

Token Resistance: Clarifying prevalence, reasons, & related variables at present day

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Token resistance (TR), is a behavior that can be summarized as saying no while meaning yes in a sexual context, but more broadly includes making false displays of refusal towards others while intending to engage in sex and hoping others will respond by continuing to pursue sexual activity. TR behaviour is distinct from TR belief, which represents the stereotypical view that women communicate sexual consent indirectly, engage in TR behaviour to avoid negative labelling associated with promiscuity, and that men should respond to suspected TR behaviour by using force. TR behaviour has not been examined in recent decades and the measure used in previous studies has been recognized as imprecise, resulting in inflated rates of TR behaviour engagement. Additionally, variables presumed to play a role in TR behaviour, such as sexual assertiveness, sexual/relationship experience, desire, and TR belief have not been thoroughly explored or examined together in a single study.

This study involved the participation of 168 university students who completed survey packages meant to assess the relationship between TR behaviour and the variables listed above, as well as clarify rates and reasons for engaging in TR behaviour at present day. This was done by developing an improved, more precise measure of TR behaviour. As was predicted, results showed that TR behaviour rates were lower compared to past studies, with 14.5% of participants indicating they had engaged in TR behaviour. Furthermore, it was found that men and women reported engaging in TR behaviour at similar rates, with 15.7% of women and 10.3% of men in the study indicating engagement in such behaviour. Three major categories of reasons for engaging in TR behaviour emerged from participants' descriptions: for fun, excitement or as a

game/roleplay, to feel desired or give a partner an opportunity to show desire through pursuit, and to play hard to get.

Additional findings showed that those who reported engaging in TR behaviour also reported greater levels of desire and lower levels of assertiveness for refusing sex that is unwanted. Unexpectedly, the TR and No TR behaviour groups were not significantly different in terms of assertiveness for initiating sex that is wanted or in their endorsement of TR belief. Though for the TR group there was an inverse relationship between TR belief and relationship experience that was not present for those who did not report TR behaviour. This finding suggests that for participants who reported engaging in TR behaviour, those who indicated having lower levels of relationship experience were more likely to report endorsement of traditional beliefs regarding women's use of TR behaviour, whereas those with greater experience were less likely to report endorsing these beliefs. Overall, this study contributed to the literature on TR behavior by introducing a more precise measure of TR behavior and providing a clarified examination of TR behavior and related variables at present day.