
Evaluation of the psychometric properties of the Italian Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory

Giulia Fioravanti¹, Agathe Scappini¹, Paolo Antonelli^{1,2}, Daniel Giunti²

¹ Department of Health Sciences, Psychology Unit, University of Florence, Italy

² Centro Integrato di Sessuologia Clinica "Il Ponte", Florence, Italy

giulia.fioravanti@unifi.it

✎ **ABSTRACT.** Aderire a copioni sessuali tradizionali può portare le donne ad assumere un ruolo passivo nei confronti della propria sessualità e a non sentirsi legittimate a desiderare e ricercare il piacere sessuale. Il *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI)* è un questionario self-report che indaga la capacità delle giovani donne di resistere agli stereotipi di genere e di porsi in qualità di soggetto attivo della propria sessualità. Nel presente studio sono state esaminate la dimensionalità, la coerenza interna e la validità convergente della versione italiana del FSSI. I risultati indicano che la versione italiana del FSSI presenta buone proprietà psicometriche e può quindi essere utilizzata per valutare la *Female Sexual Subjectivity* nelle giovani donne italiane.

✎ **SUMMARY.** The *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI)* is a 20-item self-report measure to assess whether women feel entitled to express and satisfy their sexual needs. Despite the relevance of sexual subjectivity for female sexual wellbeing, the FSSI has not yet received scientific attention in Italy. For this reason, the purpose of the present study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Italian version of the FSSI. A community sample of 1404 women (mean age = 22.25±3.42 years; age range 18-35 years) was recruited in Italy. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the Italian FSSI had a five-factor structure, similar to the original version, named Sexual body-esteem, Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from self, Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from partner, Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure, and Sexual self-reflection. The confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the five-factor structure of the Italian FSSI had good fit. The Italian FSSI showed good internal reliability (Cronbach's alphas for the five factors were .74, .77, .77, .85, and .76 respectively) and good convergent validity. Overall, results indicate that the Italian FSSI has good psychometric properties and can be used to assess sexual subjectivity among young Italian women.

Keywords: Female sexual subjectivity, Psychometric properties, Factor structure

INTRODUCTION

Female sexual subjectivity can be described as a woman's feeling of entitlement to be an active subject rather than an object of sexual desire (Burch, 1998). It encompasses different aspects of sexual self-concepts, such as "sexual body-esteem, perceptions of efficacy and entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure, and sexual self-reflection" (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Tolman (2002) stated that a woman's sexual subjectivity means experiencing entitlement to sexual pleasure and sexual safety and being aware of social forces against her possessing these entitlements. Indeed, most cultures discourage female sexual expression, thus making particularly challenging for young women to develop positive representations of their sexual selves (i.e., free of shame, guilt and fear) (Bay-Cheng, Bruns & Maguin, 2018; Breakwell & Millward, 1997; Fine, 1988; Tolman, 1994). In fact, gender stereotypes traditionally assign women to a passive and submissive role, but also expect them to satisfy their male partners' sexual desires (Kim et al., 2007, Seabrook et al., 2016). Moreover, research has established that a double standard exists in the evaluation of men and women sexual behaviours (Migheli & Pronzato, 2020; Sagebin Bordini & Sperb, 2012). That is to say that men and women are evaluated differently for the same sexual behaviour: men are accorded sexual freedom and promiscuity, women instead are expected to act as "gate-keepers" (Seabrook et al., 2016). The sexual double standard affects many aspects of women's sexuality, for instance, having sex at a young age (Kreager, Staff, Gauthier, Lefkowitz & Feinberg, 2016) or having numerous sexual partners (Marks, Young & Zaikman, 2019) are disapproved behaviours for women, while they are accepted, if not even encouraged, in men. As a result, women may grow to feel that it is not appropriate for them to express and explore their own sexual desires and they might not feel entitled to take charge of their sexual pleasure and safety.

Sexual subjectivity has been associated with numerous aspects of female psychological and sexual wellbeing. Firstly, positive associations were found with sexual self-consciousness, safe-sex self-efficacy and safe-sex competence, which suggests that women with higher levels of sexual subjectivity tend to feel more in control of their sexual experiences and sexual safety and therefore may be more capable of preventing the unwanted consequences of unprotected sex such as unintended pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck,

2006; Mastro & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2015). Secondly, women who possess a stronger sense of sexual subjectivity also show greater general self-esteem and a better identity achievement (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006), which may indicate that sexual subjectivity is an important component of women's identity and self-esteem. Thirdly, higher levels of sexual subjectivity were found to increase women's likelihood to overtly communicate their consent to receive oral sex, which suggests that sexual subjectivity could be a protective factor against the occurrence of consensual, yet unwanted, sexual activities (Satinsky & Jozkowski, 2014). Fourthly, sexual subjectivity is associated with higher romantic and sexual satisfaction, increased positive emotional reactions to recent sexual encounters, and diminished negative emotional reactions to recent sexual encounters, which indicates that sexual subjectivity may have important implications on women's experiences of partnered sexuality (Mastro & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2015; Zimmer-Gembeck, See & O'Sullivan, 2014). Finally, women who show higher levels of sexual subjectivity have considerably more chances to achieve orgasm frequently (Bond, Morrison & Hawes, 2020).

Sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes in the Italian context

Despite the relevance of female sexual subjectivity for women's sexual, relational, and general well-being, this construct has not yet received scientific attention in Italy. Nevertheless, gender stereotypes are particularly prominent in the Italian culture (Ragnedda & Budd, 2015), which, as mentioned before, may increase young women's risk to develop negative representations of their sexual selves. For a brief overview of the general adherence to gender stereotypes in the Italian context, it appears meaningful to consider the findings of a national survey on gender role's stereotypes and the social image of sexual violence, that was conducted in 2018 on a large sample of Italian adults ($N = 15034$; age range 18-74 years) (ISTAT, 2019). More than half (58.8%) of the respondents, with no significant difference between men and women, were found to agree (quite or very much so) with at least one gender stereotype such as "for a man, more than for a woman, it is very important to be successful at work" (32.5%) or "men are less suited to household chores" (31.5%) (ISTAT, 2019). Moreover, 23.9% of the sample believed that a woman's outfit may provoke sexual aggression, and up to

7.2% of the respondents believed that when women receive sexual advances they often refuse, but they actually mean to accept (ISTAT, 2019). These findings clearly indicate that a large proportion of Italian adults adhere to stereotyped gender roles and endorse gendered sexual scripts.

