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An Analysis of Motivations and Typologies for the Consumption of Prostitution as Perceived by a Young Spanish Sample

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Abstract: Our study addresses prostitution as a phenomenon linked to the feminization of poverty, the exploitation of women, and gender inequality, highlighting the role of male demand in its perpetuation. Spain is positioned as one of the main destinations for prostitution, with a high incidence of men paying for sex, normalizing this practice. Male motivations, classified in categories such as loneliness, risk attraction, domination, and validation of masculinity, reinforce objectification and violence against women. The aim of this study is to explore the different motivational typologies of prostitution consumption perceived by the Spanish population, as well as the perceived differences between men and women with respect to these typologies. With a sample of 198 young Spaniards (57.1% female, M = 22.5 years), we used the Motives for Prostitution Consumption Scale (MCP). Factor analyses identified two main factors: experimentation and attraction to the forbidden and sexual needs, satisfaction, and companionship, consistent with previous typologies in the literature. Results revealed that women perceive control and dominance as predominant motivations, while men emphasize sexual and affective needs. The MPC demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency indices ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) and the ability to discriminate between groups with different perceptions of the motivations of women and men. Limitations include a predominantly young university sample and the need for further validation with more diverse populations. The study reinforces the importance of analyzing male motivations for prostitution use in order to design educational strategies to promote gender equality and reduce prostitution.

Keywords: prostitution; attitudes; motivations; Spain/Spanish population

1. Introduction

1.1. Prostitution and Women in This Context

The sex trade is built on an interdependent relationship, forming a continuum between the consumption of prostitution and the need to supply women [1–4]. Thus, the feminization of poverty constitutes a vulnerability factor for women, who represent the majority within the context of prostitution, often coming from impoverished backgrounds, as immigrants or as racialized individuals facing multiple forms of discrimination [1,5–9]. Some data indicate that between 600,000 and 800,000 people worldwide cross international borders each year as victims of trafficking, around 80% of them for sexual exploitation, with the majority being girls and women under the age of 25 [10–13]. This situation is illustrated in the literature, which highlights how the increase in prostitution in Europe is paralleled by an increase in the trafficking of women when "supply" is insufficient, with

Spain being one of the primary destination markets for the sex trade. Estimates suggest around 45,000 women and girls are involved in prostitution in Spain [8,14–17].

Currently, several political and social frameworks in Spain and Europe and different sections of feminist movements endorse different perspectives on the prostitution phenomenon, specifically in relation to the conditions of women in prostitution. One is the sex work perspective, which considers prostitution as a legitimate profession or as an employment choice of women [18], while the other is the feminist perspective, which considers it the most extreme form of women's exploitation and that sex cannot be legally bought or sold [8]. From the latter perspective, the International Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and the Directorate of the UNESCO Women's Promotion Program (CATW) [19,20] states that "prostitution is not an expression of women's sexual freedom, but almost always involves violence, marginalization, economic hardship, and a sexist and patriarchal culture", and "when we understand that male dominance is directly linked to rape culture, we must address toxic masculinity and how it relates to the sex trade". In prostitution and the sex industry, data indicate a marked gender inequality between women and men, with a predominantly male demand (99.7%) and a majority female supply (93%) [8,21–23]. In the literature, different authors refer to this male demand for prostitution as representing yet another form of violence against women, violating fundamental rights to equality, the right to human dignity and respect, sexual freedom, physical integrity, freedom of expression, and the prohibition of slavery or forced labor, among others [21,24,25]. Through this demand for prostitution, patriarchal power and the belief in having the right to buy women as sexual objects is justified, while a majority of these women suffer discrimination, exploitation, and sexual violence that undermines their dignity [17,21,24,26,27].

