

**Sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure in intimate
relationships: associations with the frequency and consequences
of sexual compliance**

Master's thesis
Psychology
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Sexual compliance refers to consenting to sexual activity despite a lack of desire. Prior research has identified both positive and negative consequences of sexual compliance, with notable gender-related differences. Understanding when sexual compliance is beneficial or harmful requires investigating various aspects of sexual relationships. The current study aimed to investigate how sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure are associated with frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance, while also exploring the potential moderating role of gender. The sample consisted of 1,279 participants, who were recruited through a postal invitation to an online survey. Participants were aged from 18 to 64 and were in an intimate relationship with at least one partner. Statistical analyses were conducted with independent samples t-tests, Spearman's rank-order correlations, Pearson's two-tailed correlations, and two separate multiple linear regression models. The findings revealed that greater comfort with sexual communication was linked to more positive and fewer negative consequences of sexual compliance, with stronger associations observed in women compared to men. Sexual self-disclosure did not independently contribute to the variance in the perceived consequences of sexual compliance. No significant associations were found between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the frequency of sexual compliance, which indicates that these factors do not directly impact the frequency in this sample. These results underscore the importance of dyadic sexual communication in shaping the perceived consequences of sexual compliance. Future research should further investigate how the dyadic context and evolution of sexual communication, particularly as relationship progress in duration, are associated with the perceived consequences of sexual compliance in intimate relationships.

Keywords: sexual compliance, perceived consequences of sexual compliance, sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure

1 Introduction

Sexual communication is crucial to developing and maintaining a healthy and satisfying sexual connection between partners (Jones et al., 2018; Mallory et al., 2019). Open and effective communication has consistently been associated with greater sexual and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Byers, 2011). One important part of sexual communication is the act of revealing sexual information (e.g., sexual preferences and likes, dislikes, or past sexual experiences) to the partner, which is called sexual self-disclosure (Coffelt & Hess, 2009; MacNeil & Byers, 2005). Through sexual self-disclosure, partners can gain a better understanding of each other's sexual matters. As these factors are fundamental for sexual relationships, it is essential to understand their impact comprehensively in relational contexts.

A commonly reported phenomenon in sexual relationships is consensual but undesired sexual activity (Himanen & Gunst, 2023). Consenting to sexual activity despite a lack of desire is called sexual compliance (Impett & Peplau, 2003). This engagement happens willingly without a partner's pressure, distinguishing sexual compliance from sexual coercion (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2007; Darden et al., 2019). Complying can occur with sex in general or with certain types of sexual activity (e.g., oral sex). Previous research often approaches sexual compliance from a gendered perspective, with women and men showing different rates of compliance frequency (O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998). Furthermore, sexual compliance is associated with positive and negative consequences for well-being (Himanen & Gunst, 2023). The current study aimed to expand the understanding of associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, gender, and the frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance.

1.1 The prevalence and characteristics of sexual compliance

Previous research has recognized sexual compliance as a prevalent phenomenon in intimate relationships, with most studies focusing on Western and heterosexual couples. Studies based on convenience samples have found that 64% (Himanen & Gunst, 2023), 46% (Vannier & Sullivan, 2010), and 37% (Katz & Tirone, 2009) of participants report complying with sexual activity at least on one occasion with their current or most recent partner. Additionally, in two daily-diary surveys, between 38% and 46% of participants reported complying with sex at least once during two to four weeks of study periods (O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). Furthermore, Vannier and O'Sullivan (2010) found that 17% of all

sexual activity in their sample was compliant. These findings emphasize the need to deepen the understanding of sexual compliance.

There are many reasons and motives why people comply with sex. Firstly, motives might rely on relational reasons, such as wanting to satisfy partners' needs and fostering intimacy (O'Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). Engaging in compliant sex to promote positive outcomes is referred to as having approach motives (Impett & Peplau, 2005). Secondly, sexual compliance is often viewed as a strategy that partners use to navigate situations where they experience differences in desire to engage in sex (Herbenick et al., 2014). These situations are referred to as desire discrepancies, which are common in long-term relationships (Mark & Lasslo, 2018). In this context, sexual compliance is sometimes understood as an implicit agreement or compromise between partners to maintain a sexual connection even if sexual activity is unwanted by one partner (Shotland & Goodstein, 1992; Vannier & Sullivan, 2010). From this perspective, sexual compliance is seen as a natural and adaptive aspect of intimate relationships, helping partners sustain sexual availability, satisfaction, and connection despite desire discrepancies.

On the other hand, some studies have problematized sexual compliance, particularly from a gendered perspective. A systematic review by Impett and Peplau (2003) revealed that complying with sex was more common among women than men. For instance, in the daily diary survey by O'Sullivan and Allegeier (1998), 50% of women and 26% of men reported sexual compliance in a two-week study period. Research has argued that women often experience lower sexual desire compared to men (e.g., Murray & Milhausen, 2012), which could explain why women comply more. However, women's higher rates have also been linked to gender socialization and covert social expectations (Katz & Tirone, 2009; Conroy et al., 2015). Sexual script theory is often used to examine the dynamics of sexual compliance in heterosexual relationships (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). According to this theory, sexual interactions are informed by cultural and interpersonal scripts that shape couples' sexual dynamics with stereotypical gender roles and expectations surrounding sexual encounters.

The impact of sexual scripts becomes evident when examining patterns of sexual compliance in both women and men. Conroy et al. (2015) argued that women often engage in unwanted sexual activity due to various forms of social coercion to conform to traditional sexual scripts and fulfill perceived relationship obligations, such as relationship harmony maintenance. For instance, Katz and Tirone (2009) found that women's sexual compliance was often driven by

approach motives but was not associated with relationship satisfaction. Although approach motives are generally linked with positive consequences, engaging in sex while neglecting one's own needs, has been associated with decreased sexual satisfaction (Impett et al., 2019). Katz and Tirone (2009) suggested that the women in their study complied because they expected it to make their partner happy. Additionally, one recognized motive for engaging in compliant sex is the intention to prevent relationship tension (O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998), which further may explain why women comply in the context of gendered expectations. These motives, referred to as avoidance motives, are often associated with negative consequences (Impett & Peplau, 2005). Women may be more likely to be expected to neglect their own needs, which could explain higher rates of sexual compliance compared to men. Furthermore, men's sexual compliance is recognized to be more frequent when they endorse traditional gender beliefs and sexuality stereotypes (Khera et al., 2022). Traditional beliefs of masculinity often expect men for instance to have a constant drive for sex or to take on the dominant role during sexual encounters (Meenagh., 2021). In this view, sexual compliance can involve the internalization of normative gender roles, driven by the desire to fulfill social expectations, which can result in discomfort for both genders.