The stereotyped representation of the feminine role is further reinforced by Italian media. Several studies have observed that women's portrayals in Italian media are more often stereotyped and/or sexualized (Ragnedda & Budd, 2015) than in other European countries. More specifically, women are much less likely than men to be depicted in leading roles or to be presented as experts, while they are much more likely to be portrayed in roles that are related to their sexuality or family status (Ragnedda & Budd, 2015). Tartaglia and Rollero (2015) compared the rate and type of women's portrayals in Italian and Dutch newspaper's advertisements and they found that whereas in both countries women's depictions were more often sexualized and used in a decorative fashion than men's ones, this phenomenon was significantly more frequent in Italy than it was in The Netherlands, reflecting the patriarchal mentality that characterizes the Italian culture and the increased risk for Italian women to be sexualized.

Another socio-cultural aspect, that is peculiar to the Italian context and is worth mentioning because of its potential impact on the development of negative sexual attitudes, is the presence of the Vatican City within the Italian borders and the strong influence that the Catholic Church has on Italian youth socialization (Caltabiano, Rosina & Dalla-Zuanna, 2006). In fact, Italians deem religion and family as much more important than other European citizens do (De Santis, Maltagliati & Salvini, 2015). Numerous authors have highlighted how religiosity is generally associated with more conservative sexual attitudes, less permissive sexual behaviors, and increased sexual shame (Lefkowitz, Gillen, Shearer & Boone, 2004; Marcinechová & Záhorcová, 2020). Moreover, solid evidence has established that religious attitudes predict a higher endorsement of traditional gender roles (Morgan, 1987); higher levels of sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1997; Maltby, Hall, Anderson & Edwards, 2010; Mikołajczak & Pietrzak, 2014), and a stronger endorsement of the sexual double standard (Emmerink, Vanwesenbeeck, van den Eijnden & ter Bogt, 2015; Migheli & Pronzato, 2020), meaning that religious people are significantly more likely to negatively evaluate a woman (but not a man) on the basis of her sexual behaviors.

Recent research conducted on Italian university students has shown that Italian youth is progressively catching up with other Western European countries in terms of liberal sexual attitudes (Minello, Caltabiano, Dalla-Zuanna & Vignoli, 2020; Stranges & Vignoli, 2020). In this regard, Minello and colleagues (2020) have compared the sexual behaviors and opinions of two cohorts of university students, using data collected in 2000 and 2017. The authors observed that a considerable shift toward sexual permissiveness has taken place, specifically, young women are reporting an increasing number of occasional partners, the expectation that women should remain virgins until marriage has significantly dropped, having casual partners is becoming more acceptable for women and cheating has become less acceptable for men. Yet, despite these signs of progress, young Italian women are still being evaluated significantly more harshly than men on their sexual sphere (Migheli & Pronzato, 2020). Indeed, when Migheli and Pronzato (2020) assessed individuals' asymmetry in judging men and women for certain sexual behaviors, they found that the (hetero)sexual double standard keeps dominating the mentality of Italian university students. Specifically, the authors found that the cultural context was particularly relevant in predicting the sexual double standard. Indeed, the respondents who grew up in more conservative regions of Italy were two to three times more likely to believe that women, but not men, should avoid certain sexual behaviors (such as having pre-marital sex, having sex at a young age or having multiple partners).

The Italian literature lacks solid evidence on the sexual attitudes of Italian youth and on its positive and health-enhancing aspects. However, a recent study has evaluated sexual satisfaction and its correlates among Italian university students and has found that the majority of the sample declared themselves as sexually satisfied, without significant gender differences (Terzera, Rimoldi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2020). However, the authors found gender differences in the variables influencing sexual satisfaction, specifically, female respondents were less likely to have ever engaged in masturbation and their sexual satisfaction levels were more negatively impacted when reporting low self-confidence and when holding sexual double standards about early sexual debut (Terzera et al., 2020).

Overall, the evidence discussed so far seems to indicate that the Italian context is characterized by numerous socio-cultural factors which are likely to increase young women's

risk to develop negative representations of their sexual selves. The influence of the Catholic religion, the traditional dichotomization of the feminine and masculine roles, the high rates of sexualization of women's bodies in the media and the endorsement of the sexual double standard among Italian youth, all appear to be potential risk factors for women's development of a healthy sexual subjectivity.

The Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory

Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck (2006) were the first to operationalize the concepts related to female sexual subjectivity and to develop an instrument for its measurement: the *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI)*. According to the conceptualization of Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck (2006), sexual subjectivity consists of self-conceptions and cognitions in regard to three macro areas: Sexual body-esteem, Sexual Desire and Pleasure, and Sexual self-reflection. The three studies that yielded to the development and validation of the FSSI revealed that a 20-item five-factor structure showed the best fit to the data (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Indeed, the second element of sexual subjectivity, Sexual Desire and Pleasure, is further divided into three factors: Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from self, Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner, and Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure. Despite the slightly better fit of the five-factor structure, the authors preferred to maintain the original, conceptually derived, three-factor structure. However, the authors also acknowledged that the FSSI measures five related but distinct factors that only show moderate positive correlations with each other, and therefore should be considered separately (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Factor 1 (Sexual body-esteem) assesses women's perceptions of their sexual attractiveness. A sample item is "I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable". Factor 2 (Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from self) assesses women's sense of entitlement to experience sexual pleasure from masturbation. A sample item is "It is okay for me to meet my own sexual needs through self-masturbation". Factor 3 (Entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner) assesses women's sense of entitlement to receive pleasurable sexual stimulation from a partner. A sample item is "If a partner were to ignore my sexual needs and desires, I'd feel hurt". Factor 4 (Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure) assesses a woman's

ability to demand the sexual stimulation that she needs in order to achieve sexual pleasure. A sample item is "I am able to ask a partner to provide the sexual stimulation I need". Factor 5 (Sexual self-reflection) assesses women's proneness to critically reflect about their sexual selves. A sample item is "I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences". Respondents are asked to indicate how much each statement is true for them, using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (absolutely false) to 5 (absolutely true). Higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual subjectivity. The psychometric evaluation of the instrument was performed on data collected from a sample of 216 Australian women aged 17 to 22 and revealed adequate psychometric properties (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Cronbach's alphas were .82, .81, .81, .85, and .78 for Factor 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. Good convergent validity was demonstrated through positive correlations with measures of sexual consciousness, safe-sex self-efficacy, self-esteem, identity achievement, and resistance to sexual double standards (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). A negative correlation was found with a measure of self-silencing in intimate relationships (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Two longitudinal studies have attempted to assess the stability of sexual subjectivity over time and the factors that may be associated with its variation (Hewitt-Stubbs, Zimmer-Gembeck, Mastro & Boislard, 2016; Zimmer-Gembeck, Ducat & Boislard-Pepin, 2011). These studies showed that sexual subjectivity' scores correlate with the amplitude of the repertoire of sexual experiences and suggest that sexual subjectivity tends to develop steadily when sexual activity is first initiated and then stabilizes as sexual activity increases (Hewitt-Stubbs et al., 2016; Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Overall sexual subjectivity scores were not found to significantly differ by age group (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), however, positive associations were found between age and entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner (Hewitt-Stubbs et al., 2016; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011) and between age and entitlement to sexual pleasure from self (Moyano, Granados, Vélez-Schemankewitz & Dib-Fayad, 2020; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Sexual subjectivity scores have been found to be significantly higher in women who have a stable romantic relationship (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Albeit the FSSI was developed to assess the sexual self-concepts of girls in their late adolescence and emerging adulthood, some scholars have used it with women up to 71 years of age and have concluded that the FSSI is an adequate instrument to use with women in

