

# **Sexual Compliance in Finland: Characteristics, Associations, and Potential Consequences**

Psychology / Department of Psychology and Speech-Language Pathology

Master's thesis

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HIMANEN, MARIANNE: Sexual compliance in Finland: Characteristics, associations, and potential consequences

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**Abstract.** Sexual compliance is predominantly defined as willingly engaging in unwanted sexual activity in the absence of partner pressure or coercion. The present study investigated the demographic characteristics of sexual compliance in a Finnish sample of 1,496 participants. Furthermore, based on previous literature, low sexual self-control (including sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, and reasons for consenting) and high partner sexual relationship power (a proxy of covert social coercion) were investigated as explanatory models for sexual compliance. Lastly, this study investigated possible personal and relational consequences of sexual compliance. The sample, recruited through various social media platforms, consisted of individuals who were or had recently been in a committed intimate relationship. The rate in respondents peaked especially after two social media influencers shared the study invitation via their Instagram profiles, and thus, as the sample is likely biased, the generalizability of the following results is limited. Participants answered self-report measures of the above-mentioned aspects. Sexual compliance was common, with 65% of women, 37% men and 67% of participants of other genders reporting sexual compliance at least once in their current or most recent relationship. As 93% of the participants identified as women, only women were included in the subsequent analyses. Initial bivariate correlations showed that higher age, current relationship duration and education level were significantly associated with less sexual compliance in women, contradicting, and adding to previous literature. In line with the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis showed that women with less sexual resourcefulness, less sexual self-efficacy, more reasons for consenting, and higher partner sexual relationship power reported more sexual compliance. Most reported positive and negative consequences were in line with previous literature. Additionally, multiple regression analysis showed that women with less approach reasons, more avoidance reasons, less sexual resourcefulness, and less sexual self-efficacy reported more negative consequences of sexual compliance. Results on the association between covert social coercion and consequences of sexual compliance were inconclusive. The present study is, to my knowledge, the first to study sexual compliance in Finland. The results suggest that sexual compliance is a common phenomenon in Finnish committed relationships and seems to have both negative and positive consequences for the individual and the relationship in women. Additionally, the examination of sexual self-control and sexual relationship power seem to offer some insight to why Finnish women comply sexually.

**Key words:** sexual compliance, sexual self-control, sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, motives for sexual compliance, covert social coercion, consequences of sexual compliance, sexuality, sexual behavior.

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**Abstrakti.** Seksuaalinen myöntävyys määritellään pääasiassa vapaaehtoiseksi ei-toivottuun seksuaaliseen toimintaan suostumiseksi, silloin kun kumppani ei käyttäydy tilanteessa painostavasti tai pakottavasti. Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin seksuaalisen myöntävyyden demografisia piirteitä suomalaisessa 1496 osallistujan otoksessa. Aiempaan kirjallisuuteen perustuen alhaista seksuaalista itsekontrollia (seksuaalinen neuvokkuus, seksuaalinen minäpystyvyys ja myöntymisen syyt) sekä kumppanin korkeaa seksuaalista valtaa suhteessa (piilevän sosiaalisen pakottamisen operationalisointi) tutkittiin selittävinä malleina seksuaaliselle myöntävyydelle. Lisäksi selvitettiin seksuaalisen myöntävyyden mahdollisia henkilökohtaisia ja vakiintuneeseen suhteeseen liittyviä seurauksia. Erilaisten sosiaalisen median alustojen kautta rekrytoitu otos koostui henkilöistä, jotka olivat kyselyn hetkellä tai olivat äskettäin olleet vakiintuneessa intiimisuhteessa. Vastaajien määrä oli huipussaan erityisesti sen jälkeen, kun kaksi sosiaalisen median vaikuttajaa jakoivat tutkimuskutsun Instagram-profiiliensa kautta. Tämän vuoksi otos on todennäköisesti vinoutunut, ja raportoitujen tulosten yleistettävyys on kyseenalainen. Osallistujat vastasivat itsearviokyselyihin edellä mainituista näkökohdista. Seksuaalinen myöntävyys oli yleistä, sillä 65 % naisista, 37 % miehistä ja 67 % muita sukupuolia edustavista osallistujista raportoivat myöntäneensä seksuaalisesti ainakin kerran nykyisessä tai viimeisimmässä suhteessaan. Koska 93 % osallistujista identifioitui naisiksi, vain naisia koskeva aineisto otettiin mukaan seuraaviin analyyseihin. Alustavat korrelaatiot osoittivat, että korkeampi ikä, nykyisen vakiintuneen suhteen pidempi kesto sekä koulutustaso liittyivät merkitsevästi naisten vähäisempään seksuaaliseen myöntymiseen. Korkeamman iän sekä vakiintuneen suhteen pidemmän keston yhteys matalampaan seksuaaliseen myöntävyyteen naisilla oli ristiriidassa aiemman kirjallisuuden kanssa. Koulutustason yhteyttä seksuaaliseen myöntävyyteen ei ole aiemmin tutkittu. Monimuuttujaregressio osoitti, että naiset, joilla oli vähemmän seksuaalista neuvokkuutta, vähemmän seksuaalista minäpystyvyyttä, enemmän syytä myöntymiselle sekä jotka arvioivat kumppanin seksuaalisen vallan suhteessa korkeammaksi raportoivat enemmän seksuaalisesta myöntävyyttä. Tulos tuki asetettuja hypoteeseja. Useimmin raportoidut positiiviset ja negatiiviset seuraukset olivat aiemmassa kirjallisuudessa saatujen tulosten mukaisia. Lisäksi monimuuttujaregressio osoitti, että naiset, joilla oli vähemmän lähestymismotiiveja, enemmän välttämismotiiveja, vähemmän seksuaalista neuvokkuutta ja vähemmän seksuaalista minäpystyvyyttä raportoivat enemmän seksuaalisen myöntymisen negatiivisia seurauksia. Tulokset piilevän sosiaalisen pakottamisen ja seksuaalisen myöntymisen seurausten välisestä yhteydestä jäivät epäselviksi, joten tulokset tukivat vain osaa asetetuista hypoteeseista. Tämä tutkimus on tietoni mukaan ensimmäinen, joka tutkii seksuaalista myöntävyyttä Suomessa. Tulokset viittaavat siihen, että seksuaalinen myöntävyys on yleinen ilmiö suomalaisissa vakiintuneissa intiimisuhteissa ja sillä näyttää olevan sekä kielteisiä että myönteisiä henkilökohtaisia sekä vakiintuneeseen suhteeseen liittyviä seurauksia ainakin naisilla. Lisäksi seksuaalisen itsekontrollin ja vakiintuneen suhteen seksuaalisen vallan jakautumisen tarkastelu näyttävät tarjoavan jonkinlaisen käsityksen siitä, miksi suomalaiset naiset myöntävät seksuaalisesti.

**Avainsanat:** seksuaalinen myöntävyys, seksuaalinen itsekontrolli, seksuaalinen neuvokkuus, seksuaalinen minäpystyvyys, seksuaalisen myöntävyyden syyt, piilevä sosiaalinen pakottaminen, seksuaalisen myöntävyyden seuraukset, seksuaalisuus, seksuaalikäyttäytyminen.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Who Complies and Why?</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Sexual Compliance and Sexual Self-Control</i> .....	2
<i>Covert Social Coercion</i> .....	4
<b>Potential Consequences of Consenting to Unwanted Sexual Activity</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>The Current Study</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Aims and Hypotheses</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Methods</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Procedure</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Measures</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Sexual Resourcefulness</i> .....	9
<i>Sexual Self-Efficacy</i> .....	10
<i>Sexual Relationship Power</i> .....	10
<i>Sexual Compliance</i> .....	11
<i>Reasons for Sexual Compliance</i> .....	11
<i>Potential Consequences of Sexual Compliance</i> .....	11
<b>Participant Selection Criteria</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Statistical Analyses</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Results</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Descriptive Statistics</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Sexual Compliance</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<i>Sexual Compliance and Sexual Self-Control</i> .....	17
<i>Social Covert Coercion and Sexual Compliance</i> .....	17
<i>Predicting Sexual Compliance</i> .....	17
<b>Possible Consequences of Sexual Compliance</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Discussion</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Sexual Compliance in Finland</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>The Role of Sexual Self-Control in Sexual Compliance</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>The Role of Social Covert Coercion in Sexual Compliance</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Consequences of Sexual Compliance</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Study Limitations</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Future Research</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	<b>44</b>

## Introduction

People in committed, intimate long-term relationships often face the issue of sexual desire discrepancy, that is, a situation where one has sexual desire, and the other does not. Consequently, there are many situations in which a partner's sexual advance can be undesired, and the partner lacking sexual desire has to either decline the sexual overture or go along with it. Going along with unwanted sexual activity, *sexual compliance*, is defined as voluntary participation in sexual activity "despite a lack of sexual desire" (Katz & Tirone, 2010; Morgan et al., 2006). Additionally, the definition of sexual compliance includes the "absence of immediate partner pressure", such as physical or psychological coercion, and thus, differentiates sexual compliance from sexual assault (Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). However, sexual compliance may happen as a result of covert social coercion, an indirect form of coercion that stems from societal and cultural pressures to adhere to sex roles (Conroy et al., 2015).