While most studies have found gender differences, some have not reported such findings. O'Sullivan and Allegeier (1998) found no differences between men and women in the overall frequency of sexual compliance over the past year or across their lifetime. In addition, they found that the frequency of complying with sex was not associated with the endorsement of traditional gender roles. Similarly, Vannier and Sullivan (2010) reported no gender differences in the frequency of sexual compliance among individuals in long-term relationships. However, a scoping review on women's sexual pleasure found that women often prioritize men's sexual pleasure at the expense of their own, suggesting that sexual compliance may be linked to decreased sexual pleasure for women (Reis et al., 2021). Nevertheless, as sexual compliance has been recognized as prevalent, its consequences and their contributors should be considered to understand sexual compliance as a phenomenon better.

1.2 The consequences of sexual compliance

Previous research suggests that the perceived consequences of sexual compliance, usually identified as positive or negative consequences for well-being, vary among individuals. A recent Finnish cross-sectional study found that 42% of participants experienced only positive

consequences, while 41% reported exclusively negative consequences (Himanen & Gunst, 2023). Moreover, one-third of participants experienced both positive and negative consequences. Similarly, O'Sullivan and Allegeier (1998) found that 92% of participants reported positive consequences, whereas 59% also noted negative consequences. Although these studies used convenience samples and retrospective assessments, these results suggest that there are differing experiences in the context of sexual compliance. Therefore, it is important to better understand when individuals are more likely to experience positive versus negative consequences, as described below.

Perceived positive consequences often include experiences of increased intimacy, greater sexual satisfaction, and the reduction of relationship tension (O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998; Gunst et al., 2023). The most common self-reported positive consequence in a study conducted by Himanen & Gunst (2023) was enhanced feelings of love and attachment. Moreover, in a Finnish qualitative study on perceived consequences of sexual compliance, some individuals reported that the initially undesired sexual activity became pleasurable during the act (Gunst et al., 2023). This aligns with the concept of responsive desire, in which sexual desire develops during sexual activity rather than preceding it (Basson, 2000).

Perceived negative consequences, on the other hand, often consider experiences of emotional discomfort and negative emotions (Katz & Schneider, 2015; O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998). Studies indicate that compliant sexual interactions are less pleasurable and enjoyable than desired sexual activity (Katz & Tirone, 2009; Reis et al., 2021; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2010). These findings suggest that complying with sex is associated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, reported consequences include decreased mood and self-esteem (Himanen & Gunst, 2023). In a cross-sectional study of university students in monogamous relationships, Hartmann & Crockett (2016) found that complying with unwanted sex was associated with elevated levels of cortisol compared to sexual activity in which desire and frequency were matched. This study suggests that sexual compliance is associated with psychological stress.

1.3 Sexual communication

Sexual communication is a dyadic process in which partners engage in discussions about sexual matters and create a shared understanding of their sexual relationship (Coffelt & Hess, 2012). A meta-analysis of 48 studies by Mallory et al. (2019) showed that sexual

communication positively correlates with overall sexual functioning in both women and men. Sexual communication is also positively associated with different dimensions of sexual function, such as satisfaction and arousal (Jones et al., 2018; MacNeil & Byers, 1997). For long-term heterosexual couples, sexual communication facilitates adjustments to their sexual rhythm, thereby enhancing relationship satisfaction (Galizia et al., 2023). Thus, sexual communication allows partners to negotiate their sex life and build a mutually satisfying sexual relationship.

Conversely, poor sexual communication is often associated with sexual issues, dysfunctions, and lower levels of satisfaction (Byers, 2005; Byers, 2011). However, the causal relationship between challenges in sexual communication and sexual dissatisfaction has been difficult to establish (Mallory et al., 2019). It may be that sexual difficulties challenge individuals to communicate comfortably. On the other hand, couples who struggle with effective communication may be more likely to experience sexual problems. One explanation for the recognized negative association is the discomfort caused by relying on and repeating sexual scripts (Masters et al., 2013). Through sexual communication, partners can ease the discomfort by re-writing these scripts to better align with the sexual needs and desires of both partners. For instance, if women feel socially expected to prioritize their partner's needs at the expense of their own needs, sexual communication enables sexual interactions where both partner's needs are acknowledged. In cases of sexual compliance, individuals may comply less frequently, as they shift away from rigid sexual scripts and instead focus on recognizing and addressing each other's needs and desires.

In addition to promoting satisfaction, sexual communication is recognized to be important in maintaining sexual desire in long-term relationships (Mark & Lasslo, 2018). It is suggested that partners' experience of effective sexual communication and satisfaction with its quality increases their desire to engage in sex (Ferreira et al., 2014; Velten & Margraf, 2017). Feelings of safety, being desired, and acceptance are possible to foster through sexual communication, which in turn brings partners closer emotionally and positively influences their interest in sex. Moreover, when partners are satisfied with sexual communication, they are less likely to perceive desire discrepancies as problematic (Mallory et al., 2019).

Notably, Mallory et al. (2019) found that the association between sexual communication and both sexual desire and orgasm frequency was stronger for women than men, suggesting that sexual communication is important in facilitating women's sexual desire. For instance, it is

commonly suggested that women, on average, experience lower spontaneous sexual desire and are more likely to have responsive desire, which depends more on factors that are fostered through sexual communication (e.g., emotional intimacy; Basson, 2000). Research further suggests that for women, communicating about desire discrepancy is a key strategy for addressing and resolving difficulties linked to desire discrepancies, and can even increase the levels of sexual desire (Herbernick et al, 2014; Galizia et al., 2023). Similarly, Kelly et al. (2004) reported that women with communication difficulties around sex with their partner were more likely to experience problems achieving orgasm. Orgasm frequency is one of the most significant predictors of satisfaction, but problems linked to orgasm are often associated with communication difficulties. For women, the positive outcomes of sexual interactions, such as satisfaction, are strongly associated with greater sexual communication.

As sexual communication plays a crucial role in fostering sexual desire and satisfaction, it is crucial to consider its relationship with the consequences of sexual compliance. In a study by Gunst et al. (2024) participants independently identified factors that might influence the consequences they experience, with communication being the most commonly reported factor predicting the outcomes of sexual compliance. Notably, 45% of participants reported that poor communication was associated with experiencing negative consequences, while 47% of participants reported that good communication contributed to positive consequences. However, the study did not specify the types of communication that were involved. Broader understanding is needed to understand which kind of communication and its components are associated with the consequences of sexual compliance.