different developmental stages (Moyano et al., 2020; Satinsky & Jozkowski, 2014). Most of the research employing the FSSI has been conducted on White, English-speaking populations (such as Australian or American samples). Moyano and colleagues (2020) have developed a Spanish version of the FSSI and have examined its psychometric properties on a sample of Ecuadorian women. Although the Spanish version was found to have adequate psychometric properties, the authors observed that Ecuadorian women scored particularly low in the Entitlement to pleasure from self subscale, which suggests that female sexual subjectivity is a culture-dependent construct (Moyano et al., 2020), and the need to re-examine the structure and psychometric properties of measures when they are applied to another context or culture.

The current study

The present study aimed to determine whether the FSSI could be a psychometrically-sound measure in the Italian context. This is important because it provides further cross-cultural research on the FSSI, while also providing a useful tool with which to assess this construct in Italy. Indeed, it should be noted that, to the best of our knowledge, no measure of entitlement to sexual pleasure, sex reflection or sexual self-efficacy is currently available in the Italian language. This lack of instruments is currently impeding the Italian literature to replicate the research on female sexual well-being that has been conducted elsewhere and is especially preventing clinicians from gaining important insights in regard to the sexual well-being of young Italian women. For these reasons, the aims of the present study were to examine the dimensionality, internal consistency, and convergent validity of the Italian version of the FSSI. On the basis of the literature reviewed so far, we expected to find evidence for a five-factor structure for the FSSI. Furthermore, based on previous findings (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006; Moyano et al., 2020), we expected FSSI scores to correlate positively with measures of general self-esteem and body self-esteem and negatively with a measure of self-surveillance (i.e., self-objectification). For the conflicting previous results about the association between sexual subjectivity and age (Hewitt-Stubbs et al., 2016; Moyano et al., 2020; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), and for the lack of previous findings in regard to the association between sexual subjectivity and religiosity, no specific predictions were made.

METHOD

Participants

Data were derived from the first phase of a larger study that was conducted by the first two authors of this paper in 2020 aimed to investigate the impact of gender scripts, sexual pressure, and sexual subjectivity on young heterosexual women's sexual functioning. The study comprised three different phases on three different samples. A total of 1404 Italian women aged 18 to 35 ($M = 22.25$, $SD = 3.42$) participated in the first phase of the study. The majority of participants (65.1%) had a high school diploma, 24.3% had an academic degree, 7.8% had an elementary or middle school diploma, and 2.8% had postgraduate degrees. For what concerns religious faith, 30.7% of the participants stated that they were religious. As the overall research focused on the impact of gender scripts in the specific context of heterosexual relationships, only women who had been in a romantic relationship with a man in the six months preceding recruitment were eligible to participate, thus this study does not include lesbian or asexual women.

The recruitment procedure was carried out by disseminating advertisements on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and in particular, on a sex education Instagram profile that posts daily content on sexuality-related topics (Sessuologia, n.d.). The study was advertised as a "Scientific research on gender stereotypes and female sexual well-being" and inclusion criteria were stated in the online post. Those included identifying as a female, being between 18 and 35 years of age, and having or having had a romantic relationship with a male partner in the six months preceding recruitment. Participants were screened for eligibility in the first page of the online survey, those who did not meet the inclusion criteria were redirected directly to the closing page of the online protocol, thus their data were not collected. Participation was voluntary and participants did not receive remuneration.

Measures

- *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory*. The Italian version of the *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory* (FSSI; Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) was developed using a standard back-translation technique (Brislin, 1986). Firstly, the parent English version was translated from English to Italian

by a bilingual individual who was unaffiliated with the study (thus creating Version 1), next, the scale was translated back to English by a second individual (thus creating Version 2). Finally, Version 1 and Version 2 were compared by two additional independent translators that were not affiliated with the study. Minor discrepancies were settled through consensus. The Italian FSSI can be found in Appendix.

- *Body Shape Questionnaire-14*. The Italian version (Matera, Nerini & Stefanile, 2013) of the *Body Shape Questionnaire-14* (BSQ-14; Dowson & Henderson, 2001), is a 14 items scale that investigates women's dissatisfaction with their body image and shape. Participants are asked to indicate how frequently they experienced the feelings or situations that are described in the items in the past two weeks, using a 6-points Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 6 (Always). Higher scores indicate higher levels of body dissatisfaction. The psychometric properties of the Italian version of the questionnaire were tested on a sample of Italian non-clinical young women, Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was found to be high ($\alpha = .93$) and convergent validity was good (Matera et al., 2013). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .95.
- *Objectified Body Consciousness Scale*. The Italian version (Dakanalis, Timko, Clerici, Riva & Carrà, 2016) of the Self-surveillance subscale of the *Objectified Body Consciousness Scale* (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996) was used to measure respondents' tendency or habit to persistently monitor and think about their bodies as outside observers and respondents' levels of objectification of their bodies. The Self-surveillance subscale was found to be distinct from the two other dimensions of the *Objectified Body Consciousness Scale* (namely Body shame and appearance control beliefs) and can therefore be administered independently (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The Self-surveillance subscale comprises 8 items (e.g., "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good"). Participants have to express their agreement or disagreement using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-surveillance. Psychometric evaluation of the Italian version of the OBCS has demonstrated that the Self-surveillance subscale possesses good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$), test-retest reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity (Dakanalis et al., 2016). In the current study, Cronbach's α was .75.
- *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*. The Italian adaptation

(Prezza, Trombaccia & Armento, 1997) of the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) was used as a measure of global self-esteem. The questionnaire counts 10 items investigating respondents' feelings of worthiness, contentedness about the self, and beliefs about competency. A sample item is "I feel that I have a number of good qualities". The rating scale consists of a 4-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (Completely false) to 4 (Completely true). Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. The internal consistency of the Italian version of the instrument was found to be good (Cronbach's alpha = .84), as well as its construct validity (Prezza et al., 1997). In the current study, Cronbach's α was .87.