Sexual compliance seems to be distinctive of committed long-term relationships. For instance, in their sample of U.S. young adults, Vannier and O'Sullivan (2010) found that 46% of participants in committed heterosexual relationships had consented to unwanted sexual activity in at least one occasion. Similar percentages have been found in other studies looking at young adults in committed heterosexual relationships (e.g., Katz & Tirone, 2009; 2010). On the contrary, Willis et al. (2020) found that in their U.S. sample of young adults, only 2.5% of the participants reported sexual compliance with their most recent, novel sexual partner. Moreover, in a study by Katz and Schneider (2015), only 10% of those who reported sexual compliance in a committed relationship reported sexual compliance also in a casual, non-committed relationship. Additionally, the motives or reasons why individuals consent to unwanted sexual activities seem to differ between committed and non-committed relationships. Alcohol intoxication was the most commonly reported reason for consenting to unwanted sexual activity in novel sexual relationships (Willis et al., 2020), whereas in committed relationships, the reasons were commonly related to endeavors of maintaining the relationship (e.g., avoiding an argument or wanting to fulfill a partner's sexual needs; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). Considering these findings, it is possible that consenting to unwanted sexual activity becomes especially relevant in the context of a committed relationship because of an effort to sustain the relationship. However, it is not clear that this effort unequivocally leads to favorable outcomes even if the relationship is sustained.

Sexual compliance may have adverse effects to the compliant individual's wellbeing. In a U.S. study, participants in committed relationships rated compliant sexual activity as more unexpected and less enjoyable compared to mutually desired sex (Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). Additionally, sexual compliance has been associated with higher cortisol levels (Hartmann & Crockett, 2016) which suggests that stress is somehow involved in instances of sexual compliance. This raises both the question why people voluntarily participate in unwanted sexual activity, and what consequences for the individual's personal wellbeing and the relationship such behavior might have. Following, I will discuss these questions in more detail.

### **Who Complies and Why?**

The pioneering studies on sexual compliance found that sexual compliance in heterosexual dating relationships is more common in women than in men (see O'Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998 and Sprecher et al., 1994). Since then, the majority of sexual compliance studies have focused on women and the endeavor to understand and explain women's sexual compliance (see e.g., Conroy et al., 2015; Darden et al., 2019; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). However, in their Canadian sample of 124 men, Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013) found that 89% had complied sexually (e.g., to kissing, dancing, or giving oral sex) at some point in their life, which is consistent with recent findings for women (Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). Although sexual compliance has not been studied in non-binary samples, sexually compliant behavior likely exists in other genders, too.

Demographic variables, such as age (see e.g., Kennett et al., 2009; Katz & Schneider, 2015; Katz & Tirone, 2010; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018) and relationship duration (Kennett et al., 2009, 2013; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018), seem to be unrelated to sexual compliance. However, all of the referenced samples have consisted of young college or university students and thus, the generalizability of these results is poor. This is also why the association between sexual compliance, and, for example, education level has not been considered. Thus, more versatile samples are needed to make more confident conclusions. Next, I will elaborate some of the concepts that might explain sexually compliant behavior.

### ***Sexual Compliance and Sexual Self-Control***

One aspect that has been studied in the context of sexual compliance is sexual self-control. For instance, Kennett et al. (2009) formed a model of sexual self-control in order to investigate an aspect of sexual decision-making processes that possibly explains sexual compliance. They depicted that *sexual resourcefulness*, that is, the

ability to deal with challenging sexual situations such as unwanted sexual advances requires the use of self-control strategies which are socially learned. These strategies include using instructive positive self-talk, communicating with one's partner when their sexual advance is unwanted, and planning how to deal with unwanted sexual advances. They based their theory on Rosenbaum's (1990, 2000) self-control model—the idea that people manage the demands and challenges of everyday life by self-regulating their behavior with psychosocial skills, that is, *general learned resourcefulness*. In their model, Kennett et al. (2009) concluded that general learned resourcefulness works as the basis for sexual resourcefulness. They added that *sexual self-efficacy* (i.e., one's belief of being able to turn down an unwanted sexual advance) and *reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activities*, among other process regulating cognitions, contribute to one's skills of sexual resourcefulness, and found that more sexually resourceful women were more sexually self-efficacious and had less reasons for consenting. Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013) showed that the model applies to men, too. Moreover, a lower level of sexual resourcefulness seems to predict higher sexual compliance in women (Kennett et al., 2009 and 2013; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). In the only study looking at sexual resourcefulness in men, lower sexual resourcefulness did not predict higher sexual compliance (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2013). Next, I will expand the meaning of the aforementioned concepts of process regulating cognitions to sexual self-control.

As sexual resourcefulness assesses the strategies individuals use in unwanted sexual situations, *sexual self-efficacy* reflects individuals' self-perception in those situations. Sexual self-efficacy refers to one's perception of being able to control sexual settings (Kennett et al., 2013). Lower sexual self-efficacy has been associated with higher sexual compliance in women (Kennett et al., 2013). Additionally, lower sexual self-efficacy has been associated with lower sexual resourcefulness in women (Humphreys & Kennett, 2010), indicating that those who are less confident of their ability to control unwanted sexual situations are less likely to use sexual self-regulating strategies in those situations. In the only study looking at sexual self-efficacy in men, sexual self-efficacy did not predict sexual compliance, but higher sexual self-efficacy was related to higher sexual resourcefulness (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2013).

*Reasons for consenting* include the motives an individual has for consenting to unwanted sexual activity (Kennett et al., 2009). More reasons for consenting has been associated with higher sexual compliance in women (Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018) and men (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2013). Additionally, in women, lower sexual resourcefulness

has been associated with more reasons for consenting and consequently, with more experiences of sexual compliance (Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). Interestingly, in men, more reasons for consenting has been associated with more experiences of sexual compliance despite the level of sexual resourcefulness (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2013). This result suggests that having many reasons for consenting makes the use of sexual self-control strategies irrelevant.

In summary, the consistent findings on the relationship of Kennett et al.'s (2009) model of sexual self-control and sexual compliance in women imply that the model is a relevant part of investigating sexual decision-making in unwanted sexual settings. However, as the model of sexual self-control can explain only a part of sexual compliance, other aspects are additionally needed in order to understand the phenomenon more fully.

### ***Covert Social Coercion***

Another aspect that has been investigated in the context of sexual compliance is covert social coercion. Conroy et al. (2015) denoted that covert social coercion, an indirect form of coercion, can affect the decision to consent to unwanted sexual activity especially in women. They questioned whether occasions of sexual compliance are always free of pressure or coercion although immediate partner pressure is not perceived. Covert social coercion leading to sexual compliance means that the woman complying experiences pressure to follow sex role obligations (Conroy et al., 2015). These obligations are a result of the surrounding social and cultural expectations and refer to, for example, women's experiences of being responsible to have sex with their partner to maintain the relationship. Conroy et al. (2015) argued that women are inclined to higher sexual compliance because of the cultural expectations of their sexual role. This argument is consistent with previous findings about the association of gender role endorsement and sexual compliance in women, that is, women who endorse more traditional gender roles are more likely to comply sexually (Katz & Tirone, 2009; Kennett et al., 2013). Although the effects of gender role endorsement have been investigated in the sexual compliance literature, the role of covert social coercion has not received much attention.

Conroy et al. (2015) suggested a feminist theoretical framework for investigating the role of social coercion in sexual compliance. This means that the context where sexual negotiations take place is recognized as a patriarchal culture, that is, a culture where gender socialization leads individuals to internalize specific social and societal expectations. The societal expectations and gender socialization imply



women to adopt a sexually passive role as well as value their sexual desires secondary to those of men (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008). Additionally, essential to the suggested feminist theory is the assumption that in a patriarchal culture, men hold more social power than women outside of as well as within intimate relationships (Smith et al., 2009). These assumptions together form the base for the power imbalance in sexual negotiations between women and men. In this setting, women are inclined to acquiesce to unwanted sex in order to give men what they want. Thus, one way of assessing covert social coercion would be to examine the potential power imbalance in the sexual context of a committed relationship, that is, *sexual relationship power*. Furthermore, sexual relationship power can be evaluated by measuring *partner relationship power* (i.e., respondents' perception of whether their partner has more power in the relationship) and *decision-making dominance* (i.e., respondents' perception of whether or not their partner dominates mutual decision-making). Higher reports of partner sexual relationship power (i.e., experiencing less social power in the committed relationship compared to the partner) associated with higher sexual compliance in women (Conroy et al., 2015).

In addition to the aforementioned concepts, the attempts to explain sexual compliance in women have looked at sexual assertiveness and sexual ambivalence (Darden et al., 2019), attachment style and commitment to the relationship (Impett & Peplau, 2002), gendered and neoliberal norms (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008), relationship satisfaction (Kennett et al., 2009), romantic well-being and endorsement of ideal womanhood (Katz & Tirone, 2009), and sexual scripts (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2018). These investigations have approached sexual compliance as a contradictory or adaptive behavior and have pursued to provide explanations to why women consent to sexual activity when they do not have sexual desire. On the other hand, some scholars (e.g., Impett et al., 2015) have framed sexual compliance as a prosocial behavior suggesting that this type of self-sacrifice may work for the good of the relationship. Through this framing Impett et al. (2015) have focused on investigating why individuals are motivated to provide each other with sexual benefits in committed relationships. Next, I will shortly discuss the potential personal and relationship-related consequences of sexual compliance.

### **Potential Consequences of Consenting to Unwanted Sexual Activity**

Previous literature suggests that sexual compliance might have both negative and positive consequences or outcomes for the individual as well as for the relationship. In an older study by O'Sullivan and Allgeier (1998), approximately a third of men and

women reported feeling, for example, “disappointed in oneself” or “uncomfortable about engaging in meaningless sex” as a consequence of sexual compliance. Hartmann and Crockett’s (2016) more recent finding that sexually compliant participants had higher cortisol levels compared to the non-compliant participants indicates that sexual compliance can lead to adverse consequences. Additionally, sexually submissive behavior, including sexual compliance, has been associated with lower sexual satisfaction when it conflicted personal desires (i.e., no interest in partner dominance; Sanchez et al., 2012). However, some scholars have argued that sexual compliance can serve the maintenance of a committed relationship by, for example, maintaining harmony (Vannier & O’Sullivan, 2010), and thus, suggest a beneficial impact on committed relationships.