1.2. Consumption of Prostitution by Men and Their Motivations

In various academic and institutional reports on the consumption of prostitution, Spain ranks among the highest both globally and within Europe. Up to 39% of men report having paid for sex at least once [12,14,15,28–31]. Additionally, 23% of young men aged between 18 and 26 admit to having engaged in prostitution at least once as a way of "normalizing" leisure or entertainment activities [32,33]. Different studies emphasize how men's experiences are shaped by different motivations [34–37]. For those who pay for sex and engage in prostitution, the sex industry is a space where they can affirm the notion that women exist for men's pleasure [38,39]. Other motivations that would justify purchasing sex are the validation of masculinity and sexual competence, the need for male satisfaction, or deficiencies within a relationship [36,40–43]. Fun, the ease of having no-strings-attached sex, and/or the opportunity to "experiment" have also been described as justificatory motives for purchasing sex [44,45]. More specifically, additional motivations include low self-esteem, lack of confidence, emotional and sexual loneliness, the inability to have sex by other means, fear of women, romantic disappointments, or fulfilling fantasies. Other factors include the desire to engage in different sexual practices with various partners or to seek risky and illicit sexual acts [41,43,46–62]. All of these studies demonstrate that research on the motivations that drive men to purchase sex or women's bodies is a widely explored area; however, the conclusions reached vary. Some studies conclude that there is no single motivation behind why men buy sex or engage in prostitution [58,63]. In other studies, it is explained by simplifying profiles or motivational typologies [63–65].

Pitts et al. [60] identified three general explanatory motives for purchasing sex or engaging in prostitution: ease (avoiding commitments, sexual desire, accessibility); companionship (desire for company, emotional involvement); and excitement (relief, drug and alcohol consumption). Sanders [66] proposed two typologies of motivational factors: weakness- or deprivation-driven factors (loneliness, needs) and attraction factors offered

by the sex industry (entertainment, images, fantasies). Joseph and Black [34] also suggest two types of motivations for purchasing sex linked to either a consumerist or fragile masculinity. In the first case, excitement and leisure predominate, or the perception that it provides a variety of partners and sexual acts without responsibilities. In contrast, motivations associated with a profile of fragile masculinity include men who feel less comfortable with women and less attractive in the sexual marketplace and for other reasons such as fear of women, limited opportunities to have sex by other means, low self-esteem, or lack of confidence, among others [37]. Domination and socialization have also been established as a bipolar classification that encompasses the various motivations cited in the literature [22,67]. The literature shows that justifications for paying for sex include a complex range of motivations, encompassing everything from established patterns of masculinity to the description of various motivations, which researchers have attempted to classify in an effort to establish certain consumer typologies [62]. Wakefield [68] indicates that theoretical frameworks addressing client behavior should cultivate the ability to understand clients as both economic and gendered agents.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Given all the aforementioned points and considering the social impact of the subject at hand, along with the strong connection between the prostitution/paid sex business and sexism, male domination, and gender inequality, there is an urgent need for explanatory studies that focus on these issues [17,69–72]. Research on prostitution and the consumption of paid sex is essential, as this behavior is modifiable through education, awareness-raising, and attitudinal change aimed at deterring consumption, especially among minors and young people [69]. For all these reasons, this study aims to explore the different motivational typologies of prostitution consumption perceived by a sample of the young Spanish population as well as the perceived differences between men and women with respect to these typologies.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

A community sample consisting of 198 young people aged 18 to 29 (M = 22.5; SD = 2.95) was selected through intentional non-probabilistic sampling: 57.1% were women (n = 113) and the remaining 42.9% were men (n = 85). In terms of education and current situation, 30.3% had completed secondary or high school, and 69.7% were university educated; 66.2% were students, and 33.8% were employed professionals. Additionally, 64.6% (n = 128) identified as belonging to a lower or lower-middle social class, 60.1% did not identify as religious, and 61.1% (n = 121) reported having left or center-left political views. The majority (97.5%) were of Spanish nationality.

2.2. Instruments

Regarding sociodemographic data, information was collected on sex, age, nationality, center/association/group, marital status, education, current situation, social/economic class, religious beliefs, and political views.

Regarding Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution Questionnaire (MCP) [73], the scale consists of 20 items on motives for consumption, such as having fun, poor relationships, sexual dissatisfaction, seeking companionship, experimentation, fantasies, masculinity development, or risk, among others. Participants were asked about how far they agreed or disagreed with each of the motives or reasons why men might engage in paid sex or prostitution. The response format was a Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher

scores indicate a more favorable attitude or greater agreement with the consumption of prostitution for each of the mentioned motives.

