**Premarital Sexual Compliance among Urban Indonesian Women: A Descriptive Study**

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**Abstract**

Premarital sexual compliance is a common phenomenon with women and this tendency is influenced by the socialization of gender roles. This descriptive study aims to discover the prevalence of premarital sexual compliance of women in the Jabodetabek area, their reasons for showing premarital sexual compliance, aspects in a relationship that precedes the occurrence of sexual compliance, and the emotional consequences of sexually compliant behavior. From 1444 research participants obtained through accidental sampling, there are 391 participants who have performed sexual compliance and their data were further analyzed to identify the intricacies of premarital sexual compliance in urban women in Jabodetabek. Results show that gender role and sexual script seem to influence the occurrence of premarital sexual compliance. Suggested intervention or prevention measures to eradicate this issue, among others, is the development of a program that will increase sexual assertiveness and to execute comprehensive sex education programs in schools.

Keywords: descriptive study, premarital sex, sexual compliance, urban Indonesian women

**Introduction**

How does one enter women or gender-related issues in urban studies? In an ever urbanized society, almost all issues seem relevant because they bring the data and analytical portion of gender-related issue. On the other hand, we still need to find the common ground of all these issues that make them relevant and important. In regard to women and gender-related issues in the urban society, the topic most often discussed is gender differences in the utilization of public space. Considering that urban planning and its infrastructures impact women and men differently, the issue most commonly raised is women’s perspective on feeling safe and comfortable in public areas, or how women perceive feeling safe and threatened in public areas in the urban context (McDowell, 2001).

Even so, gender-related topics are also usually confined within the context of physical-material space. We can then ask further: Is it relevant to discuss public or private space in the context of male-female intimate relationships? Romantic and sexual relationships between men and women, although not or not yet formally and legally bound in marriage, are more often regarded as private and personal relationships where third parties do not need and find it difficult to be involved.

Coming from this background, the current study focuses on issues of sexuality in the urban Indonesian society from the women’s point of view, especially those who are involved in premarital sexual relationship with their romantic partner. More specifically, the current study centers on the many dilemmas and conflicts regarding freedom vs. boundaries and the need to convince oneself to deserve love vs. the need to protect oneself.

Since the sexual revolution in the United States of America from 1960 to the 1970s, premarital sex has been one of the most discussed topic on sexuality in scientific American literature (“Premarital Sexual”, 1991; Twenge, Sherman, & Wells, 2015; Wright, 2015). The most common subtopic raised is about the society’s norms and values regarding pre-marital sex. A review found that people in the United States today show greater acceptance for premarital sex, compared to those in the 1970s and 1980s (Twenge et al., 2015). Generation Y or the Millennial Generation, born between 1982-1999, are even said to have created the “hook-up culture”, which is the practice of sexual activities without commitment, and they also came up with terms that describe such trend, including “friends with benefits” (Bogle, 2007; Stepp, 2007).

Notwithstanding the increasing acceptance towards premarital sex and the common presumption that the activity is done just for fun, the prevalence of premarital sex carried out by force is quite high at around 30-40% (French & Neville, 2016; Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004; Young & Furman, 2008). Although both men and women are able to give consent to the sexual activity they actually do not want to do, studies show that more women partake in sexual activities because they feel like they have to more often than men (Impett & Peplau, 2002; Katz & Tirone, 2009; O'Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998; Viscione, 2015). Even without pressure or immediate threat from their partner, women often feel that they need to have sex in order to satisfy their partners’ needs; a situation called sexual compliance (French & Neville, 2016; O’Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). This term was first introduced by O’Sullivan and Allgeier (1998), who defined sexual compliance as “consensual participation in unwanted sexual activity refers to situations in which a person freely consents to sexual activity with a partner without experiencing a concomitant desire for the initiated sexual activity. In a sense, they feign sexual desire or interest” (p. 234).