Reported motives for sexual compliance can be indicators of the possible consequences or outcomes of sexual compliance. Adapting the idea of approach and avoidance motivational systems in sexuality (Impett et al., 2005), these motives or reasons can be divided into *approach* and *avoidance reasons*. In the context of committed relationships, approach reasons or motives include a focus on positive outcomes, such as enhanced intimacy in the relationship or a partner’s sexual satisfaction. In contrast, avoidance motives include an effort of avoiding a negative outcome, such as a partner’s loss of interest in the relationship, or one’s own feelings of guilt for not consenting to the unwanted sexual activity. Maintenance of the committed relationship is a common motivator for consenting to unwanted sexual activity (Darden et al., 2019) and both aspects, approach and avoidance reasons, reflect this effort. Approach motives for pursuing sex are generally associated with greater sexual satisfaction compared to avoidance motives (Muise et al., 2013). However, Katz and Tirone (2009) found that, in their sample of undergraduate women, approach motives for sexual compliance had no effect on relationship satisfaction, whereas avoidance motives (e.g., avoiding an argument) predicted decreased relationship satisfaction.

### **The Current Study**

As sexuality is a complex phenomenon, the investigation of sexual compliance requires taking various psychological as well as sociocultural aspects into account. The aspects I have chosen to explore in this study, sexual self-control and covert social coercion, reflect both the individual’s behavioral tendencies and self-perceptions in unwanted sexual contexts, and consider the social aspect of sexual behavior and decision-making. Examining sexual self-control with sexual compliance in itself suggests that sexual compliance is a behavior that needs controlling. Moreover,

exploring the possible contribution of covert social coercion to sexual compliance indicates that going along with unwanted sexual activity might not always be voluntary to begin with. Therefore, with the outline of this study I look at sexual compliance as a contradictory or conflicting behavior that some individuals have more (vs. less) skills to control, and that may be affected by gendered sociocultural pressures (i.e., covert social coercion). In order to investigate how sexual compliance combined with the motives for complying affect individual and relational wellbeing, possible consequences of sexual compliance are taken into account.

### **Aims and Hypotheses**

The aim of this study was to collect a demographically versatile Finnish sample in order to explore what sexual compliance looks like in different gender and socioeconomic groups. In addition to providing descriptive statistics on sexual compliance, I explored the following questions. First, I investigated whether Kennett et al.'s (2009) model of sexual self-control explains sexual compliance in a Finnish sample (Q1). Second, I examined if Finnish women are inclined to comply sexually because of unequal sexual relationship power (i.e., covert social coercion) (Q2). Third, I explored the possible consequences of sexual compliance and how the measures of sexual self-control and sexual relationship power relate to these consequences (Q3). The aim was to investigate these questions across different gender groups but eventually only women could be explored due to unevenness of different gender groups in the sample. Additionally, to explore the theoretical ground for hypothesis of Q2, the original aim was to compare women and men, that is, see if women would report higher (vs. lower) relationship power more often than men. However, due to small number of male respondents the comparison was omitted. This study was the first one to investigate sexual compliance in Finland.

Q1. Are components of the sexual self-control model (Kennett et al., 2009) associated with sexual compliance?

Hypotheses: Women who report (a) poorer (vs. better) sexual resourcefulness skills, (b) lower (vs. higher) sexual self-efficacy, and (c) more (vs. less) reasons for complying to unwanted sexual activity, report more sexual compliance.

Q2. Is sexual relationship power associated with sexual compliance?

Hypothesis: Women who report higher (vs. lower) partner relationship power and higher (vs. lower) partner decision-making dominance report higher sexual compliance.

Q3. Are there personal and relationship-related consequences of sexual compliance? Do the variables related to sexual compliance (sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, reasons for consenting, sexual relationship power) associate with potential negative consequences in women?

Hypotheses: (a) Women who report more (vs. less) approach motives for sexual compliance report less negative self-perceived personal and relationship-related consequences, (b) women who report more (vs. less) avoidance motives for sexual compliance report more negative consequences, (c) women with less (vs. more) sexual resourcefulness skills and (d) lower (vs. higher) sexual self-efficacy report more negative consequences, and (e) women who report higher (vs. lower) partner relationship power and (f) higher (vs. lower) partner decision-making dominance report more negative consequences.

## Methods

### Procedure

The survey was created with a secure online survey software, SurveyAnalytics. Participation invitations were sent to subscribers of a local university's e-mail list and advertised on two Finnish online forums, Suomi24.fi and vauva.fi. However, it is likely that most of the participants were recruited through social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram by sharing the participation invitation on personal accounts. It is likely that a majority of the participants found the invitation via a social media influencer's profile who advertised the online survey to her 170,000 followers on Instagram, since the respondent rate peaked after the post. Subsequently, another social media influencer shared the invitation to her 24,000 followers, which further added to the peak responses. A participation invitation was also shared in a Facebook group called Miestenhuone (Men's room) as an attempt to gain more male participants.

The participants were told that they are participating in a study regarding their sexual experiences in their current or most recent partnership as well as possible experiences of sexual compliance. Those who did not have experiences of sexual compliance were also welcomed to take part in the study. Sexual compliance was defined as "consenting to sexual activity (e.g., fondling or oral sex) despite a lack of sexual desire, and in the absence of immediate partner pressure, manipulation or

coercion”. Participants were asked to read and approve an electronic consent form as well as confirm they are at least 18 years old before being able to participate. The consent form included a short description of the study and informed the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point without questions or consequences. Participants were then showed another form which included a notice about possible emergence of difficult emotions when answering questions about past sexual experiences. This form included information about crisis help for mental health and victims of sexual abuse, and a reminder of the possibility to withdraw from the study at any point. Next, participants were asked to complete the demographic questions followed by the measures in the order I present them below. At the end of the survey, participants were thanked, and given the same information about crisis help that was presented prior to answering the survey.

### **Measures**

Participants were asked for demographic information: their age, occupation, highest education, monthly income, gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, and duration of their current or most recent intimate relationship. Additionally, participants answered the scales below, which were all translated into Finnish (see Appendix A for translated items). For the measures concerning relationship-aspects, the participants were asked to base their answers on their current or most recent relationship. In addition to the presented measures, the participants were asked two questions before the sexual resourcefulness inventory: “Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual advances?” and “Have you ever consented to unwanted sexual activity despite not being pressured, manipulated or coerced?”, and two questions before the sexual giving-in inventory: “Have you experienced unwanted sexual advances in your current or recent relationship?” and “Have you consented to unwanted sexual activity in your current/most recent relationship?”. Only individuals who had experiences of unwanted sexual advances and had complied to unwanted sexual activity in their current or most recent relationship answered the scales of sexual compliance, reasons for consenting, and potential consequences of sexual compliance.

#### ***Sexual Resourcefulness***

A 19-item self-report measure, the Sexual Resourcefulness Scale by Kennett and colleagues (2009) was used to assess sexual resourcefulness (see original items in Appendix B). The measure assesses the self-control strategies individuals use in order to handle unwanted sexual advances or activities. Participants were instructed to evaluate their behavior generally, also including situations outside of the current or most recent

relationship by rating 19 statements on a 6-point Likert scale (1 “very uncharacteristic of me”, 6 “very characteristic of me”). Hence, possible scores could range from 19 to 114, with lower scores demonstrating less frequent use of sexual self-control behaviors, that is, lower sexual resourcefulness. Kennett and partners (2009) reported an average score of 80.51 ( $SD = 18.86$ ) together with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .91 in their sample of undergraduate women. Quinn-Nilas and partners (2013) reported a mean score of 73.84 ( $SD = 17.02$ ) and a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .89 in their sample of undergraduate men.

### ***Sexual Self-Efficacy***

Heimonen (2015) translated and slightly modified the 5-item self-report measure the Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale (SSES; Kennett et al., 2009) (see original items in Appendix 2). This scale was used to evaluate participants’ belief in their ability to handle or prevent unwanted sexual advances, that is, sexual self-efficacy. Heimonen (2015) changed the original 9-point Likert scale to a 5-point scale. To make the scale shorter, they modified statement 1 “I feel confident in my strategies for dealing with unwanted sexual advances/activity that I am uncomfortable with”, and in order to differentiate statements 2 and 4 better, statement 4 “I have no control when unwanted sexual advances are made towards me” was modified. See modified versions in Appendix A. Responses to the statements ranged from 1 “not at all like me” to 5 “very much like me”. Possible scores could range from 0 to 40, with higher scores representing participants’ greater belief in being in control in sexual situations, that is, higher sexual self-efficacy. Kennett and partners (2009) reported an average score of 25.75 ( $SD = 7.71$ ) with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .78 in their sample of undergraduate women. Quinn-Nilas and partners (2013) reported a mean score of 26.76 ( $SD = 8.32$ ) and a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .80 in their sample of undergraduate men.

### ***Sexual Relationship Power***

Sexual relationship power was used as a proxy measure for covert social coercion. Sexual relationship power was assessed using five items from two subscales from Pulerwitz and partners’ (2000) Sexual Relationship Power Scale, as was done in Conroy et al. (2015). The first subscale, the Relationship Power Subscale, assessed to what extent the respondent feels able to have control in the committed relationship by asking them to rate five statements. The statements were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 4 “strongly agree”. The second subscale, the Decision-Making Dominance Subscale, assessed how power is divided in the committed relationship regarding common decisions. Pulerwitz and colleagues’ (2000) original questions were modified into five statements. Participants were asked to rate, whether

the statements are true (2) or false (1). Higher scores on both scales reflect higher partner sexual relationship power, indicating that the participant experiences having less authority than their partner in the sexual relationship.

