

Romantic love, fidelity and happy endings: Perception of the reality TV show *La isla de las tentaciones* by Spanish young people

Amor romántico, fidelidad y happy endings: Percepción del reality TV show La isla de las tentaciones por la juventud española



Marian Blanco-Ruiz. Ph.D. in Media Research at the Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M). Bachelor's Degree in Journalism (UC3M) and in Audio-visual Communication (UC3M). Lecturer in the Department of Advertising and Audio-visual Communication at the Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC). Her lines of research focus on the analysis of gender representations in the media, new technologies in young people and gender violence. She coordinates the Annual International Congress of Young Researchers with a Gender Perspective since its creation in 2016. Co-director of the journal *Comunicación y Género* (UCM).
Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain
mangeles.blanco@urjc.es
ORCID: 0000-0002-7920-5978



Esther Martínez-Pastor. Ph.D. in Advertising and Public Relations at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), and Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and Public Relations (UCM) and in Law (UNED, the Spanish National Distance Education University). Associate Professor at the Faculty of Communication Sciences of Universidad Rey Juan Carlos de Madrid. Coordinator of the research group on Communication and Children (COMKIDS-URJC). Her lines of research focus on the regulation of advertising, advertising relating to children and transparency.
Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain
esther.martinez.pastor@urjc.es
ORCID: 0000-0002-2861-750X

Received: 04/08/2022 - Accepted: 16/02/2023 - Early access: 10/03/2023 - Published: 01/07/2023

Recibido: 04/08/2022 - Aceptado: 16/02/2023 - En edición: 10/03/2023 - Published: 01/07/2023

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to find out young people's perception of the romantic love narratives portrayed in the reality show *La isla de las tentaciones* (*Temptation Island*). It attempts to discover the degree to which they identify with or reject the characters and relationship models that emerge over the course of the TV programme, and to find out whether the myths of romantic love are maintained. To this end,

Resumen:

Este trabajo trata de conocer la percepción de los y las jóvenes en torno a las narrativas del amor romántico que se representan en La isla de las tentaciones; el grado de identificación o rechazo con personajes y modelos de relaciones que surgen en el desarrollo del programa, e indagar si se mantienen los mitos del amor romántico. Para ello, se ha llevado un estudio exploratorio mediante una metodología mixta, una

How to cite this article:

Blanco-Ruiz, M. and Martínez-Pastor, E. (2023). Romantic love, fidelity and happy endings: Perception of the reality TV show *La isla de las tentaciones* by Spanish young people. *Doxa Comunicación*, 37, pp. 263-290.

<https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n37a1747>



This content is published under Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License. International License

an exploratory study was carried out using a mixed methodology, a semi-structured guided interview combining specific closed-ended questions with Likert-scale answers. The sample consisted of 123 young people between 18 and 26 years of age: 92 women (74.8%) and 31 men (25.2%). As regards sexual orientation, 75.6% stated they were heterosexual, 17.1% bisexual and 4.1% homosexual, while 4 people (3.3%) preferred not to state their sexuality. The fieldwork was carried out from October to November 2020. The results show that the aspirational concept of the myth of the omnipotence of love still prevails, toxic relationships that cannot reach this ideal of love are totally rejected, and the idea of fidelity as one of the most important values in love is reinforced.

Keywords:

Reality TV show; gender differences; young people; romantic love; myth of fidelity.

entrevista semiestructurada guiada combinando preguntas específicas con respuestas cerradas de escala de Likert. La muestra han sido 123 jóvenes entre 18 y 26 años: 92 mujeres (74,8%) y 31 hombres (25,2%). Su orientación sexual era: 75,6% se declaran heterosexuales, el 17,1% bisexuales, el 4,1% homosexuales y 4 personas (3,3%) prefirieron no declarar su sexualidad. El trabajo de campo fue de octubre a noviembre de 2020. En los resultados se observa que sigue prevaleciendo el concepto aspiracional del mito de la omnipotencia del amor, rechazándose totalmente las relaciones tóxicas que no pueden alcanzar este ideal amoroso y se refuerza la idea de la fidelidad como unos de los valores más importantes en el amor.

Palabras clave:

Reality TV show; diferencias de género; jóvenes; amor romántico; mito de la fidelidad.

1. Introduction

Over the last decade there has been a gradual decrease in consumption of linear television, while video on demand (VOD) platforms and online catch-up TV players for the major television channels have been gaining popularity (Cha, 2013; Guerrero Pérez, 2018; Kantar Media, 2020). However, the reality show *La isla de las tentaciones* ("*Temptation Island*" as its English-language version is known) has emerged as a success story in the midst of this broadcasting crisis and the restructuring of the audiovisual industry (Scolari, 2008). Leading the ratings for the 13-24 year age group and with an audience share of over 50% (Mucientes, 2020), *La isla de las tentaciones* has also become the Spanish non-sports programme with the largest audience in the 14-year history of the free-TV channel on which it is broadcast *abierto* (Mucientes, 2020; Rivas, 2020; Torrego et al., 2021).

Its success transcends television and the format's social audience leads the conversation on social media such as Twitter and Instagram, giving rise to new narratives based on the content generated by the users. The programme's hashtags are on the list of Twitter's trending topics even hours before the broadcast, and the social conversation extends beyond the broadcasting time limits of the programme. This degree of popularity means that the course of the programme is followed by people who do not even watch it as it is broadcast on linear television. The opportunity to interact in real time through comments on social media (Alvarez-Monzoncillo, 2011), and the content generated by users, offers a glimpse of the effect this show has on its viewers' TV-related behaviour. It enables the impact of an audio-visual product to be measured through hashtags (Halpern et al., 2016) and interactions with the profiles of the contestants (Parejo & Bernal-Luque, 2022).

1.1. The success of reality TV shows

The reality show (or reality TV show) format is a television genre created in the 1990s whose popularity has grown exponentially and internationally since the 2000s (Peek, 2019). These programmes are characterised by showing people (usually "ordinary" people rather than actors or actresses) in different situations, situations that are simulations of reality, in which viewers witness

their relationships, private moments and feelings (Andrejevic, 2003; Wood & Skeggs, 2011). In this type of programme, the audience becomes a sort of voyeur, able to continue watching the programme out of curiosity or a kind of fascination about how the protagonists are going to act (Nabi, 2007).

The success of reality shows is a transnational phenomenon, a format that succeeds in different countries and contexts by adapting to local particularities. Their popularity has become the subject of attention of Communication Science studies. Among these studies, most of the research on the reception and audiences of this format has drawn on the theory of media uses and gratifications (Rubin, 1983) to point out that the main motivation for its consumption lies in entertainment (Conteh, 2021; Ferguson et al., 2013, 2013; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Peek, 2019; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2011). Even those who admit that they do not particularly like these types of reality programmes because they are scripted are later shown to be very keen to know the outcome of the programmes (Church et al., 2020).

However, in many cases diversity is not depicted as representing a social reality, but rather is shown in an anecdotal and highly stereotyped way. The reality portrayed in these programmes is strongly biased in terms of representation of ethnicity, gender, social class and gender identity (Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Monroe, 2015; Sánchez-González & González de Garay-Domínguez, 2020; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2011; Wood & Skeggs, 2011; Zurbriggen & Morgan, 2006).

In this sense, Wood and Skeggs (2011) have pointed out that reality television is an audio-visual format that serves as a vehicle to promote the neoliberal agenda, being a channel through which the social models to be aspired to are disseminated, while at the same time showing which ones should be despised.

The format of *La isla de las tentaciones* (adapted from the Dutch programme *Blind Vertrouwen*) falls within the sub-genre of romantically themed reality television. The central idea of the programme's format is to "take four couples committed to each other but at the crossroads in their relationships and send them on the most amazing vacation in paradise, separated from their partner. Although they are apart, they won't be alone and will spend their days, and nights, in the company of attractive singles, all of them looking for love" (Banijay Group, 2020). The programme proposes to enable them to allay their concerns and answer the question "Am I really with The One or is there someone better out there for me?" (Banijay Group, 2020), all this in front of the cameras 24 hours a day with fun activities arranged by the production team with the aim of putting the couples' relationships to the test. The programme's theme highlights the prevalence in the context of the media of the "romantic ideal" model of love *amorosos* (Aran-Ramspott et al., 2015; Blanco Ruiz, 2018; Illouz, 2014), above others. The concept of the couple in the *La isla de las tentaciones* format is based on heterosexuality and the myths of romantic love. The narrative, revolving around the central myth of fidelity, consists of putting the relationships of several heterosexual couples to the test by having each couple receive attention from other, enticing participants –known as "tempters" and "temptresses"– over the course of two weeks (Carpentier, 2006, p. 135).