2.3. Procedure

The Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution Scale (MCP) [73] was developed following the recommendations by Muñiz and Fonseca-Pedrero [74] and the international guidelines of the International Test Commission (ITC) [75]. A review of the literature was conducted on profiles and consumers' motives for seeking paid sex within the Spanish population. Researchers from the IAPAC (Psychosocial Action Research in the Community Context) research group selected and agreed upon a list of motives based on their frequency and content as presented in various studies [22,41,45,47,54,55,76,77]. In the first phase, a preliminary list of 8 items was administered during pilot workshops conducted by ASTI organization (Secretariado Diocesano ASTI-Alicante), showing adequate preliminary consistency results ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) [73,78]. In the second phase, the number of items was expanded, taking into account that the items selected for the final version would only be those with the best indicators or technical guarantees according to metrics, comprehensibility, and difficulty [74]. For this purpose, the researchers from the IAPAC Research Group individually developed a pool of representative items from the literature, which were then refined into a common list of 20 items: 3 on relationship frequency and dissatisfaction with one's partner (1, 2); 3 on affective difficulties (3); 5 on fantasies and risk (4); 2 related to leisure or fun (5); 4 on easy sex, physiological needs, or lack of opportunity to have sex in a relationship (6, 7); and 3 on masculinities, reaffirmation, and control (8, 9). (See Table 1).

Table 1. List of items on Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution (MCP).

They seek enjoyment (5)
They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships (3)
They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner (1, 2)
They seek variety, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies (4)
They want to be with women who offer a different sexual experience (1, 2)
They need sexual relations more frequently (1, 2)
It is seen as characteristic of masculinity or manhood (8, 9)
It may be their only opportunity to experience sex with another person (6, 7),
They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters (6, 7)
They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied (6, 7)
They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality (8, 9)
It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex (3)
They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood (3)
They look for something more daring or risky in sex (4)
It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties) (5)
They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them (8,9)
They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex (4)
They want to enjoy "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment (4)
They are addicts who cannot control themselves (6, 7)
It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually only seen in "porn" (4)

The study was conducted online between October and December 2023. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method and the snowball technique. Undergraduate psychology students from a public university collaborated for the distribution of the questionnaires. They were administered through Google Forms, sharing a link to the questionnaire by e-mail and through private groups in social networks.

Participants between 18 and 29 years of age who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study were included. As an exclusion criterion, we removed professionals from public and private entities who were sensitized to human trafficking in prostitution and

assist prostituted women or who worked in entities that focus on gender equality and similar women's issues. This information was controlled with a specific question in the questionnaire that identified participants' occupations.

Before completing the questionnaire, participants were required to provide electronic informed consent after receiving a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, purpose, and significance. This consent ensured that participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, that no personally identifiable information (PII) was collected, and that participants could withdraw from the study at any time without academic, professional, or personal consequences. All anonymized data were securely stored on protected servers to guarantee confidentiality.

This study was part of a broader project funded by the Department of Education, University, and Employment of the Generalitat Valenciana (CIACO/161/2022) in order to explore prostitution attitudes in general population and between consumers and non-consumers. This work represented the first phase, focusing on establishing the typologies of consumers as perceived by young people.

