



Article

Measuring Refusal in Romantic Relationships: Psychometric Properties of the Refusal Frequency Scale, Refusal Impact Scale, and Refusal Index in Romanian Culture

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Abstract

This study developed and validated three measures of refusal in romantic relationships: Refusal Frequency (RF), Refusal Impact (RI), and the Refusal Index (Rx), which combines Refusal Frequency and Interpretation. Data from 509 participants were used to examine their psychometric properties and associations with intimacy, passion, and commitment. RF and RI showed predominantly unidimensional structures, excellent reliability, and evidence of validity, while representing related but distinct aspects of refusal. RF was the strongest individual predictor of romantic love, whereas Rx explained additional variance in intimacy and passion. Negative interpretations of refusal were associated with lower intimacy, passion, and commitment, while positive interpretations showed no corresponding positive associations. The findings show that both the frequency and meaning of refusal matter for romantic functioning and may provide useful information for couple psychotherapy and research.

Keywords: romantic relationships; partner refusal; refusal frequency; refusal impact; refusal index; romantic love; intimacy; passion; commitment; scale validation; Love and Rejection Messages Theory

1. Refusal vs. Rejection

In the existing literature, the concepts of refusal and rejection are often used interchangeably, particularly in studies examining romantic and sexual interactions (Kim et al. 2019; Kim et al. 2020). However, these constructs may represent related but conceptually distinct interpersonal phenomena. On the one hand, refusal primarily refers to a verbal or explicit behavioral act occurring within an interpersonal interaction, through which a partner declines a request, initiative, need, or invitation expressed by the other partner (Marici 2025a). Rejection, on the other hand, conveys the meaning of interpersonal exclusion, emotional distancing, devaluation, or pushing the person away relationally (Downey and Feldman 1996; Romero-Canyas et al. 2010). The Love and Rejection Messages Theory (LRMT) (Marici 2025b) defines rejection as an emotional experience of feeling pushed away.

Yet a refusal may be a normal practice in everyday life, if sweetened by justifying and compensating for the loss, and does not always imply feelings of rejection. A partner may decline a request while still expressing warmth (Kim et al. 2020). However, when refusals



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become frequent, they may be experienced as rejection (Crasta et al. 2021b). Refusals are semantically closer to limited desired needs. That is why they are more often experienced as withdrawal and rejection than as feelings of love (Downey and Feldman 1996; Sasaki and Overall 2021).

2. Refusals as Signals of Distancing in Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships are fundamentally shaped by the need for acceptance, emotional validation, and perceived responsiveness from one's partner (Reis et al. 2004). Within close relationships, refusals, or related concepts, unavailability, or emotional disengagement may threaten individuals' sense of relational security and belonging and convey the meaning of rejection of the person (Marici 2025b; Baumeister and Leary 1995).

Refusal from a partner may represent a particularly meaningful interpersonal signal because it communicates not only the blocking of a request or need, but also potential low regard, withdrawal, relational unavailability or even emotional blocking in areas of romantic relationship (Crasta et al. 2021b; Downey and Feldman 1996; Marici 2025b). Existing research suggests that the harmful impact of refusal is shaped not only by the refusal itself, but by the emotional meaning attached to it and the manner in which it is communicated. Studies on sexual rejection indicate that hostile, resentful, insecure, or withdrawing responses are associated with lower relationship and sexual satisfaction, whereas reassuring and understanding responses are linked with greater well-being and relational connection (Kim et al. 2020; Schwenck et al. 2025). Similarly, research on demand–withdraw communication patterns has shown that partner withdrawal during conflict interactions predicts declines in perceived partner responsiveness and relationship satisfaction over time (Heavey et al. 1995; Sasaki and Overall 2021). These findings support the idea that repeated experiences of refusal may function as broader interpersonal indicators of disengagement and relational dysfunction, extending beyond isolated situations or the sexual domain alone.

Yet even single refusal situations may trigger feelings of rejection in romantic relationships. Individuals with heightened rejection sensitivity are more likely to interpret ambiguous partner behaviors as rejecting, respond defensively or hostilely, and subsequently contribute to maladaptive relational cycles (Romero-Canyas et al. 2010). A recent systematic review and meta-analysis further indicated that rejection sensitivity is consistently associated with lower relationship satisfaction and closeness, higher levels of conflict, jealousy, self-silencing behaviors, and increased risk for intimate partner violence and relational distress (Mishra and Allen 2023).

3. Limitations of Existing Measures

There is currently no validated measure specifically designed to assess refusal from a partner as a broader interpersonal experience in romantic relationships. Existing instruments mainly assess related but distinct constructs, such as rejection sensitivity, partner acceptance, sexual rejection, or dysfunctional communication. For example, the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ; Downey and Feldman 1996) and the Rejection Sensitive Expectation, Perception, and Reaction Questionnaire–Partner (RSEPR-P; Natarajan and Prasad 2023) assess individuals' tendencies to expect and react to rejection rather than actual recurring refusal experiences within the relationship. Sexual rejection measures, such as the Responses to Sexual Rejection Scale (RSRS; Kim et al. 2019), focus specifically on declined sexual advances and remain limited to the sexual domain (Kim et al. 2020). Similarly, the Perceived Responsiveness and Insensitivity Scale (PRI; Crasta et al. 2021a) and the Frequency and Acceptability of Partner Behavior Inventory (FAPBI; Doss and Christensen 2006) assess general relationship climate, acceptance, or responsiveness rather

than recurring refusal behaviors. In addition, measures of demand–withdraw communication patterns capture withdrawal and disengagement processes, but do not directly assess refusal as a distinct relational construct (Heavey et al. 1995; Schrodtt et al. 2014).

One difficulty in assessing refusal behaviors is probably the fact that they may convey neutral, negative or positive valencies, which complicates even more the construction and validation of such a scale. Consequently, the current literature highlights the need for a broader and more integrative measure capable of assessing refusal from a partner across everyday relational interactions, extending beyond sexual rejection and global evaluations of relationship quality.

4. Short Presentation of Love and Rejection Messages Theory

Moreover, the measures proposed in this research are grounded in the Love and Rejection Messages Theory (LRMT; Marici 2025b). The theory proposes that romantic relationships are formed on the basis of love between partners. Love is expressed through love messages, whereas their opposite is represented by rejection messages. Within romantic relationships, partners communicate love through love messages, which consist of two interrelated components: the *content* (what is done) of the love message and the *modalities* (how it is done) through which that content is expressed. This distinction reflects the longstanding, ancient distinction between content and form, which together constitute the message as a whole.

For example, a man may offer his partner roses. The content of the message is the act of offering flowers, whereas the modalities concern how this act is performed—for instance, the fact that he chose red roses rather than the yellow roses she prefers, and the fact that he was in a positive mood when giving them to her. Such love messages occur repeatedly in everyday couple interactions and, through their accumulation over time, become organized into a flux of love messages. Love messages group into a flux of love messages and rejection messages group into a flux of rejection messages.

Developing the example, a man may send his partner yellow roses by courier. The content remains the act of giving flowers, but the modalities include the fact that the roses are yellow even though she does not like them, that they are delivered rather than offered face-to-face as she would have preferred, and that he does not call her at all. Although intended by him as a love message, the message may therefore be decoded by her as a rejection message—a ‘junk love message’.