Further examining the associations with gender, a study by Nickull, Jern et al. (2025) found that sexual communication was a weak but significant predictor of positive consequence of compliance within the subsample of women, whereas it was not a significant predictor in the subsample of men. Regarding negative consequences, sexual communication was not a significant predictor for either men or women. However, since the study included many other variables, these results do not indicate how sexual communication independently predicted the consequences once other factors were considered. Moreover, Reis et al. (2021) suggested that enhancing communication between partners could promote women's sexual pleasure and reduce the negative impact associated with sexual compliance and gendered power imbalance. Further research is needed for a better understanding of how gender is linked to

the associations with sexual communication and the perceived consequences of sexual compliance.

1.4 Sexual self-disclosure

To gain a better understanding of one's partner, disclosing information about one's sexual matters is crucial. Sexual self-disclosure refers to only one component of the broader dyadic process of sexual communication, as it emphasizes the one-sided revealing of sexual matters (Tang et al., 2013). As one aspect of sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure has been consistently associated positively with sexual satisfaction (Coffelt & Hess, 2014; MacNeil & Byers, 2009; Rehman et al., 2011). Moreover, in a review of sexual communication, Byers (2011) noted that individuals who engage in sexual self-disclosure tend to experience greater sexual well-being. She further emphasized that sexual self-disclosure is essential for partners in negotiating mutually satisfying sexual scripts. Notably, individuals who self-disclose sexually report feeling satisfied with the quality of sexual communication with their partner (Byers & Demmons, 1999). These findings emphasize the role of sexual self-disclosure within effective communication and shaping satisfying relationships.

Furthermore, as a part of effective sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure should be considered within the association of sexual desire. In a pioneering study of sexual self-disclosure, Metts and Cupah (1991) proposed that disclosing one's sexual likes and dislikes provides valuable information to one's partner about personal desires. This, in turn, facilitates more positive and satisfying sexual interactions, as partners are more likely to receive wanted sexual activities and fulfill each other's desires. When partners know what their partner finds arousing, they can enhance sexual satisfaction by promoting their partner's sexual desire (Rehman et al., 2011). Additionally, when partners know of each other's desires and needs, they can avoid sexual activity that is not preferred.

Greater engagement in sexual self-disclosure can contribute to more positive sexual outcomes and may reduce the frequency of sexual compliance. When partners openly communicate their levels of sexual desire, they minimize the risk of misinterpretation by their partner, which might decrease the frequency of sexual compliance (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999). Further, as sexual self-disclosure is the way partners can gain knowledge of each other's needs and desires, it could be the relevant part of sexual communication which contributes to

the consequences of sexual compliance. Despite its relevance, sexual self-disclosure has not been investigated in the context of sexual compliance.

1.5 Research questions

Even though previous studies have established the importance of sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure as a part of sexual relationships, there remains limited research examining their associations with the frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance. Understanding these relationships is crucial, as sexual communication and self-disclosure may influence how individuals experience and interpret sexual compliance. Moreover, the potential role of sexual self-disclosure as a key component of sexual communication in contributing to the consequences of sexual compliance was investigated. As prior research has highlighted gender differences and discussed the gendered nature of sexual compliance, it is essential to investigate the role of gender in relation to these factors. This study aimed to examine associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance. Additionally, the moderating role of gender was explored in these associations.

In the current study, the following research questions, and hypotheses were formulated based on previous studies:

1. Are sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure associated with the frequency of sexual compliance? Here, I hypothesized that participants who report greater levels of sexual communication and self-disclose sexually more willingly report less sexual compliance.
 - 1.1 Do the associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the frequency of sexual compliance differ between men and women? A hypothesis was not formulated in this case due to the absence of prior research to base it on.

2. Is sexual communication associated with the perceived consequences of sexual compliance? Here, I hypothesized that individuals who report greater levels of sexual communication report more positive and fewer perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance.
 - 2.1 Is the association between sexual communication and perceived consequences moderated by gender? Here, I hypothesized that sexual

communication has a stronger association with the perceived consequences for women than men.

3. Is sexual self-disclosure associated with the perceived consequences of sexual compliance? Here, I hypothesized that individuals who are more willing to self-disclose sexually report more positive and fewer perceived negative consequences of sexual compliance.

- 3.1 Is the association between sexual self-disclosure and perceived consequences moderated by gender? A hypothesis was not formulated in this case due to the absence of prior research to base it on.

4. To what extent do sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure independently contribute to the perceived consequences of sexual compliance? A hypothesis was not formulated in this case due to the absence of prior research to base it on.

2 Methods

2.1 Procedure

The present study was a part of larger research and data collection on sexual compliance in Finland. Detailed information about the data collection can be found in Nickull, Lagerström et al. (2025). Participants were recruited through a postal invitation to an online survey. Individuals were randomly selected by the Digital and Population Data Service Agency of Finland. Invitations were sent to 30,000 people aged 18-50 living in Finland and having either Finnish or Swedish (the official languages of Finland) as their mother tongue. Based on findings from previous population-based surveys, the final sample was expected to consist of approximately 2/3 responses from women, despite an equal (50/50) gender distribution in the initial pool of invitees (Johansson et al., 2013). Therefore, 20,000 men and 10,000 women were invited to participate in the study, aiming to achieve a more balanced gender representation in the final sample. It is worth noting that the population registry of Finland currently only recognizes male and female as legal genders.

The invitation letters were sent out beginning on the 19th of September 2023, and the survey remained open until the 23rd of October 2023. The letter contained information about the purpose of the data collection. As an incentive to participate, participants were given the opportunity to enter a lottery for 30 gift cards worth 25€ to a business conglomerate that

operates shops, grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, and petrol stations throughout Finland. Each person could only win one gift card.

The letter included a link and a QR-code to a secure online platform called QuestionPro, where it was possible to answer the survey. The survey included questions about various individual and relational factors, as well as experiences of sexual compliance. To offer participants knowledge of key concepts related to sexual compliance, the following definitions were displayed at the beginning of the study:

Sexual compliance means consensually engaging in sexual activity with a partner despite the lack (at least in the beginning) of sexual desire for it. Sexual compliance differs from sexual coercion and assault, as sexual compliance refers to situations where consent has been given voluntarily (either explicitly or implicitly), without any pressure, manipulation, or coercion from the partner. Sexual activity means a broad range of sexual behaviors which can include, for instance, petting/touching of genitals, oral sex, or penetrative sex. Sexual desire means being interested in and personally motivated to engage in sexual activity, with or without physical reactions (e.g., erection, tingling, lubrication).

2.2 Participants

A total of 2,163 people responded to the survey, resulting in a response rate of 7.2%. The study included two separate samples for the analyses of frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance. To examine the associations between study variables and the frequency, it was necessary to include participants who have and who not complied with sex with their current partner. However, including participants who have not complied with sex with their current partner in the analyses of perceived consequences would that skew the interpretability of results. Therefore, the participants who had never complied with sex with their current partner were excluded from the analyses of perceived consequences. The procedure for creating different samples is described below.