### ***Sexual Compliance***

Sexual compliance was assessed with a 5-item self-report scale by Conroy and colleagues (2015), the Sexual Giving-in Experiences Scale. The scale measures the percentage of times in which the participant generally complies to unwanted sexual activities in their relationship. Sexual activities in this scale included genital stimulation by hand, oral sex, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse. In the present study, the participant was also given the opportunity to rate how often they comply with some other sexual activity. Participants were asked to rate how often they complied to each of the sexual activities on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “never / 0% of the time” to 4 “every time / 100% of the time”. Conroy and partners (2015) reported that, on average, women complied to the different activities 25% of the time in their sample of 189 undergraduate women.

### ***Reasons for Sexual Compliance***

To assess participants’ motives for sexual compliance, the 18-item scale Reasons for Consenting to Unwanted Sexual Advances Inventory by Kennett et al. (2009; see Millhausen et al., 2019 for the items) was used together with six items from the Sex Motives Measure (Cooper et al., 1998) to increase the items assessing approach-related motives. These six items were modified to fit the language of the Reasons for Consenting Scale. Eight of the 24 statements were considered to reflect approach motives and other eight statements were considered to reflect avoidance motives (see Appendix B for details). The rest of the statements did not fall into either of these categories. Responses to the 24 statements were provided on a 10-point Likert scale, as suggested by Kennett et al. (2013), ranging from 1 “not at all characteristic of me” to 10 “very characteristic of me”. Possible scores ranged from 24 to 240, with higher scores indicating more reasons for sexual compliance.

### ***Potential Consequences of Sexual Compliance***

The possible consequences of sexual compliance were assessed by using a 7-item self-constructed measure, the Consequences of Sexual Compliance Scale (see Appendices A and B). Participants were asked to evaluate potential consequences of sexual compliance with regards to the following aspects: mood, self-esteem, relationship satisfaction, intimacy in the relationship, trust in the relationship, feelings of love or attachment, and sexual satisfaction. The questions were rated on a 7-point

Likert scale ranging from 1 “affected very negatively” to 4 “not affected” to 7 “affected very positively”. That is, scores 1 – 3 reflected a negative effect and scores 5 – 7 reflected a positive effect. Sum scores of all of the items ranged from 7 to 49. A higher sum score indicated more perceived positive personal and relationship-related consequences, and lower scores indicated more perceived negative personal and relationship-related consequences. The scale had an optional exploratory item where the participant could define an experienced consequence and rate it. This was not included in the analyses but was used to screen if there were any areas that the scale did not take into account.

### Participant Selection Criteria

The inclusion criterion for the study was a current or recent (ended within 12 months) intimate relationship that had lasted for at least two months. In total, 1,638 participants started filling out the survey. However, only those who finished answering the sexual resourcefulness and the sexual self-efficacy measures ( $N = 1,496$  respondents) were included in the full sample. The whole questionnaire was finished by 918 respondents (see detailed response rates in Table 1). Experience of sexual compliance in the current or recent committed relationship was required for answering the measures for sexual compliance, reasons for consenting and consequences of sexual compliance. Consequently, the respondent rate dropped for these scales. Other changes in respondent rates are due to dropouts ( $n = 81$ ; 5.4%). All the valid data were included in the analyses.

**Table 1**

#### *Response Rates for Each Scale Included in the Questionnaire*

Scale	<i>n</i>	% (of <i>N</i> )
Sexual resourcefulness	1,496	100.0
Sexual self-efficacy	1,496	100.0
Relationship power	1,452	97.1
Decision-making dominance	1,452	97.1
Sexual compliance	954	63.8
Reasons for consenting	939	62.8
Consequences of sexual compliance	918	61.4
Full sample, <i>N</i>	1,496	

*Note.* The difference between decision-making dominance and sexual compliance is mostly due to survey termination logic (i.e., requiring experiences of sexual compliance in the current or most recent relationship;  $n = 497$ ; 33.2% terminated). Other changes in response rates are due to dropouts ( $n = 81$ ; 5.4%).



## Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). To prepare the data for the analyses, participants who identified as other than woman or man were coded into one group, reverse items were recoded, and sum scores were created for all study measures. Additionally, sum scores for approach reasons for consenting and avoidance reasons for consenting were created by selecting the corresponding items from the reasons for consenting measure (see Appendix B for details). As women constituted the majority of the full sample, only women were included in the analysis. Normal distribution was determined by observing Shapiro-Wilk test results. Bivariate correlations were conducted between demographic variables and study measures to investigate if age, occupation, education, income level or relationship duration are related to sexual compliance. Additionally, the associations between relationship status and sexual compliance, and sexual orientation and sexual compliance were investigated with one-way ANOVAs. The analysis for relationship status included only those participants who reported being currently in a relationship. Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc tests were used to specify the significant differences. To explore the hypotheses for Q1, Q2 and Q3, first, bivariate correlations were conducted for the sum scores of the scales. Second, when the correlations were significant, standard multiple regressions were performed. Before conducting the standard multiple regressions, variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance value were observed to make sure that there was no multicollinearity. Histograms and P-P plots of residuals were visually reviewed to make sure the normality of residuals assumption was supported. Missing cases were excluded pairwise. For testing Q1(a), (b) and (c), a standard multiple regression was conducted on sexual compliance (dependent) with the following independent variables: sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, and reasons for consenting. For testing the hypothesis of Q2, a standard multiple regression was conducted on sexual compliance (dependent) with the following independent variables: relationship power and decision-making dominance. For testing the hypotheses of Q3, a standard multiple regression was performed on consequences of sexual compliance (dependent) with the following independent variables: approach reasons for consenting, avoidance reasons for consenting, sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, relationship power and decision-making dominance. Although the size of the other gender categories (others and men) was small, initial bivariate correlations between study measures were conducted to these groups as an explorative endeavor.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

See detailed participant demographics in Table 2. The data consisted of 1,496 participants of which the majority (93.2%) identified as woman. Most of the women identified as either heterosexual (64.3%) or bisexual (24.5%). The participants' age ranged between 18 and 73 years ( $M = 26.0$ ). A majority of the participants (68.5%) reported being currently either in a committed relationship or in a domestic partnership. Of those who were in a relationship at the time of the study, the mean duration of the relationship was 4.9 years ( $SD = 5.2$ ). For those who were not currently in a relationship, the mean duration of their most recent relationship was 1.8 years ( $SD = 1.8$ ).

### Sexual Compliance

Of the full sample, 1,386 participants (92.6%) had consented to unwanted sexual activity at least once at some point in their life. Frequencies for different gender categories are presented in Table 3.

**Table 2*****Participant Demographics***

Baseline characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18 – 25	937	57.3
26 – 33	531	32.5
34 – 41	114	7.0
42 – 51	36	2.2
52 – 73	17	1.1
Gender		
Women	1,394	93.2
Men	51	3.4
Other (e.g., non-binary, transgender, gender non-conforming)	51	3.4
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	945	63.2
Bisexual	356	23.8
Pansexual	106	7.1
Lesbian/homosexual	32	2.1
Other	37	2.5
Asexual	20	1.3
Relationship status		
Committed relationship	565	37.8
Domestic partnership	459	30.7
Married	204	13.6
Single	172	11.5
Casual relationship	61	4.1
Non-monogamic relationship	33	2.2
Other	2	0.1
Occupation		
Student	649	43.4
Working	652	43.6
Unemployed	113	7.6
Other	63	4.2
Retired	19	1.3
Highest educational level		
Secondary school	755	50.5
Bachelor's degree	470	31.4
Master's degree	178	11.9
Comprehensive school	80	5.3
Institute degree	12	0.8
No education / other education	1	0.1
Monthly income (in euros)		
< 500	348	23.3
500 – 999	382	25.5
1,000 – 1,999	281	18.8
2,000 – 2,999	313	20.9
3,000 – 3,999	123	8.2
4,000 – 5,999	38	2.5
> 5,999	11	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,496</b>	

**Table 3*****Sexual Compliance Throughout Life in Different Gender Categories***

	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Sexual compliance throughout life				
Women	1,307	94.0	83	6.0
Men	31	60.8	20	39.2
Other	45	88.2	6	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>7.3</b>

*Note.* Sexual compliance was assessed with the following question: “Have you ever consented to unwanted sexual activity despite not being pressured, manipulated or coerced?”.

Of the full sample, 958 participants (64.0%) had consented to unwanted sexual activity in their current or most recent relationship. Of these participants, 64.9% women, 37.3% men and 66.7% in the other category had complied to sexual activity in their current or most recent relationship. The mean of overall of sexual compliance ( $M = 2.0$ ) for these participants reflected that they complied to all sexual activity approximately 25% of the time, and this was also true when only women were observed (see frequencies for specific sexual activities in Table 4). Women complied to manual genital stimulation, oral sex, vaginal intercourse/other penetrative activity, and other sexual activity approximately 25% of the time ( $M = 2.4$ ;  $M = 2.1$ ;  $M = 2.3$ ;  $M = 2.0$ , respectively). Most women (82.7%) reported that they never complied to anal intercourse/other penetrative activity ( $M = 1.3$ ).

See Table 5 in Appendix C for one-way ANOVA test results for differences of sexual compliance between different demographic groups for women. Post hoc Tukey test showed that those who were currently in a casual relationship ( $M = 2.3$ ) differed significantly in the frequency of sexual compliance from those who were married ( $M = 1.9$ ,  $p = .002$ ), in a committed ( $M = 2.0$ ,  $p = .018$ ), non-monogamic ( $M = 1.8$ ,  $p = .38$ ) or domestic relationship ( $M = 2.0$ ,  $p = .015$ ). There was no significant difference between the different categories of sexual orientation in the frequency of sexual compliance.

Of the demographic variables, age, level of education, and current relationship duration were associated with sexual compliance in women ( $r = -.131$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $r = -.082$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $r = -.075$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively) indicating that women with higher education, higher age, and longer current relationship were less sexually compliant. This opposes the findings of previous studies (e.g., Kennett et al., 2009, 2013; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). See the full presentation of correlations between demographic variables and the study measures for women in Table 6 in Appendix C.