2.4. Data Analysis

First, univariate descriptive analyses of the items were conducted, as their means and variances provide information on item positioning and response homogeneity [79]. This analysis was recommended as a preliminary step before factor analysis because an item with maximum homogeneity in responses (i.e., zero variance) would not contribute information to the common variance and should be discarded [80]. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then performed to identify latent dimensions underlying the relationships among observed variables, thereby determining existing typologies within a theoretical framework of relationships between variables [2,81]. Given the observed non-normal distribution in study variables (K-S: 0.165, 0.304; $p \leq 0.001$), the Minimum Squares extraction method was chosen in accordance with the recommendations given in the literature [82–86]. Oblique rotation was applied to identify correlated factors, comparing oblimin and promax criteria to select the simplest and most informative solution [87–91]. Factor identification was guided by the Kaiser [92] criterion, using an eigenvalue > 1. Model adequacy was evaluated with the KMO index [93], with acceptable values between 0.70 and 0.79 and satisfactory values ≥ 0.80, along with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with *p*-value < 0.05. Items were assigned to factors based on a loading criterion of 0.40 [94,95]. Item discrimination or homogeneity analysis considered an item-total correlation ≥ 0.20 [96]. Internal consistency was evaluated with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ [97] and $\omega \geq 0.70$ for McDonald's Omega, which provides a more precise reliability estimate [86,98–100]. Sample size followed the recommendations given in the literature, with a minimum of 100 participants and a ratio of at least 5 to 10 cases per variable [97,101–103]. Additionally, Schreiber [86] suggests that when a factor has four or more loadings above 0.60, the factor may be stable regardless of sample size. In our analysis, several variables showed factor loadings above 0.60 in their respective factors, supporting the stability of the results. For non-parametric difference analyses for independent samples, the Mann–Whitney U test was used. Effect sizes were calculated using the rank-biserial correlation (r_{rb}), with the following criteria: 0.10 indicated a small effect size, 0.30 a moderate effect size, and 0.50 a large effect size [104]. Jamovi statistical software (Version 2.2) was used for data processing and statistical analyses.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis of Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution

The descriptive analysis of the items shows variance indices ranging from 0.87 to 1.60. The mean scores for each item range between 1.87 and 3.77, with mode values between

1.00 and 4.00. The items with the highest mean scores are "they feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them" (M = 3.77; SD = ±1.07) and "they want variety, to experiment, or to fulfill fantasies" (M = 3.76; SD = ±0.93). The items with the lowest mean scores are "It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood" (M = 1.87; SD = ±1.12) and "they are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality" (M = 2.01; SD = ±1.00) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Variance analysis of items.

	M ± SD	Variance	Mode
1. They seek enjoyment	3.66 ± 1.02	1.04	4.00
2. They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships	3.63 ± 1.05	1.11	4.00
3. They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner	3.19 ± 1.08	1.17	4.00
4. They seek variety, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies	3.76 ± 0.93	0.87	4.00
5. They want to be with women who offer a different sexual experience	3.06 ± 1.05	1.10	3.00
6. They need sexual relations more frequently	3.11 ± 1.20	1.45	4.00
7. It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood	1.87 ± 1.12	1.26	1.00
8. It may be their only opportunity to experience sex with another person	3.03 ± 1.20	1.45	4.00
9. They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters	3.68 ± 1.10	1.20	4.00
10. They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied	2.48 ± 1.22	1.48	2.00
11. They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality	2.01 ± 1.00	1.00	2.00
12. It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex	2.06 ± 1.11	1.24	1.00
13. They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood	2.37 ± 1.13	1.28	1.00
14. They look for something more daring or risky in sex	3.23 ± 1.02	1.04	4.00
15. It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties)	2.93 ± 1.22	1.50	4.00
16. They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them	3.77 ± 1.07	1.15	4.00
17. They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex	3.35 ± 1.05	1.11	4.00
18. They want to enjoy "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment	3.54 ± 1.04	1.08	4.00
19. They are addicts who cannot control themselves	2.98 ± 1.26	1.60	4.00
20. It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in "porn"	3.51 ± 1.20	1.45	4.00

Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

The frequency distribution of response options range from 2% to 56%. The "Strongly Disagree" response to item 7 ("It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood") and item 12 ("it is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex") shows frequencies of 52% and 40.4%, respectively. At the opposite end, the "Strongly Agree" response to item 16 ("they feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them") and item 20 ("it allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in porn") reaches frequencies of 27.8% and 22.2%, respectively. The "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response to items 5 ("to be with women who are different from the rest") and item 17 ("they seek to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex") shows the highest frequencies at 31.3% and 29.8%, respectively. The highest frequencies of 56.6% and 53.0% are found in the "Agree" response to items 4 ("they want variety, to experiment, or fulfill fantasies") and 2 ("they feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships"), respectively (see Table 3).