Participants who did not have at least one partner during the data collection were excluded ($n = 537$). Furthermore, participants who had never had sex ($n = 17$) or had not had sex with their current partner ($n = 11$) were excluded. At the time of responding to the question about having had sex, participants had not yet received our definition of sexual activity, so their answers reflected their own understanding of the term. Those with multiple partners were

instructed to base their responses on their primary or longest-standing relationship. Participants with missing data the scales measuring the frequency of sexual compliance, sexual communication, or sexual self-disclosure were excluded ($n = 303$). After removing participants in accordance with the described exclusion criteria, a total of 1,295 participants met the inclusion criteria, with 49.6 % identifying as women, 49.2 % as men, 0.1% as transwoman (or woman with a trans background), 0.6% as transmen (or men with a trans background), 0.5% as non-binary, and 0.1% as other. Due to the small number of participants identifying as transwoman ($n = 1$), transman ($n = 8$), non-binary ($n = 4$), or other ($n = 1$), they were excluded from the analysis for reasons of comparability. The sample consisted through this exclusion process is considered as the final sample. Thus, the final sample included 1,279 participants, identifying as cisgender women or men. The participants' mean age was 34.2 ($SD = 9.0$, range = 18 to 64). The mean length of participants' current relationship was 8.6 years ($SD = 8.0$). Of the participants, 16.2% ($n = 207$) reported having never complied with sex with their current partner, 3.3% ($n = 35$) reported having complied once, 30.4% ($n = 326$) indicated having complied a handful of times, 27.1% ($n = 291$) a few dozen times, and 39.2% ($n = 420$) reported having complied more than a hundred times. This exclusion process is conducted for the analysis which investigates associations between study variables and the frequency of sexual compliance.

Additional exclusions were made for the analyses to investigate associations between study variables and the perceived consequences of sexual compliance. The participants who had never complied with sex with their current partner ($n = 207$) were excluded from these analyses. Furthermore, there was six participants who reported that they had never complied with sex, but that they had complied with sex with their current partner. As these responses were logically inconsistent, they were excluded from the perceived consequences analyses. Finally, participants who had missing data on the scale measuring perceived consequences were supposed to be excluded but there was none. Therefore, these additional exclusions created the sub-sample of 1066 participants. Further details about the final sample before the additional exclusions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant Demographics in the Final Sample*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Woman	642	50.2
Man	637	49.8
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	1110	86.8
Bisexual	113	8.8
Gay/lesbian	17	1.3
Pansexual	25	2.0
Asexual	4	0.3
Other	10	0.8
Highest education		
Middle/junior high school (9 years)	42	3.3
Vocational school or high school (12 years)	509	39.8
Bachelor's degree (applied or university)	440	34.4
Master's degree (applied or university)	260	20.3
Licentiate/doctorate degree	25	2.0
Other	3	0.2
Occupation		
Studying	211	16.5
Employed or self-employed	972	76.0
Retired	14	1.1

Unemployed	40	3.1
Other	42	3.3
Monthly gross income		
Less than 500€	93	7.3
500–999€	100	7.8
1,000–1,999€	138	10.8
2,000–2,999€	35	26.2
3,000–3,999€	279	21.8
4,000–4,999€	158	12.4
5,000–5,999€	04	8.1
6,000€ or more	2	5.6
Nationality		
Finnish	1,276	99.8
Other	3	0.2

Note. $N = 1,279$.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Frequency of sexual compliance

The frequency of sexual compliance within the participant's current relationship was measured using a self-constructed question: "Roughly, how many times have you complied with sexual activities with your current partner?" Participants assessed the question with 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *once*, 3 = *a handful of times*, 4 = *a few dozen of times*, 5 = *more than a hundred times*). The measure was created to reflect an approximate estimate of the times complied, as it may be difficult retrospectively report on exact frequency.

2.3.2 The consequences of sexual compliance

Participants' experiences of the consequences of sexual compliance were assessed using the Consequences of Sexual Compliance Scale (CSCS; Nickull, Lageström, et al., 2025). The CSCS comprises two factors: one measuring perceived positive consequences and the other

measuring perceived negative consequences for individuals' well-being. This scale was developed based on results from a qualitative study by Gunst et al. (2024), which offered comprehensive information on the experienced consequences of compliance. Participants were asked to evaluate their experiences of complying with sex on a three-month time frame and with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *all of the time*). The scale includes a total of 20 items divided equally into two subscales. The perceived positive consequences include items such as "It helped you maintain your sex life", while the perceived negative consequences are reflected in items like "It made you trust your partner less". Sum scores were calculated separately for each subscale, ranging from 10 to 50. Higher scores indicate more experienced consequences. In the current sample, internal consistency was excellent for the perceived positive consequences subscale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$) and good for the perceived negative consequences subscale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$).

2.3.3 Sexual communication

Participants' sexual communication was assessed using a shortened version of the Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale (DSC; Catania, 2019). The DSC is a self-report measure that evaluates how individuals perceive conversations about sexual topics with their partners. The used measure included five items, such as "Talking about sex is a satisfying experience for both of us". Participants rated their agreement with each statement using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Scores from all five items were summed, yielding a total score ranging from 5 to 30. Two items were reverse-scored so that higher total scores reflected greater comfort in discussing sexual matters with their partner. In the current sample, the scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$).

2.3.4 Sexual self-disclosure

A modified version of the self-report questionnaire Sexual Self-Disclosure Scale-Revised (SSDS-R; S Snell & Quinn-Nilas, 2019) was used to assess participants' willingness to self-disclose sexual matters. The shortened version of SSDR-S used in this study included four subscales, each targeting a different aspect of sexual self-disclosure: sexual behaviors, sexual sensations, sexual preferences, and distressing sex. Each subscale consisted of three items, assessing respondents' willingness to discuss specific sexual topics with their partner. The selected subscales assess the most general aspects of sexual self-disclosure in intimate relationships. For example, one item asked about "the sexual preferences I have". Participants rated their willingness on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *I would not be willing*, 5 = *I am totally*

willing). A total score was calculated by summing the scores from all four subscales, with possible scores ranging from 12 to 60. Higher scores indicated a greater willingness to engage in sexual self-disclosure with their partner. The scale had excellent internal consistency in the current sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$).

2.4 Ethics statement

The research and data collection got a favorable evaluation on February 27th, 2023, from the Research Ethics Board for Psychology and Speech and Language Pathology at Åbo Akademi University. In accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could cancel their participation at any time without facing any consequences or needing to provide a reason. Furthermore, the study included general information about the study and its practices. Consent to participate in the study was asked for electronically as part of the online survey.