**Table 4*****Frequencies of Sexual Compliance in Different Gender Categories***

	never		25% of times		50% of times		100% of times	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Genital stimulation								
Women	120	12.2	483	49.0	295	29.9	88	8.9
Men	3	13.6	11	50.0	5	22.7	3	13.6
Other	3	8.3	15	41.7	11	30.6	7	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Oral sex								
Women	291	29.5	394	40.0	212	21.5	89	9.0
Men	8	36.4	9	40.9	3	13.6	2	9.1
Other	6	16.7	15	41.7	8	22.2	7	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Vaginal intercourse / other penetrative activity								
Women	158	16.0	472	47.9	270	27.4	85	8.6
Men	6	27.3	9	40.9	4	18.2	3	13.6
Other	9	25.0	14	38.9	7	19.4	6	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Anal intercourse / other penetrative activity								
Women	815	82.7	104	10.6	34	3.5	32	3.2
Men	18	81.8	2	9.1	0	0.0	2	9.1
Other	32	88.8	1	2.8	3	8.3	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Other sexual activity								
Women	289	29.4	465	47.3	179	18.2	50	5.1
Men	3	13.6	10	45.5	6	27.3	3	13.6
Other	11	30.6	14	38.9	7	19.4	4	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>5.5</b>

***Sexual Compliance and Sexual Self-Control***

Sexual resourcefulness ( $r = -.40, p < .01$ ), sexual self-efficacy ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ), and reasons for consenting ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ) correlated significantly with sexual compliance in women, supporting the hypotheses for Q1. Women who had poorer sexual resourcefulness skills, lower sexual self-efficacy, and more reasons for consenting were more likely to report more frequent sexual compliance. See Table 7 in Appendix C for full presentation of bivariate correlations for different genders between the study scales.

***Social Covert Coercion and Sexual Compliance***

In women, relationship power and decision-making dominance was significantly associated with sexual compliance ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ;  $r = .36, p < .01$ , respectively). This result supported the hypothesis for Q2. Women who reported higher partner relationship power and higher partner decision-making dominance, and thus, more covert social coercion, were more likely to report higher sexual compliance. For full presentation of correlations and mean values, see Table 7 in Appendix C.

***Predicting Sexual Compliance***

See Tables 8 and 9 for multiple regression results. The shared contribution of sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, and reasons for consenting accounted for 23.5% of the variance of sexual compliance in women. The independent variables accounted for 3%, 1%, and 5% of the unique variance, respectively, in sexual compliance. That is, those who had poorer sexual resourcefulness skills, lower sexual self-efficacy, and more reasons for consenting were more likely to consent to unwanted sexual activities, supporting Q1(a), (b), and (c).

**Table 8**

***Multiple Regression Results for Variables Predicting Sexual Compliance in Women***

Variable	Sexual compliance	$\beta$	Semi-partial $r$	$sr^2$ (unique)	Tolerance	VIF <sup>a</sup>
Sexual resourcefulness	-.40	-.22	-.18	.03***	.69	1.45
Sexual self-efficacy	-.24	-.10	-.09	.01**	.89	1.12
Reasons for consenting	.43	.30	.24	.05***	.69	1.46
						R <sup>2</sup> = .238
						R <sup>2a</sup> = .235
						R = .488

*Note.* Sexual compliance ( $n = 901$ , higher scores represent more experience of sexual compliance in a current or recent relationship), Sexual resourcefulness ( $n = 1,394$ , lower scores represent poorer sexual resourcefulness skills), Sexual self-efficacy ( $n = 1,394$ , lower scores represent lower perceived ability of being in control of sexual situations), Reasons for consenting ( $n = 888$ , higher scores represent more reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity).

R values are presented for the whole model.

<sup>a</sup> VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

R<sup>2a</sup> = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p = .002$

The role of covert social coercion in predicting sexual compliance was also explored in women. The shared variance of relationship power and decision-making dominance accounted for 18.1% of the variance of sexual compliance. The independent variables accounted for 5% and 1% of the unique variance, respectively, in sexual compliance. Higher partner relationship power and decision-making dominance predicted higher sexual compliance in women supporting the hypothesis for Q2.

**Table 9**

***Multiple Regression Results for Variables Predicting Sexual Compliance in Women***

Variable	Sexual compliance	$\beta$	Semi-partial $r$	$sr^2$ (unique)	Tolerance	VIF <sup>a</sup>
Relationship power	.41	.309	.223	.05***	.519	1.925
Decision-making dominance	.36	.150	.108	.01***	.519	1.925
						$R^2 = .182$
						$R^{2a} = .181$
						$R = .427$

*Note.* Sexual compliance ( $n = 901$ , higher scores represent more experience of sexual compliance in a current or recent relationship), Relationship power ( $n = 1,352$ , higher scores represent higher *partner* relationship power), Decision-making dominance ( $n = 1,352$ , higher scores represent higher *partner* decision-making dominance).

R values are presented for the whole model.

<sup>a</sup> VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

$R^{2a}$  = Adjusted  $R^2$

\*\*\* $p < .001$

### **Possible Consequences of Sexual Compliance**

Table 10 displays frequencies for reported negative/neutral/positive consequences in women. Negative effects of sexual compliance were reported most frequently for mood, self-esteem, relationship satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction. Positive effects were reported most frequently for intimacy in the relationship and feelings of love or attachment.

According to expectations of Q3(a), women who reported more approach motives were more likely to report less negative consequences ( $r = .10, p < .01$ ). Supporting Q3(b), women who reported more avoidance motives were more likely to report negative consequences of sexual compliance ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ ). When bivariate correlations between other study measures were observed, Q3(c), (d), (e), and (f) were also supported in women. Lower sexual resourcefulness ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), lower sexual self-efficacy ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), higher partner relationship power ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ) and higher partner decision-making dominance ( $r = -.23, p < .01$ ) associated with more



reported negative consequences. See Table 5 in Appendix C for full presentation of the bivariate correlations and mean values.

See Table 11 for multiple regression results predicting consequences of sexual compliance in women. The full model for testing Q3 hypothesis accounted for 23.2% of the variance of consequences of sexual compliance in women. More approach reasons predicted less perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance, further confirming the expectation of Q3(a). More avoidance reasons, lower sexual resourcefulness, lower sexual self-efficacy, and higher partner relationship power predicted more perceived negative consequences and thus, hypotheses b), c), d), and e) were further supported. The independent factors accounted for 11.2% (approach reasons), 5.7% (avoidance reasons), 0.7% (sexual resourcefulness), 1.7% (sexual self-efficacy), and 0.6% (relationship power) of the unique variance in consequences of sexual compliance. Decision-making dominance was not uniquely predicting consequences of sexual compliance ( $p = .186$ ). The shared contribution of all independent variables accounted for an additional 3.3% of the variance, suggesting a moderating effect of decision-making dominance on consequences of sexual compliance.

**Table 10*****Perceived Consequences of Sexual Compliance in Women***

Aspect	Negative effect		No effect		Positive effect		<i>M</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Mood	550	63.4	178	18.9	173	17.7	3.3
Self-esteem	383	44.2	289	33.3	195	22.5	3.7
Relationship satisfaction	461	53.1	158	18.2	248	28.6	3.6
Intimacy	281	32.4	167	19.3	419	48.3	4.2
Trust	323	37.2	358	41.3	186	21.5	3.7
Love / attachment	260	30.0	278	32.1	329	37.9	4.1
Sexual satisfaction	491	56.6	119	13.7	257	29.6	3.4

*Note.* *n* = 867, Negative effect: All participants who answered 1 – 3, No effect: All participants who answered 4, Positive effect: All participants who answered 5 – 7.

**Table 11*****Multiple Regression of Measures Predicting Consequences of Sexual Compliance in Women***

Variable	Consequences of sexual compliance	$\beta$	Semi-partial $r$	$sr^2$ (unique)	Tolerance	VIF <sup>a</sup>
Sexual resourcefulness	.257	.109	.086	.007**	.63	1.58
Sexual self-efficacy	.264	.141	.131	.017***	.86	1.16
Relationship power	-.242	-.110	-.076	.006**	.47	2.13
Decision-making dominance	-.227	-.056	-.039	ns	.50	1.99
Avoidance reasons	-.250	-.354	-.239	.057***	.46	2.19
Approach reasons	.103	.435	.335	.112***	.59	1.68
<i>M (SD)</i>	27.30					
						$R^2 = .238$
						$R^{2a} = .232$
						$R = .488$

Note. Consequences of sexual compliance (n = 867, lower scores represent more perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance), Sexual resourcefulness (n = 1394, lower scores represent poorer sexual resourcefulness skills), Sexual self-efficacy (n = 1394, lower scores represent lower perceived ability of being in control of sexual situations), Relationship power (n = 1,352, higher scores represent higher partner relationship power), Decision-making dominance (n = 1,352, higher scores represent higher partner decision-making dominance), Avoidance reasons for consenting (n = 888, higher scores represent more avoidance reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity), Approach reasons for consenting (n = 888, higher scores represent more approach reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity).

R values are presented for the whole model.

a VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

$R^{2a}$  = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed.

## Discussion

This study aimed to explore sexual compliance in Finland in a demographically diverse sample. The first purpose of this investigation was to find out whether Kennett et al.'s (2009) model of sexual self-control associates with sexual compliance in a Finnish sample. The second aim was to investigate if covert social coercion is associated with sexual compliance. The third aim was to explore if sexual compliance has some adverse outcomes or beneficial consequences to the individual and the relationship, and how the variables of the aforementioned concepts relate to these possible consequences of sexual compliance. The original aim of examining the research questions across all genders was not accomplished because most of the participants identified as women and the size of other gender samples was small. To my knowledge, this study was the first one to explore sexual compliance in Northern Europe, as well as to include a third gender category in the sample. Additionally, this sample included participants with versatile sexual orientations and education backgrounds, and the age range of participants was broader compared to the samples in previous literature. Nevertheless, the sample was asymmetrical regarding all the demographic variables, particularly participant age, gender, education level and sexual orientation. Additionally, as most of the participants probably found the study through two social media influencer's posts, the generalizability of the study results is limited.