Procedure and statistical analysis

The individuals who were interested in undertaking the survey were provided with a link redirecting them directly to the online research questionnaire. Before starting the survey, participants were informed about the scope of the research, data treatment and privacy, and they were asked to declare that they were at least 18 years old and that they had read and understood the informed consent. International ethical guidelines were followed, and ethics approval was obtained.

A two-step analytic strategy to examine the psychometric properties of the Italian FSSI was used. We split the sample's dataset into two so that each subsample had a random allocation of 702 participants. There were no significant differences between the two subsamples in terms of age, or in the distribution of all the other study variables. In the first subsample, we assessed the factor structure of the Italian FSSI using principal component analysis (PCA) in IBM SPSS Statistics v.25. The sample sizes in this subsample met a conservative item-to-participant ratio of 10:1 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Using the original validation study (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) as a guide, we used oblimin rotation. The number of factors to be extracted was determined by factor eigenvalues above 1.0 (the EGV1 criterion) and examination of the scree plot (Preacher & MacCallum, 2003). Factor loadings were interpreted using Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendations, with loadings of .71 and above considered excellent, .63-.70 considered very good, .55-.62 considered good, .33-.54 considered fair, and .32 or lower considered poor. We then examined internal consistency by computing Cronbach's reliability coefficient. Next, data from the second

subsample were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method by using LISREL. Hypothesized modelling was based on the results of the PCA in the first subsample. Standard goodness-of-fit indices were selected a priori to assess the measurement models (Hu & Bentler, 1999): the normed model chi-square (χ^2/df), the Comparative fit index (CFI), the Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Specifically, a χ^2/df value of <3.00 indicates a good fit, CFI values should be close to or $>.95$ for a good fit but can be as low as $.90$ for adequate fit. A cut-off value for SRMR is recommended to be close to or $<.09$. RMSEA values close to $.06$ indicate a good fit, with values ranging to $.10$ representing a mediocre fit. In this second subsample, we examined convergent validity by computing bivariate correlations between FSSI scores and scores on the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1965), the Self-surveillance subscale of the *Objectified Body Consciousness Scale* (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), and the *Body Shape Questionnaire-14* (Dowson & Henderson, 2001). Bivariate correlations between FSSI scores, Age and Religiosity were also computed. Religiosity was coded as a dummy variable, with “non-religious” as a reference.

RESULTS

Item analysis

Means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis for each FSSI item in the first subsample ($n = 702$ age $M = 22.30$ $SD = 3.46$) were calculated. They are shown in Table 1. All the items except one (i.e., item 13) showed skewness and kurtosis within normal parameters (being included in the conventional cut-off of ± 3 [e.g., Mayers, 2013]). Regardless of statistical significance, simulation studies have found that serious problems may exist when univariate skewness is ≥ 2.0 and kurtosis is ≥ 7.0 (Curran, West & Finch, 1996).

Exploratory factor analysis

Based on items distribution, average correlation with other items, and item-total correlations (Clark & Watson, 1995), this data was suitable for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy ($.81$) and

the significance of Bartlett’s test of sphericity of the present study ($\chi^2_{(190)} = 4862.534, p < .001$) indicated that this data had adequate factorability. The results of the factor analysis indicated that five factors – which explained 61.03% of the total variance – should be extracted. As shown in Table 2, all 20 items in the FSSI had good-to-excellent factor loadings. Cronbach’s alphas had adequate values (see Table 2). The five factors identified were the same as the original version: Sexual body-esteem (Factor 1), Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from self (Factor 2), Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from partner (Factor 3), Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure (Factor 4), Sexual self-reflection (Factor 5).

Confirmatory factor analysis

To verify the factor structure identified through PCA, a CFA was performed on the second subsample ($n = 702$, age $M = 22.19$ $SD = 3.38$). Results showed an acceptable fit for the five-factor solution ($\chi^2_{(160)} = 586.90, p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 3.66$; RMSEA [90% CI] = $.06$ [$.05$; $.07$]; CFI = $.94$; SRMR = $.05$). Standardized factor loading ranged from $.34$ to $.87$, all of which were significant at the $.001$ level, as well as the estimated correlations between the five factors (see Figure 1).

Convergent validity

We examined convergent validity by considering bivariate correlations between FSSI scores and scores on the BSQ-14, the Self-surveillance subscale of the OBCS and the RSES (see Table 3).