1.2. Romantic love and the role of the media

Since the 1970s, the concept of love has been approached from different disciplines, not only as a feeling that forms part of the intimate sphere but also as a concept inherent in a society and the system of norms by which it is organised (Bauman, 2005; Bosch et al., 2011; Esteban-Galarza, 2011; Giddens, 1998; Illouz, 2019; Sternberg, 1986; Yela, 2000). Within this current,

Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love stands out for its application to multiple contexts, according to which, depending on the combination of three elements (intimacy, passion and commitment), different types of love experiences can occur, such as romantic love, companionate love, empty love, consummated love, fatuous love or sociable love. The media, as transmitters of culture and in its role as generators of public opinion, is not unconnected to the sentimental organisation of society, as they contribute to legitimising certain love models over others.

Romantic love represents a specific social and cultural construct, with its corresponding myths such as that of the "better half" and the omnipotence of love, which acts as a shaper of interpersonal, social and individual practices. The idea of romantic love disseminated in the mass media is of particular relevance during the stage of adolescence and young adulthood, where the first emotional and sexual relationships are initiated and the role of peer groups as a source of information gains in importance (Fernández-Cavia, 2002; Stassen & Thompson, 1997). During this stage, the myths of romantic love are accepted with ease (Blanco, 2015; Ruiz Repullo, 2016). The myth of the "power of love" is underpinned by the social consensus about its truthfulness, and it is precisely this attribution of almost magical qualities to the loving feeling which also perpetuates the gender roles associated with love and sexuality in today's society (Jónasdóttir, 1993, 2011; Langford, 1999). For example, the various media products continue to show men incapable of making decisions about love, who find it difficult to talk about their feelings (and, frequently, these seem bound to sex), compared to women who must adapt to men and be patient because "love can do anything" (Álvarez & Cardoso, 2010; Gill, 2007). As asserted by hooks (2000, p. 17-18), "popular culture is the one domain in which our longing for love is talked about. Movies, music, magazines, and books are the place where we turn to hear our yearnings for love expressed". Such longing, today, after the emergence of the digital era and the information society, has positioned love as a feeling that is presented as "a true connection" in the face of a mediatised society where artifice and posturing predominate (Illouz, 2019). This emotional identification with the stories and personas of the love culture is what Illouz (2009, 2012) calls fictional emotions, cognitive moulds which serve as imaginary "scripts" to shape our emotions. In this respect, the importance of the happy ending dwindles, as the attraction for the audience is that love ultimately triumphs despite the hurdles faced along the way (Illouz, 2009).

Furthermore, romance has become a mass movement displaying attributes of modernity, introducing marriage –or the couple– based on love as a means of self-fulfilment (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The rise of dating apps (Gibbs et al., 2011; Sumter et al., 2017) and romantically themed reality television (Carpentier, 2006; Sánchez-González & González de Garay-Domínguez, 2020; Zurbriggen & Morgan, 2006) are merely a reflection of this paradigm and of how the mass media enables the assimilation as being "natural" of a series of codes and subcodes contributing to the legitimising of certain emotional models over others (Illouz, 2019). Their success with audiences and their influence on social behaviours has caught the attention of researchers as a subject for analysis (Carpentier, 2006; Fisher et al., 2009; Hidalgo-Marí, 2018; Rose & Wood, 2005; Sánchez-González & González de Garay-Domínguez, 2020; Torrego et al., 2021; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2011; Zurbriggen & Morgan, 2006). Earlier research into the relationship between romantically themed reality television and the attitudes and behaviours of the young people who consume them demonstrated that young people who are used to viewing these primetime shows tend to positively endorse beliefs that suggest they view dating from a recreational perspective, men as being obsessed with sex and women as being sexual (Ferris et al., 2007; Ward, 2002; Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Subsequently, Ferguson, Salmond and Modi (2013) found that reality TV viewing was associated with increased attention to appearance and a willingness to

compromise other values for fame. On the other hand, focus has also been placed on the influence of reality TV viewing on girls' perceptions of their own bodies, increasing body dissatisfaction, desire for thinness and demand for cosmetic surgery.

2. Methodology

In this exploratory study on the perception and identification of young Spanish people with the love relationships depicted in the reality TV show *La isla de las tentaciones*, a mixed methodological approach has been adopted. The intention of combining different approaches to the same research has the purpose of reaching more in-depth conclusions. This work would be framed within the explanatory model of mixed methodologies, as quantitative questions are qualitatively complemented with more in-depth questions in order to clarify or complement the findings (Hamui-Sutton, 2013).

2.1. Objectives

The general objective of this article is to explore the perception and identification that young Spanish people have of the emotional and sexual relationships in reality shows such as *La isla de las tentaciones* (in the English-language version, entitled *Temptation Island*). Specifically, the aim is to explore their opinion about the love relationships depicted, as well as exploring the degree to which they identify with or reject the love story of these audio-visual formats.

- Specific objective 1: find out the attitude towards the couples competing in the programme and their romantic relationship.
- Specific objective 2: explore the degree to which they identify with or reject the contestants in the reality TV show.
- Specific objective 3: identify whether myths about romantic love and gender stereotypes about relationships are maintained.

The starting point was the following research questions that will guide this study:

- What is their assessment of the competing couples and their romantic relationships?
- Which models do they most identify with?
- What are the myths of romantic love and gender stereotypes present in the discourses about the competing couples in *La isla de las tentaciones*?

2.2. Techniques used

A semi-structured guided interview was designed to explore the young people's perception of the *La isla de las tentaciones* programme and their adherence to the love models proposed in the format. The interview script combined specific questions with closed Likert scale answers (in the form of a questionnaire) that allowed us to obtain quantitative information about their following of the programme, their assessment of the relationship of the competing couples and their idea of romantic love. These questions were complemented with other, broader, open questions in which they could deepen their answers about the couples¹ and how they identified with them.

¹ The fieldwork for this study took place at the end of the second season of *La isla de las tentaciones*, broadcast between 23 September and 1 November 2020.

Likert scales were selected as they allow for the same frame of reference for all study participants, avoiding ambiguity and subjectivity in the coding and interpretation of responses. In addition, the open-ended questions of the script allow us to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' opinions of the couples in the programme, the models of love they represent, etc., and from there to investigate the relevance of these media stories in the perception of romantic love. By combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, it is possible to access the variety of responses present in the study population, gathering all the alternative responses present in the group.

The field work for this study was carried out between November 2020 and December 2020. Due to the mobility restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 health crisis, the interviews were conducted via telematic methods. The average length was 30 minutes.

2.3. Participants

A total of 123 young people participated in this research. The profile of the sample of participants consists of 92 women (74.8%) and 31 men (25.2%) aged between 18 and 26 years old, with an average age of 21 years (SD=4). 75.6% stated they were heterosexual, 17.1% bisexual (the vast majority being women), 4.1% homosexual and 4 participants (3.3%) preferred not to declare their sexual orientation. No data were collected on ethnicity, social class or size of city of residence. The presence of a higher number of women corresponds to the audience profile for *La isla de las tentaciones*, which is 63% women compared to 37% men (Rivas, 2020). The number of participants in this study is similar to that presented in other exploratory analyses or case studies on young people and reality TV shows (Conteh, 2021; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Toor, 2013; Yanarda o lu & Karam, 2013). This study used non-probability purposive sampling and a snowball technique strategy based on relevance to the research question rather than representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The purposive sampling strategy involved purposively selecting participants according to the following inclusion criteria: a) being between 18-26 years old; b) following the reality TV show *La isla de las tentaciones*; and c) having experienced an intimate sexual and/or romantic relationship (at least one). A snowball sampling procedure was also applied (Pérez-Luco Arenas et al., 2017), in which participants put the research team in contact with other participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Recruitment began at three university establishments in the Community of Madrid (Spain). Participants were informed in advance about the objectives of the study, their rights and confidentiality. The use of samples of university students is justified when this demographic group is theoretically of interest for the topic of study (Basil, 1996) and they represent a significant part of the target demographic age group for reality television programmes (Allen & Mendick, 2013; Andrejevic, 2003; Gardyn, 2001; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Parejo & Bernal-Luque, 2022; Vangeel et al., 2020; Von Feilitzen, 2004).