### Sexual Compliance in Finland

In this sample, more than 90% of the female participants had complied sexually at least once in their life. Moreover, most of these participants had consented to unwanted sexual activity in their current or most recent committed relationship. The questions about sexual compliance throughout life and in a current or most recent relationship did not specify which sexual activities the respondents had complied to. The frequencies found in this study are consistent with previous results (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2013 and Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018), and due to question formation, should be compared only with findings that have defined sexual activity broadly. Contradicting previous literature (e.g., Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018), higher age and current relationship duration associated with lower sexual compliance in women. This difference might be due to the broader age range, and thus, longer relationships, in the current study compared to previous research. Additionally, higher education level was related to lower sexual compliance, and this study was the first one to investigate the association. Noteworthy is that a higher education level also associated with lower

covert social coercion and less reasons for consenting in women. As a higher education level generally refers to a wealthier socioeconomic status, this may indicate that those with more institutional education possess social capital that helps them to deal with unwanted sexual advances. However, more analyses are needed in order to specify the role of education level in sexual compliance.

In summary, based on these findings, sexual compliance is as common in Finnish women as it seems to be in the other countries where the phenomenon has been assessed (U.S. and Canada). Additionally, it is possible that sexual compliance is highlighted in specific socioeconomic groups. As this is a new finding in the literature of sexual compliance, the aspect deserves further attention.

### **The Role of Sexual Self-Control in Sexual Compliance**

The sexual self-control model by Kennett et al. (2009) was supported in this study, as sexual resourcefulness, sexual self-efficacy, and reasons for consenting explained almost one quarter of the variance of sexual compliance in women. Because the data of this study were cross-sectional, these results do not assure causality – that is, that having poor sexual resourcefulness skills, low sexual self-efficacy, or many reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity would lead to sexual compliance. Nevertheless, the result is in line with some of the previous literature (Kennett et al., 2009; 2013) with the exception that recently, reasons for consenting was found to explain as much as 12% of the variance of sexual compliance (Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018). In the current study, reasons for consenting explained only 5% of the variance. The explanatory power of the full model was modest, and, as Quinn-Nilas and Kennett (2018) indicated, the relationship between a woman's ability to refuse an unwanted sexual advance and the decision to do so is probably more complex than the model assumes. For example, the extent of commitment in the relationship might be a significant element in the process of sexual decision-making. In the current study, those who reported being in a casual relationship reported more sexual compliance compared to those reporting more committed forms of relationships. Although this finding somewhat opposes previous literature (e.g., Kennett et al., 2009, 2013; Quinn-Nilas & Kennett, 2018), it is possible that, regardless of one's sexual resourcefulness skills, casual relationships place individuals in a position where pleasing the partner (e.g., by complying to unwanted sexual activity) is believed to be essential for the relationship to continue if continuity is regarded as crucial. On the contrary, marriage and other more committed forms of relationships might provide a setting where saying no to sex is not perceived as detrimental for the continuity of the relationship, and thus, skills of sexual

resourcefulness become more valid. As this result opposes previous literature, more research is needed to make further conclusions.

### **The Role of Social Covert Coercion in Sexual Compliance**

Covert social coercion, as it was framed for this study, was found to explain close to a fifth of the variance of sexual compliance in women. That is, greater partner sexual relationship power predicted higher sexual compliance in women. As Conroy et al. (2015) denoted, this result questions the assumption that consent is given in the absence of pressure in occasions of sexual compliance. Thus, the sociocultural context and its effects on gender socialization as well as power dynamics in intimate relationships should be considered also in future research.

An important note is that the concept of covert social coercion and its relationship to sexual compliance refers to a coercive experience instead of a willing one, and thus, further conclusions should be made with caution. For example, As Bay-Cheng (2019) remarked, consenting to unwanted sex even in a socially coercive context can be a manifestation of (young) women's sexual agency as sexuality can be used to achieve important goals, such as physical safety. Though, this is not to say that having agency removes struggling or suffering whilst using it. In fact, in the present study, experiencing more covert social coercion (i.e., reporting higher partner relationship power and higher partner decision-making dominance) was associated with more reported negative consequences of sexual compliance in the correlation analyses. However, the contribution of the covert social coercion measures to explaining consequences of sexual compliance in the multiple regression analysis was minimal at most, as only the measure of relationship power explained 0,6% of the variance of the consequences. Furthermore, as the data were cross-sectional, further conclusions cannot be made.

### **Consequences of Sexual Compliance**

The variables of sexual self-control and covert social coercion related to the investigated consequences of sexual compliance as I expected. Opposing previous literature (Katz & Tirone, 2009), more approach reasons for sexual compliance predicted less reported negative consequences. In line with previous research (Katz & Tirone, 2009), more avoidance reasons predicted more reported negative consequences. Again, as the data of the current study were cross-sectional, the findings do not assure causality. The most commonly reported positive (intimacy in the relationship and feelings of love or attachment) and negative (mood, self-esteem, relationship satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction) consequences in the current study are consistent

with previous literature (Impett et al., 2010; Katz & Tirone, 2009; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). As Impett et al. (2015) noticed, experienced consequences of partnered sexual activity may change on a daily basis, and thus, it is possible that the same activity induces negative as well as positive consequences. Daily diary studies on consequences of sexual compliance as well as qualitative research could provide a more nuanced view on the subject.

An important notice is that the last exploratory item of the consequences of sexual compliance measure revealed that some individuals experienced detrimental consequences of sexual compliance for mental health. A few participants reported being retraumatized or having trauma flashbacks in instances of sexual compliance because of past experiences of sexual assault. Additionally, some participants reported being (more) anxious or depressed because of their sexual compliance. More commonly reported negative consequences in this item were lowered self-worth or self-respect, lost sense of boundaries, decreased sexual interest, feelings of bitterness towards the partner, lowered sense of safety, and feelings of guilt for not wanting to have sex. On the other hand, some participants reported finding joy and enjoyment in sexual interactions even though they did not "feel like it" in the first place. These results indicate that sexual compliance is a phenomenon that produces severe consequences for the psychological wellbeing of individuals. Thus, institutional sex education should take the phenomenon into account and pursue to inform and educate young people to become more aware of how sexual experiences can affect mental health as well as how mental health problems might affect sexual decision-making. Obviously, this is only one possible suggestion for trying to diminish the negative consequences of sexual compliance, and the solution likely requires more complex actions and changes on systemic, communal, and individual levels.

### **Study Limitations**

The sample of this study is likely biased since the respondent rate peaked after two social media influencers shared the participant invitation on their Instagram accounts. Presumably, the followers of these influencers share some common qualities such as an interest in sexuality and relationship-related topics as well as an interest in feminism. Additionally, as this study was voluntary, those who completed the survey may have been more open to or interested in the study's topic. Thus, the generalizability to other populations is limited.

As most men responded the survey after the invitation was shared in a Facebook group for men with 38,000 members, the men in this study might represent a group with

some specific attributes. The full sample included only 51 male participants, and thus, conclusions about sexual compliance in men have poor generalizability. It is unclear why such a low rate of men responded to the survey. One possible explanation is that the study invitation was not clear enough about the inclusion criteria; that also those who do not have experiences of sexual compliance could respond. This would additionally mean that men who do not have experiences of sexual compliance did not take part in the study, and thus, would further limit the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation is that the results of this study were obtained with self-report measures. Although the online survey assured anonymity to the respondents, anonymous responding does not guarantee that the participants give or have a realistic answer of their behavior. Thus, the problems of self-reporting and online questionnaires cannot be completely eliminated. Additionally, the results from the consequences of sexual compliance measure might be unreliable since it might be difficult to report consequences retrospectively. Hence, daily diary studies are needed.

The measure of consequences of sexual compliance was a self-constructed measure. Although the selected items were based on previous suggestions in the literature of sexual compliance, all possible or even relevant consequences might not have been listed.

### **Future Research**

Future research should consider the conceptualization of sexual compliance in more detail. For example, Kennett and partners (2009) noted that heterosexual encounters often include verbal and non-verbal persuasion. If one of the partners experiences the sexual advance unwanted, persuasion from the other likely creates pressure to comply with the activity. Additionally, the role of covert social coercion in sexual compliance together with possible past experiences of sexual victimization as well as past pressuring behavior from the partner should be considered. As Vannier & O'Sullivan (2010) noted, sexual compliance in a context of past pressuring experiences with the current partner might be distinct from sexual compliance in a relationship that does not have a history of pressuring. The question that yet deserves further exploration is: is consent always given in the absence of pressure although immediate partner pressure is not perceived? One suggestion would be to give an even more detailed description of sexual compliance and write out what "in the absence of immediate partner pressure" means. Possibly future research could also distinguish between sexual compliance in relationships with past experiences of partner pressure and relationships that do not have this type of history.