LRMT keeps track of the emitter and receiver partner’s interpretations. Regarding refusals, the emitter partner makes an invitation, the receiver partner denies it, and the emitter may interpret it as a love message, as a rejection message or as a neutral action, which is not very relevant for the self. The love messages may be of the following types (Marici 2025b):

Unseen love messages (USLM): Authentic love messages with appropriate content and modality that are sent but not recognized as love. Because of current hurt or psychological barriers, the receiver perceives them as rejection or neutral messages. The receiver is psychologically blind and needs calibration. For example, he helps with household chores, but she sees it as a duty rather than a love message.

Unneeded love messages (ULM): Authentic love messages that are recognized but no longer valued or emotionally needed, although their content and modality are appropriate. The sender is psychologically blind and needs calibration. For example, he brings her flowers, which she once appreciated, but she now considers them unnecessary.

Junk love messages (JLM): Incomplete love messages with appropriate content but an inappropriate modality, often sent unconsciously and perceived as rejection. The sender

is psychologically blind and needs calibration. For example, she buys him a present but sends it by post rather than giving it to him personally, as he expected.

Poisonous love messages (PLM): Messages in which personal suffering or defensiveness is expressed as love, combining harmful content with a good or bad modality. They are perceived as rejection and may produce hurt or even hate. The sender is psychologically blind and needs calibration. For example, he accuses her to make her stop helping her tyrannical father; his intention is protective, but the accusation itself is hurtful.

Consequently, many refusal actions may be classified within this framework.

LRMT also proposes ‘The Stages of Romantic Functioning’, which describe seven levels through which a couple may move, based on the changing balance between love and rejection messages (Marici 2025b):

1. *High functioning*—Love messages exceed what partners desire, while rejection is minimal.
2. *Optimum functioning*—Love messages meet partners’ needs, and rejection remains under control.
3. *Cooling*—Love messages become insufficient, while rejection exceeds what partners can comfortably tolerate.
4. *Fight for survival*—Love is scarcely experienced and conflict is high, but at least one partner actively fights for the relationship.
5. *Personal sacrifice*—Love messages largely disappear, yet one partner continues investing and hoping for recovery, often without expecting reciprocity.
6. *Individualization*—The partner stops waiting for love, turns toward the self, and increasingly disengages from the relationship.
7. *Total blocking*—Love messages are no longer desired or accepted, reflecting complete emotional disengagement from the romantic relationship.

Refusal may therefore represent a critical turning point in romantic functioning. A refusal is not inherently a rejection message; what matters is how often it occurs, how it is communicated, and, ultimately, how it is experienced by the partner. When repeated refusals are interpreted as rejection, they may gradually alter the emotional balance of the relationship. They may transform attempts at connection into experiences of hurt and move partners from closeness toward romantic distancing. Conversely, when refusal is communicated and interpreted without rejection, its relational cost may be substantially reduced. Understanding refusal therefore means looking beyond the simple act of saying “no” to the meaning that this “no” acquires between partners—and to its role in shaping the trajectory of the relationship. Within this theoretical framework, refusals may constitute an important source of rejection messages.

5. The Present Study

Despite the growing body of literature on rejection sensitivity, sexual rejection, partner responsiveness, and dysfunctional communication patterns, there is currently no validated instrument designed to assess refusal from a partner as a broad interpersonal experience within romantic relationships. This leaves an important conceptual and measurement gap in the literature.

The importance of this measure would be given by the fact that, according to the LRMT, refusals from one’s partner may easily convey the meaning of rejection of the person and trigger partial or total emotional blocking, in areas of couple functioning (Marici 2025b).

The present study addresses three main objectives: (a) to examine the psychometric properties of the proposed scales; (b) to investigate how negative, neutral, and positive interpretations of refusal are associated with romantic love; and (c) to determine the

relative contributions of Refusal Frequency, the interpretation of refusal, and a Refusal Index integrating both components in explaining individual differences in romantic love.

6. Methodology

6.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 509 participants, including 278 women (54.6%) and 231 men (45.4%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 64 years ($M = 30.87$, $SD = 10.70$), and relationship duration ranged from 0 to 40 years ($M = 9.25$, $SD = 8.97$). Participants reported an average of one child ($SD = 1.26$, range = 0–9). Of the total sample, 295 participants (58.0%) had no children, whereas 214 (42.0%) had at least one child. Among participants with children, the youngest child had a mean age of 9.34 years ($SD = 8.58$, range = 0–38).

Regarding living arrangements, 400 participants (78.6%) lived in their own/shared residence, 71 (13.9%) lived with their own parents, and 38 (7.5%) lived with their partner's parents. Regarding educational attainment, 20 participants (3.9%) had completed 10 years of schooling, 233 (45.8%) had completed high school, 179 (35.2%) held a bachelor's degree, 74 (14.5%) held a master's degree, and 3 (0.6%) held a doctoral degree. Regarding perceived family financial status, 3 participants (0.6%) reported barely making ends meet, 40 (7.9%) reported having less than they needed, 359 (70.5%) reported having exactly what they needed, 91 (17.9%) reported having more than they needed, and 16 (3.1%) reported having much more than they needed. Finally, 32 participants (6.3%) reported having attended therapy, whereas 477 (93.7%) had not.

A random number was assigned to each case using the SPSS random number generator (RV.UNIFORM). The dataset was subsequently sorted by the generated random values, and participants were allocated to the EFA and CFA subsamples based on their position in the randomized dataset, resulting in two approximately equal groups.

6.2. Instruments

The development of the Refusal Frequency Scale, Refusal Impact Scale, and Refusal Index was initiated as part of a broader research project on refusal in romantic relationships, with different stages of their development reported in previous studies (Marici 2025a; Marici et al. 2026) or addressed in manuscripts currently under review or in preparation.

Refusal Frequency (RF)—Refusal Frequency measures how often one was refused from a partner using the 18-item Refusal from Partner Scale (RP) (Marici 2025a). Items were rated on a 5-point frequency scale: 0 (never), 1 (yearly), 2 (monthly), 3 (weekly) and 4 (daily). The items assess different forms of refusal toward a partner's requests, initiatives, or proposals within romantic relationships (see Appendix A), and were derived from a qualitative study. The items represent a perception of the frequency of refusal from partner and are formulated like this: "Gives reasons to avoid the activity I suggest." (see Appendix A).

Refusal Impact (RI)—The scale used the same items from RF, only that the questions were asking respondents to rate how that gesture makes them feel (Marici 2025a), on a scale like this: (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved). The scale allows us to understand how participants view each refusal gesture in RF, as negative (rejected), neutral (neither positive, not negative) or positive (loved) (see Appendix B).

Refusal Index (Rx)—The index was calculated based on the RF and RI scales. It was meant to be a more accurate estimate of refusal in research and clinical practice contexts. The Refusal Index (Rx) was calculated by multiplying the frequency of each refusal experience by its Interpretation score and summing the resulting products across all items. Negative scores indicate predominantly negative interpretations, positive scores indicate predominantly positive interpretations, and scores around zero reflect neutral attached meaning.

The Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg 1997) is a self-report measure meant to assess the three components of love proposed by the Triangular Theory of Love, which are: intimacy, passion and commitment. The instrument is formed from 45 items, distributed equally between the three scales. It used a Likert-type response scale between 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely). Items are of this type: “I have a warm relationship with my partner”. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the respective love component. The Triangular Love Scale is one of the most respected romantic scales, with multiple studies about it in the world (Sorokowski et al. 2021; Kowal et al. 2024).

6.3. Pilot Study for Refusal from Partner

The development of the RF began with a pilot study aimed at identifying common refusal behaviors within romantic relationships. Initially, participants were asked open-ended questions regarding the ways in which partners refuse, avoid, or block requests and initiatives in everyday couple interactions. Based on these responses, an initial pool of 18 items was generated based on the various ways of refusal practiced in couples. The criteria for inclusion were: (1) the candidate items represented an identifiable form of partner refusal, (2) the item was considered a category in the qualitative study, thus summing more responses, (3) the item could be distinguished conceptually from the other identified forms of refusals, and (4) the item could be formulated as a concrete behavior that respondents could recognize and evaluate in their own relationships. Responses that were idiosyncratic, did not clearly represent refusal, duplicated an already identified category, or were too ambiguous or context-specific to be meaningfully assessed across relationships were excluded or incorporated into a broader category, firstly in the quantitative study and secondly in the screening phase. This procedure resulted in an initial pool of 18 items, each representing a distinct category of refusal while allowing for behavioral variations within that category.

Subsequently, we reviewed the items through consultation with four expert psychologists in the field of couple and relationship functioning, in order to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and conceptual consistency of the items. All items passed through this stage as they were considered distinctive realities which recorded different frequencies.

This preliminary version of the scale was administered to 30 participants. It assessed item comprehension, wording clarity, and response feasibility. Items were considered for revision when participants indicated difficulty understanding the wording, interpreted an item inconsistently with its intended meaning, or experienced difficulty selecting an appropriate response. Participant feedback was used to refine item wording before administration of the scale in the main validation study. No items were removed at this stage.

6.4. Statistical Analyses Plan

The statistical analysis for this study was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and R version 4.5.3. In SPSS we did the initial data screening, descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, correlations, and regression analyses. The significance tests and the rest of the analyses were performed in R using several specialized packages.

Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and R version 4.5.3. Initial data screening and descriptive statistics were performed prior to the main analyses. For scale validation, the total sample was randomly divided into two approximately equal and independent subsamples, with the first used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA; N = 260) and the second for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; N = 249).

The factorability of the item sets was examined using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. For the Refusal Frequency Scale, factor retention was initially examined through parallel analysis based on poly-

choric correlations. Because the frequency items were ordinal and markedly non-normally distributed, EFA and CFA were estimated using weighted least squares mean- and variance-adjusted (WLSMV) estimation, treating the items as ordered categorical variables. One- and two-factor solutions were examined, with an oblique Geomin rotation used for the two-factor EFA. For the Refusal Impact Scale, factor retention was evaluated using parallel analysis, followed by EFA using maximum likelihood extraction. CFA was subsequently conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR), and both one- and two-factor specifications were examined. Model fit was evaluated using the chi-square statistic (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence intervals, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR).

Reliability and construct validity were examined using Cronbach’s alpha, McDonald’s omega, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity between Refusal Frequency and Refusal Impact was evaluated using the correlation between the two measures, the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). A composite Refusal Index was calculated by multiplying the frequency score of each refusal behavior by its corresponding impact score and summing the resulting products across the 18 items.

Predictive validity was examined by assessing the associations of Refusal Frequency, Refusal Impact, and the Refusal Index with intimacy, passion, and commitment. Incremental validity was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, in which Refusal Frequency and Refusal Impact were entered in the first step and the Refusal Index was added in the second step. The change in explained variance (ΔR^2) was used to determine whether the index contributed additional predictive information beyond its two component measures. Supplementary analyses were also conducted after excluding participants with a Refusal Index score of zero.

To further examine the role of Refusal Valence, Spearman rank-order correlations were used to assess associations between the intensity of negative or positive Refusal Interpretations and intimacy, passion, and commitment. Participants were also compared across Refusal-Valence groups. Because homogeneity of variance was not assumed, group differences were examined using Welch’s ANOVA followed by Games–Howell post hoc comparisons. Additional analyses distinguished participants reporting no refusal experiences from those who experienced refusal but assigned these experiences an overall neutral interpretation. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < 0.05$.

6.5. Ethics

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia (Approval No. R-CE 54/3 April 2026). All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and data were collected anonymously and confidentially.

The database can be found in Marici, M., Marina, L. & Cheia, G. (2026). Measuring Refusal in Romantic Relationships: Psychometric Properties of the Refusal Frequency Scale, Refusal Impact Scale, and Refusal Index in Romanian Culture [Dataset]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21563119>.

ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5.5, Plus version) was used for proofreading and language refinement of some sections of the manuscript. In addition, AI was used for organization of some ideas and reformulations in scientific style.

7. Results

7.1. Preliminary Analyses for RF

The psychometric properties of the Refusal Frequency Scale were examined using a two-step validation procedure. The total sample was randomly divided into two approximately equal subsamples. The first subsample was used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA, $N = 260$), whereas the second subsample was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, $N = 249$).

Prior to factor extraction, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was evaluated. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis ($KMO = 0.86$). Item-level KMO values ranged from 0.70 to 0.96. Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(153) = 6375.71$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the inter-item correlations were sufficiently large for factor analysis.

7.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis for RF

Given the ordinal response format of the items (0–4) and their markedly non-normal distributions, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using the weighted least squares mean- and variance-adjusted (WLSMV) estimator, treating all items as ordered categorical variables. WLSMV was selected because it does not require the observed ordinal responses to be normally distributed and estimates the latent structure using item thresholds and associations appropriate for ordered categorical data.

The number of factors to be examined was initially evaluated using parallel analysis based on the polychoric correlation matrix. Parallel analysis suggested a two-factor solution. Accordingly, both one- and two-factor solutions were examined using WLSMV estimation. Because multiple factors were considered, an oblique Geomin rotation was used for the two-factor solution, allowing the factors to correlate.

The EFA was conducted on 260 participants. The one-factor solution showed acceptable fit, scaled $\chi^2(135) = 325.74$, $CFI = 0.977$, $TLI = 0.973$, $RMSEA = 0.074$, 90% CI [0.064, 0.084], and $SRMR = 0.047$. All 18 items loaded strongly on the factor, with standardized loadings ranging from 0.780 to 0.919 (Table 1), indicating a strong common dimension underlying the items.

Table 1. Standardized factor loadings, communalities, and uniquenesses for the one-factor WLSMV EFA.