	1	2	3	4	5
1. They seek enjoyment	4	11.1	17.2	50.5	17.2
2. They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships	5.1	12.1	13.6	53.0	16.2
3. They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner	7.6	20.2	25.8	38.9	7.6
4. They seek variety, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies	2.0	11.1	13.1	56.6	17.2
5. They want to be with women who offer a different sexual experience	7.1	24.2	31.3	30.8	6.61
6. They need sexual relations more frequently	12.1	20.7	21.7	35.4	10.1
7. It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood	52.0	24.2	11.6	9.1	3.0
8. It may be their only opportunity to experience sex with another person	14.6	20.2	19.7	38.9	6.6
9. They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters	6.1	9.1	17.7	45.5	21.7
10. They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied	27.3	27.8	18.2	23.2	3.5
11. They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality (8.9)	35.4	41.4	12.1	9.6	1.5
12. It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex	40.4	31.3	11.6	15.7	1.0
13. They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood	29.8	24.2	26.8	17.7	1.5
14. They look for something more daring or risky in sex	6.6	17.2	28.8	41.4	6.1
15. It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties)	17.7	19.2	21.7	35.4	6.1
16. They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them	4.5	7.1	23.2	37.4	27.8
17. They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex	6.6	13.1	4.00	39.4	11.1
18. They want to enjoy the "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment	4.5	12.1	4.00	43.4	15.7
19. They are addicts who cannot control themselves	15.2	22.2	4.00	25.8	12.6
20. It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in "porn"	8.6	11.6	4.00	34.8	22.2

Note: The data represent the percentage of the population that selected each response option. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.2. Profile of Motivational Typologies for the Consumption of Prostitution

The factor analyses of the MCP (Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution) items show satisfactory *KMO* indices (>0.80) and significant Bartlett's test ($p \leq 0.001$), revealing two factors with total explained variance (*V.E*) > 35%. Using oblimin or promax criteria, both models display very similar factor solution patterns. Items 1 ("they seek enjoyment"), 5 ("to be with women who are different from the rest"), 7 ("It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood"), and 19 ("they are addicts who cannot control themselves") do not show factor loadings ≥ 0.40 in either model; the remaining items are similarly distributed across one of the two factors, showing comparable loadings. The first factor comprises seven items (4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20), represented by experimentation, attraction, or forbidden sex acts, with factor loadings ranging from 0.589 to 0.781 using oblimin criteria and from 0.538 to 0.828 with promax. The second factor consists of nine items (2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) related to sexual need, satisfaction, and companionship, with factor loadings between 0.412 and 0.705 using oblimin criteria and between 0.414 and 0.733 with promax (see Table 4).

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis.

Items: Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution (MCP)	F1	F2	F1	F2
1. They seek enjoyment				
2. They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships		0.440		0.456
3. They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner		0.433		0.416
4. They seek variety or new experiences, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies	0.622		0.651	
5. They want to be with women who offer a different sexual experience				
6. They need sexual relations more frequently		0.644		0.651
7. It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood				
8. It may be their only opportunity to have sex in a relationship		0.604		0.621
9. They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters		0.441		0.414
10. They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied		0.705		0.733
11. They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality		0.629		0.663
12. It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex		0.424		0.448
13. They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood		0.412		0.430
14. They look for something more daring or risky in sex	0.589		0.614	
15. It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties)	0.513		0.538	
16. They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them	0.736		0.792	
17. They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex	0.781		0.828	
18. They want to enjoy the "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment	0.775		0.827	
19. They are addicts who cannot control themselves				
20. It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in "porn"	0.696		0.742	
% Variance	18.8	16.5	19.5	15.7
Barlett Test (χ^2 = 1318; $p \leq 0.001$); KMO = 0.86	Oblimin		Promax	

Note: Extraction method: Minimum Squares; oblimin and promax rotation.

The internal consistency analysis shows α = 0.857 and ω = 0.863 for Factor 1, and α = 0.781 and ω = 0.783 for Factor 2. The item discrimination or corrected homogeneity index analysis shows item-total correlations above 0.50 in the first factor and above 0.36 in the second factor (see Table 5).

Table 5. Internal consistency and item discrimination.