2.5 Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (v. 29) software package. Sum scores were calculated for sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and perceived positive and negative consequences of sexual compliance. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to assess mean differences between men and women across the study variables. To estimate effect sizes, Cohen's d was used. Because the frequency of sexual compliance was assessed with a single ordinal item, Spearman's rank-order correlations were used to examine its associations with the study variables. In contrast, Pearson's two-tailed correlation analyses were performed to explore the associations between the study variables and perceived consequences of sexual compliance, which were treated as continuous variables. Two separate multiple linear regression models were conducted: one with perceived positive consequences, and the other with perceived negative consequences. Both two models included sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and gender as independent variables to explore how these variables explain the variance in the dependent variable in question. Gender was dummy-coded as 0 = women and 1 = men. To examine whether gender moderates the associations between sexual communication or sexual self-disclosure and the perceived consequences, two interaction terms (gender * sexual communication, gender * sexual self-disclosure) were included in both models. For the interaction terms, sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure were grand-mean centered to enhance the interpretability of regression coefficients.

3 Results

3.1 Descriptive results

There was a significant difference in sexual compliance frequency between women and men, $t(1245.22) = 4.32, p < .001$. This indicate that women reported more compliance than men. However, the effect size was small ($d = 0.24$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in sexual communication between women and men either, $t(1277) = 0.56, p = .565$. No significant gender difference was found in sexual self-disclosure, $t(1269.16) = 1.56, p = .120$. These results indicate that gender is not associated with participants' comfort with sexual communication, or their sexual self-disclosure willingness.

The additional exclusion criteria were applied on the sample for comparing perceived consequences between genders. Men reported significantly more positive consequences of sexual compliance compared to women, $t(1064) = 2.25, p = .025$. However, the effect size was small ($d = 0.14$). Women reported significantly more negative consequences than men, $t(1023.76) = 4.59, p < .001$. The effect size for this association was small ($d = 0.28$). More information about descriptive results can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Included Variables

Variable	Women, $n = 642$			Men, $n = 637$			Possible range
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	
Compliance frequency	3.7	1.3	1-5	3.4	1.5	1-5	1-5
Positive consequences of sexual compliance*	36.9	8.9	10-50	38.1	8.6	10-50	10-50
Negative consequences of sexual compliance*	13.7	4.4	10-36	12.6	3.2	10-38	10-50
Sexual communication	22.5	5.1	6-30	22.4	5.3	6-30	5-30
Sexual self-disclosure	40.2	11.6	12-60	41.2	10.6	12-60	12-60

Note. $N = 1,279$, * $n = 1,066$. Higher scores indicate higher levels variable in question.

3.2 Spearman's rank-order correlations

In both genders, a weak but statistically significant positive correlation was found between the frequency of sexual compliance and the perceived positive consequences of compliance,

suggesting that higher compliance frequency is associated with more positive perceived outcomes, though the association was stronger for men. Thus, these correlations indicate that sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure are not associated with the frequency of sexual compliance, further analyses of possible gender differences were not examined. For further information about the correlations, see Table 3.

Table 3

Spearman's rank-order Correlation Coefficients Between Study Variables

Variable	Compliance frequency	
	Women	Men
1. Positive consequences of sexual compliance	.149**	.239**
2. Negative consequences of sexual compliance	.069	-.089*
3. Sexual communication	-.022	-.008
4. Sexual self-disclosure	-.046	-.012

Note. $N = 1,279$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

3.3 Pearson's two-tailed correlations

To examine correlations between study variables and the perceived consequences of sexual compliance, the analyses were conducted on the sample with additional exclusion criteria. In both genders, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between sexual communication and the perceived positive consequences of sexual compliance. In contrast, for the perceived negative consequences, there was a significant negative correlation between sexual communication for both genders. However, the association was moderate for women and weak for men. Similarly, there was also a significant but weak positive correlation between the perceived positive consequences and sexual self-disclosure for both men and women. Additionally, perceived negative consequences were significantly negatively correlated with sexual self-disclosure, though the association was very weak for both genders. These results suggest that individuals who report more comfort with sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure also report more perceived positive consequences. Conversely, those who report less comfort with sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure perceive more negative consequences.

Furthermore, sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure were significantly positively correlated for both men and women. The association was strong for women and moderate for men, suggesting that individuals who feel more comfort with sexual communication report

also greater sexual self-disclosure. Despite these correlations, the findings indicate that distinct aspects of sexual communication are successfully measured. Correlations and their significance levels can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Pearson's two-tailed Correlation Coefficients Between Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Positive consequences of sexual compliance		-.380**	.422**	.259**
2. Negative consequences of sexual compliance	-.297**		-.325**	-.138
3. Sexual communication	.310**	-.221*		.527**
4. Sexual self-disclosure	.293**	-.110*	.384*	

Note. $N = 1,066$. Correlations for women above the diagonal and for men below the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

3.4 Multiple linear regression models

Similarly with Pearson's two-tailed correlation analyses, multiple linear regressions were conducted on the sample with additional exclusion criteria. The associations described below measure the association when taking into account the other independent variables in the multiple regression model. For more information about the multiple linear regression models, see Table 5.

In the first multiple linear regression model for perceived positive consequences sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, gender, gender*sexual communication, and gender*sexual self-disclosure significantly explained 15.8% of the variance in positively perceived consequences of sexual compliance, $F(5, 1060) = 41.0, p < .001$. An examination of residuals revealed deviations from normality. There was skewness to the left in the distribution of the residuals and 1.4% of the residuals were over three standard deviations from the predicted value. To account for deviations from normality and improve the reliability of parameter estimates, bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples was applied. There was a significant positive association between sexual communication and perceived positive consequences, indicating that individuals who feel more comfort with sexual communication perceive more positive consequences. Gender showed a significant positive association with perceived positive consequences, suggesting that men report slightly more perceived positive consequences than women. The first

interaction term (gender * sexual communication) was significantly and negatively associated, suggesting that the association between sexual communication and perceived positive consequences is stronger for women than men. Conversely, the second interaction term (gender*sexual self-disclosure) showed a significant and positive association, suggesting that the association is stronger for men than women. In contrast, sexual self-disclosure alone was not significantly associated with the perceived positive consequences.