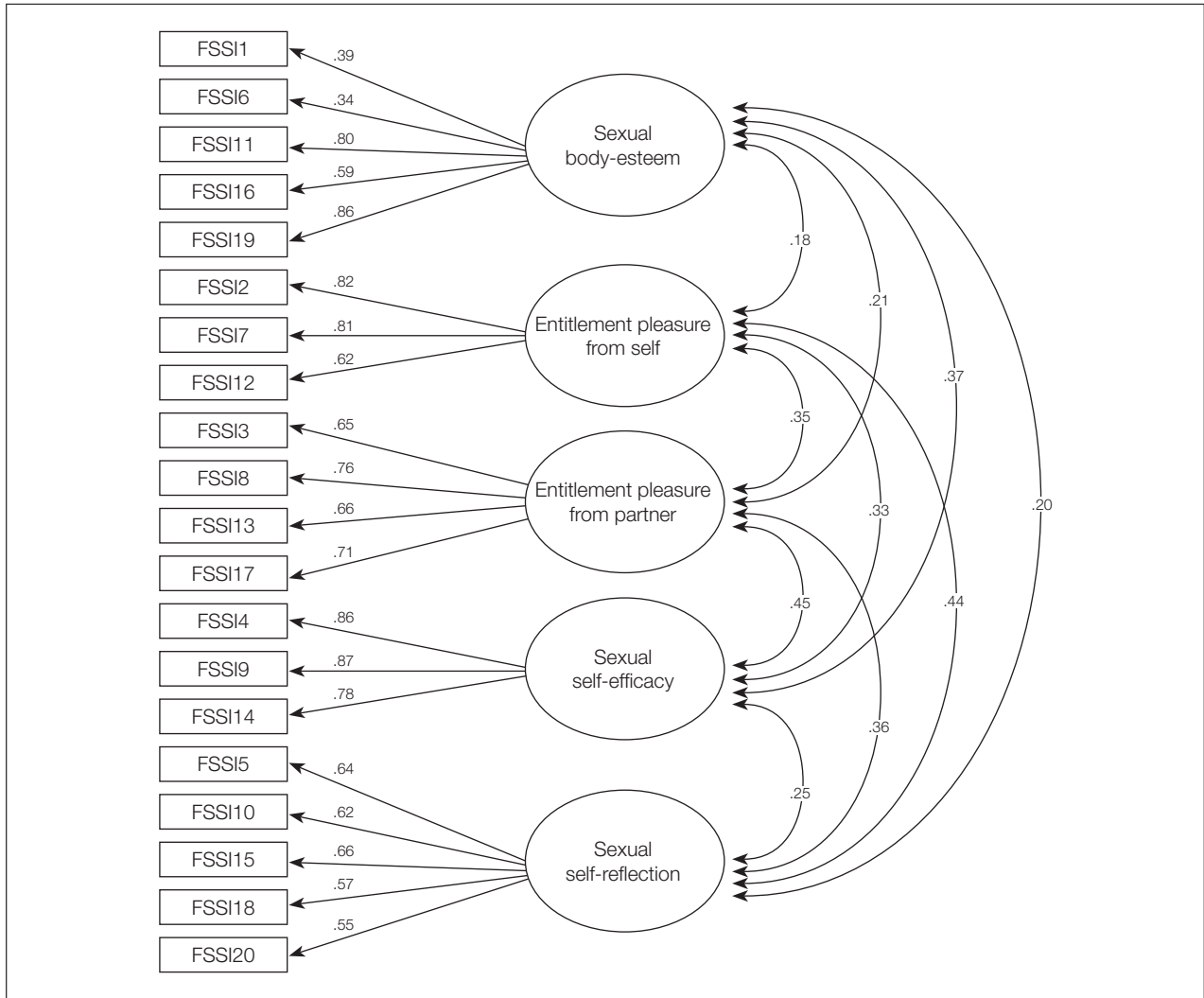
The Sexual body-esteem subscale positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with self-surveillance and body dissatisfaction. The Sense of entitlement to pleasure from partner and from the self subscales were positively correlated with self-esteem. The Self-efficacy in achieving pleasure subscale was positively associated with self-esteem and negatively associated with self-surveillance. The Sexual self-reflection subscale was positively associated with self-surveillance. Being religious correlated negatively with feeling entitled to sexual pleasure from a partner and from the self and with sexual self-reflection, whereas no significant associations were found with Sexual body-esteem or Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure. No significant associations were found between FSSI factors and age.

Table 1 – Descriptive statistics of Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI) (N = 702)

	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
FSSI1	2.69	1.14	.48	-.64
FSSI2	4.30	.95	-1.54	2.07
FSSI3	4.34	.77	-1.29	2.11
FSSI4	4.13	1.00	-1.12	.60
FSSI5	3.74	1.00	-.75	.14
FSSI6	2.87	1.21	.31	-.90
FSSI7	4.29	.91	-1.44	2.04
FSSI8	4.39	.69	-1.19	2.02
FSSI9	3.94	1.04	-.89	.15
FSSI10	4.07	.89	-.82	.25
FSSI11	3.26	.94	-.44	.05
FSSI12	4.82	.50	-1.54	1.52
FSSI13	4.57	.67	-1.77	3.91
FSSI14	4.08	.84	-.94	1.14
FSSI15	4.10	.92	-1.04	.95
FSSI16	3.70	1.04	-.65	-.07
FSSI17	4.62	.56	-1.39	2.70
FSSI18	4.02	.95	-.89	.40
FSSI19	3.00	1.00	-.14	-.52
FSSI20	4.11	1.00	-1.19	1.03

Table 2 – Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory: Principal components analysis with Oblimin rotation

Item	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
FSSI1	.59	-.03	-.36	-.15	.00
FSSI6	.52	.06	-.26	-.22	-.01
FSSI11	.83	-.06	.11	.15	.04
FSSI16	.64	.07	.19	-.11	-.04
FSSI19	.85	-.08	.10	.13	.03
FSSI2	.02	-.88	-.04	-.03	-.02
FSSI7	.01	-.84	.07	-.01	.02
FSSI12	-.01	-.77	-.02	-.01	.00
FSSI3	.01	-.04	.76	.05	.04
FSSI8	.03	-.07	.78	-.01	.05
FSSI13	-.03	.03	.65	-.25	-.02
FSSI17	.17	-.03	.64	-.15	.09
FSSI4	-.01	-.06	.02	-.87	.01
FSSI9	-.03	-.05	.03	-.87	.01
FSSI14	.02	-.01	.18	-.76	.08
FSSI5	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.01	.70
FSSI10	.04	.02	.01	.02	.75
FSSI15	-.01	-.12	.06	-.07	.65
FSSI18	.00	.05	.02	.00	.71
FSSI20	-.03	.06	-.05	.02	.76
Explained variance (%)	12.30	7.76	24.90	6.83	9.25
Cronbach's alpha	.74	.77	.77	.85	.76

Figure 1 – Confirmatory factor analysis of the Italian FSSI

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Italian version of the *Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory* (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) and to determine whether the FSSI can be used to investigate female sexual subjectivity in the Italian context. The factor structure, internal consistency, convergent validity and reliability of the Italian FSSI were explored.

The Italian version of the FSSI comprises the same 20 items as the original version (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the five-factor structure of the scale. The first FSSI factor (Sexual body-esteem) assesses women's levels

of self-confidence in regard to their sexual attractiveness. The second factor (Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from self) investigates whether a woman feels entitled to satisfy her sexual needs through self-masturbation. The third factor (Sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from partner) investigates whether a woman feels entitled to experience sexual pleasure from the partner and whether she expects a sexual partner to be sensitive to her sexual needs and feelings. The fourth factor (Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure) investigates whether a woman is comfortable in expressing her sexual needs to a sexual partner. The fifth factor (Sexual self-reflection) investigates a woman's proneness to reflect upon her sexuality and her sexual experiences.