Item	Loading	h^2	u^2
RF1	0.870	0.757	0.243
RF2	0.868	0.754	0.246
RF3	0.850	0.723	0.277
RF4	0.828	0.686	0.314
RF5	0.860	0.740	0.261
RF6	0.839	0.704	0.297
RF7	0.801	0.642	0.359
RF8	0.854	0.729	0.270
RF9	0.821	0.674	0.327
RF10	0.883	0.780	0.220
RF11	0.862	0.743	0.257
RF12	0.780	0.608	0.391
RF13	0.872	0.760	0.240
RF14	0.910	0.828	0.172
RF15	0.844	0.712	0.288
RF16	0.877	0.769	0.232

Table 1. *Cont.*

Item	Loading	h^2	u^2
RF17	0.919	0.845	0.156
RF18	0.831	0.691	0.309

Notes: λ = standardized factor loading; h^2 = communality; u^2 = uniqueness. All items were treated as ordered categorical variables. All standardized factor loadings were statistically significant, $p < 0.001$.

A two-factor solution showed somewhat improved fit, scaled $\chi^2(118) = 227.17$, CFI = 0.987, TLI = 0.983, RMSEA = 0.060, 90% CI [0.048, 0.071], and SRMR = 0.037. However, the two factors were highly correlated ($r = 0.848$), and several items exhibited substantial cross-loadings, indicating limited differentiation between the factors. Given the strong loadings in the one-factor solution, the high correlation between the two factors, the absence of a clearly differentiated two-factor structure, and the greater parsimony of the unidimensional model, the one-factor solution was retained. The decision was sustained by the CFA, presented below too.

7.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for RF

Following the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to test the unidimensional structure of the Refusal Frequency Scale. A single-factor model including all 18 items was specified and estimated using the WLSMV estimator, which is appropriate for ordinal data.

The one-factor CFA model showed excellent fit, $\chi^2(135) = 171.22$, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.999, RMSEA = 0.033, 90% CI [0.014, 0.047], and SRMR = 0.050. All fit indices met or exceeded recommended criteria, supporting the adequacy of the proposed unidimensional structure. These results confirm the EFA findings and indicate that the 18 items reflect a common underlying construct (see Table 2).

Table 2. Standardized factor loadings, explained variance, and uniqueness for the Refusal Frequency Scale (CFA, N = 249).

Item	λ (Std.)	R^2	Uniqueness
RI1	0.774	0.600	0.400
RI2	0.867	0.751	0.249
RI3	0.844	0.712	0.288
RI4	0.844	0.712	0.288
RI5	0.853	0.727	0.273
RI6	0.839	0.704	0.296
RI7	0.846	0.716	0.284
RI8	0.853	0.728	0.272
RI9	0.891	0.795	0.205
RI10	0.863	0.745	0.255
RI11	0.839	0.705	0.295
RI12	0.758	0.575	0.425
RI13	0.852	0.726	0.274
RI14	0.794	0.630	0.370
RI15	0.866	0.750	0.250
RI16	0.825	0.681	0.319
RI17	0.847	0.717	0.283
RI18	0.814	0.663	0.337

Note: λ = standardized factor loading; R^2 = explained item variance; Uniqueness = residual variance. All standardized loadings exceeded 0.75 and were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating strong item-factor relationships.

Standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.758 to 0.891, indicating strong associations between the items and the latent factor. Item uniqueness values ranged from 0.205 to 0.425, suggesting that between 57.5% and 79.5% of the variance in each item was explained by the common factor. The lowest uniqueness was observed for RI9 (0.205), whereas the highest uniqueness was observed for RI12 (0.425).

7.4. Reliability and Convergent Validity for RF

The Refusal Frequency Scale indicated excellent internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was 0.95 (95% CI [0.95, 0.96]), indicating a very high degree of internal consistency among the 18 items. McDonald's omega was 0.96, providing further evidence of score reliability. Because the scale was specified as unidimensional, omega hierarchical is not substantively interpretable and coincided with omega total.

Composite reliability was also excellent ($CR = 0.96$), exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The average variance extracted was $AVE = 0.70$, indicating that the latent factor accounted for approximately 70.2% of the variance in its indicators, substantially above the recommended criterion of 0.50. These findings support both the reliability and convergent validity of the scale.

The combination of high factor loadings (0.758–0.891), excellent composite reliability (0.96), and an AVE of 0.70 provides strong evidence that the items consistently reflect a common underlying construct. The AVE value indicates that the latent refusal factor explains more than two-thirds of the variance in the observed indicators, supporting convergent validity.

7.5. Refusal Impact Scale

The Frequency and Impact Scales were intentionally constructed as parallel measures assessing the same set of refusal behaviors. Therefore, all corresponding item pairs were retained to preserve conceptual equivalence across the two instruments.

7.6. Exploratory Factor Analysis for RI

The data were highly suitable for factor analysis ($KMO = 0.97$; Bartlett's $\chi^2(153) = 6427.17$, $p < 0.001$). Parallel analysis supported the extraction of a single factor. Exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood extraction yielded a clear one-factor solution. All items loaded strongly on the latent construct, with standardized loadings ranging from 0.843 to 0.919 (see Table 3). Communalities ranged from 0.711 to 0.844, whereas uniqueness values ranged from 0.156 to 0.289. The factor accounted for 77.6% of the total variance (SS loadings = 13.96). The solution showed low residual error ($RMSR = 0.031$) with a TLI of 0.915. Although the RMSEA value (0.116, 90% CI [0.107, 0.125]) exceeded conventional recommendations, the combination of parallel analysis, very high factor loadings, substantial explained variance, and excellent sampling adequacy provided strong evidence for a dominant unidimensional structure.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of the Refusal Impact Scale ($N = 260$).

Item	Loading (λ)	h^2	u^2
RI1	0.854	0.729	0.271
RI2	0.843	0.711	0.289
RI3	0.871	0.758	0.242
RI4	0.855	0.731	0.269
RI5	0.855	0.731	0.269
RI6	0.873	0.762	0.238
RI7	0.851	0.724	0.276
RI8	0.887	0.786	0.214

Table 3. *Cont.*

Item	Loading (λ)	h^2	u^2
RI9	0.844	0.713	0.287
RI10	0.868	0.753	0.247
RI11	0.918	0.842	0.158
RI12	0.919	0.844	0.156
RI13	0.913	0.834	0.166
RI14	0.903	0.816	0.184
RI15	0.897	0.804	0.196
RI16	0.892	0.795	0.205
RI17	0.890	0.792	0.208
RI18	0.914	0.835	0.165

Note. KMO = 0.97; Bartlett's $\chi^2(153) = 6427.17$, $p < 0.001$. Parallel analysis supported a one-factor solution. The factor explained 77.6% of the total variance (SS loadings = 13.96). RMSR = 0.031, TLI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.116, 90% CI [0.107, 0.125], BIC = −145.86.

7.7. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for RI

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on an independent sample ($N = 249$) to evaluate the unidimensional structure of the Refusal Impact Scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR). MLR was selected to provide robust standard errors and a scaled test statistic in the presence of non-normality. The one-factor model provided the following model fit: $\chi^2(135) = 328.35$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.912, TLI = 0.900, RMSEA = 0.121, 90% CI [0.104, 0.138], and SRMR = 0.039. Although the RMSEA exceeded conventional cut-off values, the SRMR indicated excellent residual fit and both CFI and TLI reached acceptable levels for a unidimensional measurement model. All standardized factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and ranged from 0.775 to 0.898, indicating strong associations between the observed indicators and the latent construct (see Table 4). Item uniqueness values ranged from 0.193 to 0.400, suggesting that between 60.0% and 80.7% of the variance in each item was explained by the common factor.

Table 4. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Refusal Impact Scale.

Item	λ	R^2	Uniqueness
RI1	0.786	0.618	0.382
RI2	0.775	0.600	0.400
RI3	0.811	0.658	0.342
RI4	0.857	0.734	0.266
RI5	0.853	0.728	0.272
RI6	0.874	0.763	0.237
RI7	0.874	0.763	0.237
RI8	0.871	0.758	0.242
RI9	0.881	0.776	0.224
RI10	0.866	0.751	0.249
RI11	0.886	0.786	0.214
RI12	0.876	0.767	0.233
RI13	0.898	0.807	0.193
RI14	0.841	0.707	0.293
RI15	0.879	0.772	0.228
RI16	0.876	0.767	0.233
RI17	0.891	0.793	0.207
RI18	0.872	0.760	0.240

Note: $\chi^2(135) = 328.35$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.912; TLI = 0.900; RMSEA = 0.121, 90% CI [0.104, 0.138]; SRMR = 0.039. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.980$; McDonald's $\omega = 0.980$; CR = 0.979; AVE = 0.737.

An alternative two-factor solution was examined using robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR). The two-factor model showed improved fit relative to the one-factor model, $\chi^2(118) = 250.03$, $p < 0.001$, robust CFI = 0.950, robust TLI = 0.935, robust RMSEA = 0.099, 90% CI [0.080, 0.118], and SRMR = 0.026. However, inspection of the rotated factor loadings did not reveal two clearly differentiated substantive dimensions. The first factor was defined predominantly by RI1 ($\lambda = 0.741$) and RI2 ($\lambda = 0.950$), whereas most of the remaining items loaded strongly on the second factor. Several items showed weak or non-significant loadings on the first factor, and the two factors were strongly correlated ($r = 0.759$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, although allowing two factors improved global fit, the resulting structure did not provide clear evidence for two distinct and interpretable dimensions. Given the strong standardized loadings observed in the one-factor CFA ($\lambda = 0.775$ – 0.898), the substantial association between the two exploratory factors, and the absence of a theoretically coherent two-factor structure, the more parsimonious unidimensional representation of Refusal Impact was retained. The elevated RMSEA of the one-factor model was nevertheless considered evidence of residual model misfit and is acknowledged as a limitation of the unidimensional specification.

7.8. Reliability and Convergent Validity for RI

The Refusal Impact Scale showed excellent internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was 0.980 and McDonald's omega was 0.980, indicating a very high degree of score reliability. Composite reliability (CR) was 0.979, substantially exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.737, indicating that the latent factor accounted for 73.7% of the variance in its indicators. These findings provide strong evidence for both the reliability and convergent validity of the scale.

7.9. Discriminant Validity Between the Two Scales

Discriminant validity was evaluated using three complementary approaches. First, the correlation between the Refusal Frequency Scale and the Refusal Impact Scale was moderate, $r = -0.485$, 95% CI $[-0.549, -0.416]$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the two measures were related but not redundant. Second, the Fornell–Larcker criterion was satisfied, as the square roots of the average variance extracted exceeded the absolute correlation between the constructs ($\sqrt{\text{AVEFrequency}} = 0.838$; $\sqrt{\text{AVEImpact}} = 0.858$; $|r| = 0.485$). Third, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was 0.485, well below the recommended threshold of 0.85. Collectively, these findings provide strong evidence for the discriminant validity of the Refusal Frequency and Refusal Impact Scales, supporting the interpretation that they assess related but distinct dimensions of relational refusal experiences.

The occurrence of refusal behaviors and the perceived impact of those behaviors represent empirically distinct constructs.

7.10. Composite Index

A composite Refusal Index was created by combining the frequency and perceived impact of each refusal behavior ($N = 509$). For each item, an item-level impact score was calculated by multiplying the frequency rating by the corresponding impact rating. The overall Refusal Index (Rx) was then computed as the sum of the 18 item-level impact scores:

$$Rx = \sum_{i=1}^{18} (RF \times RI)$$

where RF represents the frequency of a refusal behavior and RI represents the perceived impact of that behavior. Higher absolute scores indicate a stronger cumulative relational message, whereas scores closer to zero indicate weaker or neutral relational messages.

A multiplicative rather than additive approach was used because the relational impact of a refusal behavior was assumed to depend simultaneously on its frequency and its perceived meaning. A behavior that occurs frequently but carries little relational significance is expected to have a weaker effect than a behavior that is both frequent and highly meaningful. Therefore, item-level impact scores were calculated as the product of frequency and perceived impact ratings, allowing the index to capture the interactive effect of occurrence and meaning.

The Refusal Index ranged from -355 to 128 ($M = -8.41$, $SD = 37.19$, $Median = 0$). The distribution was markedly negatively skewed ($skewness = -4.15$) and leptokurtic ($kurtosis = 27.10$). Regarding score distribution, 36.54% of participants obtained negative values, 39.29% obtained a score of zero, and 24.17% obtained positive values. These findings indicate that neutral scores were the most common outcome, followed by negative scores, whereas positive scores were observed in approximately one-quarter of the sample. Neutral scores mean that it is neither positive nor negative, but convey no positive or negative valency. They convey a nonparticipator interpretation.

7.11. Incremental and Predictive Validity

Incremental validity was examined through hierarchical regression analyses for the RF and RI Scales and for Rx. In the first step, Refusal Frequency and Refusal Interpretation were entered as predictors. In the second step, the Refusal Index was added to the model. For intimacy, the inclusion of Rx produced a significant increase in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.044$, $F(1, 441) = 28.54$, $p < 0.001$. Similarly, for passion, Rx explained additional variance beyond RF and RI, $\Delta R^2 = 0.038$, $F(1, 441) = 23.41$, $p < 0.001$. In contrast, the addition of Rx did not significantly improve the prediction of commitment, $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$, $F(1, 441) = 2.48$, $p = 0.116$. These findings indicate that the Refusal Index captures unique variance related to emotional closeness and romantic involvement beyond the separate effects of Refusal Frequency and Interpretation.

To examine predictive validity, the Refusal Index was correlated with Sternberg's components of love. Significant positive associations were found with intimacy ($r = 0.437$, $p < 0.001$), passion ($r = 0.402$, $p < 0.001$), and commitment ($r = 0.256$, $p < 0.001$). Additional analyses excluding participants with neutral scores ($Rx = 0$) produced highly similar results, indicating that the observed associations were not driven by the large proportion of neutral responses.

Because 39.29% of participants obtained a neutral Refusal Index score ($Rx = 0$), supplementary analyses were conducted after excluding these cases. The resulting correlations remained highly similar to those obtained in the full sample. Specifically, the Refusal Index was positively associated with intimacy, $r(259) = 0.458$, 95% CI $[0.356, 0.549]$, $p < 0.001$, passion, $r(259) = 0.420$, 95% CI $[0.315, 0.515]$, $p < 0.001$, and commitment, $r(259) = 0.255$, 95% CI $[0.137, 0.365]$, $p < 0.001$. The minimal differences relative to the full-sample analyses indicate that the observed associations were robust and not driven by the large number of neutral responses.

Refusal Frequency emerged as the strongest individual predictor of intimacy ($R^2 = 0.265$), passion ($R^2 = 0.231$), and commitment ($R^2 = 0.191$). Refusal Interpretation showed weaker but significant associations with all three outcomes. Although the Refusal Index was not the strongest individual predictor, it indicated incremental validity by explaining additional variance in intimacy ($\Delta R^2 = 0.044$, $p < 0.001$) and passion ($\Delta R^2 = 0.038$, $p < 0.001$) beyond the combined effects of Refusal Frequency and Refusal Interpretation. No significant incremental contribution was observed for commitment ($\Delta R^2 = 0.005$, $p = 0.116$) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Predictive and incremental validity of Refusal Frequency (RF), Refusal Interpretation (RI), and the Refusal Index (Rx).

Outcome	RF β (R^2)	RI β (R^2)	Rx β (R^2)	RF + RI (R^2)	RF + RI + Rx (R^2)	ΔR^2
Intimacy	−0.513 *** (0.265)	0.092 *** (0.102)	0.189 *** (0.191)	0.278 ***	0.322 ***	0.044 ***
Passion	−0.557 *** (0.231)	0.094 *** (0.080)	0.202 *** (0.162)	0.239 ***	0.278 ***	0.038 ***
Commitment	−0.416 *** (0.191)	0.058 *** (0.044)	0.106 *** (0.065)	0.192 ***	0.197 ***	0.005 ns

Note: RF = Refusal Frequency; RI = Refusal Interpretation; Rx = Refusal Index. Values in parentheses represent R^2 obtained from separate simple regression models. ΔR^2 represents the increase in explained variance after adding the Refusal Index to the RF + RI model. *** $p < 0.001$; ns = non-significant.

These findings suggest that the interaction between Refusal Frequency and Interpretation captures unique relational information that is not fully represented by either component alone.

7.12. Analyses of Refusal-Valence Groups, Regarding Love Components

7.12.1. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlations

Among participants with negative Refusal Interpretation scores ($N = 150$), scores closer to zero—that is, less negative interpretations—were associated with higher intimacy, $r_s = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$, higher passion, $r_s = 0.358$, $p < 0.001$, and higher commitment, $r_s = 0.243$, $p = 0.003$. Equivalently, increasingly negative interpretations were associated with lower levels of all three dimensions of love.

Among participants with positive Interpretation scores ($N = 111$), the intensity of positive interpretations was not significantly associated with intimacy, $r_s = 0.114$, $p = 0.233$, passion, $r_s = 0.111$, $p = 0.246$, or commitment, $r_s = 0.034$, $p = 0.724$.

The findings suggest that greater negativity in interpreting refusal experiences is associated with poorer relationship functioning, whereas increasingly positive interpretations are not necessarily associated with higher relationship functioning.

The correlation between RxNegative and RxPositive could not be computed because the variables contained no overlapping valid cases ($N = 0$).

7.12.2. Differences Between Refusal-Valence Groups

To further examine the relational consequences of Refusal Interpretations, participants were classified into three groups based on the valence of their Refusal Index scores: negative ($n = 150$), neutral ($n = 184$), and positive ($n = 111$). Welch analyses of variance indicated significant group differences for intimacy, $F(2, 236.20) = 14.07$, $p < 0.001$, passion, $F(2, 231.11) = 18.55$, $p < 0.001$, and commitment, $F(2, 221.66) = 11.22$, $p < 0.001$. Games–Howell post hoc tests (see Table 6) revealed that participants in the negative valence group reported significantly lower intimacy ($M = 98.62$), passion ($M = 94.37$), and commitment ($M = 99.80$) than participants in the neutral group (intimacy: $M = 105.54$, passion: $M = 103.07$, commitment: $M = 105.02$). Participants in the positive group reported intermediate levels of relationship functioning (intimacy: $M = 103.25$, passion: $M = 99.39$, commitment: $M = 101.90$). Specifically, the neutral group reported significantly higher passion than the positive group (mean difference = 3.68, $p = 0.014$) and significantly higher commitment than the positive group (mean difference = 3.12, $p = 0.022$), whereas the difference in intimacy between the neutral and positive groups did not reach significance ($p = 0.056$).

Table 6. Games–Howell post hoc comparisons across four Refusal-Valence groups, regarding Sternberg’s Love Dimensions.

Sternberg’s Love Dimensions	Comparison	Mean Difference	<i>p</i>
Intimacy	Negative vs. Neutral Interpretation	5.02	ns
	Negative vs. No Refusal	7.49	****
	Negative vs. Positive	4.63	*
	Neutral Interpretation vs. No Refusal	2.47	ns
	Neutral Interpretation vs. Positive	−0.39	ns
	No Refusal vs. Positive	2.85	*
Passion	Negative vs. Neutral Interpretation	6.42	*
	Negative vs. No Refusal	9.37	****
	Negative vs. Positive	5.02	*
	Neutral Interpretation vs. No Refusal	2.95	ns
	Neutral Interpretation vs. Positive	−1.41	ns
	No Refusal vs. Positive	4.35	**
Commitment	Negative vs. Neutral Interpretation	3.66	ns
	Negative vs. No Refusal	5.68	****
	Negative vs. Positive	2.10	ns
	Neutral Interpretation vs. No Refusal	2.03	ns
	Neutral Interpretation vs. Positive	−1.55	ns
	No Refusal vs. Positive	3.58	*

Note: ns = non-significant; $p < 0.05 = *$; $p < 0.01 = **$; $p < 0.0001 = ****$.

The findings suggest that relationship functioning was most favorable among participants who interpreted refusal experiences in a neutral manner. Rather than benefiting from positive reinterpretations of refusal, participants reporting neutral interpretations displayed the highest levels of intimacy, passion, and commitment, whereas negative interpretations were consistently associated with the least favorable relationship outcomes. However, this is a surprising finding, and that is why we took a step forward. Returning to the database we noticed that some respondents did not experience at all rejection as behavior (0 score for RF), while others experienced it but interpreted it as neutral (score > 0 for RF, score = 0 for RI).

Thus, participants were classified again into four groups according to the valence of their refusal experiences: Negative ($N = 150$, 33.7%), Neutral Interpretation ($N = 42$, 9.4%), No Refusal ($N = 142$, 31.9%), and Positive ($N = 111$, 24.9%). The *No Refusal* group consisted of participants who reported no refusal experiences ($RF = 0$). In contrast, the *Neutral Interpretation* group included participants who reported refusal experiences ($RF > 0$) but whose overall Refusal Index score was equal to zero, indicating a neutral net interpretation of these experiences. Thus, the former reflects the absence of refusal messages, whereas the latter reflects the presence of refusal messages that were not assigned an overall positive or negative relational meaning.

Welch ANOVA revealed significant group differences for intimacy, $F(3, 145.44) = 12.24$, $p < 0.001$, passion, $F(3, 152.42) = 14.70$, $p < 0.001$, and commitment, $F(3, 150.26) = 9.18$, $p < 0.001$.

Games–Howell post hoc comparisons showed that participants reporting no refusal experiences displayed significantly higher intimacy, passion, and commitment than participants in the Negative group (see Figure 1). Participants in the Positive group also reported significantly higher intimacy and passion than participants in the Negative group.

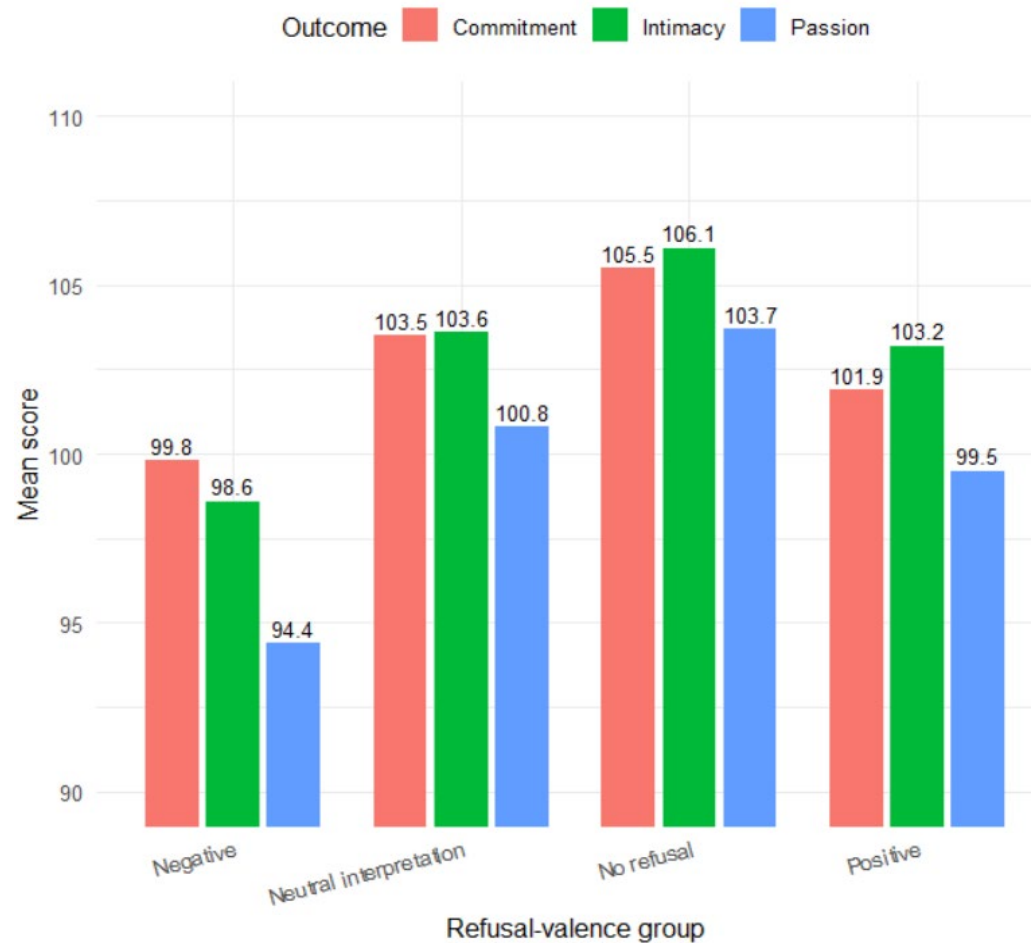


Figure 1. Relationship outcomes by Refusal-Valence group.

Participants characterized by neutral interpretations reported significantly higher passion than the Negative group, whereas differences for intimacy and commitment did not reach significance. Neutral and positive interpretations did not differ significantly on any relationship outcome.

8. Discussion

The present study extended the assessment of partner refusal by examining not only the frequency of refusal behaviors but also their perceived relational impact or even composite impact of RF $\times$ RI. Results indicated that both the Refusal Frequency Scale and the Refusal Impact Scale displayed a robust unidimensional structure, excellent reliability, and strong convergent validity. These findings suggest that recurrent refusal experiences and the subjective meaning attached to those experiences each represent coherent psychological constructs.

An important contribution of the present study is that Refusal Frequency and Refusal Impact are empirically distinct. Although the two measures were moderately associated, discriminant validity analyses consistently indicated that they should not be considered interchangeable constructs. The moderate correlation ($r = -0.485$), the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and the HTMT ratio all supported the conclusion that the occurrence of refusal behaviors and the interpretation of those behaviors represent different psychological processes.

This distinction is theoretically meaningful. A refusal behavior may occur frequently but carry little relational significance if it is interpreted as situational, justified, or unrelated to the relationship itself. Conversely, even relatively infrequent refusals may have a strong relational impact when interpreted as signals of disinterest, distancing, devaluation,

or rejection. In this sense, refusal behaviors may reflect emotional distancing without necessarily representing direct interpersonal rejection (Downey and Feldman 1996; Kim et al. 2020). These findings are consistent with theoretical perspectives emphasizing that interpersonal experiences derive their consequences not only from objective events but also from the meaning's individuals attribute to those events.

The creation of the Refusal Index represents a further conceptual contribution. By combining RF and RI through a multiplicative procedure, the index (Rx) captures the joint effect of behavioral occurrence and subjective interpretation. This approach assumes that relational consequences emerge when refusal behaviors are both recurrent and psychologically meaningful. Consequently, the index reflects the cumulative relational message communicated through repeated refusal experiences.

The predictive analyses provided support for this assumption. Refusal Frequency emerged as the strongest individual predictor of intimacy, passion, and commitment. However, the Refusal Index showed significant incremental validity beyond the combined effects of Refusal Frequency and Refusal Interpretation. Specifically, the index explained additional variance in intimacy and passion after controlling for both component variables. These findings suggest that the interaction between how often refusals occur and how they are interpreted captures unique information regarding emotional closeness and romantic involvement. In contrast, no significant incremental contribution was observed for commitment, indicating that commitment may depend on additional relational factors that extend beyond day-to-day refusal experiences.

From the perspective of the Love and Rejection Messages Theory (LRMT), these findings are particularly relevant. LRMT proposes that repeated interpersonal messages gradually shape relational perceptions and emotional experiences. The present results suggest that the meaning of a refusal cannot be inferred solely from its frequency. Rather, its relational impact depends on how the recipient interprets the event. Repeated refusals that are perceived as rejection may gradually communicate messages of emotional unavailability, low responsiveness, or relational distancing, thereby reducing intimacy and passion over time. This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that repeated experiences of withdrawal, unresponsiveness, and rejection-related behaviors are associated with lower relationship satisfaction and greater relational distress (Heavey et al. 1995; Sasaki and Overall 2021).

The findings indicate an asymmetric pattern: increasingly negative interpretations of refusal were associated with lower intimacy, passion, and commitment, whereas increasingly positive interpretations were not associated with corresponding increases in these dimensions. Negative interpretations may therefore function as a relational risk indicator, while positive interpretations do not necessarily operate as an equivalent protective factor.