The second multiple linear regression model significantly explained 10.0% of the variance in negatively perceived consequences, $F(5, 1060) = 24.77, p < .001$. In this model, there was a problem with a non-normal distribution of residuals. The distribution showed a slight skewness to the right. Approximately 2.2% of the residuals were more than three standard deviations away from the predicted values. Therefore, similar bootstrapping techniques were applied as in the previous regression model. There was a significant negative association between sexual communication and perceived negative consequences, as well as between gender and perceived negative consequences. These results suggest that individuals who feel more comfortable with sexual communication report fewer negative consequences, and that men report fewer negative consequences than women. The first interaction term (gender * sexual communication) was significantly and negatively associated with the perceived negative consequences, indicating that the negative association between sexual communication and perceived negative consequences is stronger for women than for men. Sexual self-disclosure and its interaction with gender were not significantly associated.

Table 5*Multiple linear regression results*

Dependent variable	Predictor	<i>b</i>	BCa <i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>	95% BCa CI
Positive consequences	Gender	1.20	0.50	.07	.014	[0.14;2.11]
	Sexual communication	0.69	0.09	.41	<.001	[0.52;0.85]
	Sexual self-disclosure	0.04	0.04	.05	.225	[-0.03;0.11]
	Gender*Sexual communication	-0.31	0.12	-.13	.008	[-0.56;-0.06]
	Gender*Sexual self-disclosure	0.13	0.05	.16	.013	[0.03;0.22]
Negative consequences	Gender	-1.10	0.23	-.14	<.001	[-1.57;-0.62]
	Sexual communication	-0.30	0.06	.39	<.001	[-0.43;-0.18]
	Sexual self-disclosure	0.02	0.02	.05	.411	[-0.02;0.05]
	Gender *					
	Sexual communication	0.17	0.07	.16	.011	[0.05;0.30]
	Gender*Sexual self-disclosure	-0.03	0.03	-.05	.366	[-0.08;0.03]

Note. $N = 1,066$, b = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient (beta). Confidence intervals (CI) and standard errors (SE) are based on 1,000 BCa bootstrap samples. Gender was dummy-coded as 0 = woman and 1 = man.

4 Discussion

The present study examined the associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance in intimate relationships within a Finnish population-based sample. The potential role of gender was also explored. Four main research questions and three sub-questions were addressed to deepen understanding of how sexual communication processes relate to sexual compliance in intimate relationships. It was hypothesized that greater comfort in sexual communication and greater willingness to self-disclose sexually would be associated with less compliance frequency and more positive and fewer negative consequences. Further, it was expected that these associations would differ by gender, particularly that women might experience a stronger association between sexual communication and perceived consequences.

4.1 Sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the perceived consequences of sexual compliance

Participants who reported greater comfort with sexual communication with their partner tended to perceive more positive and fewer negative consequences from engaging in compliant sex, which aligns with the second hypothesis of this study. Prior research has highlighted that sexual communication benefits sexual and relational satisfaction (Galizia et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2018; Mallory et al., 2019), and the result of the current study expands that importance to the sexual compliance context. Furthermore, these findings support the contributing role of sexual communication to perceived consequences of sexual compliance found in a study by Gunst et al. (2023). The findings emphasize the notion that sexual communication functions as a positive relational buffer in sexual relationships.

Through sexual communication, partners create a shared understanding of their sexual relationship, to discuss topics related to sexual compliance openly. Research by Vannier and Sullivan (2010) found that it was common for partners to be aware of desire discrepancies and to accept them as a natural part of a sexual relationship. When partners communicate about sex, they may interpret sexual compliance as a mutual agreement to maintain a sexual connection. Furthermore, as partners are satisfied with the quality of these discussions, it can increase their desire to engage in sex, as partners feel more emotionally closer and secure within the relationship (Mark & Lasslo, 2018; Velten & Margraf, 2017). Thus, sexual communication plays a crucial role in how partners navigate and perceive desire discrepancies (Mallory et al., 2019). Through open communication, partners may reframe

desire discrepancies as manageable, temporary differences, allowing compliant sex to become a consensual and understood relational strategy rather than an individual sacrifice. In contrast, when sexual communication is lacking, compliance may lead to dissatisfaction, misinterpretations, or emotional disconnection. In this context, sexual communication not only addresses the concerns of desire discrepancies but also contributes to overall sexual satisfaction within the relationship.

Interestingly, contrary to the third hypothesis, sexual self-disclosure was not significantly associated with the consequences of sexual compliance. Although there were significant correlations between sexual self-disclosure and perceived consequences, a significant association was not found in the two separate multiple linear regression models, when sexual communication was taken into account. Furthermore, the study findings provide more precise insight into how sexual communication is associated with the perceived consequences, particularly in contrast to the study by Nickull, Jern et al. (2025), which did not investigate sexual self-disclosure. The results of this study suggest that sexual self-disclosure does not independently predict the perceived consequences when general sexual communication is accounted for. It seems that sexual self-disclosure does not provide additional explanatory value, as sexual communication captures the key aspects of these associations. In answer to the fourth research question represented in this study, these findings indicate that while sexual self-disclosure plays a role in sexual relationships, its contribution to the perceived consequences of sexual compliance is less significant than broader sexual communication.

Previous research has emphasized the importance of sexual self-disclosure in creating mutually satisfying sexual scripts (Byers, 2011), because disclosing refers to revealing their sexual needs and preferences. This is also associated with greater sexual satisfaction, as partners acknowledge each other's likes and dislikes (Coffelt & Hess, 2014). Based on these findings, this study assumed that greater sexual self-disclosure would be associated with more positive and fewer negative consequences of sexual compliance. However, as results revealed the significance of sexual communication rather than sexual self-disclosure, it is important to consider why dyadic aspects of communication may play a crucial role in shaping the perceived consequences of sexual compliance. Even when one partner discloses sexually, it does not guarantee acknowledgment or response from the partner. Prior studies have emphasized the importance of partner responsiveness in enhancing intimacy and sexual communication (Birnbaum & Reis, 2006; Reyes & Clark, 2024). Furthermore,

responsiveness to a partner's needs is argued to be important for maintaining sexual desire (Birnbaum et al., 2016). For instance, disclosing a lack of desire may be experienced differently depending on the partner's response. Thus, while self-disclosure remains an essential component of communication, its impact may depend on the relational context and partner reactions. These dyadic aspects were captured better in the measure of sexual communication, as it focused on comfort, openness, and satisfaction in discussing sexual matters. In conclusion, the study findings suggest that the perceived consequences are more strongly shaped by the broader dynamics of sexual communication.

4.2 The moderating role of gender

One main finding of the gender moderation was the association between sexual communication and perceived consequences being stronger for women than men, which is consistent with the second sub-questions hypothesis. This was true for both positive and negative consequences. Previous research has noted that greater levels of sexual communication are important for facilitating women's sexual desire and orgasm frequency (Mallory et al., 2019), underscoring its importance in fostering positive and satisfying sexual interactions. In the context of sexual compliance, this finding may help explain why sexual communication has a stronger association with the perceived consequences of sexual compliance for women than for men.

