifestations, encouraging a discussion about the effects of pornography on women's lives.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the potential associations between feminist and mainstream pornography consumption and Brazilian women's sexual function and self-esteem. The results suggest that exposure to both types of pornography may have varying impacts on women's sexual desire and lubrication, with women who consume pornography (regardless of type) reporting higher levels of sexual desire than those who do not. However, when examining self-esteem, a significant finding emerged, with women who occasionally consumed mainstream pornography displaying lower self-esteem compared to those who did not engage with such content. These findings align with existing literature highlighting the potentially negative effects of mainstream pornography on women, particularly in reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes and unrealistic beauty standards. At the same time, feminist pornography appears to offer a more positive alternative, promoting healthier representations of sexuality. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the diverse effects of pornography on women's sexual and psychological well-being, with important implications for future studies and interventions in sexual health and gender equality. Further investigation is needed to explore the long-term impacts of such content and to deepen our understanding of emerging forms of independent pornography.

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