2.4. Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed in full, and these transcripts, together with field notes and reflective comments, were thematically analysed inductively, looking for emerging themes that appeared in the interviews (Berger, 2016). No predetermined category guide was used for the qualitative analysis. The thematic analysis consisted of identifying text fragments with relevant information to achieve the research objectives. This allowed us to identify verbatim quotations and

to see the networks of relationships in the narratives of the young people who had followed *La isla de las tentaciones*. This analysis was carried out using ATLAS.ti v8. Joint team meetings were held to combine the results of the analysis and discuss data collection and analysis procedures. At these team meetings, the final themes were presented, combined, integrated and identified. In the event of divergence of opinions, the identification of the theme was based on consensus among the research team members.

The quantitative data obtained from the questions that were asked using Likert scales during the interviews were coded and processed with IBM SPSS Statistics v21. For the data analysis, a descriptive analysis was carried out using frequency distributions and graphical representations. As this was an exploratory study with a non-representative sample, no statistical tests were applied to check for significant associations between variables.

The quantitative data are complemented by qualitative data obtained from the analysis of the participants' narratives. In this article we will analyse items related to programme follow-up, attitudes towards and identification with the competing couples and the gender issues underlying these attitudes.

3. Results

Out of the interviewees, 79.67% stated that they had watched *La isla de las tentaciones*, with it being watched regularly by 83.70% of the women and 67.74% of the men interviewed. The women interviewed stated that they watched *La isla de las tentaciones* more frequently than the men (see table 1). 59.79% stated that they viewed the format often or always, compared to 36.94% of the men.

Table 1. Frequency of viewing the show *La isla de las tentaciones*

		Gender						
		Women			Men			Total
		% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the N of the table
How often have you followed the programme?	Never	17.39%	55.17%	16	41.94%	44.83%	13	23.58%
	Seldom	14.13%	86.67%	13	6.45%	13.33%	2	12.20%
	Sometimes	8.70%	80.00%	8	6.45%	20.00%	2	8.13%
	Often	22.83%	87.50%	21	9.68%	12.50%	3	19.51%
	Always	36.96%	75.56%	34	35.48%	24.44%	11	36.59%
	Total	100.00%	74.80%	92	100.00%	25.20%	31	100.00%

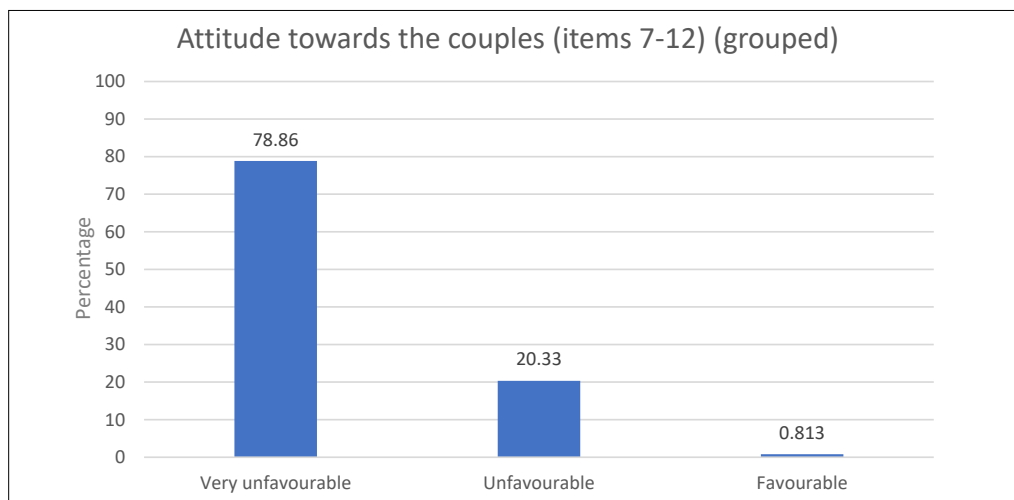
Source: own compilation

There were no gender differences with regard to who did not watch *La isla de las tentaciones*; only 15 women and 10 men stated that they did not view this format on television, although they did know about it through social media. *La isla de las tentaciones* is a paradigmatic example of social television and its propagation through social media, as this interviewee pointed out: “I haven’t seen the programme live [...] I have seen memes and phrases on Twitter” (16, woman, 21 years old).

3.1. Perceptions of romantic relationships and attitudes towards contestant couples

In general terms, the participants in the study did not have a favourable attitude towards the relationships of the couples depicted in *La isla de las tentaciones*, who are mostly negatively perceived (see graph 1).

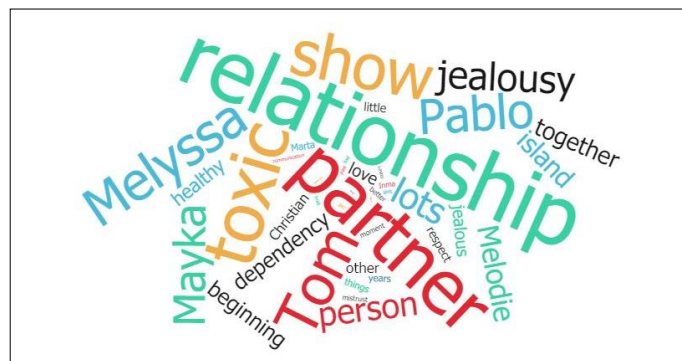
Graph 1. Attitude of young people towards the relationships of the couples competing in *La isla de las tentaciones* (grouped)



Source: on compilation

Among the opinions about couples on the programme, the adjective which most accompanies the description given by the young subjects towards the love relationships in *La isla de las tentaciones* is “toxic” (144 times). Other words were also used (see illustration 1), although less frequently, such as jealousy (57 times), dependence (37 times), love (35 times) and respect (29 times).

Illustration 2. Word cloud of youth discourse towards the relationships of the couples competing in *La isla de las tentaciones* (grouped)



Source: own compilation

In all the interviews, when explicitly asking whether there has been love on *La isla de las tentaciones*, most interviewees indicated that these relationships are not based on love and instead used other words such as sexual attraction, affection, fleeting relationships, and so on:

“The couples were already damaged outside [the show], their love had run out long ago. And the new relationships that arose didn’t involve love either; they were surrounded by an aura of jealousy, lust, toxicity, etc.” (I98, woman, aged 19).

“I wouldn’t say actual love... as love is giving oneself fully to each other” (I103, man, aged 18).

This description about love changes radically when asked about the elements on which, in their opinion, love relationships in real life should be based (see illustration 2). The word most repeated was “trust” (72 times). Other words were also used (see illustration 2), although less frequently, such as respect (52 times), love (31 times), communication (30 times) and sincerity (23 times).

Illustration 2. Word cloud of the discourse from young people about the basic elements of a loving relationship



Source: own compilation

The descriptions of dating relationships are also linked to myths of romantic love, upon which the reality show format is based, such as *fidelity*, the *myth of the couple* and the *myth of marriage or romantic cohabitating relationships*, and where the myths of *equivalence* and the *other half* are also underlying the format. However, it can be observed that more positive characteristics and behaviours are attributed such as trust, respect, loyalty and teamwork:

"I think communication is the most important thing. Next to that, trust, and loyalty. I think that there should be a relationship of friendship that underpins that of the couple, and that it is very positive that each of them continues to lead a life apart from that of their partner: with their circle of friends, for example" (I84, woman, aged 19).

"Love, trust, humour and understanding. Your partner should be your best friend and there should be total trust and love. It has to be the first person you think of whenever there is something positive and want to share with them" (I7, man, aged 26).

However, despite this positive description given by these young people, most of the people interviewed considered that the relationships appearing in *La isla de las tentaciones* do exist in real life:

"Yes, they're a reflection of real life... there is manipulation, blackmail, lies, episodes of jealousy, of dependence, of giving chances when you know that there are things that do not get forgiven... but only for the fact of feeling that you are nothing without the other person" (I16, woman, aged 21).

“Yes, they do exist. Maybe they are more visible in the programme, but we all know someone who is or has been in a relationship like this” (I23, woman, aged 21).

"I think they perfectly represent today's relationships, although some aspects are exaggerated, jealousy and obsession are common in real life thanks to the control that can be exerted through social media" (I70, man, aged 21).

However, different love experiences appear in the programme under the umbrella of romantic love. This analysis is contextualised in the competing couples of the second season (Molina, 2020); to these, the research team assigned a love style based on Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love to describe the love experience that each couple could represent.

Couple One was the most reviled, with 76.42% of young people “totally disagreeing” with this couple model, followed by Couple Three (59.35%) and Couple Two (52.03%). Only Couple Four and Couple Five achieved higher levels of favourable opinion (“agree” or “strongly agree”) as an ideal couple relationship (see table 2).