Gunst et al. (2023) found that sometimes in instances of compliant sex, sexual activity became pleasurable during the act. This refers to responsive desire, which is believed to be more dependent on effective sexual communication, as it fosters positive experiences such as emotional closeness and intimacy in intimate relationships (Basson, 2000; Birnbaum et al., 2016). Moreover, as responsive desire is more common among women than men, the positive consequence of sexual compliance reported in Gunst et al.'s (2023) study may be particularly relevant for women. This suggests that women may be more likely to perceive positive consequences from compliant sex when there is effective sexual communication, as it enables the emotional and relational context that supports responsive desire. In contrast, men typically experience more spontaneous desire, which may not rely as heavily on sexual communication (Mallory, 2019). This difference in sexual desire patterns could explain why sexual communication does not have the same significant impact on the perceived consequences of sexual compliance for men.

Furthermore, sexual compliance may be more negatively experienced in the absence of sexual communication because of the discomfort of traditional gender roles and sexual scripts, which reflect complying as a social obligation (Conroy et al., 2015; Reis et al., 2021). For example, Katz and Tirone's (2009) finding that women's approach motives to compliant sex were not associated with relationship satisfaction, along with Impett and Peplau's (2005) notions of the negative impact of avoidance motives, can be explained by traditional gender roles that place women responsible of sexual harmony. These dynamics were also supported in a scoping review by Reis et al. (2021), which found that sexual compliance may be linked to diminished sexual pleasure for women because women are expected to prioritize men's sexual pleasure over their own. Sexual communication allows partners to create mutually satisfying relationships, which eases the influence of traditional gender roles and sexual scripts (Master et al., 2013). This process of reshaping sexual norms and dynamics through communication may be especially beneficial for women, thereby accounting for the stronger association between sexual communication and the perceived consequences of sexual compliance.

Conversely, the other main finding of gender moderation was the association between sexual self-disclosure and perceived positive consequences being stronger for men than for women. Even though gender was significantly associated with perceived positive consequences, its Beta value was small, indicating a relatively weak effect that may not be scientifically meaningful. Moreover, the Beta value for the main effect of the gender was weaker than that for the interaction term (sexual self-disclosure*gender), and sexual self-disclosure was not independently associated with perceived positive consequences. As the Beta value for the interaction term is moderate and the interaction term is statistically significant, it suggests that the relationship between sexual self-disclosure and perceived positive consequences differs by gender. In other words, this association between these variables is different for men and women, which accounts for the significant interaction term. Specifically, a crossover interaction might be present, where the strength of the association between sexual self-disclosure and perceived positive consequences is stronger for men and weaker for women. For instance, while men might experience a stronger or more significant benefit from sexual self-disclosure, women may still experience some benefit, but it is weaker or less pronounced in comparison.

The stronger association found for men may reflect how traditional masculinity norms and sexual stereotypes discourage vulnerability, such as expressing sexual needs and boundaries (e.g., McQueen, 2017). This rigid stereotype may inhibit sexual self-disclosure and explain the outcomes when men engage in it. Moreover, existing stereotypes and sexual scripts expect men to experience high sexual desire and take the lead in sexual activity (Morgan et al., 2006). Expressing a lack of desire or sexual boundaries in instances of sexual compliance may be crucial for men because of these gendered dynamics. This finding can be linked to the study by Khera et al. (2022), in which more endorsement of traditional gender roles was associated with more frequent compliant sex. Men may benefit more from sexual self-disclosure because it allows them to break away from repeating the traditional role of masculinity, as stereotypes and sexual scripts shape how men are expected to operate in sexual interactions. Sexual self-disclosure creates a way to address men's personal sexual needs.

As noticed earlier, sexual communication with its association with perceived consequences of sexual compliance is important for women, it could be that sexual self-disclosure is more important for women than men too. Thus, the finding of the stronger association for men between sexual self-disclosure and perceived consequences, challenges that. When comparing the benefits of sexual compliance with women, the importance of dyadic context could explain these gender differences. In addition to findings of women's sexual desire being more dependent on feelings of intimacy and emotional connection, it is recognized that women's sexual desire tends to be more strongly influenced by the partner's responsiveness because it fosters intimacy between partners (Birnbaum et al., 2016). For women, the benefits of sexual self-disclosure may depend more on the partner's responsiveness. This gendered dynamic may help explain why sexual self-disclosure shows a stronger association with the perceived consequences of sexual compliance among men than among women. Furthermore, these considerations may help explain why sexual self-disclosure alone was not significantly associated with perceived consequences of sexual compliance but showed significant association for men.

4.3 Sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and the frequency of sexual compliance

Contrary to the first hypothesis of this study, the results revealed no significant associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and compliance frequency. As there

were no correlations between these study variables, possible gender differences were not examined. This finding may indicate that there is no clear association of how sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure are associated with the frequency of sexual compliance. One possible explanation is that a lack of sexual communication between partners is not necessarily manifest as sexual compliance. Conversely, greater sexual communication may not predict fewer instances of compliant sex.

These findings support the idea that, within committed relationships, sexual compliance is a complex behavior influenced by various relational and contextual factors (Impett & Peplau, 2003). For instance, partners might feel more comfortable engaging in compliant sex when they have communicated sexual needs and boundaries. Through sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure, compliant sexual interactions might embed part of partners' sex life and relational dynamics. Furthermore, partners may use sexual compliance to navigate desire discrepancies and maintain intimacy in the relationship (Herbenick et al., 2014; O'Sullivan & Allegeier, 1998). In this context, sexual compliance might serve as a mechanism through which couples navigate differing levels of sexual desire while maintaining intimacy, rather than being a direct result of poor communication. It is also possible that better communication does not directly increase the frequency of sexual compliance but instead helps partners navigate this behavior in a more trusting and open manner. In intimate relationships, communication allows sexual compliance to develop as a relational benefit that serves different functions, such as maintaining connection, rather than influencing the frequency of sexual compliance.

4.4 Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

A notable strength of the present study was its focus on examining sexual self-disclosure in the context of sexual compliance, which has not been investigated before. Furthermore, this study investigated more precisely associations between gender, sexual communication, and perceived consequences of sexual compliance. The study utilized population-based samples with large sample sizes, which provides a more representative understanding of sexual compliance and its associations with study variables. While many previous studies have focused on women, this study, to my knowledge, had the largest sample of men to date. The gender differences were measured reliably as the sample's gender distribution was quite equal. Unfortunately, gender minority participants were not included in the gender comparisons due to their small representation in the current sample. Moreover, the used

measurements had good, acceptable, and excellent internal consistency which demonstrates that items included in the scale in question are measuring the same construct. In addition, the Consequences of Sexual Compliance Scale (CSCS; Nickull, Lagerström et al., 2025) is the only psychometrically evaluated scale designed to assess perceived consequences of sexual compliance.

