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Consent Across the Spectrum: Comparing Queer and Cis-Heterosexual Approaches to Sexual Agreement

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Abstract

Sexual consent is central to preventing sexual violence, yet most research - including the widely used Sexual Consent Questionnaire (Humphreys, 2007) - has mostly focused on heterosexual, cisgender samples in North American contexts. Grounded in sexual script theory and responding to this gap, this study examines how sexual consent attitudes and behaviors differ across gender identities and sexual orientations in Germany. A German version of two sexual consent attitudes scales from Humphreys (*asking for consent first is important* and *commitment reduces asking for consent*) was administered alongside a new, self-developed scale capturing behavioral consent negotiation tactics (*convince to consent*). In a diverse online sample (N = 399, average age = 25.6 years), significant differences emerged by gender and sexual orientation. Queer and TIN* (trans, inter, non-binary and other) participants consider it more important to ask for consent first and less likely to normalize persuasive tactics compared to heterosexual and cisgender respondents (Mann-Whitney-U-Tests and Kruskal-Wallis-Tests; $p < .001-.005$, $r = .185-.295$). No significant group differences emerged for the scale *commitment reduces asking for consent*, suggesting that this dimension of sexual consent attitudes may be more universally held, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. These findings highlight how consent norms are reinterpreted across identity groups and underscore the need for inclusive frameworks in sexual health education. By extending Humphreys' work beyond heterosexual contexts, this study contributes culturally and intersectionally nuanced insights to the global discourse on sexual ethics.

Keywords: informed sexual consent; sexual awareness; sexual consciousness; gender differences, sexual psychology