**Gender role socialization and the reason why women show sexual compliance**

Impett and Peplau (2003) argued that conventional gender role socialization cultivates compliant behavior, including compliance in the sexual context with women. In the society, ‘ideal femininity’ for women is still closely associated with beauty, nurturance, and self sacrifices. This socialized content eventually influences women to develop an identity that is oriented to fulfilling the needs of others, maintaining close relationships with others, to be a ‘caretaker’ who supplies emotional support to others (Hyde & Else-Quest, 2013; Impett & Peplau, 2003; Walker, 1997). There are many reasons women give to justify their sexual compliance are consistent with the feeling of being obligated to their partner. Several studies show that women perform sexual activities they do not want to do because they feel as if they are obligated to fulfill their partner’s sexual needs, do not want to hurt their partner’s feelings or make them feel rejected, want to avoid conflict, want their partner to stay attracted to them, want to feel accepted by their partner, and want to improve intimacy in the relationship, among other things (Gavey in French & Neville, 2016; Impett & Peplau, 2002; Lewin, 1985; O’Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). If they ‘fail’ to fulfill their ‘duties’, they develop the fear of losing their partner.

**Sexual compliance and its consequences**

Sexual compliance is not a phenomenon to be taken lightly because it has the potential to incur an array of negative emotional and physical consequences to the women involved. Maass (2006) stated that sexual compliance that arises from romantic feelings at the early stages of a relationship may make a woman feel like she has successfully accommodated her beloved partner’s needs, however, as the relationship progresses, the same woman may feel hurt because they feel like they do not have an equal role in the relationship. Sexual intercourse or anal sex performed without vaginal lubrication, due to a lack of sexual desire, will hinder a smooth penile penetration process (Cahill, 2001), which in turn may irritate the vagina or anus (Segarra-Echebarria, Fernandez-Perez, Gracia-Moncho, & Delarze-Carillo, 2015). Furthermore, compliant sex also increase the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS or cervical cancer). This is because women who perform sexual activities because they feel like they have to tend to feel reluctant to ask for protection or contraception (Katz & Tirone, 2009; Liu, 2006; Thiangtham, Bennett, & Nuntaboot, 2010).

**Sexual compliance and Indonesian values**

The impacts of sexual compliance indeed make this phenomenon worth reviewing. Different from American studies from the past two decades, which highlights sexual compliance in women, there is yet a study in Indonesia which systematically reviews this phenomenon. The topic of sexuality, especially premarital sex, is still taboo in Indonesia. From the religious as well as cultural point of view, premarital sex is considered socially deviant, unhealthy, immoral, illegal, and dangerous (Bennett, 2005; Bennett, 2007; Holzner & Oetomo, 2004). In Islam, the majority religion in Indonesia, premarital sex is called *zina*, an offence punishable by the *shariah,* the Muslim justice system (Bennett, 2005). Even though this rule applies to men and women, the social construction really counts heavily on the protection of chastity and virginity in women. Women who have lost their virginity before marriage are usually demeaned by stigma and terminologies such as ‘broken’, ‘damaged’, ‘cheap’, and ‘easy’.

The authors predict that the taboo nature of the issue may increase the complexity of the problem with sexual compliance in Indonesia. Women who perform sexual compliance may experience an internal conflict, in that on the one hand they feel as if they have to please their partner, but on the other hand, they know that what they are doing is wrong and is a sin according to their religion. Moreover, the negative stigma labelled to unmarried women who are no longer virgins can also push women to make sure that their partner never leaves them; one way is by doing anything their partner desires, including in the sexual realm. All things considered, the authors suspect that the issue with virginity and the fear that no men will want to marry women who are no longer virgins cause women to stay in relationships that involve sexual compliance.