Items	r	α	ω
Factor 1			
4. They seek variety or new experiences, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies	0.609	0.840	0.846

Table 5. *Cont.*

Items	r	α	ω
14. They look for something more daring or risky in sex	0.604	0.840	0.847
15. It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties)	0.504	0.857	0.859
16. They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them	0.611	0.839	0.847
17. They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex	0.729	0.822	0.828
18. They want to enjoy the "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment	0.701	0.826	0.832
20. It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in "porn"	0.632	0.836	0.843
Factor 2			
2. They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships	0.411	0.768	0.772
3. They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner	0.406	0.769	0.772
6. They need sexual relations more frequently	0.556	0.747	0.749
8. It may be their only opportunity to have sex in a relationship	0.513	0.754	0.757
9. They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters	0.459	0.762	0.765
10. They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied	0.590	0.741	0.744
11. They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality	0.514	0.755	0.757
12. It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex	0.361	0.775	0.777
13. They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood	0.382	0.772	0.775

Note: r = item-total test correlation index; α = Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency index; ω = McDonald's Omega internal consistency index.

3.3. Gender Differences in the Profile of Motivational Typologies

Men and women showed significant differences in their level of agreement or disagreement regarding the typologies or factors defining the motives for the consumption of prostitution (see Table 6). In Factor 1, related to motives focused on experimentation, attraction, or forbidden sex acts, women showed higher agreement ($U = 3730$, $p \leq 0.01$) with a small effect size (rank-biserial correlation, $r_{rb} = 0.2233$). Additionally, women expressed a higher level of agreement with motives related to consuming prostitution for reasons such as "feeling a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them" with a moderate effect size (item 16) ($U = 3225$; $p \leq 0.01$; $r_{rb} = 0.329$); "seeking to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex" (item 17); and "wanting to enjoy the 'forbidden' in sex, without social judgment" (item 18).

Table 6. Differences between men and women.

	Total M(SD)	Women M(SD)	Men M(SD)	$U(p)$	r_{rb}
Factor 1	3.44 ± 0.8	3.5 ± 0.81	3.27 ± 0.074	3730 **	0.223
4. They seek variety or new experiences, to experiment, or to fulfill sexual fantasies	3.76 ± 0.94	3.82 ± 0.89	3.67 ± 0.99	4441	0.075
14. They look for something more daring or risky in sex	3.23 ± 1.02	3.24 ± 1.05	3.22 ± 0.99	4746	0.012
15. It is a way to celebrate something (business, parties, bachelor parties)	2.93 ± 1.22	3.04 ± 1.21	2.78 ± 1.24	4201	0.125
16. They feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them	3.77 ± 1.07	4.02 ± 1.04	3.44 ± 1.03	3225 **	0.329
17. They want to explore beyond the usual boundaries of sex	3.35 ± 1.05	3.50 ± 1.04	3.15 ± 1.04	3986 *	0.170
18. They want to enjoy the "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment	3.54 ± 1.04	3.70 ± 1.04	3.32 ± 1.00	3770 **	0.215
20. It allows them to engage in sexual practices usually seen only in "porn"	3.51 ± 1.2	3.63 ± 1.20	3.34 ± 1.19	4102	0.146

Table 6. *Cont.*

	Total M(SD)	Women M(SD)	Men M(SD)	*U(p)*	r_rb
Factor 2	2.84 ± 0.68	2.70 ± 0.71	3.02 ± 0.59	3620 **	0.246
2. They feel lonely or have poor emotional relationships	3.63 ± 1.05	3.49 ± 1.17	3.82 ± 0.85	4146	0.137
3. They are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partner	3.19 ± 1.08	3.06 ± 1.14	3.35 ± 0.98	4067	0.153
6. They need sexual relations more frequently	3.11 ± 1.20	3.00 ± 1.31	3.25 ± 1.02	4354	0.093
8. It may be their only opportunity to have sex in a relationship	3.03 ± 1.20	2.83 ± 1.20	3.28 ± 1.16	3807 **	0.207
9. T They want to avoid commitments and have quick and easy sexual encounters	3.68 ± 1.10	3.69 ± 1.20	3.66 ± 0.95	4476	0.068
10. They have physiological and sexual needs that must be satisfied	2.48 ± 1.22	2.28 ± 1.18	2.74 ± 1.21	3779 **	0.213
11. They are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality	2.01 ± 1.00	1.81 ± 0.93	2.27 ± 1.03	3515 **	0.268
12. It is a way to have intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex	2.06 ± 1.11	1.89 ± 1.05	2.27 ± 1.17	3924 *	0.183
13. They seek intimacy, to be listened to, or to be understood	2.37 ± 1.13	2.24 ± 1.05	2.54 ± 1.21	4146	0.137