Table 2. Assessment of the relationships of the couples competing in La isla de las tentaciones

		Gender						
		Women			Men			Total
		% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the table
Couple One (Tom and Melyssa) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	8.70%	66.67%	8	12.90%	33.33%	4	9.76%
	Totally disagree	81.52%	79.79%	75	61.29%	20.21%	19	76.42%
	Disagree	4.35%	80.00%	4	3.23%	20.00%	1	4.07%
	Neither agree nor disagree	4.35%	36.36%	4	22.58%	63.64%	7	8.94%
	Agree	1.09%	100.00%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.81%
	Totally agree	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
Couple Two (Pablo and Mayka) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	10.87%	66.67%	10	16.13%	33.33%	5	12.20%
	Totally disagree	54.35%	78.13%	50	45.16%	21.88%	14	52.03%
	Disagree	21.74%	83.33%	20	12.90%	16.67%	4	19.51%
	Neither agree nor disagree	11.96%	57.89%	11	25.81%	42.11%	8	15.45%
	Agree	1.09%	100.00%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.81%
	Totally agree	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%

ISSN: 1696-019X / e-ISSN: 2386-3978

Couple Three (Marta and Lester) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	9.78%	60.00%	9	19.35%	40.00%	6	12.20%
	Totally disagree	66.30%	83.56%	61	38.71%	16.44%	12	59.35%
	Disagree	9.78%	64.29%	9	16.13%	35.71%	5	11.38%
	Neither agree nor disagree	11.96%	57.89%	11	25.81%	42.11%	8	15.45%
	Agree	2.17%	100.00%	2	0.00%	0.00%	0	1.63%
	Totally agree	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
Couple Four(Ángel and Inma) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	10.87%	58.82%	10	22.58%	41.18%	7	13.82%
	Totally disagree	38.04%	79.55%	35	29.03%	20.45%	9	35.77%
	Disagree	26.09%	96.00%	24	3.23%	4.00%	1	20.33%
	Neither agree nor disagree	19.57%	64.29%	18	32.26%	35.71%	10	22.76%
	Agree	5.43%	55.56%	5	12.90%	44.44%	4	7.32%
	Totally agree	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
Couple Five (Aless and Patry) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	9.78%	64.29%	9	16.13%	35.71%	5	11.38%
	Totally disagree	26.09%	80.00%	24	19.35%	20.00%	6	24.39%
	Disagree	21.74%	95.24%	20	3.23%	4.76%	1	17.07%
	Neither agree nor disagree	33.70%	70.45%	31	41.94%	29.55%	13	35.77%
	Agree	6.52%	50.00%	6	19.35%	50.00%	6	9.76%
	Totally agree	2.17%	100.00%	2	0.00%	0.00%	0	1.63%

Couple Six (Cristian and Melodie) is your ideal of a love relationship	No opinion	17.39%	66.67%	16	25.81%	33.33%	8	19.51%
	Totally disagree	41.30%	92.68%	38	9.68%	7.32%	3	33.33%
	Disagree	23.91%	75.86%	22	22.58%	24.14%	7	23.58%
	Neither agree nor disagree	15.22%	53.85%	14	38.71%	46.15%	12	21.14%
	Agree	1.09%	50.00%	1	3.23%	50.00%	1	1.63%
	Totally agree	1.09%	100.00%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.81%
	Total	100.00%	74.80%	92	100.00%	25.20%	31	100.00%

Source: own compilation

The relationship of Couple One was one of those receiving the most media coverage and also one of the most rejected “ideal couple” options. They had been together for eight months, after meeting on another television show (*Mujeres y hombres y viceversa*), and their involvement in *La isla de las tentaciones* centred on his cheating. According to the types of love posited by Sternberg (1986): the man (Tom) would match the model of “infatuated love”, as his role in the relationship is based purely on passion and the woman (Melyssa) would match “fatuous love” in which their commitment is grounded in their passion but there is no intimacy as she has not been able to trust the other person. Of those interviewed, 81.52% of the women and 61.29% of the men stated that they “totally disagree” with this type of relationship (see table 2), describing it as toxic and based on mistrust and jealousy:

“I think it’s a super toxic relationship. On both sides. As for Tom, there are honestly no words to describe him. You cannot “love” your partner like that: humiliate her in front of the whole of Spain. That you see your partner having a bad time because of your actions, who on top of that goes to tell you about it, and yet you keep hurting her doesn’t seem normal to me. As for Melyssa, she seems to me to be a woman who is very dependent on her partners. She is very insecure in her relationships and acts out of jealousy” (I118, woman, aged 19).

The relationship of Couple Two also failed to gain the support of the audience as being an ideal couple, as 52.03% (54.35% of the women and 45.16% of the men) “totally disagree” with this love relationship as a model. Once again, the women disagreed most with this relationship. The couple had been in a relationship for three years before going on the show. During the programme, she acted very jealously and had a fling with one of the “tempters”; the man’s behaviour in Couple Two was of contempt towards his partner. Their relationship would match, for the woman, the model of “romantic love”, understood by Sternberg (1986) as a relationship in which there is no commitment but there is passion and intimacy, and, for the man, the model of “empty love”, as the physical attraction and trust has gone and only his commitment remained. The discourses in the interviews focus on her infidelity, highlighting his fidelity (*myth of fidelity*):

"At the beginning Pablo acted like someone who was cocky and super-hetero-basic but Mayka became 'the Tom' of the girls, trying to justify her behaviour with what Pablo was doing... when Pablo was faithful to her, although it's not just down to that because there was a lack of respect on his part too" (I16, woman, aged 21).

The relationship of Couple Three is one of those generating the unanimous rejection of it being that of an ideal couple: 66.30% of the women and 38.71% of the men "totally disagree" with this type of relationship (see table 2). They had been in a relationship for 11 years before they joined the show. During the programme they both gave in to temptation and had sexual encounters with other people. Their time on the show was based on jealousy, reproaches and spite. Their relationship tallies with what Sternberg (1986) calls "empty love" – the physical attraction and trust has disappeared, and there is only a commitment by the two parties, which was also broken on *La isla de las tentaciones*. In their discourse, the interviewees described it as a broken and toxic relationship, which contrasts with the *myth of eternal passion*:

"A totally toxic relationship, they've spent 11 years dragging disloyalties and disrespect along with them, which doesn't let them move on. They blame each other all the time for things from the past and don't stop the loop of a relationship filled with reproaches. I think it's a clear example of them having loved each other a lot but not in a healthy way" (I97, woman, aged 19).

Couple Four had been in a relationship for a year when they began competing on the programme. After a few days, they decided to leave *La isla de las tentaciones* because they missed each other, and wanted to start a family and be together. In Sternberg's (1986) models it would be close to the "consummate love" model because of the assumption of intimacy, commitment and passion when leaving the programme, although it can probably also be related to "empty love" or "fatuous love". The relationship of Couple Four demonstrates divided opinions. Although the general attitude was to assess it as a model which is far from their ideal relationship, it was the women interviewees who showed the highest level of disagreement (38.04% "totally disagree" and 26.09% "disagree"), whereas the men were in intermediate positions ("neither agree nor disagree", 32.26%, and "totally disagree", 20.45%). This division of opinions can also be observed in the discourses of the interviewees. There were those who saw them as the sincerest couple, although they identified dynamics of dependency:

"A nice relationship at first sight but really dependent, it wasn't healthy" (I10, woman, aged 21).

"This relationship seems to me to be the healthiest on the island, but it is also bordering on toxic. Inma doesn't get to enjoy her experience because she depends too much on Ángel, and in the end in a relationship you can't depend on your partner and let yourself be guided by jealousy. A relationship has to be based on being able to have a good time, even if your partner is not there" (I94, woman, aged 18).

Their abandonment of the show positions them in the story of the triumph of the ideal of romantic love (Yela, 2000; Herrera, 2011); however, dependency is observed by many young people as a characteristic of a toxic relationship. Once again, jealousy and control emerged as a characteristic to define the couples in the format:

"People think that this couple was one of the best, but in my opinion, they were both really toxic. They needed each other constantly and couldn't live without each other" (I109, woman, aged 18).