All FSSI subscales had adequate to high internal

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics and correlations (Pearson’s coefficients) between the five factors of the FSSI, Self-esteem, Self-surveillance, Body dissatisfaction, Age and Religiosity (N = 702)

FSSI Factors	M (SD)	Self-esteem	Self-surveillance	Body-shape dissatisfaction	Age	Religiosity
Factor 1 – Sexual body esteem	3.12 (.74)	.49**	-.39**	-.47**	.02	-.03
Factor 2 – Entitlement to pleasure from the self	4.45 (.66)	.12**	-.06	-.03	.06	-.19**
Factor 3 – Entitlement to pleasure from partner	4.51 (.51)	.09*	-.06	.06	-.02	-.15**
Factor 4 – Self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure	4.07 (.86)	.19**	-.13**	-.07	-.01	-.07
Factor 5 – Sexual self-reflection	4.04 (.66)	.07	.09*	-.03	-.06	-.10**

Note. Religiosity was coded as a dummy variable with non-religious = 0 and religious = 1; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

consistencies and were found to correlate with theoretically related constructs, consistently with previous findings (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006; Moyano et al., 2020). In particular, women who scored higher on the Sexual body-esteem subscale of the FSSI showed significantly higher levels of general self-esteem, and lower levels of body dissatisfaction and self-surveillance tendencies. Moreover, women who reported feeling more entitled to experience sexual pleasure from their own selves (e.g., through self-masturbation) and those who felt more self-agentic in achieving pleasure showed greater levels of self-esteem. None of the FSSI subscales was found to correlate with age. This result differs from previous studies who reported a positive association between age and sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner (Hewitt-Stubbs et al., 2016; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011) and between age and sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure from the self (Moyano et al., 2020; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). However, we believe that the absence of correlation found in the current study might be due to the fact that the average age was higher in our sample. In fact, the association between sexual subjectivity and age is likely to be mediated by an increase in sexual experiences and sexual subjectivity was found to increase steadily when sexual activity is first initiated (Hewitt-Stubbs et al., 2016; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Thus, as the women in our sample were older than those who participated in previous studies, they might have

been all sexually experienced and therefore their sexual subjectivity scores did not vary as a function of age. Further research is needed to clarify whether age has an effect on sexual subjectivity and whether this relation is fully or partially mediated by an increase in sexual experiences.

In our sample, being religious was associated with lower levels of entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner and from the self, and lower levels of sexual self-reflection. To the best of our knowledge, no previous study has investigated the associations between religiosity and sexual subjectivity, thus these findings are important because they suggest that religious women might have more difficulties in developing a healthy sense of sexual subjectivity. This could be due to the fact that, according to the Catholic religion, sex should only occur for procreational purposes and having sexual experiences only for the sake of pleasure is considered sinful. Therefore, young religious women might feel less entitled to experience sexual pleasure and less prone to reflect on their sexual life, because they might deem that it is not appropriate. This explanation would be in line with the findings of Marcinechová and Záhorcová (2020), who found that intrinsic religiosity was associated with diminished sexual permissiveness and increased sexual shame.

The psychometric properties of the Italian FSSI are comparable to those reported by Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck (2006). This result seems to suggest that the structure and the

psychometric properties of the FSSI remain relatively stable across different cultural contexts. The FSSI has been adapted to the Spanish language and its psychometric properties have been tested on a sample of Ecuadorian women (Moyano et al., 2020). Moyano and colleagues (2020) found that after deletion of two items, the Spanish version of the FSSI revealed a five-factor structure and psychometric properties comparable to those of the original version. However, the authors also noted that Ecuadorian women scored significantly lower than Australian women on the Entitlement to pleasure from self subscale, which they attributed to the rigid patriarchal norms that characterize Latin American countries (Moyano et al., 2020). These results may indicate that the construct of sexual subjectivity, or at least some of its factors, are sensitive to cultural changes. Thus, further studies are warranted to test the cross-cultural invariance of the FSSI, and researchers employing the FSSI should be mindful of the possible effects that different cultural contexts can have on FSSI scores.

This study features some important limitations. First, the majority of women who took part in our study were recruited by the means of an Instagram page that posts daily content related to sexology and sexual wellbeing. This may represent a sampling bias, which may have altered the generalizability of our findings to the general population of young Italian women. Indeed, there is a concrete risk that women who follow a sex-education Instagram profile are more open-minded and knowledgeable about sexuality and therefore more prone to reflect on their sexuality or to feel entitled to experience sexual pleasure. However, this recruiting procedure also presented considerable advantages, in fact, it enabled us to recruit a very large and diversified sample in terms of socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., level of education), which would not have been the case if we had carried out the recruitment procedure on a university campus. Another limitation of current study is that the women in our study sample had been in a romantic

relationship with a male partner in the six months preceding recruitment, thus, results cannot be generalizable to women with no partner or with different sexual orientations, such as lesbian or asexual women. Finally, this study only focused on women between 18 and 35 years of age and therefore cannot be generalizable to adolescents or older adults. Hence, studies featuring more diversified samples in terms of age, sentimental status, and sexual orientation should be conducted, to further support the validity of the current findings.

Despite these limitations, the present findings indicate that the FSSI is an adequate instrument to assess sexual subjectivity among young Italian heterosexual women and that sexual subjectivity significantly relates to other important areas of women's wellbeing.

Given that significant rates of sexism against women have been documented among Italian University students (Rollero & Tartaglia, 2018) and on Italian media (Ragnedda & Budd, 2015; Tartaglia & Rollero, 2015), and considering that sexual double standard persists to exist among Italian youth (Migheli & Pronzato, 2020), more research is warranted to investigate the effect that gender stereotypes play on the sexual well-being of young Italian women. Using the Italian versions of the FSSI will allow future researchers to gain a better understanding of how gender stereotypes may influence the sexual subjectivity and the sexual well-being of young women in Italy. Moreover, as noted by numerous authors, most of the research that has been conducted on young female sexuality has taken a problem-oriented approach and has focused on the occurrence/prevention of negative outcomes (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006; Rostosky, Dekhtyar, Cupp & Anderman, 2008). The FSSI, instead, will enable future researchers to focus on the positive and health enhancing outcomes of young women's sexuality, an important area of study that has not yet been sufficiently considered in the Italian context.

References

- BAY-CHENG, L., BRUNS, A. & MAGUIN, E. (2018). Agents, virgins, sluts, and losers: The sexual typecasting of young heterosexual women. *Sex Roles*, 79 (11-12), 699-714. doi:10.1007/s11199-018-0907-7
- BOND, J., MORRISON, D. & HAWES, S. (2020). Sexual self-efficacy and entitlement to pleasure: The association of the Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory with sexual risk taking and experience of orgasm. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49 (3), 1029-1038. doi:10.1007/s10508-019-01563-3
- BREAKWELL, G. & MILLWARD, L. (1997). Sexual self-concept and sexual risk-taking. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20 (1), 29-41. doi:10.1006/jado.1996.0062