Note: $U(p)$ = Mann–Whitney U Statistic (*p*-value), * $p < 0.05$ or ** $p < 0.01$; r_rb = rank-biserial correlation; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

In Factor 2, related to sexual need, satisfaction, and companionship, men showed a higher level of agreement ($U = 3620$, $p \leq 0.01$), with an effect size ranging from small to moderate (rank-biserial correlation, $r_{rb} = 0.246$). Men also expressed a higher level of agreement with the motive "it may be their only opportunity to experience sex with a partner" (item 8) and showed less disagreement with consuming prostitution for motives such as "having physiological and sexual needs to satisfy" (item 10); "being young and developing their masculinity/sexuality", with an effect size between small and moderate (item 11) ($U = 3515$; $p \leq 0.01$; $r_{rb} = 0.268$); or "having a way to experience intimate, affectionate, and close companionship through sex" (item 12).

4. Discussion

In light of the literature review and the motivational profiles of consumption of prostitution and paid sex, this study aims to verify different motivational typologies in the consumption of paid sex and how they are perceived by the general population. First, the analysis of the items proposed in the Motives for the Consumption of Prostitution (MCP) scale shows adequate variance indices without "0" values, which would suggest the need to eliminate items a priori [79,80]. Item mean range between a minimum of 1.87 and a maximum of 3.77 with median values between 1.00 and 4.00 indicates a graded and scaled average response across the items [79,80]. The frequency distribution of the different response options to the items supports these results, showing a percentage range from 2% for "Strongly Disagree" to 56% for "Agree" for an item such as "seeking variety, to experiment, or fulfill fantasies". For the responses "Neither Agree nor Disagree", which might indicate greater ambivalence or a central tendency bias, the highest percentage is 31.3% for item 5 ("to be with women who are different from the rest").

Second, with respect to motivational typologies for the consumption of prostitution, the factor solution revealed a first factor with seven items (4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20) represented by experimentation, attraction, or forbidden sex acts and a second factor with nine items (2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) represented by sexual need, satisfaction, and

companionship. These results align with bipolar or dual motivational profiles proposed in the literature. Likewise, our findings are consistent with the typologies proposed by Sanders [66] based on motivations related to attraction (entertainment, imagery, fantasies) or deficit (loneliness, needs). They also align with the profiles proposed by Joseph and Black [34]: consumerist masculinity profiles driven by excitement, leisure, or variety in sexual acts and the fragile masculinity profile, associated with motives such as a fear of women or limited opportunity to have sex in companionship [37]. Our findings also align with other bipolar classifications proposed in the literature based on domination and socialization [22,67]. It is worth noting that item 16, "they feel a sense of control or dominance that appeals to them", is representative of the first factor, with one of the highest factor loadings ($\geq$0.73) and the highest mean in the item descriptive analysis. Meanwhile, items 6 ("they need sexual relations more frequently"), 10 ("they have physiological and sexual needs to satisfy"), and 11 ("they are young and developing their masculinity/sexuality") are representative of the second factor. These three items show the highest loadings ($\geq$0.62) in their factor and may highlight the recognition of socialization processes within a hegemonic masculinity based on physiological needs and the priority given to the sexual development of men.

The results of the factor solution showed four items with factor loadings below 0.40 (1, 5, 7, and 19). In the case of items 5 and 19 ("to be with women who are different from the rest" and "they are addicts who cannot control themselves"), the descriptive analysis also shows median and mean values around 3, indicating a degree of ambivalence in agreement or disagreement or a lack of representativeness of these items in the population's opinion. Item 7 ("It is seen as a characteristic of masculinity or manhood") has a median of 1 and a mean of 1.87, with 52% of responses showing total disagreement. It is possible that while certain motives are perceived as representative of hegemonic masculine socialization processes (items 10 and 11, related to the need for satisfaction and sexual development), they may coexist with recognizing a certain diversity of masculine identities or "conditions of being a man", consistent with the visibility and construction of new masculinities in contemporary society [105,106].