Couple Five had been together for a year when they joined the programme to replace another couple. She displayed a lot of insecurity and jealousy resulting from her partner cheating in the past. It could be said that during the programme, the couple

would fit the model of “fatuous love” (Sternberg, 1986) due to that lack of trust, but, finally, by being the couple which ended up together, they came to represent the programme’s success story, exemplifying a model of “consummate love” as it presupposes there is intimacy, commitment and passion. The relationship of Couple Five is the one receiving the best scores, showing higher levels of agreeing with them as an “ideal couple” among men (“neither agree or disagree”, 41.94%, and “agree”, 19.35%) than among women (“neither agree or disagree”, 33.70%, “totally disagree”, 26.09%, “disagree”, 21.74%). However, the discourse about this couple was closely linked to the myths of romantic love such as *the myth of jealousy born out of love*, *the myth of omnipotence*, *the myth of fidelity* and *the myth of marriage or romantic cohabitating relationships*:

“Seemingly, it is the most stable couple and the only one still together nowadays. She is excessively jealous because she is scared that Aless will make the same mistake she made in the past. There is a lot of mistrust...” (I93, woman, aged 19).

This is the relationship considered to be the most real, normal, and least toxic, although for the audience it seemed “dispensable”: Couple Six had a nine-year relationship when they competed on *La isla de las tentaciones*. A short time after the show began, he began to have sexual encounters with a “temptress”, whereas she maintained a respectful attitude up until the end. They once again represent the model of “empty love” (Sternberg, 1986); passion and trust disappear and only she keeps up the commitment. The relationship of Couple Six also showcased gender differences, as it is the women who showed a greater level of disagreement (41.30% “totally disagree” and 23.91% “disagree”) compared to men (38.71% “neither agree nor disagree” and 24.14% “disagree”). During the interviews, the women showed quite a lot of empathy with her and acknowledged she was one of the more mature women in that season:

“He is the typical man who thinks you don’t have to take care of a relationship... and has no idea about love. She hasn’t known how to leave it before, but luckily she’s realised” (I21, man, aged 20).

3.2. Identifying with the competitors on *La isla de las tentaciones*

The identification with characters in audio-visual media is one of the central concepts for understanding and explaining the processes and effects of television programmes and fictional works on the audience (Cohen, 2001). Most interviewees did not identify with any *La isla de las tentaciones* contestants. There is a generalised rejection of the models of masculinity and femininity suggested by the contestants making up the couples in the format: 45.53% of the interviewees stated they do not identify positively with any of the contestants (see table 3). Specifying the contestants who they most liked or most identified with, it can be observed that the women identified to a greater extent with the women of Couple One and Couple Six, while the men identified most with the man in Couple Two. It can also be observed that there was a tendency to identify with contestants of the same sex and gender.

Table 3. Contestant who is most liked or with whom interviewees identified the most

		Gender						
		Women			Men			Total
		% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the table
Which contestant did you like the most or identify with the most?	Ángel (Couple Four - man)	0.00%	0.00%	0	3.23%	100.00%	1	0.81%
	Cristian (Couple Six - man)	0.00%	0.00%	0	3.23%	100.00%	1	0.81%
	Inma (Couple Four - woman)	1.09%	50.00%	1	3.23%	50.00%	1	1.63%
	Marta (Couple Three - woman)	2.17%	66.67%	2	3.23%	33.33%	1	2.44%
	Melyssa (Couple One - woman)	17.39%	84.21%	16	9.68%	15.79%	3	15.45%
	Melodie (Couple Six - woman)	33.70%	96.88%	31	3.23%	3.13%	1	26.02%
	Pablo (Couple Two - man)	4.35%	44.44%	4	16.13%	55.56%	5	7.32%
	None	41.30%	67.86%	38	58.06%	32.14%	18	45.53%
	Total	100.00%	74.80%	92	100.00%	25.20%	31	100.00%

Source: own compilation

Regarding the most disliked participants, in most cases, the women flagged the man in Couple One as one of the competitors in the format who they liked the least or with whom they identified the least. They also singled out, although to a lesser extent, the women in Couples Two and Three and the man in Couple Three. In the case of the men who were interviewed, the majority stated that they did not identify with any of the participants and those who did give a name singled out the women in Couples Two and Three and the man in Couple One (see table 4).

Table 4. Contestant who is least liked or with whom interviewees identified the least

		Gender						
		Women			Men			Total
		% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the table
Which contestant did you like the least or identify with the least?	Aless (Couple Five - man)	2.17%	100.00%	2	0.00%	0.00%	0	1.63%
	Cristian (Couple Six - man)	1.09%	100.00%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.81%
	Lester (Couple Three - man)	3.26%	100.00%	3	0.00%	0.00%	0	2.44%
	Marta (Couple Three- woman)	6.52%	60.00%	6	12.90%	40.00%	4	8.13%
	Mayka (Couple Two - woman)	8.70%	57.14%	8	19.35%	42.86%	6	11.38%
	Patry (Couple Five - woman)	2.17%	100.00%	2	0.00%	0.00%	0	1.63%
	Tom (Couple One - man)	52.17%	92.31%	48	12.90%	7.69%	4	42.28%
	None	23.91%	56.41%	22	54.84%	43.59%	17	31.71%
	Total	100.00%	74.80%	92	100.00%	25.20%	31	100.00%

Source: own compilation

However, the participants in the study did not consider the relationship models in *La isla de las tentaciones* to be the most appropriate, in their view:

“All the couples seem to be cut from the same cloth and– whether out of jealousy, a lack of values such as honesty or respect, or other reasons– none of them constitute a proper representation of what emotional relationships ought to be like. I believe there is no reason that justifies cheating on your partner” (I25, woman, aged 21).

They considered them to be part of the media circus; they were not situations they considered real, although during their discourse they talked about them as if they were:

“I have to say that as it is a television show, I’m not sure up to what point what they do is real. If we decide to believe that it is, they don’t at all seem to me to be examples to follow of a couple; if you really love your partner, you sort out the problems at home and without causing so much hurt. I think they are false relationships... and in which it’s built up so much that it explodes” (I19, woman, aged 21).

The young people interviewed mostly identified with the contestants who were victims of betrayal. Occasionally the discourses of the interviewees also came to identify cases of violence between the competing couples. The paradigmatic case is the relationship of Couple One (with the most rejected male contestant) involving the woman in the same couple (the second most-liked contestant):

“I think Melyssa was being gaslit by Tom– let me explain: when the show began, Tom wanted to give us a perspective of Melyssa as a jealous person, manipulative, hysterical, etc. And, even, he made her believe that was their real problem. When the truth was that, if at any time Melyssa did behave like that, her experience had given her real grounds for mistrusting her partner’s faithfulness” (I25, woman, aged 21).

Even behaviours involving psychological abuse such as gaslighting are observed, as in the case of Couple One above, in which somebody denies a reality, acting as if something never happened or the information were false in order to make the victim doubt his or her perception:

“It’s a very toxic relationship where jealousy is at the core. He is very manipulative, and has very little involvement in their union, constantly blaming her for the problems that arise between them. She really believes that it’s her fault for being very jealous and not letting him develop as a person, she’s very insecure and being around Tom doesn’t help her at all” (I98, woman, aged 18).

However, it is interesting to note how the word “toxic” was continually used in the interviews to refer to this type of behaviour that is analogous to violence against women, but without naming it specifically. In contrast, the word “healthy” was used to identify behaviours that they considered more positive:

“Yes, they do exist in real life and they are very toxic couples, full of jealousy and envy, which in my opinion is not love, it can be dependence or obsession, but not healthy love” (I17, woman, aged 21).

3.3. Presence of romantic love and gender roles

When referring to the concept of romantic love, the participants considered themselves as romantic (42.28%) or moderately romantic (34.15%), with a tendency for women to consider themselves more romantic than the men did (see table 5).

Table 5. Degree of perception of oneself as a romantic person

		Gender						
		Women			Men			Total
		% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the column	% of the row	Number	% of the table
Perception of yourself as a romantic person	Not at all romantic	0.00%	0.00%	0	3.23%	100.00%	1	0.81%
	Not very romantic	10.87%	76.92%	10	9.68%	23.08%	3	10.57%
	Moderately romantic	30.43%	66.67%	28	45.16%	33.33%	14	34.15%
	Romantic	46.74%	82.69%	43	29.03%	17.31%	9	42.28%
	Very romantic	11.96%	73.33%	11	12.90%	26.67%	4	12.20%
	Total	100.00%	74.80%	92	100.00%	25.20%	31	100.00%

Source: own compilation

However, some people in their discourses positioned themselves explicitly in opposition to the model of romantic love:

“The fact that most relationships currently and especially among young people remain shallow, all of it being mythologised due to that idea of love the industry is selling us, which is based on it giving wonderful moments... and without a doubt this is a misguided perspective of this concept” (I105, woman, aged 18).