Seeing as there is no published review on sexual compliance in Indonesia yet - which covers the complex relationship between premarital sex and religion and/or culture in Indonesia as well as the potential repercussions that come with it - the authors seek to capture the portrait of sexual compliance in unmarried women in Indonesia, especially in the urban Jabodetabek area. Even though there is yet a systematic review that compares sexual behavior in urban and rural Indonesia, Holzner and Oetomo (2004) have found that the urban society’s openness to sexuality has increased, which will make the findings of this study an interesting discussion topic to young urban Indonesians. This descriptive research aims to discover the prevalence of premarital sexual compliance in women in the Jabodetabek area, reasons why they show premarital sexual compliance, factors in the relationship that precede sexual compliance, and emotional consequences caused by sexually compliant behaviors.

**Methods**

*Procedure*

Data were collected online, through a survey portal managed by the University of Indonesia: survey.ui.ac.id. Samples were chosen accidentally (accidental sampling) by sharing the link to the survey in social media and forums that discuss women issues. The target participants are: women who lives in Jabodetabek, are unmarried, have been in a romantic relationship, and are heterosexual. Data was collected between February 8th - March 29th, 2017.

There were 1444 women who matches the above criteria and participated to the end of the survey. Data from these participants were processed to obtain the prevalence of sexual compliance of women in Jabodetabek. Some 391 participants reported that they have done sexual activities they did not want to do or that they did it because they felt like they had to. They, however, were never forced to do the sexual activities by deliberate intoxication, receiving physical violence, or being threatened by their partner. These data will be analyzed further to identify the reasons why they performed sexual compliance, factors in the relationship that precede sexual compliance, and emotional consequences caused by sexually compliant behaviors.

*Measures*

Most data on this survey were obtained through a single item with several answer options. This format was chosen because if the questions presented in the online survey are too open-ended, the authors cannot ensure that the participants will respond according to the context as there was no chance to clarify their understanding of the questions. The choice of answers were decided based on a literature review and discussion between the first and second author. Moreover, there was a space after each question where participants can elaborate their answer if they need to.

*Demographic section*

This section asked the basic demographic questions, including age, gender, domicile, education, religion, occupation, ethnicity, marital status, and sexual orientation.

*Dating experiences*

This section asked whether the participant have previously dated or been in a romantic relationship, are currently in a romantic relationship, and the duration of the current relationship.

*Sexual compliance experiences*

Participants were asked to check off the list of sexual activities they have done with their partner. The list included: 1) holding hands; 2) hugging; 3) kissing of the forehead or cheeks; 4) kissing of the lips; 4) necking (kissing of the neck area); 5) groping of the chest area (breasts); 6) groping of the genitals; 7) petting (rubbing one’s genitals against the partner’s genitals); 8) oral sex (the participant to the partner); 9) oral sex (the partner to the participant); 10) anal sex; 11) sexual intercourse. The list of sexual activities were developed based on Caroll’s finding (2010) and adjusted through a discussion between the authors.

The participant were then asked whether each sexual activity were done based on their own will or if they felt they were obliged to perform something they actually did not want to do. Afterwards, there was an item which asked which of the chosen sexual activities were done even though they did not want to. Participants were then asked whether the sexually compliant behavior(s) or activity were performed in the current or previous relationship.

*Reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activities*

Reasons for showing sexual compliance were identified by through 14 statements on reasons that may influence women to comply to doing sexual activities they actually do not want to do. The participants were asked to rate the suitability of each statement to their situation (“very not true to my situation” = 1, “not true to my situation” = 2, “true to my situation” = 3, or “very true to my situation” = 4). All 14 statements were developed based on a literature review on sexual compliance (Humphreys & Kennett, 2011; Impett & Peplau 2002; Meston & Buss, 2007; O’Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998; Shotland & Hunter 1995). An example of the statement is: “I am afraid of losing my boyfriend if I do not perform the sexual activity” and “Doing sexual activities is a norm/habit in our relationship”.

The authors did not aim to identify the correlation between the fourteen statements or treat them all as one, rather as individual items that explain different things. Due to this, there was no psychometric test conducted to test the consistency of the items.

*Partner’s behavior(s) that influence sexual compliance*

Sexual compliance is the behavior of voluntarily complying to the partner’s sexual requests, without any pressure or threat from the partner. However, the reality is that there may very well be behaviors performed or shown by the partner that influence a woman’s decision to have compliant sex. The authors’ review of two literatures show that sometimes there are mild or subtle pressures to do sexual activities, making room for the women to comply (Livingston, Buddie, Testa, & VanZile-Tamsen, 2004; Shackleford & Goetz, 2004). Based on these literatures, the authors have come up with 15 types of partner’s behavior that may influence women to show sexual compliance and asked the participants to check off the items that were done to them.

*Emotional consequences of complying to unwanted sex*

The emotional consequences of sexual compliance was determined by the question “What feelings or emotions emerged after you perform a sexual activity? (you may choose more than 1)”. The answer options were developed based on the variety of emotions that may arise from first sexual experiences according to Guggino and Ponzetti (1997) and adjusted through a discussion between the authors.

*Daya analysis*

There are two types of data on the current study: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistical analysis which involves the measuring of mean, standard deviation, and percentages.

**Results**

One of the aims of the current study is to figure out the prevalence of sexual compliance of women in Jabodetabek. From 1444 samples of the study, 30.75% reported that they have done one or more unwanted sexual activity or that they did it because they felt like they had to. Eighty-eight percent or 391 people from this group reported that they have never received pressure in the form of physical violence, verbal threats, or were intoxicated by their partner to perform the sexual activity.

**Demographic characteristics and sexual compliance experience**

There is a significant correlation between age and sexual compliance. The participants’ age range is 15-47 years old ( = 24.04,SD = 3.47), and the percentage of participants aged 25 and below who have shown sexual compliance is significantly greater than that of the participants aged 25 and above ( = 7.049, < 0.05). The percentage of sexual compliance of participants with at least 12 years of education is also significantly lower than that of those with less than 12 years of education ( = 8.127, < 0.05). This result indicates that older age and higher education can be protective factors for women to not consent to unwanted sex. Meanwhile, there is no significant relationship between religion and sexual compliance ( = 3.478, > 0.05). The prevalence of sexual compliance within each religion of participants are equal. Demographic characteristics of participants and the prevalence of sexual compliance among them are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants who have and have never shown sexual compliance**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Compliance (%)  *N* = 391 | Non-Compliance (%)  *N* = 1444 |  | |  | |
| Age |  |  |  |  | |
| < 25 years | 262 (29.5) | 625 (70.5) | 7.049 | | 0.008\* | |
| ≥ 25 years | 129 (23.4) | 428 (76.8) |  | |  | |
| Education |  |  |  | |  | |
| < 12 years | 104 (33.4) | 207 (66.6) | 8.127 | | 0.004\* | |
| ≥ 12 years | 287 (25.3) | 846 (74.7) |  | |  | |
| Religion |  |  |  | |  | |
| Moslem | 229 (27.0) | 618 (73.0) | 3.478 | | 0.324 | |
| Christian/Catholic | 130 (27.5) | 342 (72.5) |  | |  | |
| Others | 29 (29.30) | 70 (70.7) |  | |  | |
| Unknown | 3 (11.5) | 23 (88.5) |  | |  | |

\* Significant to the *alpha level* = 0.01

**(Unwanted) sexual activities**

Almost half (49.0% and 42.6%) of the participants reported that they have given or received oral sex, a third of them (37.0%) have had sexual intercourse, while 6.4% of them have had anal sex. The top five most unwanted sexual activity but were done by the participants are giving oral sex (21.1%), anal sex (19.4%), sexual intercourse (18.2%), groping of the genitals (14.2%) and receiving oral sex (14.0%). Results also show that participants are more uncomfortable with giving oral sex rather than receiving them. Table 2 shows the complete information of the types of sexual activities the participants have done and the prevalence of the unwanted sexual activities.

**Table 2. Sexual activities done and the prevalence of unwanted sexual activities**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sexual activities | Number of experience (%)  *N* = 1444 | Number of experienced but unwanted sexual activities (%)\*  *N* = varied across sexual activities |
| Holding hands | 1351 (93.6) | 19 (1.4) |
| Hugging | 1321 (91.5) | 21 (1.6) |
| Kissing of the forehead or cheeks | 1271 (88.0) | 21 (1.7) |
| Kissing of the lips | 1205 (83.4) | 74 (6.1) |
| Necking | 1003 (69.5) | 60 (6.0) |
| Breast fondling | 993 (68.8) | 124 (12.5) |
| Groping of the genitals | 901 (62.4) | **128 (14.2)** |
| Petting | 724 (50.1) | 89 (12.3) |
| Giving oral sex | 707 (49.0) | **149 (21.1)** |
| Receiving oral sex | 615 (42.6) | **86 (14.0)** |
| Anal sex | 93 (6.4) | **18 (19.4)** |
| Sexual intercourse | 534 (37.0) | **97 (18.2)** |

\*Those printed in bold are the five most unwanted sexual activity by the participants

**Reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activities**

The most agreed upon reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activities, in descending order, are to avoid tension/conflict ( = 2.75), wanting to be accepted by the partner ( = 2.74), not wanting to hurt the partner’s feelings ( = 2.71), not wanting to make the partner feel rejected ( = 2.67), to prevent the partner from losing interest in them ( = 2.57), and wanting to increase intimacy ( = 2.52). Table 3 shows the complete information on the reasons why participants consented to unwanted sexual activities.

**Table 3. Reasons for consenting to unwanted sexual activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Mean\*  *N* = 683 |
| Guilty feeling | 2.34 |
| Wanting to be accepted by the partner | **2.74** |
| Fear that she will lose her partner | 2.08 |
| Not wanting to hurt the partner’s feelings | **2.71** |
| To avoid tension/conflict | **2.75** |
| The feeling that she “must” satisfy the partner’s needs | 2.32 |
| Wanting to be more liked/loved by the partner | 2.28 |
| To prevent the partner from losing interest in them | **2.57** |
| Not wanting to make the partner feel rejected | **2.67** |
| Feeling that she has agreed to do the sexual activity with the current partner | 2.30 |
| Feeling that she has agreed to do the sexual activity with a former partner | 1.69 |
| Wanting to increase intimacy | **2.52** |
| Sexual activity has become the norm or a habit | 2.30 |
| Fear that the quality of the relationship will decline | 2.06 |

\*Those printed in bold are reasons with > 2.5 on a scale of 1-4

**Partner’s behavior(s) that influence sexual compliance**

Table 4 show several behaviors performed or done by the partner to initiate or persuade participants to do a certain sexual activity. The most reported behaviors, in decreasing order, are saying that they love or care for the participant (60.1%), begging (38.4%), admiring the participant’s beauty or body (36.6%), negotiating (34.0%), and questioning why the participant does not want to do sexual activities (30.7%).

**Table 4. Partner’s behavior(s) that influence sexual compliance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number of cases (%)\*  *N* = 391 |
| Admiring the participant’s beauty or body | **143 (36.6)** |
| Saying that they love or care for the participant | **235 (60.1)** |
| Comparing participant with a former partner | 25 (6.4) |
| Asking why the participant does not want to do sexual activities | **120 (30.7)** |
| Promising that he will be responsible | 81 (20.7) |
| Begging | **150 (38.4)** |
| Sulking | 94 (24.0) |
| Asking to be felt sorry for | 56 (14.3) |
| Feeling sorry for himself | 23 (5.9) |
| Doubting the participant's sexual attraction to the partner by questioning | 30 (7.7) |
| Crying | 6 (1.5) |
| Negotiating | **133 (34.0)** |
| Questioning the participant’s feelings for him | 61 (15.6) |
| Promising a gift | 8 (2.0) |

\*Those printed in bold are the partner’s behaviors that were reported by more than 30% of the participants

**Emotional consequences of complying to unwanted sex**

Table 5 shows the variety of emotions that may be felt by women after performing sexual activities. We can see that the participants’ answers to describe how they feel after performing unwanted sexual activities also varies, from positive emotions: loved (58.1%), happy (46%), romantic (45.8%), dan satisfied (46%), as well as negative emotions: guilty (58.1%), scared (42.2%), regret (41.4%), ashamed (39.4%), and confused (38.1%).

**Table 5. Emotion(s) experienced after consenting in unwanted sexual activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number of cases (%)\*  *N* = 391 |
| Satisfied | **165 (42.2)** |
| Happy | **180 (46)** |
| Joyful | 71 (18.2) |
| Romantic | **179 (45.8)** |
| Loved | **227 (58.1)** |
| Sad | 102 (26.1) |
| Exploited | 95 (24.3) |
| Tense | 54 (13.8) |
| Scared | **165 (42.2)** |
| Guilty | **227 (58.1)** |
| Nervous | 55 (14.1) |
| Ashamed | **154 (39.4)** |
| Confused | **149 (38.1)** |
| Angry | 52 (13.3) |
| Regret | **162 (41.4)** |
| Apprehensive | 107 (27.4) |
| Disgusted | 64 (16.4) |

\*Those printed in bold are the emotions reported by more than 30% of the participants

Looking at the variety of answers reported by the participants, the authors have categorized the reported emotions into three categories: positive emotions, negative emotions, and conflicting emotions (see Table 6). The positive emotions category was assigned to participants who reported positive emotions exclusively (satisfied, happy, joyful, romantic, or loved). The negative emotions category was assigned to participants who reported negative emotions exclusively (sad, exploited, tense, scared, guilty, nervous, ashamed, confused, angry, regret, apprehensive, or disgusted). The conflicting emotions category was assigned to participants who reported both positive and negative emotions.

Results show that a majority of the participants (64.34%) reported having conflicting feelings regarding their experience with unwanted sexual activities. On the one hand, they had positive feelings (loved, happy, etc.), but they also felt negative emotions (guilty, regret, etc.).

**Table 6. Categorization of emotion(s) experienced after doing unwanted sexual activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number of cases (%)\*  *N* = 387\* |
| Positive | 59 (15.25) |
| Negative | 79 (20.41) |
| Conflicting | **249 (64.34)** |

\* Four participants did not report their feelings specifically; they stated that the sexual activities they had done did not trigger any emotions or that they were unsure of how to label the emotions they felt

**Discussion**

*Conclusions and discussion of findings*

The current study discussed the urban society, that was reviewed by Paddison (2001) as an experienced context. As something that is experienced, what is examined are social actions that are revealed through stories or narrations. What is told are issues with sexuality, especially premarital sex as an unpleasant experience, though a lot of young women are finding it hard to assertively say no.

The current study successfully illustrates the premarital sexual compliance phenomenon in women in Jabodetabek, looking at the prevalence, reasons, factors in the relationship that precede the occurrence of sexual compliance, as well as emotional consequences incited by sexual compliance. This section will discuss the findings of the study, its strengths and limitations, and the implications of the study for future research.

The current study shows very different results compared to an earlier survey conducted by Utomo, McDonald, Hull, and Reimondos (2012) to 3006 people ages 20-34 in Jakarta, Bekasi, and Tangerang. On that research, only 5% of unmarried women reported to having had sexual intercourse, whereas on the current study, 37% of unmarried women reported that they have had sexual intercourse. High figures were also found for experiences in having oral sex, where respectively 49.0% and 42.6% of the participants reported to have given and received oral sex to and from their partner. The difference in findings may be the result of the different sampling techniques used, where Utomo and colleagues’ (2012) study used clustered sampling, whereas the current study used accidental sampling therefore the participants obtained may not necessarily represent all layers of the community in Jabodetabek. Moreover, the majority of the participants of the current study have an undergraduate degree and from Utomo and colleagues’ (2012) research, it was known that the higher the level of education, the higher the chance that the individual have had their first sexual experience before marriage. This may indicate that the higher an individual’s level of education, the more open they are towards premarital sexual activities. What needs to be reviewed on the next study is whether openness towards premarital sexual activities is accompanied by the knowledge and action of using protection or contraceptives to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

We will now discuss findings on unwanted sexual activities. There seems to be a pattern that sexual activities that are normatively considered to be taboo (such as groping of the genitals, oral sex, anal sex, and sexual intercourse) are more reported as unwanted sexual activities by the participants, even though they have done it. Meanwhile, only 1.4% of the participants felt that they have held hands with their partners even though they did not want to. This can be explained by Bennett (2005) who said that even though the act of holding hands with the opposite sex before marriage is still considered taboo by some conservative groups, this activity still occurs more and is considered more acceptable than kissing or sexual intercourse.

Another finding that should be discussed, among others, is regarding the reasons why women give consent to doing unwanted sexual activities. Based on the reason most agreed upon by the participants, we can see that the reason women give consent to doing unwanted sexual activities matches the gender role of women in the society. The socialization of gender roles to women which highlights the ‘ideal femininity’, associated with nurturance and self sacrifices (Hyde & Else-Quest, 2013; Impett & Peplau, 2003; Walker, 1997), eventually pushes women to perform unwanted sexual activities to avoid hurting their partner’s feelings, avoid conflicts, or increase intimacy. As women who also has to duty to nurture, they perceive fulfilling their partner’s sexual requests as one way to be accepted by their partner.

The interactional aspect in a relationship is also an important factor be considered in the discussion of sexual compliance. Due to this, the authors have also pointed out partner’s behaviors that may influence the occurrence of sexual compliance. Findings show that the most reported partner’s behaviors matches the male sexual script. Sexual script is implicit rules about the who, when, what, where, and how individuals should perform sexual activities (Laws & Schwartz, in Sollie & Leslie, 1994), which includes rules on how to assert authority, communicate topics of sexual activity, and sexual negotiations (Baber & Allen, in Sollie & Leslie, 1994). When women rejects men’s sexual advances, men are expected to continue their sexual persuasions, ignoring the rejections, until the women gives up and gives in to the sexual invitation. In general, women are considered as ‘playing hard to get’ and are expected to agree to having sex if the men continues to persuade (Maass, 2006). For the participants of the current study, those persuasions appear in the form of declaration of love, begging, admiring beauty or body, negotiating, and asking why the participant does not want to do the sexual activity. These information gives a clearer picture of the process that occurs in sexual compliance; that there are behaviors asserted by men to persuade their partner to consent to one or more sexual activities without being forceful or resorting to physical violence.

Another important finding to be discussed is regarding emotions felt by women after participating in unwanted sexual activities. The majority of participants show conflicting emotions, in that they feel romantic and loved on the one side, but on the other hand they also feel negative emotions, predominantly feelings of guilt, fear, and regret. This finding confirms the complexity of the issue with sexual compliance in Indonesia and illustrates the conflict unique to Indonesian women in this situation. They are conflicted between needing to please their partner by consenting to their sexual requests–so they can feel romantic, accepted, and loved–and realizing that they should not perform premarital sexual activities because they do not align with their beliefs, which consequently triggers guilt, fear, and regret.

*Strengths and limitations*

The current study have given the snapshot of sexual compliance as a phenomenon in the premarital context of urban Indonesia. This snapshot is new information to the archive of psychological studies in Indonesia because there was previously no study which examined the topic of sexual compliance.

Putting aside this accomplishment, the current study is not susceptible to a few limitations. First of all, the current study used an unsystematic non-probability sampling technique, which means that the participants obtained might not fairly represent all of Jabodetabek.