Moreover, it is possible that two other distinct phenomena exist within sexual compliance: 1) consenting to unwanted sexual advance when one does not want to and this experience of unwanted sex continues until the sexual activity stops and 2) consenting to unwanted sexual activity when one does not “feel like it” but might “get in the mood” at some point of the activity. As this study showed that those with more approach reasons for sexual compliance were inclined to experience less negative consequences, I carefully suggest that having approach reasons for sexual compliance makes it more likely for an initially unwanted activity to become wanted. This view might be in line with what Impett et al. (2018) have presented, that people in committed relationships approach discrepant sexual encounters with sexual communal motivation or with unmitigated sexual communion. Sexual communal motivation refers to situations where one estimates that the costs of giving in to a partner’s sexual want are reasonable for the self and unmitigated sexual communion refers to a more unhealthy, inflexible way of seeing the partner’s sexual needs superior to one’s own. Impett et al. (2018) found in their investigation that higher sexual communal motivation was associated with more satisfaction in a romantic relationship. As they expected, unmitigated sexual communion was associated with less enjoyment of sexual experiences. Interestingly, and relating to my previous suggestion, this result was also related to more focus on negative aspects of the sexual encounter. Additionally, it is possible that previously mentioned past sexual victimization might explain the difference between the two experiences of sexual compliance that I suggested above. To move from speculations to quantitative study designs, qualitative studies might provide a fruitful way of exploring novel aspects as well as deepening the understanding of different experiences of sexual compliance. Future research should take into account, for example, if occasions of sexual compliance bring pleasure or enjoyment to the person that complies. This type of investigation could also explore the question of what precisely is unwanted. If an individual has reasons to comply to unwanted sex, is it possible that some aspect of the activity or its outcome is actually wanted? Moreover, daily diary studies could look into what Impett et al. (2018) explored, that how the individuals’ quality of motivation relates to what one experiences after an occasion of sexual compliance. Additionally, as Impett et al. (2018) did, the experience of the partner who “receives” what the compliant partner “gives”, should be taken into account as that experience likely also affects the relationship.

## **Conclusions**

Sexual compliance is a common phenomenon in Finnish committed relationships. Although Kennett et al.'s (2009) model of sexual self-control explained close to one fourth of the variance of sexual compliance in women, it is clear that the model of sexual self-control, at least to the extent I examined it in the current study, is not sufficient in explaining sexual compliance. The present study also showed that experiencing covert social coercion might make women more inclined to comply sexually. However, more studies are needed in order to draw strong conclusions about the role of covert social coercion for sexual compliance, and other aspects of covert social coercion should be explored to make further conclusions. Finally, sexual compliance seems to have negative as well as positive consequences. The severe negative consequences of sexual compliance found in the current study imply that the phenomenon deserves further attention in research as well as in sex education.

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17. Kun kohtaan ei-toivotun seksuaalisen aloitteen/tilanteen, päätän siihen osallistumisesta sen hetkisen kiihottuneisuuden tasoni perusteella. Toimin näin, vaikka tietäisin, että tulisin katumaan päätöstäni myöhemmin.
18. Kun osallistun ei-toivottuun seksuaaliseen toimintaan, pyrin harhauttamaan ajatukseni pois siitä, kuinka epämukavalta minusta tuntuu.
19. Suunnittelen etukäteen, kuinka pitkälle haluan edetä kussakin seksuaalisessa toiminnassa ja pysäytän tilanteen ennen kuin se etenee liian pitkälle.

## Sexual self-efficacy

- ✕ Arvioi asteikolla 1–5 (1 = täysin eri mieltä, 5 = täysin samaa mieltä), kuinka hyvin seuraavat väittämät kuvaavat sinua.

	Täysin eri mieltä			Täysin samaa mieltä	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Uskon, että voin torjua ei-toivotut seksuaaliset lähestymisyrietykset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Voin toimia haluamallani tavalla, mikäli joku lähestyy minua seksuaalisesti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Koen oloni turvalliseksi kieltäytyessäni ei-toivotuista seksuaalisista lähestymisyrietyksistä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Voin kontrolloida tilanteita, joissa joku lähestyy minua ei-toivotulla tavalla seksuaalisesti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Minun on vaikea kieltäytyä ei-toivotuista seksuaalisista lähestymisyrietyksistä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Relationship power

- ✕ Mikäli olet tällä hetkellä kumppanuus-/parisuhteessa, vastaa seuraaviin väittämiin tämänhetkisen suhteesi perusteella. Mikäli et ole suhteessa, vastaa viimeisimmän suhteesi perusteella.

Arvioi asteikolla 1–4 (1 = vahvasti eri mieltä, 4 = vahvasti samaa mieltä), kuinka hyvin seuraavat väittämät koskevat ihmissuhdettaasi.

	vahvasti eri mieltä		vahvasti samaa mieltä	
	1	2	3	4
1. Useimmiten teemme sitä, mitä kumppanini haluaa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Kumppanillani on enemmän sanottavaa meitä koskevissa tärkeissä päätöksissä kuin minulla.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Kumppanini tekee, mitä haluaa, vaikka minä en haluaisi hänen tekevän jotain tiettyä asiaa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Olen sitoutuneempi suhteeseemme kuin kumppanini.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Kumppanini saa suhteestamme enemmän kuin minä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Decision-making dominance

✕ Arvioi seuraavia väittämiä vastaamalla, pitääkö väite paikkaansa vai ei.

	ei pidä paikkaansa	pitää paikkaansa
1. Kumppanini päättää yleensä siitä, milloin harrastamme seksiä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Kumppanini päättää yleensä siitä, mitä teemme yhdessä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Kumppanini päättää yleensä siitä, milloin näemme toisiamme/vietämme aikaa yhdessä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Kumppanini päättää yleensä siitä, milloin keskustelemme vakavista asioista.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Yleisesti ottaen, kumppanillani on enemmän valtaa suhteessamme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Filtering questions before Experiences of sexual compliance

✕ Oletko kokenut nykyisessä/viimeisimmässä suhteessasi seksuaalisia lähestymisyrityksiä, joita et ole halunnut?

- Kyllä  
 En

▶ Skip Logic

En If Selected, jump to 29. [Q26] Tähän voit kirjoittaa halutessasi palautetta kyselystämme.

✕ Oletko myöntynyt seksuaaliseen toimintaan nykyisessä/viimeisimmässä suhteessasi?

- Kyllä  
 En

▶ Skip Logic

En If Selected, jump to 29. [Q26] Tähän voit kirjoittaa halutessasi palautetta kyselystämme.

## Experiences of sexual compliance in current / most recent relationship

✕ Kuinka usein suostut (tai olet suostunut) seksuaaliseen toimintaan, jota et ole halunnut, vaikka kumppanisi ei painostanut, uhkaillut tai pakottanut sinua? Mikäli olet tällä hetkellä kumppanuus-/parisuhteessa, vastaa tämänhetkisen suhteesi perusteella. Mikäli et ole suhteessa, vastaa viimeisimmän suhteesi perusteella.

	Left Anchor			Right Anchor
	0% kerroista (en koskaan)	25% kerroista (yksi kerta neljästä)	50% kerroista (noin joka toinen kerta)	100% kerroista (joka kerta)
Genitaalien stimuloiminen käsin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suuseksi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vaginaalinen yhdyntä / muu penetraatiivinen toiminta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anaaliyhdyntä / muu penetraatiivinen toiminta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muu seksuaalinen toiminta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





## Consequences of consenting to unwanted sexual activity

- ✕ Arvioi asteikolla 1–7, millä tavoin myöntyminen seksuaaliseen toimintaan on vaikuttanut / vaikuttaa seuraaviin elämäsi osa-alueisiin:

	vaikuttaa erittäin kielteisesti			ei vaikuta millään tavalla	vaikuttaa erittäin myönteisesti		
	1	2	3		5	6	7
1. mielialaasi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. itsetuntoosi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. tyytyväisyytesi kumppanuus- / parisuhteeseesi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. läheisyyteen kumppanuus- / parisuhteessasi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. luottamukseen kumppanuus- / parisuhteessasi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. rakkauden tai kiintymyksen tunteisiin?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. seksuaaliseen tyytyväisyyteesi?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- ✕ Onko seksuaalinen myöntyminen vaikuttanut mielestäsi johonkin muuhun?

- Ei  
 Kyllä, mihin?

- ✕ Arvioi asteikolla 1–7, millä tavoin myöntyminen seksuaaliseen toimintaan on vaikuttanut mainitsemaasi asiaan:

- 1 - vaikuttaa erittäin kielteisesti  
 2  
 3  
 4 - ei vaikuta millään tavalla  
 5  
 6  
 7 - vaikuttaa erittäin myönteisesti  
 Ei mikään ylläolevista vaihtoehdoista

## Appendix B

### The original items of study measures

Items from SRS, SSES and RC are reproduced here with a permission from the original authors. Reversed items are marked with [R]. Approach motives are marked with [App] and avoidance motives are marked with [Av].

#### Sexual resourcefulness

1. When I am in the middle of sexual play, but do not want the activity to progress any further, I change my aroused feelings so that I prevent the activity from progressing.
2. I often give in to unwanted sexual activity. [R]
3. When I feel upset while engaged in unwanted sexual activity, I try not to think about it. [R]
4. When faced with unwanted sexual advances/activity, I leave the situation.
5. While engaged in unwanted sexual activity, I think I'm making a mistake, but I'm at a loss to do anything about it. [R]
6. I usually consent to unwanted sexual activity when my partner is pressuring me. [R]
7. When I am experiencing unwanted sexual advances/activity, I prefer not to think about it and go along with the activity instead. [R]
8. If I was in the middle of sexual play which I no longer wanted to continue, I could tell my partner to stop.
9. When I have become aroused from sexual play, but do not want to continue any further, I am able to resist engaging in the sexual activity by thinking about the good reasons for stopping.
10. Although I feel bad about hurting my partner's feelings, I am able to let him know when I am uncomfortable with a sexual situation.
11. I feel good about myself when I resist unwanted sexual advances.
12. When experiencing unwanted sexual activity/advances, I often tell myself that I can do something about it.
13. When I am about to engage in unwanted sexual activity, I tell myself to stop and think before I do anything.
14. I consider my actions very carefully when deciding whether or not to participate in unwanted sexual activity.
15. I always have a back up plan for when I am faced with unwanted sexual advances/activities that get out of control.

16. I takes a lot of effort on my part to bring unwanted sexual advances/activity to a halt. [R]

17. When presented with unwanted sexual advances/activity, I base my decision on my arousal and how I feel in the moment, even if I know I will regret it later. [R]

18. When engaging in unwanted sexual activity, I try to divert my thoughts from how uncomfortable I feel.

19. I plan in advance how far I want to go with any sexual activity and am able to stop the activity before it goes too far.