They also criticised some of the gender roles and expectations about how a love relationship should end (such as the one that underlies the myth of marriage or cohabitation) that are reflected in the programme:

“Starting from the basis that I don’t believe in hetero-normative monogamous love [...] It makes me very angry that this concept of love makes people feel how Inma [Couple Four] felt throughout the programme. I feel that both of them were under enormous pressure... I see the reflection of many women who go through the same thing, feeling that lack of love and loss of sense of everything” (I119, woman, aged 19).

It is around the myth of fidelity and sexuality where the narratives of the contestants show to a greater extent stereotyped and mythologised conceptions. The *myth of fidelity* as the cultural ideal of romantic love, and whose belief that being in love implies being faithful, was also accepted by young people in their discourse. This myth is taken on board by the dynamics of the programme and by all participants:

“A dating relationship needs time to build, several months, and communication and trust are essential. There [on *La isla de las tentaciones*] there can be no trust when couples go to strengthen their relationship and end up being unfaithful: what future does a relationship that arises from infidelity have? Also, a relationship needs to emerge in a realistic environment, not on an island lost in a Caribbean paradise, so that all the elements outside the relationship take part and people see how it develops”. (I95, woman, aged 19).

"The most important elements are commitment, trust and fidelity. Although for me, to talk about love, I have to feel proud of the other person, of their constancy, work, courage with others, etc." (I51, woman, aged 21).

The *myth of the couple* (the belief that the –heterosexual– couple is something that is natural and universal and, hence, the programme arranges the "tempters" and "temptresses") and the *myth of marriage or romantic cohabitating relationships* (since, if they pass the test of *La isla de las tentaciones*, their union will be more stable) can also be observed both in the programme and in the narratives of the participants.

The *myth of jealousy born out of love* is present in the behaviour of the couples competing in *La isla de las tentaciones*. Jealousy and controlling behaviour as a gesture of true love are identified as "toxic" (see Illustration 1). This myth is usually used to justify possessive, selfish, unfair, repressive and, occasionally, violent behaviours. It can be observed that in the interviews jealous and controlling behaviour was identified to a greater extent as a sign of love in the female contestants:

"It seems to me that all [the women] behave in a very jealous and insecure way in general" (I118, woman, aged 19).

Among a part of the interviewees, gender stereotypes and roles towards both women and men can still be observed. There were few testimonies such as that of participant I69 who pointed out that there are no gender differences:

"I don't think it's a thing that there has to be a bias between men and women. Everyone has different behaviours no matter what gender they are" (I69, man, aged 21).

In the case of women, the role of seductress or femme fatale, who is manipulative, jealous and so on, persists, particularly penalising those who do not comply with the mandate of fidelity:

"The faithful ones ok, the other [women] are embarrassing" (I3, woman, aged 22).

"[The women] do whatever they want, but then they blame the guys, really manipulative" (I107, man, aged 18).

"It stereotypes the temptress as that 'predator' searching for a man to share her life" (I80, man, aged 22).

In the case of the men, the discourse indicates that they fit the roles of the *Latin lover*, the *winner*, while at the same time upholding the myth of unstoppable sexual instinct. In this case, although infidelity was penalised, it was not rated at the same level but mentioned in terms of "sexual impulse":

"Like alpha males who can act in any way because they're not going to be judged in the same way as the women" (I124, woman, aged 21).

"I get the feeling that they're all unfaithful. And they behave in such a way they can't repress their sexual impulses" (I27, woman, aged 23).

The new relationships which are formed within the show are categorised as merely being sexual encounters fostered by the situation. The discourses included the appearance of the *myth of free will*, as they indicated that these feelings are absolutely private and free, unhindered by any wishes that could decisively influence them:

"The relationships they create are driven by lust, pleasure and a kind of fascination. In these conditions, it's impossible that a relationship based on feelings and love itself can develop" (I98, woman, aged 19).

4. Discussion

Young people in Spain show a generalised rejection of the models of couples participating in *La isla de las tentaciones*. Overall, more than 98% show an unfavourable attitude towards the roles of the competing couples. Although the negative views are generalised, there are gendered tendencies, with women interviewed tending to be more likely to take a negative stance.

In the narratives of the participants, the narrative of romantic love is present, a narrative shared by the competing couples according to the study by Parejo and Bernal-Luque (2022). However, the contestants who achieve the happy ending – the triumph of love in the face of adversity – who receive the highest ratings from the audience. The media representation of the *myth of the omnipotence of love* is, according Illouz (2009), the biggest attraction in the consumption of romantic culture, and accordingly also of successful *reality TV shows* like *La isla de las tentaciones*. The emergence of the *happy ending* is a revolution in the imaginary, situating the idea of happiness as the main core of these forms of imagination (Morin, 1966), and this is reflected in the discourse about the couples who still maintained their relationship after appearing on the show – such as Couple Five – or about the participants identified with the most – such as the women in Couple One and Couple Two – who managed to get out of a relationship that the audience considered “toxic”.

As regards identifying with the contestants, the majority of young people do not identify with any of the participants in *La isla de las tentaciones*. However, among those who do identify with somebody, two trends can be observed: firstly, they tend to identify with people of the same sex as themselves, a preference in identifying with the participants that is corroborated by that occurring in other audio-visual formats (Cohen, 2001; Igartua & Múñiz, 2008); and secondly, another part of the audience identifies to a greater extent with the participants who remained faithful despite the circumstances, linking this behaviour with autobiographical memory and with the social learning that occurs through the media.

In the narratives of the participants in the study, we can observe a distancing of what they consider to be a loving relationship from what the models of couples presented in *La isla de las tentaciones* represent. Trust, respect, communication, sincerity and empathy, among others, are elements that appear repeatedly in the discourse on love relationships in real life, as opposed to the jealousy, infidelity or toxic behaviours that are identified. In their narratives, young people tend to identify with companionate love or consummate love (Sternberg, 1986). In contrast to the findings by Zurbriggen and Morgan (2006), the results of this study do not suggest that increased viewing of this type of programmes is associated with more traditional and unfavourable attitudes towards dates and love relationships; on the contrary, it can be observed that said attitudes are identified as “toxic”.

While it is true that they identify attitudes that are analogous to psychological violence and controlling attitudes as toxic, it is women who identify these situations to a greater extent. However, it is relevant to note that all these attitudes appear under the term “toxic”, a term that seems to be frequently used among young people but that does not correctly identify each of the types of violence described. Sometimes, in the narratives of the participants, behaviours that correspond to the first stages of violence are described with a certain degree of normalisation, especially those related to behaviours of control, jealousy and deception, as if this were the norm for this type of romantic partner model.

Regarding the presence of the concept of romantic love and its associated myths, in the interviews the participants indicate a prevalence of the *myth of fidelity* as a key element in the scoring of the competing couples and their love relationships, as well as in describing what a loving relationship should be. It can be observed that those couples or contestants who remain

faithful are those who receive more positive assessments, whereas the most criticised characters and the contestants who are identified with the least are those who are unfaithful. These findings are similar to those of Torrego, Gutiérrez-Martín and Hoechsmann (2021) who also observed that criticism on social media was harsher towards unfaithful competitors, in the same way that those couples who remained faithful received the most positive online feedback.

In the discourse of the interviewees, it can be observed that the *myth of jealousy born out of love* is clearly identified as harmful behaviour for the emotional and sexual relationship; this tendency towards certain degree of demystification of *jealousy born out of love* had already been observed in recent studies (Blanco-Ruiz, 2020) despite being one of those most resistant to change (Bosch et al., 2011; Díaz-Aguado et al., 2014). Despite manifesting a certain degree of demystification and rejection towards romantic love, in the majority of cases it can be observed how other beliefs of romantic love such as the *myth of the couple*, the *myth of exclusivity*, the *myth of free will* and the *myth of fidelity* are highly internalised in the discourse articulated by the young people in the interviews. This prevalence of romantic love myths is also observed in other studies on youth and *La isla de las tentaciones* (Parejo & Bernal-Luque, 2022).

Likewise, a perpetuation of gender roles and stereotypes linked to sexuality is also observed. In the interviews' discourse about the men and women who take part in *La isla de las tentaciones*, for both the competitors and the tempters and temptresses, the notion that men are more unfaithful is reinforced, attributing more highly sexual conduct to them as opposed to the women who are represented as being jealous. These gender differences concerning to fidelity and sexuality are the consequence of a sociocultural tradition in which the image of the seductive, unfaithful male has been glorified, while female unfaithfulness has been strongly stigmatised, from Cleopatra to the *femme fatale*, positioning the woman with a certain degree of sexual liberation as undesirable, negative, perfidious (Hernández-García & Pérez-Gallo, 2007). These imaginaries coincide with earlier studies on the concept of romantic interpersonal relationships in adolescents which underscored the prevalence of female fidelity as a value compared to the male stereotype on infidelity, as well as the gender stereotypes which ascribed more sexual behaviour to men as opposed to women (Blanco Ruiz, 2018; Bravo & Moreno, 2007).