- BRISLIN, R.W. (1986). The wording and translation of research instruments. In W.L. Lonner & J.W. Berry (Eds.), *Cross-cultural research and methodology series, Vol. 8. Field methods in cross-cultural research*. Sage Publications.
- BURCH, B. (1998). Lesbian sexuality/female sexuality: Searching for sexual subjectivity. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 85, 349-372.
- CALTABIANO, M., ROSINA, A. & DALLA-ZUANNA, G. (2006). Interdependence between sexual debut and church attendance in Italy. *Demographic Research*, 14, 453-484. doi:10.4054/demres.2006.14.19
- CLARK, L.A. & WATSON, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7 (3), 309-319. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.7.3.309
- CURRAN, P.J., WEST, S.G. & FINCH, J.F. (1996). The robustness of test statistics to nonnormality and specification error in confirmatory factor analysis. *Psychological Methods*, 1 (1), 16-29. doi:10.1037/1082-989X.1.1.16
- DAKANALIS, A., TIMKO, A., CLERICI, M., RIVA, G. & CARRÀ, G. (2016). Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) in eating psychopathology. *Assessment*, 24 (2), 252-274. doi:10.1177/1073191115602553
- DE SANTIS, G., MALTAGLIATI, M. & SALVINI, S. (2015). A measure of the cultural distance between countries. *Social Indicators Research*, 126 (3), 1065-1087. doi:10.1007/s11205-015-0932-7
- DOWSON, J. & HENDERSON, L. (2001). The validity of a short version of the Body Shape Questionnaire. *Psychiatry Research*, 102, 263-271. doi:10.1016/s0165-1781(01)00254-2.
- EMMERINK, P.M.J., VANWESENBEECK, I., VAN DEN EIJNDEN, R.J.J.M. & TER BOGT, T.F.M. (2015). Psychosexual correlates of sexual double standard endorsement in adolescent sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53 (3), 286-297. doi:10.1080/00224499.2015.1030720
- FINE, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 29-53. doi:10.17763/haer.58.1.u0468k1v2n2n8242
- GLICK, P. & FISKE, S.T. (1997). Hostile and benevolent sexism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21 (1), 119-135. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00104.x
- HEWITT-STUBBS, G., ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M., MASTRO, S. & BOISLARD, M. (2016). A longitudinal study of sexual entitlement and self-efficacy among young women and men: Gender differences and associations with age and sexual experience. *Behavioral Sciences*, 6 (1), 4. doi:10.3390/bs6010004
- HORNE, S. & ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M. (2005). Female sexual subjectivity and well-being: Comparing late adolescents with different sexual experiences. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 2 (3), 25-40. doi:10.1525/srsp.2005.2.3.25
- HORNE, S. & ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M. (2006). The Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory: Development and validation of a multidimensional inventory for late adolescents and emerging adults. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30 (2), 125-138. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2006.00276.x
- HU, L. & BENTLER, P.M. (1999). Cut-off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6 (1), 1-55. doi:10.1080/10705519909540118
- ISTAT (2019). *Gli stereotipi sui ruoli di genere e l'immagine sociale della violenza sessuale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.istat.it/it/files/2019/11/Report-stereotipi-di-genere.pdf>
- KIM, J., LYNN SORSOLI, C., COLLINS, K., ZYLBERGOLD, B., SCHOOLER, D. & TOLMAN, D. (2007). From sex to sexuality: Exposing the heterosexual script on primetime network television. *Journal of Sex Research*, 44 (2), 145-157. doi:10.1080/00224490701263660
- KREAGER, D.A., STAFF, J., GAUTHIER, R., LEFKOWITZ, E.S. & FEINBERG, M.E. (2016). The double standard at sexual debut: Gender, sexual behavior and adolescent peer acceptance. *Sex Roles*, 75 (7-8), 377-392. doi:10.1007/s11199-016-0618-x
- LEFKOWITZ, E.S., GILLEN, M.M., SHEARER, C.L. & BOONE, T.L. (2004). Religiosity, sexual behaviors, and sexual attitudes during emerging adulthood. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 41 (2), 150-159. doi:10.1080/00224490409552223
- MALTBY, L., HALL, M., ANDERSON, T. & EDWARDS, K. (2010). Religion and sexism: The moderating role of participant gender. *Sex Roles*, 62 (9-10), 615-622. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9754-x
- MARCINECHOVÁ, D. & ZÁHORCOVÁ, L. (2020). Sexual satisfaction, sexual attitudes, and shame in relation to religiosity. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24 (6), 1913-1928. doi:10.1007/s12119-020-09727-3
- MARKS, M.J., YOUNG, T.M. & ZAIKMAN, Y. (2019). The sexual double standard in the real world. *Social Psychology*, 50 (2), 67-79. doi:10.1027/1864-9335/a000362
- MASTRO, S. & ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M. (2015). Let's talk openly about sex: Sexual communication, self-esteem and efficacy as correlates of sexual well-being. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12 (5), 579-598. doi:10.1080/17405629.2015.1054373
- MATERA, C., NERINI, A. & STEFANILE, C. (2013). Misurare l'insoddisfazione corporea: Validazione della versione italiana del Body Shape Questionnaire-14 (BSQ-14). *Counseling*, 6 (2), 235-244.