### **Sexual self-efficacy**

1. I feel confident in my strategies for dealing with unwanted sexual advances/activity that I am uncomfortable with.

2. I believe I am in full control when unwanted sexual advances are made toward me.

3. I feel comfortable dealing with unwanted sexual advances/activity.

4. I have no control when unwanted sexual advances are made toward me. [R]

5. I typically do not deal well with unwanted sexual activity. [R]

Note: The Finnish translation of statement 4 was not a reversed item.

### **Relationship power**

1. Most of the time, we do what my partner wants to do.

2. My partner has more say than I do about important decisions that affect us.

3. My partner does what he wants, even if I do not want him to.

4. I am more committed to our relationship than my partner is.

5. My partner gets more out of our relationship than I do.

### **Decision-making dominance**

1. My partner has more say about whether we have sex.

2. My partner has more say about what we do together.

3. My partner has more say about how often we see each other.

4. My partner has more say about when we talk about serious things.

5. In general, my partner has more power in our relationship.

### **Reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity**

When answering these questions, please think about those times you have consented to unwanted sexual activity in your current / most recent relationship. Note that sexual activity can mean also other activities than what was listed in the previous questionnaire. Rate each statement by how well it describes you and the reasons why you have consented to the unwanted sexual activity. (0 = not at all characteristic of me, 9 = very characteristic of me)

1. I felt that I would be jeopardizing our relationship if I did not engage in the unwanted sexual activity. [Av]
  2. As their partner, I am obligated to engage in the unwanted sexual activity.
  3. They verbally pressured me to participate in the unwanted sexual behavior.
  4. They begged me to engage in the unwanted sexual activity until I could not argue anymore.
  5. I had been drinking or had consumed other types of drugs.
  6. I felt guilty for not participating in the unwanted sexual activity. [Av]
  7. I feared that I would lose my partner if I did not consent to the unwanted sexual activity. [Av]
  8. I wanted to avoid tension in our relationship. [Av]
  9. I wanted to prevent my partner from losing interest in our relationship. [Av]
  10. I consented to the unwanted sexual activity to promote intimacy. [App]
  11. I felt it was necessary to satisfy my partner's needs.
  12. I felt that I needed to because I consented to the sexual activity before.
  13. I didn't want to hurt my partner's feelings. [Av]
  14. He physically would not let me leave.
  15. I didn't want him to feel rejected. [Av]
  16. I felt that if I consented to the unwanted sexual activity, he would like/love me. [Av]
  17. I wanted to feel accepted by my partner. [App]
  18. He sweet talked me into it.
- + Self-modified items from Cooper et al.'s (1998) Sex Motives Measure
19. I wanted to fulfill my partner's sexual needs.
  20. I wanted to express love to my partner.
  21. I wanted to experience emotional connection.
  22. I wanted to reassure myself I'm desirable.
  23. I wanted to feel closer to my partner.
  24. I wanted to prove myself I'm attractive.

### **Possible consequences of sexual compliance scale**

On a scale from 1 to 7 (1 = affects very negatively, 4 = does not affect, 7 = affects very positively), rate how sexual compliance has affected or affects the next aspects of your life:

1. mood
2. self-esteem
3. relationship satisfaction

4. intimacy in your relationship
5. feeling of trust in your relationship
6. feelings of love or affection
7. sexual satisfaction

## Appendix C

## Bivariate correlations and one-way ANOVA results

Table 5

*One-way ANOVA Results for Comparing Sexual Compliance in Different Demographic Groups in Women*

Group	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$	$[\eta^2 \text{ 95\%CI}]$
Sexual orientation	1.92	5	.38	1.25	.284	.007	[.000 – .016]
Relationship status	4.59	4	1.15	3.88	<b>.004</b>	.019	[.002 – .038]

*Note.* This analysis used the mean value of SEXP calculated for each respondent. Results for relationship status includes only those participants who reported being currently in a relationship.

Table 6

*Bivariate Correlations Between Demographic Factors and Study Measures in Women*

Measure	Age	Income	Occupation	Education	Relationship duration <sup>1</sup>	Relationship duration <sup>2</sup>
Sexual Resourcefulness	.012	-.010	-.008	.029	<b>.060*</b>	-.090
Sexual self-efficacy	<b>.066**</b>	.046	<b>.056*</b>	.047	<b>.086**</b>	-.150

Measure	Age	Income	Occupation	Education	Relationship duration <sup>1</sup>	Relationship duration <sup>2</sup>
Relationship power	<b>-.074**</b>	<b>-.066*</b>	-.014	<b>-.128**</b>	-.034	<b>.168*</b>
Decision-making dominance	-.033	-.040	.013	<b>-.094**</b>	-.013	.128
Sexual compliance	<b>-.131**</b>	-.054	-.046	<b>-.082*</b>	<b>-.075*</b>	-.033
Reasons for consenting	-.039	-.005	.001	<b>-.095**</b>	-.036	-.143
Consequences of sexual compliance	.090	.125	.159	<b>.221**</b>	.034	.000

*Note.* Sexual resourcefulness: lower scores represent poorer sexual resourcefulness skills, Sexual self-efficacy: lower scores represent lower perceived ability of being in control of sexual situations, Relationship power: higher scores represent higher partner relationship power, Decision-making dominance: higher scores represent higher partner decision-making dominance, Sexual compliance: higher scores represent more experience of sexual compliance in a current or recent relationship, Reasons for consenting: higher scores represent more reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity, Consequences of sexual compliance: lower scores represent more perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance).

Relationship duration<sup>1</sup> = participants currently in a committed relationship (n = 1,323)

Relationship duration<sup>2</sup> = participants who had recently been in a committed relationship (n = 173)

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.



**Table 7*****Bivariate Correlations Between the Study Scales for All Participants and for Separate Gender Categories***

Variable	Sexual resourcefulness	Sexual self- efficacy	Relationship power	Decision- making dominance	Sexual compliance	Reasons for consenting	Consequences of sexual compliance
Sexual self-efficacy	<b>.30**</b>						
Women	<b>.30**</b>						
Other	<b>.30*</b>						
Men	<b>.32*</b>						
Relationship power	<b>-.44**</b>	<b>-.27**</b>					
Women	<b>-.44**</b>	<b>-.28**</b>					
Other	-.25	-.13					
Men	<b>-.36*</b>	<b>-.47**</b>					
Decision-making dominance	<b>-.38**</b>	<b>-.26**</b>	<b>.69**</b>				
Women	<b>-.39**</b>	<b>-.26**</b>	<b>.69**</b>				
Other	<b>-.40**</b>	-.26	<b>.71**</b>				
Men	<b>-.35*</b>	<b>-.31*</b>	<b>.61**</b>				
Sexual compliance	<b>-.40**</b>	<b>-.24**</b>	<b>.39**</b>	<b>.35**</b>			
Women	<b>-.40**</b>	<b>-.24**</b>	<b>.41**</b>	<b>.36**</b>			
Other	<b>-.51**</b>	-.22	.03	.24			
Men	-.15	-.25	.36	-.09			

Table 7

*Bivariate Correlations Between the Study Scales for All Participants and for Separate Gender Categories*

Variable	Sexual resourcefulness	Sexual self-efficacy	Relationship power	Decision-making dominance	Sexual compliance	Reasons for consenting	Consequences of sexual compliance
Reasons for consenting	<b>-.55**</b>	<b>-.30**</b>	<b>.50**</b>	<b>.43**</b>	<b>.43**</b>		
Women	<b>-.55**</b>	<b>-.30**</b>	<b>.51**</b>	<b>.44**</b>	<b>.44**</b>		
Other	<b>-.53**</b>	-.26	<b>.38*</b>	.31	<b>.59**</b>		
Men	<b>-.53*</b>	-.15	<b>.64**</b>	<b>.54*</b>	-.09		
Consequences of sexual compliance	<b>.27**</b>	<b>.27**</b>	<b>-.23**</b>	<b>-.21**</b>	<b>-.11**</b>	<b>-.15**</b>	
Women	<b>.26**</b>	<b>.26**</b>	<b>-.24**</b>	<b>-.23**</b>	<b>-.12**</b>	<b>-.14**</b>	
Other	<b>.46**</b>	.34	-.08	-.01	-.05	-.18	
Men	.30	.22	.08	-.12	-.05	-.07	
<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	66.5 (14.2)	17.5 (3.1)	9.86 (3.3)	6.3 (1.5)	10.1 (2.8)	127.3 (43.4)	27.2 (8.1)
Women	66.4 (14.2)	17.5 (3.1)	9.8 (3.3)	6.3 (1.5)	10.1 (2.8)	127.2 (43.5)	27.1 (8.1)
Other	64.8 (15.2)	16.6 (3.2)	10.5 (3.3)	6.6 (1.3)	10.8 (3.3)	136.2 (40.4)	27.1 (8.7)
Men	70.7 (13.8)	19.1 (2.7)	11.1 (2.7)	7.0 (1.8)	10.8 (3.5)	119.1 (40.1)	31.6 (6.9)
<i>n</i>	1635	1635	1588	1588	1041	1026	1002
Women	1394	1394	1352	1352	901	888	867
Other	51	51	50	50	34	32	32
Men	51	51	50	50	19	19	19

*Note.* Sexual resourcefulness: lower scores represent poorer sexual resourcefulness skills, Sexual self-efficacy: lower scores represent lower perceived ability of being in control of sexual situations, Relationship power: higher scores represent higher partner relationship power, Decision-making dominance: higher scores represent higher partner decision-making dominance, Sexual compliance: higher scores represent more experiences of sexual compliance in a current or recent relationship, Reasons for consenting: higher scores represent more reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activity, Consequences: lower scores represent more perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed