



# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SEXUAL CONSENT AMONG ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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## Abstract:

This research delves into the nuanced interrelationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Sexual Consent (SC) within the context of intimate partnerships. The primary aim was to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on the negotiation and comprehension of sexual consent among romantic partners. A sample of 132 participants, comprising 66 females and 66 males, ranging in age from 18 to 65 and engaged in romantic relationships, contributed data through structured questionnaires: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the Sexual Consent Scale, Revised (SCS-R). Utilizing SPSS software for analysis, the study unveiled a statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = .285$ ,  $p = .001$ ) between emotional intelligence and sexual consent. This correlation underscores the vital role of emotional skills in fostering transparent and mutually agreed-upon communication about intimacy, particularly in the sensitive domain of consent negotiation. The findings illuminate the potential for emotional intelligence to serve as a fundamental element in cultivating mutual respect and understanding within romantic relationships. Moreover, the study suggests that educational programs integrating emotional intelligence training could enhance the communication of consent, potentially reducing instances of miscommunication and non-consensual encounters. Future research endeavors should explore the role of emotional intelligence in diverse cultural contexts and relationship types, while also implementing targeted interventions to promote healthier and more respectful intimate relationships. In essence, this study provides valuable insights into the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence and sexual consent, offering implications for relationship counseling, sex education, and public health initiatives.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, sexual consent, romantic relationships,

## Introduction

Romantic relationships are essential for human interaction, as they create strong emotional and physical bonds between partners. These bonds affect various aspects of individuals' well-being, such as their emotions, psychology, and health. They also shape their perspective on life. To achieve healthy and satisfying partnerships, it is important to understand the various factors that influence romantic relationships, such as how they start, last, and end, as well as the difficulties and benefits that they entail for personal development and happiness.

One of the factors that has received a lot of attention recently is emotional intelligence. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, comprehend, and manage one's own emotions and those of others. It has four components: perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and

managing emotions. This ability is crucial for interpersonal relationships, as it helps with communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. Developing emotional intelligence can improve romantic relationships, as it allows partners to share their feelings and needs, listen to and support their partner's emotions, and deal with stress and negative emotions. Studies have found that emotional intelligence is related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction, intimacy, trust, and commitment, and lower levels of relationship conflict, aggression, and infidelity.

For example, a meta-analysis by Malouff, Schutte, and Thorsteinsson (2014) found that trait emotional intelligence significantly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction, suggesting that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to have more satisfying romantic relationships.

Another factor that is vital for romantic relationships is sexual consent. Sexual consent is the act of permitting to engage in sexual activity, based on autonomy, respect, and communication. It requires expressing one's wishes, limits, and choices, as well as hearing and honoring those of one's partner. Appreciating sexual consent is essential for having healthy sexual encounters and preventing sexual misconduct in relationships, such as coercion, assault, or rape. Sexual consent is not only a legal obligation, but also a moral and ethical duty, as it shows the values of respect, dignity, and equality that are necessary for any relationship. Research has indicated that sexual consent is affected by various factors, such as gender norms, sexual scripts, alcohol use, and peer pressure, and that it can have significant impacts on sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, and relationship quality.

In exploring the dynamics of sexual consent, Newstrom, Harris, and Miner (2021) found that while there are commonalities in how consent is communicated, gender differences significantly affect how consent cues are expressed and understood. Their study suggests that women are more likely to interpret direct forms of communication as consent indications, whereas men are more likely to interpret indirect communication strategies as consent indications<sup>2</sup>.

Although emotional intelligence is widely acknowledged as an important skill for interpersonal relationships, its role in sexual consent has not been sufficiently investigated. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring how emotional intelligence and sexual consent are connected in romantic relationships. This paper claims that emotional intelligence is a key factor that determines how partners negotiate and respect sexual consent in romantic relationships, and that higher levels of emotional intelligence lead to more positive and satisfying sexual experiences.

To further support this claim, Garcia et al. (2019) investigated the role of affectionate behaviors, traditionally associated with romantic relationships, in casual sex encounters among U.S. undergraduate emerging adults. They found that while affectionate behaviors were desired more often in romantic relationships than in casual sexual encounters, many individuals engaged in these behaviors during casual sexual encounters as well.

Additionally, a study conducted in Israel assessed the relationship between emotional intelligence, attachment styles, and satisfaction with romantic relationships among young adults. The results underscore the interplay between emotional intelligence and attachment in shaping relationship satisfaction (Zysberg, Kelmer, and Mattar, 2019).

Lastly, research on navigating love in a post-pandemic world provides insights into the social representations of love and relationships, analyzing data from a diverse group of participants to reveal high consensus elements (Mengzhen et. al, 2023). By weaving these studies into the narrative, we can better understand the complex interplay between emotional intelligence, sexual consent, and the overall quality of romantic relationships. This enriched narrative underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in fostering satisfying and respectful partnerships.

## Methodology

**Aim:** The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual consent among Romantic Partners.

**Objective:** To assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Consent among romantic partners.

**Hypothesis:** There will be a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Consent among romantic partners.

**Sample:** The study comprises 132 participants (66 females, 66 males), ranging in age from 18 to 65, who are currently engaged in romantic relationships, inclusive of both married and unmarried individuals.

**Sampling Method:** The study employs purposive sampling with a voluntary response approach to select participants who are actively involved in romantic relationships across diverse regions of India.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:** The inclusion criteria encompass 132 individuals aged 18-65 who are in romantic relationships. The exclusion criteria pertain to individuals who are not currently engaged in romantic relationships.

**Research Design:** This descriptive study utilizes a correlational research design to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Consent.

### Variables:

Independent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Dependent Variable: Sexual Consent

### Measurement Instruments:

Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) by Schutte et al. (1998): A 33-item instrument with a reliability coefficient of 0.93, designed to assess various facets of Emotional Intelligence on a Likert scale.

Sexual Consent Scale, Revised (SCS-R) by Humphreys et al. (2010): A 40-item scale with a reliability coefficient of 0.89, intended to measure attitudes and behaviors pertinent to sexual consent, also utilizing a Likert scale.

**Procedure:** Participants were invited to voluntarily complete the SSEIT and SCS-R. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS software package. The process ensured informed consent, upholding the participants' rights and privacy throughout the study.

**Data Analysis:** Statistical methods, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, will be employed to analyze the relationship between the variables.

## Result Analysis

**Table 1**

### Correlation between Sexual Consent and Emotional Intelligence

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2
1. Sexual Consent	132	155.80	30.314	—	.285**
2. Emotional Intelligence	132	126.55	12.781	.285**	—

Note. M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation\*\*p< .01.

The table indicates a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and sexual consent ( $r(130) = .285$ ,  $p = .001$ ), suggesting that higher emotional intelligence levels correspond to greater levels of sexual consent among partners.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and sexual consent. This indicates that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to report experiencing clearer and more mutually agreed-upon forms of consent in their romantic relationships.

## Result Discussion

The following text discusses the potential importance of emotional intelligence in promoting healthy communication, especially when it comes to sensitive topics such as sexual consent. Partners with higher emotional intelligence may demonstrate greater empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills, which can create a trusting and understanding relationship environment. Recent studies by Jones et al. (2021) and Smith et al. (2022) have emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in navigating close relationships.

There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and healthier sexual consent practices, indicating that emotional intelligence may contribute to promoting mutual respect and understanding in intimate relationships. According to Goleman (1995), individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better at handling complex social situations and understanding subtle interpersonal cues. Emotional intelligence may also empower individuals to recognize and respect their partner's boundaries, which can lead to more fulfilling and respectful intimate experiences.

Further research by Smith and Lee (2022), Garcia and Patel (2023), and Chen et al. (2023) supports these findings by demonstrating that emotional intelligence can promote healthy sexual consent practices across diverse cultures. These studies stress the importance of emotional intelligence in facilitating effective communication and understanding within romantic relationships. Hence, emotional intelligence training could be beneficial in relationship therapy.

This study reveals the significant impact of emotional intelligence on the dynamics of sexual consent within romantic relationships. The positive correlation underscores the potential for emotional intelligence to act as a cornerstone in building a foundation of mutual respect and understanding. Promoting emotional intelligence may enhance individuals' ability to navigate conversations surrounding consent, leading to more fulfilling and respectful intimate experiences.

The implications of this research go beyond individual relationships, suggesting broader societal benefits. Educational programs incorporating emotional intelligence training could significantly improve understanding and communication of consent, potentially reducing instances of miscommunication and non-consensual encounters. Therefore, these insights offer a promising direction for future initiatives toward a world where healthy relationships are the norm.

Future research should explore the role of emotional intelligence in various cultural contexts and relationship types. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how emotional intelligence influences the evolution of consent within relationships over time. Additionally, research focusing on implementing targeted interventions and educational programs incorporating emotional intelligence training could promote healthier and more respectful intimate relationships.

This study provides a foundational understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and sexual consent. However, future research should address limitations such as sample size and generalizability to broader populations. Overall, this study sheds light on the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence and sexual consent and emphasizes the importance of emotional awareness and communication as essential elements of healthy and consensual interactions.

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