Secondly, the authors also did not collect comprehensive information to get a complete picture of the interactions that take place in a relationship preceding sexual compliance. The authors only asked about what partners did to the participant that influences the participant’s decision to consent to unwanted sexual activities. The authors did not ask about how the participants responded to their partner’s sexual advances. Therefore, further studies are suggested to ask about behaviors performed by both the participants and their partner during the said sexual initiation, so we can get a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction preceding sexual compliance.

Thirdly, there is a structure of a question in the questionnaire that is deemed confusing by a few participants, which may have led to the possibility of misinterpretation. To evaluate the emotions felt by participants after doing unwanted sexual activities, the authors asked: “What emotions come up after you finish a sexual activity (you may choose more than 1)?” Even though previous questions refer to unwanted sexual experiences, the authors did not explicitly state in the above question that the participant should respond by refering only to unwanted sexual activities. There is a possibility that other than unwanted sexual experiences, the participant have also had wanted sexual experiences, therefore their answer to the question may have referred to both. In this situation, the authors are unable to make sure or clarify that the selected emotions only refer to their unwanted sexual experiences. Further studies are suggested to formulate every question specifically, context-wise, to prevent misinterpretations.

Fourthly, on the same question, the choice of negative emotions (12) are a lot more than the choice of positive emotions (5). Although the decision of using the options involved a literature review and discussion between the authors, the difference of positive and negative emotions may become a potential bias, leading participant to choose more negative emotions. Further studies should provide an equal choice of positive and negative emotions.

*Implications*

Looking at the high prevalence and complexity of the issue of sexual compliance in Indonesia, the authors propose the development an intervention or prevention program to eradicate this problem. Results of several studies show that one of the protective factors for women from performing sexual compliance is if she can perform sexual assertiveness (Carlson & Johnson, 1975; Greene & Navarro, 1998; Morokoff, 2000; Rickert, Sanghvi, & Wiemann, 2002; Schry & White, 2013; Testa & Dermen, 1999; Viscione, 2015). Sexual assertiveness also positively correlates with the use of condoms in order to protect oneself from pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases (Morokof et al., 2009; Noar, Morokoff, & Harlow, 2004). Based on this finding, the authors suggest that the aforementioned intervention or prevention program focuses on increasing the sexual assertiveness of unmarried women.

Other than the program to increase sexual assertiveness, the authors also see the ever growing need to implement a comprehensive sex education program in schools. This is very important because there are more than a third of the participants who felt confused and scared after doing sexual activities. The conflicting emotions they felt also reflect that perhaps the participants are not entirely sure of what they want sexually, and this may root from the lack of knowledge of their sexuality.

*Regarding gender review in urban societies*

As mentioned at the beginning, the current study discusses sexuality, something that is heavily influenced by the construction of gender-related topics, which are difficult to be confined in the context of physical-material space (Paddison, 2001). As something that is experienced, urban communities have begun to give more freedom to its inhabitants than before. People are free to do anything, including have sexual relations, especially within closed doors or in private. On the other hand, for women, this freedom has its own dilemmas, keeping in mind the challenges and vulnerabilities, and stigmas that are still associated with women as its consequences.

In the discussion of public vs. private space in the context of intimate relationships between men and women, it seems that it is not enough to remember that romantic relationships are more often seen as private and personal, where third parties do not need and find it hard to be involved. Peake (2009) said that, “This analytical view of the city as a space of containment for women has been challenged by those who put forward a view of the city as a contradictory and shifting space that allows women opportunities.” (p. 327) Therefore, integrating people’s stories as experiences with the review of the city that is functional in nature, perhaps new questions should be raised. For instance, to what extent do women feel safe and comfortable in their own home, and is feeling safe and comfortable the same between women who are away from their partner (e.g. living separately) and those who live together with their partner?

Furthermore, Peake (2009) stated that, “Research has also shown how women have made numerous attempts to create their own urban spaces.” (p. 327) Women take steps to respond to the structures of patriarchal urban social space. Then the question for the next study should be: How do women manage to feel safe and comfortable with their sexuality–in the physical and social, public and private space–wherever they are?

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