The analyses comparing Refusal-Valence groups provide additional support for the central assumptions of LRMT. Participants who interpreted refusal experiences negatively consistently reported the lowest levels of intimacy, passion, and commitment, whereas participants who reported no refusal experiences displayed the most favorable relationship outcomes. Importantly, participants who experienced refusal behaviors but interpreted them in a neutral manner did not differ significantly from those who interpreted them positively on any relationship outcome. This pattern suggests that the detrimental effects of refusal are not determined solely by the occurrence of refusal behaviors, but by the meaning attributed to those experiences. From an LRMT perspective, the same refusal behavior may convey different relational messages depending on how it is interpreted by the receiving partner. The findings further indicate that neutral interpretations may serve a limiting function, as individuals who experienced refusal but did not assign it a

predominantly negative meaning, reported levels of intimacy, passion, and commitment, comparable to those who interpreted refusal positively.

Relationship functioning is shaped less by the objective occurrence of relational events and more by the messages that partners derive from those events, a proposition that lies at the core of LRMT.

9. Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to develop and validate measures of refusal in romantic relationships by examining how often refusal occurs, how it is experienced by the partner, and how the combination of frequency and interpretation relates to intimacy, passion, and commitment.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. The study relied exclusively on self-report measures and employed a cross-sectional design, preventing causal conclusions. In addition, the Refusal Index displayed a substantial proportion of participants obtaining neutral scores. Although supplementary analyses showed that the predictive associations remained stable after excluding neutral cases, future research should examine the Rx in clinical and high-conflict samples where stronger refusal dynamics may be present. In addition, the exceptionally high reliability coefficients suggest that the items capture a highly homogeneous construct. Although this supports internal consistency, future research may explore whether a shorter version of the scale could achieve comparable psychometric performance while reducing potential item redundancy. What is more, future studies should use different scales, like a Likert one, with respondents referring to a shorter period of time (eq. 3 months) to see whether refusal phenomenon is surmised better or not. Finally, cross-cultural validation studies and clinical applications of the scale should be further examined in diverse relational populations (Downey and Feldman 1996; Reis et al. 2004).

This study and the findings in the study may help evaluations in psychotherapy and clinical interventions, understand how refusal behaviors impact romantic relationship quality.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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Appendix A

Frecvența Refuzului din Partea Partenerului (RF)/ *Refusal Frequency from Partner (RF)*

Indică cât de frecvent ai fost refuzat în felul acesta de partenerul tău.

Indicate how often your partner has refused you in the following ways.

1.	Este de acord cu ce propun, dar nu se ține de cuvânt. <i>Agrees with what I suggest, but does not keep his/her word.</i> 0 niciodată—1 anual—2 lunar—3 săptămânal—4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
2.	Invocă motive pentru a evita activitatea pe care o propun. <i>Gives reasons to avoid the activity I suggest.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
3.	Acceptă propunerea mea doar dacă este modificată semnificativ. <i>Accepts my suggestion only if it is changed significantly.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
4.	Acceptă inițial, dar propune să amânăm. <i>Initially agrees, but suggests postponing it.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
5.	Spune frecvent că este ocupat(ă) atunci când propun să facem ceva. <i>Frequently says they are busy when I suggest doing something together.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
6.	Spune că nu este nevoie să facem ce propun din nou. <i>Says there is no need to do what I suggest again.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
7.	Refuză inițial propunerea mea, iar ulterior acceptă prea târziu. <i>Initially refuses my suggestion, but later accepts it too late.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
8.	Devine tăcut(ă) și evită să răspundă atunci când propun ceva. <i>Becomes silent and avoids answering when I suggest something.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
9.	Spune direct că nu vrea să facem acel lucru. <i>Directly says they do not want to do that thing.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
10.	Refuză și reacționează negativ atunci când propun ceva. <i>Refuses and reacts negatively when I suggest something.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily

11.	Schimbă subiectul atunci când fac o propunere. <i>Changes the subject when I make a suggestion.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
12.	Evită ce propun și face o activitate, ce nu am cerut-o eu. <i>Avoids what I suggest and does an activity that I did not ask for instead.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
13.	Propune să facem mai puțin decât am cerut eu. <i>Suggests doing less than what I asked for.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
14.	Face opusul a ceea ce propun. <i>Does the opposite of what I suggest.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
15.	Respinge propunerile mele, spunând că nu sunt bune. <i>Rejects my suggestions by saying they are not good.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
16.	Spune că nu este necesar ceea ce propun. <i>Says that what I suggest is not necessary.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
17.	Spune că ceea ce propun nu este important pentru el/ea. <i>Says that what I suggest is not important to him/her.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily
18.	Propune altceva în loc să accepte propunerea mea. <i>Suggests something else instead of accepting my suggestion.</i> 0 niciodată 1 anual 2 lunar 3 săptămânal 4 zilnic 0 never—1 yearly—2 monthly—3 weekly—4 daily

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Appendix B

Impactul Refuzului din Partea Partenerului (RI) / *Refusal Impact from Partner (RI)*

Indică cât de frecvent ai fost refuzat în felul acesta de partenerul tău.

Indicate how often your partner has refused you in the following ways.

1.	Este de acord cu ce propun, dar nu se ține de cuvânt. (Respins) —5 —4 —3 —2 —1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Agrees with what I suggest, but does not keep his/her word.</i> (Rejected) —5 —4 —3 —2 —1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
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2.	Invocă motive pentru a evita activitatea pe care o propun. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Gives reasons to avoid the activity I suggest.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
3.	Acceptă propunerea mea doar dacă este modificată semnificativ. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Accepts my suggestion only if it is changed significantly.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
4.	Acceptă inițial, dar propune să amânăm. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Initially agrees, but suggests postponing it.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
5.	Spune frecvent că este ocupat(ă) atunci când propun să facem ceva. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Frequently says they are busy when I suggest doing something together.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
6.	Spune că nu este nevoie să facem ce propun din nou. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Says there is no need to do what I suggest again.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
7.	Refuză inițial propunerea mea, iar ulterior acceptă prea târziu. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Initially refuses my suggestion, but later accepts it too late.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
8.	Devine tăcut(ă) și evită să răspundă atunci când propun ceva. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Becomes silent and avoids answering when I suggest something.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
9.	Spune direct că nu vrea să facem acel lucru. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Directly says they do not want to do that thing.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
10.	Refuză și reacționează negativ atunci când propun ceva. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Refuses and reacts negatively when I suggest something.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
11.	Schimbă subiectul atunci când fac o propunere. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Changes the subject when I make a suggestion.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
12.	Evită ce propun și face o activitate, ce nu am cerut-o eu. (Respins) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit) <i>Avoids what I suggest and does an activity that I did not ask for instead.</i> (Rejected) –5 –4 –3 –2 –1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)

13.	Propune să facem mai puțin decât am cerut eu.
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Suggests doing less than what I asked for.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
14.	Face opusul a ceea ce propun.
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Does the opposite of what I suggest.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
15.	Respinge propunerile mele, spunând că nu sunt bune .
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Rejects my suggestions by saying they are not good.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
16.	Spune că nu este necesar ceea ce propun.
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Says that what I suggest is not necessary.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
17.	Spune că ceea ce propun nu este important pentru el/ea.
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Says that what I suggest is not important to him/her.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)
18.	Propune altceva în loc să accepte propunerea mea.
	(Respins) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutru) 1 2 3 4 5 (Iubit)
	<i>Suggests something else instead of accepting my suggestion.</i> (Rejected) −5 −4 −3 −2 −1 0 (Neutral) 1 2 3 4 5 (Loved)

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