Nonetheless, several limitations must be acknowledged, when thinking about generalizability and representativeness of the results. The response rate to the survey was low at 7.2%, which may create bias in the data. Those who decided to respond to the survey may differ from those who chose not to respond, which potentially leads to an imbalance in the responses. The study estimates of the frequency and perceived consequences of sexual compliance cannot accurately be generalized to the whole population. For instance, compared to the Finnish population (Tilastokeskus, 2024), the sample of this study appears to have higher education than the general population. Furthermore, as the study was conducted using a Finnish population-based sample, the results may not apply to other countries and cultures. For instance, gender equality (World Population Review, 2024) and attitudes toward gender-role equality (Kolpashnikova et al., 2020) in Finland are demonstrated to be high.

Other limitations concern the scales, which assessed sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure. Firstly, the scales used asked respondents to evaluate how much they agreed with the items or how willing respondents were to discuss a certain sexual topic with their partner. However, even if respondents feel comfortable or willing to engage in sexual discussion, they might still choose not to reveal sexual information (Anderson et al., 2011). Thus, scales do not address how often sexual communication or sexual self-disclosure happens. Secondly, the scales did not take into account the partner's responses or reactions, which are critical in shaping communication dynamics. The impact of sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure may not be comprehensively understood without the dyadic aspects. Future studies should use measures or methods that address sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure better within the relational context.

Furthermore, participants' relationship length may have influenced the results. The mean length of the respondents' relationship was relatively long ($M = 8.9$), although the large standard deviation ($SD = 8.1$) suggests considerable variability within the sample. When relationships become more established, it is more likely that sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure become more frequent and comfortable (Mallory et al., 2019), which

was true also in the current study. Participants reported great comfort in sexual communication as the mean scores of relatively high for both women and men ($M = 22.5$ for women and $M = 22.4$ for men, possible range 5-30). Similarly for sexual self-disclosure, the mean scores fall on the higher end of the possible range ($M = 40.2$ for women and $M = 41.2$ for men, possible range 12-60). However, these findings are based on cross-sectional data, which do not account for how sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure evolve in intimate relationships. This may, however, affect the impact of sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure in differing relationship durations. For instance, sexual scripts are more likely to occur at the beginning of relationships (Masters et al., 2013), when communication is still forming and developing. Thus, compliance may have different consequences in early-stage relationships, where misunderstandings or unmet needs are likely to be more common. In turn, when the duration of the relationship increases and the partners become more comfortable engaging in sexual communication, the consequences can be more positive because partners gain knowledge of each other and create mutually satisfying experiences. Notably, the survey used in the current study asked participants to evaluate the consequences within a three-month timeframe, which does not capture the consequences of earlier compliant sex. In the future, research should assess these associations in longitudinal settings.

In addition to relationship duration, age should be considered. The sample consisted of adults with a mean age of 34.1 years. Similarly with relationship length, the data considering age and sexual communication is cross-sectional, but it is reasonable to assume that age shapes sexual interactions and how individuals communicate about those (Mallory et al., 2019). For instance, Khera et al. (2022) found that younger age predicted that men's sexual compliance was driven by motives linked to inexperience and peer pressure. These motives may be less relevant for older individuals, who typically have greater sexual experience and a more nuanced understanding of sexual dynamics. Therefore, both age and relationship duration should be considered as contextual variables, which shape the associations between sexual communication, sexual self-disclosure, and perceived consequences of sexual compliance. For instance, sexual compliance may play a different role at the beginning of relationships for young people compared to adults in long-term relationships.

4.5 Conclusions

The current study offered new insights and deepened the understanding of sexual compliance as a phenomenon. The study was the first to examine the distinct roles of sexual communication and sexual self-disclosure. Although the results did not find sexual self-

disclosure to independently contribute to the perceived consequences of sexual compliance when taking into account sexual communication, the findings highlighted the role of dyadic sexual communication in contributing to these consequences. When partners face sexual problems, facilitating sexual communication is a key strategy for addressing them. While sexual compliance may not initially be seen as a problem, sexual communication helps prevent it from developing into one. The association between sexual communication and perceived consequences was stronger for women, which expands the understanding of the importance of sexual communication in facilitating women's sexual satisfaction and desire. Above all, the findings of this study suggest that sexual communication and its components are relevant to how individuals experience the consequences of sexual compliance.

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Appendix A

Appendix A: The Consequences of Sexual Compliance Scale

During the past 3 months, have you experienced the following as a result of complying to sex?

1 = Never, 2 = Some of the time, 3 = Half of the time, 4 = Most of the time, 5 = All of the time

1. You felt anxious
2. You noticed that your sexual desire increased after you started having sex
3. Your self-esteem decreased
4. The sex was less pleasurable than usual
5. Your sexual desire decreased
6. Your relationship improved
7. It made you trust your partner less
8. The sex was pleasurable
9. You felt happy
10. You felt emotionally closer to your partner
11. You felt pressured
12. You experienced a positive effect on your well-being
13. Your partner was in a better mood afterward
14. Your partner became satisfied
15. You enjoyed making your partner happy
16. It helped you maintain your sex life
17. You had more fights with your partner
18. You experienced physical discomfort during sex
19. The amount of tension in your relationship increased
20. You felt resentment toward your partner

Appendix B

Appendix B: The Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale

Next follows a set of questions asking about your sexual relationship with your current partner. You do not need to have had sex previously with your partner to answer the questions.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Slightly agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly agree

1. Some sexual matters are too upsetting to discuss with my partner.
2. There are sexual issues or problems in our sexual relationship that we have never discussed.
3. My partner has no difficulty in talking to me about their sexual feelings and desires.
4. Talking about sex is a satisfying experience for both of us.
5. I have little difficulty in telling my partner what I do or don't do sexually.

Appendix C

Appendix C: The Sexual Self-Disclosure Scale-Revised

Indicate how much you are willing to discuss these topics with your partner.

1 = I would not be willing, 2 = I am slightly willing, 3 = I am moderately willing, 4 = I am almost totally willing, 5 = I am totally willing

1. My past sexual experiences
2. The kinds of touching that sexually arouse me
3. The sexual preferences that I have
4. The types of sexual behaviors I have engaged in
5. The sensations that are sexually exciting to me
6. What I would desire in a sexual encounter
7. The sexual positions I have tried
8. The types of sexual foreplay that feel arousing to me
9. The things I enjoy most about sex
10. Times when sex was distressing for me
11. Times when I was pressured to have sex
12. The aspects of sex that bother me