Although it was not the subject of this research, the interviews reveal the impact of social television (Alvarez-Monzoncillo, 2011; Halpern et al., 2016) and how the couples of *La isla de las tentaciones* are viewed through the parallel consumption of the programme on the social networks Instagram and Twitter. We also observe the paradox of reality TV audiences rejecting these types of formats as quality audiovisual content while at the same time consuming them (Rose & Wood, 2005).

5. Conclusions

The general objective of this research has focused on investigating the perception and identification of Spanish young people with the romantic relationships in reality TV shows such as *La isla de las tentaciones* (*Temptation Island*). The success of this programme among a younger audience generates a perception and an impact on the individual romantic conception of youth. Despite the fact that the programme is based on the myths of romantic love and its consumption yearns for the triumph of love in the face of adversity, as happens with the happy endings, the participants' narratives show a distancing of their model of a love relationship from the television models presented in *La isla de las tentaciones*. Their assessment of the romantic couple

models presented in the programme is generally unfavourable, and they show a concern for identifying the attitudes that they single out as toxic in their immediate environment.

It is observed that, despite this generalised rejection, the young people participating in the study tend to identify more with the contestants of the same sex and gender, as well as with the contestants who are victims of their partner’s betrayal. The myth of the omnipotence of love as an aspirational model is also still prevalent among the young participants, which is why they totally reject toxic relationships that cannot achieve this model of love.

Despite a certain degree of demystification of the *myth of jealousy for love*, young people identifying certain behaviours as “toxic” and sometimes explicitly rejecting gender roles or romantic love, in the interviews, there is also a discourse that reinforces the *myth of fidelity* and the gender stereotypes associated with it.

The growing interest of young people in reality TV shows depicting young couples and their everyday problems may stem from the fact that they address issues that are more difficult to discuss in a private setting and on social media they can speak more freely and anonymously, while finding out what their peer group thinks about these behaviours. Through their consumption of the programme and social media interaction, they can freely discover the perceptions of their peer group and reflect on their own ideas about relationships. Apart from being entertainment programmes, reality TV shows give rise to reflection on what is meant by a relationship, love, sex and heartbreak, often referred to as “toxic”.

Future research should look more deeply into which attitudes Spanish young people include when they call a love relationship “toxic”, as well as carry out a diachronic comparative study on the perception of romantic love and the identification with the programme’s love models throughout all the broadcasted editions.

6. Acknowledgements

This article has been translated into English by Hilary Robinson, to whom we are grateful.

7. Specific contributions of each author

	Name and surname
Conception and design of the work	Marian Blanco-Ruiz and Esther Martínez Pastor
Methodology	Marian Blanco-Ruiz and Esther Martínez Pastor
Data collection and analysis	Marian Blanco-Ruiz and Esther Martínez Pastor
Discussion and conclusions	Marian Blanco-Ruiz and Esther Martínez Pastor
Drafting, formatting, revision and approval of versions	Marian Blanco-Ruiz and Esther Martínez Pastor

8. Bibliographical reference

- Allen, K., & Mendick, H. (2013). Keeping it Real? Social Class, Young People and 'Authenticity' in Reality TV. *Sociology*, 47, 460-476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512448563>
- Álvarez, C., & Cardoso, D. (2010). As desigualdades do amor. *Comunicação & Cultura*, 9, 89-107.
- Alvarez-Monzoncillo, J. (2011). *La televisión etiquetada: Nuevas audiencias, nuevos negocios*.
- Andrejevic, M. (2003). *Reality Tv: The Work of Being Watched*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Aran-Ramspott, S., Medina-Bravo, P., & Rodrigo-Alsina, M. (2015). Exploring the Spanish youth audience's interpretation of loving relationships. *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(6), 813-833. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715577243>
- Banijay Group. (2020). *Banijay Group Shows «Temptation Island»*. Banijay Shows. <https://goo.su/fPC2>
- Basil, M. D. (1996). Standpoint: The use of student samples in communication research. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 40(3), 431-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838159609364364>
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Amor líquido: Acerca de la fragilidad de los vínculos humanos*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). *El normal caos del amor: Las nuevas formas de la relación amorosa*. Grupo Planeta (GBS).
- Blanco, M. Á. (2015). Implicaciones del uso de las redes sociales en el aumento de la violencia de género en adolescentes. *Comunicación y Medios*, 0(30), Pág. 124-141. <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-1529.2014.32375>
- Blanco Ruiz, M. (2018). *Percepción del amor romántico en adolescentes y papel de los medios de comunicación*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10016/27813>, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.
- Blanco-Ruiz, M. (2020). Relevancia del amor romántico en la adolescencia: Una cuestión clave para el abordaje de la violencia de género. En *(Des)igualdad y violencia de género: El nudo gordiano de la sociedad globalizada* (pp. 77-87). Aranzadi Thomson Reuters.
- Bosch, E., Ferrer, V. A., Navarro, C., & Ferreiro, V. (2011). *Profundizando en el análisis del mito del amor romántico y sus relaciones con la violencia contra las mujeres en la pareja: Análisis cualitativo*. (Exp. 67/07; p. 59). Instituto de la Mujer. <https://acortar.link/cagSmY>
- Bravo, P. C., & Moreno, P. V. (2007). La interiorización de los estereotipos de género en jóvenes y adolescentes. *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 25(1), 35-38.
- Carpentier, N. (2006). Participation and power in the television program Temptation Island: 'Tits' and 'Melons' on 'Slut Camp'. En *Researching Media, Democracy and Participation: The Intellectual Work of the 2006 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School* (pp. 135-148). Tartu University Press.
- Cha, J. (2013). Do Online Video Platforms Cannibalize Television?: How Viewers Are Moving from Old Screens to New Ones. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 53(1), 71-82. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-53-1-071-082>

- Church, S. H., Robinson, T., Callahan, C., Barboza, K. K., & Montez, D. (2020). Savvy viewers and (simulated) reality TV: An analysis of The Bachelor's appeal to viewers. *Journal of Popular Television, The*, 8(1), 23-43. https://doi.org/10.1386/jptv_00009_1
- Cohen, J. (2001). Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences With Media Characters. *Mass Communication and Society*, 4(3), 245-264. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0403_01
- Conteh, B. (2021). *Reality Television: A Case Study on Viewing Motives of «Housemates Salone Season Two»*. 15, 19-41.
- Coontz, S. (2006). *Historia del matrimonio: Cómo el amor conquistó el matrimonio*. Gedisa.
- Creswell, J., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Fourth). SAGE. <https://goo.su/F2C7n>
- Díaz-Aguado, M.-J., Martínez Arias, R., & Martínez Babarro, J. (2014). *La evolución de la adolescencia española sobre la igualdad y la prevención de la violencia de género* (Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad. Centro de Publicaciones).
- Dubrofsky, R. E., & Hardy, A. (2008). Performing Race in Flavor of Love and The Bachelor. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 25(4), 373-392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295030802327774>
- Esteban Galarza, M. L. (2011). *Crítica del pensamiento amoroso: Temas contemporáneos*. Bellaterra.
- Ferguson, C. J., Salmond, K., & Modi, K. (2013). Reality Television Predicts Both Positive and Negative Outcomes for Adolescent Girls. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 162(6), 1175-1180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2012.11.067>
- Fernández-Cavia, J. (2002). *El consumidor adolescent: Televisió, marques i publicitat*. Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Ferris, A. L., Smith, S. W., Greenberg, B. S., & Smith, S. L. (2007). The Content of Reality Dating Shows and Viewer Perceptions of Dating. *Journal of Communication*, 57(3), 490-510. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00354.x>
- Fisher, D. A., Hill, D. L., Grube, J. W., Bersamin, M. M., Walker, S., & Gruber, E. L. (2009). Televised sexual content and parental mediation: Influences on adolescent sexuality. *Media psychology*, 12(2), 121-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213260902849901>
- Gardyn, R. (2001). The tribe has spoken. *American Demographics*, 23(9), 34-40.
- Gibbs, J. L., Ellison, N. B., & Lai, C.-H. (2011). First Comes Love, Then Comes Google: An Investigation of Uncertainty Reduction Strategies and Self-Disclosure in Online Dating. *Communication Research*, 30(1), 70-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210377091>
- Giddens, A. (1998). *La transformación de la intimidad: Sexualidad, amor y erotismo en las sociedades modernas (2ª)*. Cátedra.
- Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the Media*. Polity Press.
- Guerrero Pérez, E. (2018). *La fuga de los millennials de la televisión lineal* (73.ª ed.). Revista Latina de Comunicación Social. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2018-1304>
- Halpern, D., Quintas-Froufe, N., & Fernández-Medina, F. (2016). Interacciones entre la televisión y su audiencia social: Hacia una conceptualización comunicacional. *Profesional de la Información*, 25(3), Art. 3. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2016.may.06>

- Hamui-Sutton, A. (2013). Un acercamiento a los métodos mixtos de investigación en educación médica. *Investigación en Educación Médica*, 2(8), 211-216. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2007-5057\(13\)72714-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2007-5057(13)72714-5)
- Hernández García, Y., & Pérez Gallo, V. H. (2007). Un análisis feminista de la infidelidad conyugal. *Nómaditas*, 16. <https://goo.su/rZW8r>
- Herrera, C. (2011). *La construcción sociocultural del amor romántico*. Fundamentos.
- Hidalgo-Marí, T. (2018). Pasado, presente y futuro del datingshow en España: Una panorámica del subgénero de telerrealidad. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*. <https://doi.org/10.5209/ESMP.59970>
- Hooks, B. (2000). *All about love. New Visions*. HarperCollins.
- Igartua, J. J., & Múñiz, C. (2008). Identificación con los personajes y disfrute ante largometrajes de ficción. Una investigación empírica. *Communication&Society*, 21(1), 25-51. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.21.36288>
- Illouz, E. (2009). *El consumo de la utopía romántica: El amor y las contradicciones culturales del capitalismo* (1ª edición). Katz Editores.
- Illouz, E. (2012). *Por qué duele el amor: Una explicación sociológica*. Katz.
- Illouz, E. (2014). *Erotismo de autoayuda. Cincuenta sombras de Grey y el nuevo orden romántico*. Katz Editores.
- Illouz, E. (2019). *The End of Love: A Sociology of Negative Relations*.
- Jónasdóttir, A. (1993). *El poder del amor. ¿Le importa el sexo a la Democracia?* Cátedra.
- Jónasdóttir, A. (2011). ¿Qué clase de poder es «el poder del amor»? *Sociológica*, 26(74), 247-273.
- Kantar Media. (2020). *DIMENSION 2020: Media & Me*.
- Langford, W. (1999). *Revolutions of the Heart: Gender, Power and the Delusions of Love*. Psychology Press.
- Molina, B. (2020, septiembre 29). «*La isla de las tentaciones 2*»: Lista oficial de quiénes son las parejas, su edad, cuánto llevan juntos... El Confidencial. <https://acortar.link/GOLcic>
- Monroe, C. (2015). Black Themed Reality Television & Racial Identity: Gendered Perceptions from Black College Students. *Africana Studies Theses*. <https://doi.org/10.57709/7035157>
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *The European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Mucientes, E. (2020, febrero 14). *Las brutales audiencias que deja La isla de las tentaciones*. El Mundo. <https://acortar.link/TTAgsf>
- Nabi, R. L. (2007). Determining Dimensions of Reality: A Concept Mapping of the Reality TV Landscape. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51(2), 371-390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838150701307111>
- Papacharissi, Z., & Mendelson, A. L. (2007). An Exploratory Study of Reality Appeal: Uses and Gratifications of Reality TV Shows. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51(2), 355-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838150701307152>

- Parejo, J. L., & Bernal-Luque, A. (2022). «Hay más imágenes para ti...». El impacto mediático de «La Isla de las Tentaciones» en la juventud española a través de Instagram. *Revista Latinoamericana de Tecnología Educativa - RELATEC*, 21(2), Art. 2. <https://doi.org/10.17398/1695-288X.21.2.83>
- Peek, H. S. (2019). Chapter 2 - Distorted Reality: Reality Television and the Effects on Female Body Image. En E. V. Beresin & C. K. Olson (Eds.), *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Media* (pp. 11-22). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-54854-0.00002-3>
- Pérez-Luco Arenas, R., Lagos Gutiérrez, L., Mardones Barrera, R., & Sáez Ardura, F. (2017). Taxonomía de diseños y muestreo en investigación cualitativa. Un intento de síntesis entre las aproximaciones teórica y emergente. *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación*, 39. <https://goo.su/nFVY8cc>
- Rivas, O. (2020, octubre 9). *Por qué triunfa 'La Isla de las Tentaciones': Relaciones tóxicas, infidelidad y analfabetismo emocional*. Confidencial Digital. <https://acortar.link/dcQmSt>
- Romero-Sánchez, M., Krahé, B., Moya, M., & Megías, J. L. (2018). Alcohol-Related Victim Behavior and Rape Myth Acceptance as Predictors of Victim Blame in Sexual Assault Cases. *Violence Against Women*, 24(9), 1052-1069. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801217727372>
- Rose, R. L., & Wood, S. L. (2005). Paradox and the Consumption of Authenticity through Reality Television. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(2), 284-296. <https://doi.org/10.1086/432238>
- Rubin, A. M. (1983). Television uses and gratifications: The interactions of viewing patterns and motivations. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27(1), 37-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838158309386471>
- Ruiz Repullo, C. (2016). *Voces tras los datos. Una mirada cualitativa a la violencia de género en adolescentes*. Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer. <https://acortar.link/wnXmMg>
- Sánchez-González, S., & González de Garay-Domínguez, B. (2020). The Sexual-Affective Diversity on First Dates (Cuatro: 2016). Content Analysis of the Participants' Profile. *Masculinities & Social Change*, 9(2), Art. 2. <https://doi.org/10.17583/mcs.2020.3629>
- Scolari, C. (2008). This Is The End. Las interminables discusiones sobre el fin de la televisión. *La Trama de la Comunicación*, 13, 13-25. <https://doi.org/10.35305/lt.v13i0.69>
- Stassen, K., & Thompson, R. A. (1997). *Psicología del desarrollo: Infancia y adolescencia*. Médica Panamericana.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119-135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.93.2.119>
- Sumter, S. R., Vandenbosch, L., & Ligtenberg, L. (2017). Love me Tinder: Untangling emerging adults' motivations for using the dating application Tinder. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(1), 67-78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2016.04.009>
- Toor, N. (2013). *Romantically Themed Reality Television and Its Impact on Young Female Adults Ideas About Relationships, Marriage and Love* [Thesis, City University of Seattle].

Torrego, A., Gutiérrez-Martín, A., &Hoechsmann, M. (2021). The Fine Line between Person and Persona in the Spanish Reality Television Show *La isla de las tentaciones*: Audience Engagement on Instagram. *Sustainability*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13041753>

Vandenbosch, L., & Eggermont, S. (2011). Temptation Island, The Bachelor, Joe Millionaire: A Prospective Cohort Study on the Role of Romantically Themed Reality Television in Adolescents' Sexual Development. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55(4), 563-580. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.620663>

Vangeel, L., Vandenbosch, L., Eggermont, S., & Wright, P. J. (2020). A longitudinal investigation of television viewing in adolescence and sexual perfectionism and satisfaction in adulthood. *Communication Monographs*, 87(2), 223-243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2019.1683216>

Von Feilitzen, C. (2004). *Young people, soap operas and reality TV; yearbook 2004—UNESCO Biblioteca Digital*. Nordicom. <https://goo.su/0aotIq>

Ward, L. M. (2002). Does Television Exposure Affect Emerging Adults' Attitudes and Assumptions About Sexual Relationships? Correlational and Experimental Confirmation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014068031532>

Ward, L. M., & Rivaadeneyra, R. (1999). Contributions of entertainment television to adolescents' sexual attitudes and expectations: The role of viewing amount versus viewer involvement. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 36(3), 237-249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499909551994>

Wood, H., & Skeggs, B. (2011). *Reality Television and Class*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Yanarda o lu, E., & Karam, I. N. (2013). The fever that hit Arab satellite television: Audience perceptions of Turkish TV series. *Identities*, 20(5), 561-579. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.823089>

Yela, C. (2000). *El amor desde la psicología social. Ni tan libres, ni tan racionales*. Pirámide.

Zurbriggen, E. L., & Morgan, E. M. (2006). Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire? Reality Dating Television Programs, Attitudes Toward Sex, and Sexual Behaviors. *Sex Roles*, 54(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-8865-2>