For item 1 ("they seek enjoyment"), the mean is 3.66 and the median is 4, with 50% of responses indicating agreement. Its factor loading is below 0.40 and shows loadings below 0.28 on both factors. Fun and leisure have frequently been cited as motives in the literature on profiles of consumers of sex and prostitution [45,47,54,55,76]. However, in the context of the other MCP items, defined in motivational terms as the reasons that underlie a behavior through an internal process that drives an individual [107–109], the formulation of the item "they seek enjoyment" may be interpreted more as an outcome or post hoc explanatory attribution of consumption behavior rather than an antecedent or motivation for action [110].

In the factorial solution, both factors present internal consistency indices: $\geq$0.78, which is acceptable for Factor 2, and $\geq$0.85, which is good for Factor 1 [97,111,112], both falling within the range of appropriate values, i.e., equal to or above 0.70 and equal to or below 0.95 [96]. Additionally, with respect to item discrimination or a homogeneity analysis, item-total correlations are $\geq$0.36, indicating that all items contribute to the homogeneity or consistency of the scale [96].

5. Conclusions

The MCP is a questionnaire that enables the evaluation of motivational typologies in the consumption of prostitution. It presents adequate reliability indices and two factors or subscales consistent with the bidimensional typology proposals in the literature, which supports its construct validity.

The differences between men and women in the motivational typologies for the consumption of prostitution confirm that women's perceptions align with a consumer typology defined by the desire to experience novelty, fulfill sexual fantasies, explore sexual boundaries, and enjoy "forbidden" sex acts without social judgment. Additionally, it is women who recognize that this typology is characterized by control and dominance, with this motivation reaching the highest level of agreement (M = 4.02 ± 1.04) within this profile. In contrast, it is primarily men who largely consider that men's motives for consumption are best represented by a typology marked by the pursuit of emotional relationships, the possibility of sex within a relationship, or the need to fulfill physiological and sexual dissatisfaction. Men also clearly indicate that being young and developing their masculinity/sexuality could be a motive they neither oppose nor fully disagree with.

These findings confirm that men perceive a higher degree of agreement with motivational typologies for consumption justified by sexual and emotional needs and the opportunity for the development of their masculinity. Meanwhile, women confirm their perception of the desire for dominance and control as a primary and explanatory element in the typology of male consumers, consistent with the specialized literature on men's motivations for consuming prostitution [17,22,34,60,66,67].

These results also support the scale's ability to discriminate between groups with distinct perceptions and attitudes regarding motivational typologies for the consumption of prostitution [113–115].

Limitations

This study contributes to the scarce literature on public perceptions of individuals who consume prostitution; however, it is important to note certain limitations that may affect the generalizability and interpretation of the findings or the stability of the factor solution. Given our specific interest in understanding the perceptions of young people regarding this issue, our study targeted individuals aged 18 to 29. In this study, the preliminary sample consists of young individuals, most of whom have a university education, so it would be desirable to expand it by including samples with sociodemographic characteristics stratified by age, varying educational levels, professional status, among others. Further exploration of other possible motivations underlying the behavior of prostitution consumption as well as differences between consumers and non-consumers and between men and women is necessary. Then, the model obtained through an exploratory factor analysis should be verified with a confirmatory factor analysis in addition to complementing the study of the scale by analyzing other psychometric properties: test–retest reliability and concurrent, convergent–divergent, and discriminant validity. To do so, appropriate sample groups should be selected for each psychometric analysis; for example, comparing populations with homogeneous intragroup characteristics and heterogeneous intergroup characteristics for discriminant validity. As well as this, MCP results should be compared with specific instruments on prostitution already validated in the Spanish population to complete the scale's validity assessment.

Author Contributions: M.M.-A.G. and M.d.C.T.C.: conceptualization. M.V.D. and M.d.C.T.C.: methodology and formal analysis. M.V.D. and M.d.C.T.C.: data curation and supervision. C.V.R. and M.d.C.T.C.: writing—original draft preparation. C.V.R. and M.M.-A.G.: writing—review and editing. C.V.R. and M.V.D.: project administration. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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