- MAYERS, A. (2013). *Introduction to statistics and SPSS in psychology*. Harlow: Pearson
- McKINLEY, N. & HYDE, J. (1996). The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20 (2), 181-215. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1996.tb00467.x
- MIGHELI, M. & PRONZATO, C. (2020). Thinking as the others do: Persistence and conformity of sexual double standard among young Italians. *Genus*, 76 (1). doi:10.1186/s41118-020-00095-2
- MINELLO, A., CALTABIANO, M., DALLA-ZUANNA, G. & VIGNOLI, D. (2020). Catching up! The sexual behaviour and opinions of Italian students (2000-2017). *Genus*, 76 (1). doi:10.1186/s41118-020-00085-4
- MIKOŁAJCZAK, M. & PIETRZAK, J. (2014). Ambivalent sexism and religion: Connected through values. *Sex Roles*, 70 (9-10), 387-399. doi:10.1007/s11199-014-0379-3
- MORGAN, M.Y. (1987). The impact of religion on gender-role attitudes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 11 (3), 301-310. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1987.tb00905.x
- MOYANO, N., GRANADOS, R., VÉLEZ-SCHEMANKEWITZ, M. & DIB-FAYAD, N. (2020). Are you sexually empowered? Validation of the Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory for Spanish-speaking women. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 52. doi:10.14349/rlp.2020.v52.9
- PREACHER, K.J. & MacCALLUM, R.C. (2003). Repairing Tom Swift's electric factor analysis machine. *Understanding Statistics*, 2 (1), 13-43.
- PREZZA, M., TROMBACCIA, F.R. & ARMENTO, R. (1997). La scala dell'autostima di Rosenberg: Traduzione e validazione italiana [Rosenberg's self-esteem scale: Italian translation and validation]. *Bollettino di Psicologia Applicata*, 223, 35-44.
- RAGNEDDA, K. & BUDD, K.M. (2015). Invisible violence: Media (re)production of gender inequality in Italy. *Communication Papers*, 4 (07), 11. doi:10.33115/udg_bib/cp.v4i07.22045
- ROLLER, C. & TARTAGLIA, S. (2018). The effect of sexism and rape myths on victim blame. *Sexuality & Culture*, 23 (1), 209-219. doi:10.1007/s12119-018-9549-8
- ROSENBERG, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
- ROSTOSKY, S.S., DEKHTYAR, O., CUPP, P. & ANDERMAN, E. (2008). Sexual self-concept and sexual self-efficacy in adolescents: A possible clue to promoting sexual health? *Journal of Sex Research*, 45 (3), 277-286. doi:10.1080/00224490802204480
- SAGEBIN BORDINI, G. & SPERB, T.M. (2012). Sexual double standard: A review of the literature between 2001 and 2010. *Sexuality & Culture*, 17 (4), 686-704. doi:10.1007/s12119-012-9163-0
- SATINSKY, S. & JOZKOWSKI, K. (2014). Female sexual subjectivity and verbal consent to receiving oral sex. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 41 (4), 413-426. doi:10.1080/0092623x.2014.918065
- SEABROOK, R., WARD, L., REED, L., MANAGO, A., GIACCARDI, S. & LIPPMAN, J. (2016). Our scripted sexuality: The development and validation of a measure of the heterosexual script and its relation to television consumption. *Emerging Adulthood*, 4 (5), 338-355 doi:10.1177/2167696815623686
- SESSUOLOGIA [@sessuologia]. (n.d.). *Posts [Instagram profile]*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/sessuologia/>
- STRANGES, M. & VIGNOLI, D. (2020). Like a virgin: Correlates of virginity among Italian university students. *Genus*, 76 (1). doi:10.1186/s41118-020-00082-7
- TABACHNICK, B. & FIDELL, L. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics (6th ed.)*. Pearson.
- TARTAGLIA, S. & ROLLERO, C. (2015). Gender stereotyping in newspaper advertisements. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46 (8), 1103-1109. doi:10.1177/0022022115597068
- TERZERA, L., RIMOLDI, S. & BARBIANO DI BELGIOJOSO, E. (2020). Sexual satisfaction among Italian university students. *Genus*, 76 (1). doi:10.1186/s41118-020-00096-1
- TOLMAN, D.L. (1994). Doing desire: Adolescent girls' struggles for/with sexuality. *Gender & Society*, 8 (3), 324-342. doi:10.1177/089124394008003003
- TOLMAN, D.L. (2002). *Dilemmas of desire*. Harvard University Press.
- ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M., DUCAT, W. & BOISLARD-PEPIN, M. (2011). A prospective study of young females' sexual subjectivity: Associations with age, sexual behavior, and dating. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40 (5), 927-938. doi:10.1007/s10508-011-9751-3
- ZIMMER-GEMBECK, M., SEE, L. & O'SULLIVAN, L. (2014). Young women's satisfaction with sex and romance, and emotional reactions to sex. *Emerging Adulthood*, 3 (2), 113-122. doi:10.1177/2167696814548060

APPENDIX

Items of the Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (Italian version in brackets)

Item	Factor
1. It bothers me that I am not better looking. (Mi disturba il fatto di non essere fisicamente più attraente.)	Sexual body-esteem, reverse
2. It is okay for me to meet my own sexual needs through Self-masturbation. (Per me va bene soddisfare i miei bisogni sessuali tramite l'auto-masturbazione.)	Entitlement pleasure from self
3. If a partner were to ignore my sexual needs and desires, I'd feel hurt. (Se il mio partner ignorasse i miei bisogni e desideri sessuali mi sentirei ferita.)	Entitlement pleasure from partner
4. I would not hesitate to ask for what I want sexually from a romantic partner. (Non mi farei problemi a chiedere al partner quello che desidero sessualmente.)	Sexual self-efficacy
5. I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences. (Trascorro del tempo pensando e riflettendo sulle mie esperienze sessuali.)	Sexual self-reflection
6. I worry that I am not sexually desirable to others. (Mi preoccupo di non essere sessualmente desiderabile agli occhi degli altri.)	Sexual body-esteem, reverse
7. I believe self-masturbating can be an exciting experience. (Credo che l'automasturbazione possa essere un'esperienza eccitante.)	Entitlement pleasure from self
8. It would bother me if a sexual partner neglected my sexual needs and desires. (Mi disturberebbe se un partner sessuale trascurasse i miei bisogni e desideri sessuali.)	Entitlement pleasure from partner
9. I am able to ask a partner to provide the sexual stimulation I need. (Sono capace di richiedere ad un partner il tipo di stimolazione sessuale di cui ho bisogno.)	Sexual self-efficacy
10. I rarely think about the sexual aspects of my life. (Penso raramente agli aspetti sessuali della mia vita.)	Sexual self-reflection, reverse
11. Physically, I am an attractive person. (Da un punto di vista fisico, sono una persona attraente.)	Sexual body-esteem
12. I believe self-masturbation is wrong. (Credo che sia sbagliato automasturbarci.)	Entitlement pleasure from self, reverse
13. I would expect a sexual partner to be responsive to my sexual needs and feelings. (Mi aspetto che un partner sessuale sia sensibile rispetto ai miei bisogni sessuali e ai miei sentimenti riguardo al sesso.)	Entitlement pleasure from partner
14. If I were to have sex with someone I'd show my partner what I want. (Se avessi un rapporto sessuale con qualcuno gli farei capire ciò che voglio.)	Sexual self-efficacy
15. I think about my sexuality. (Rifletto sulla mia sessualità.)	Sexual self-reflection

continued on next page

continued

Item	Factor
16. I am confident that a romantic partner would find me sexually attractive. (Mi sento sicura del fatto che un partner sentimentale mi considererebbe sessualmente attraente.)	Sexual body-esteem
17. I think it is important for a sexual partner to consider my sexual pleasure. (Penso sia importante che il partner consideri il mio piacere sessuale.)	Entitlement pleasure from partner
18. I don't think about my sexual behaviour very much. (Non rifletto molto sui miei comportamenti sessuali.)	Sexual self-reflection, reverse
19. I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable. (Sono sicura che gli altri possano trovarmi sessualmente desiderabile.)	Sexual body-esteem
20. My sexual behaviour and experiences are not something I spend time thinking about. (I miei comportamenti e le mie esperienze sessuali non sono qualcosa su cui rifletto.)	Sexual self-reflection, reverse