



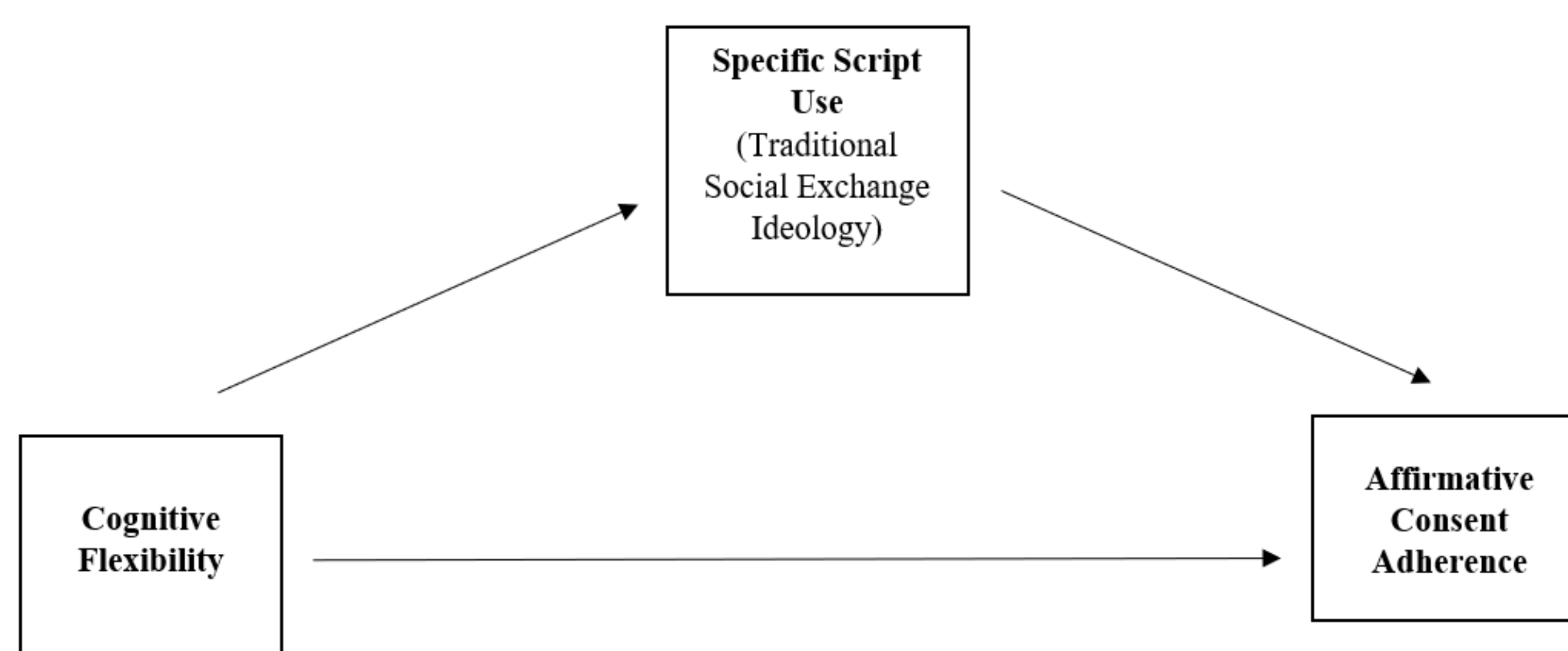
A Mediation Analysis of Barriers to Affirmative Consent Adherence



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Introduction

- Affirmative consent is the idea that for an act to be consensual, consent must be given in a verbal, “yes,” rather than the absence of a, “no.”
- Affirmative consent can be achieved through five pillars: 1. voluntary, 2. informed, 3. revertible, 4. specific, and 5. unburdensome (Im *et al.*, 2021).
- Barriers to affirmative consent adherence are present in society, meaning true consent is often not achieved – social scripts and social exchange theory (Shumlich & Fisher, 2020).
- The main goal of our study is to provide insight into what the specific barriers to affirmative consent adherence are.
- We ran exploratory analyses for adherence to affirmative consent standards and communication styles.
- Figure 1:** Hypothesized mediation model (expected to be the case in each of the six vignettes)

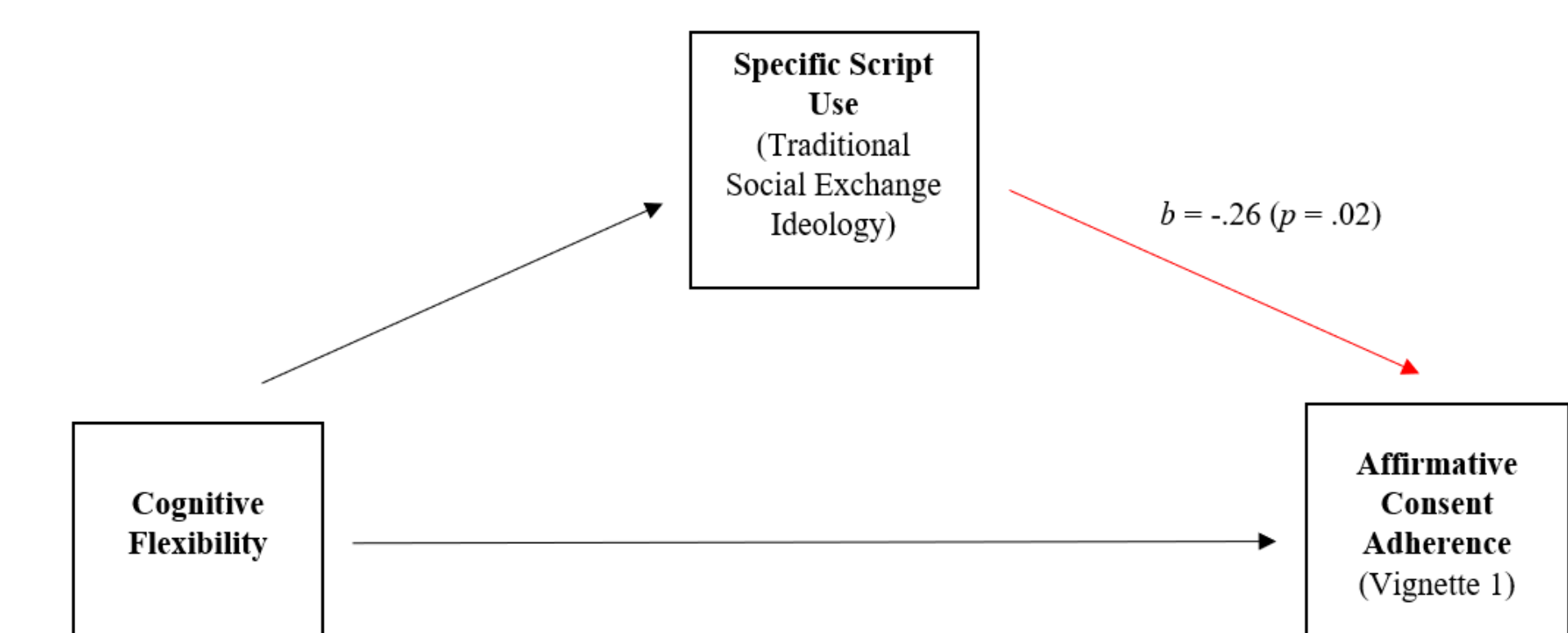


Methods

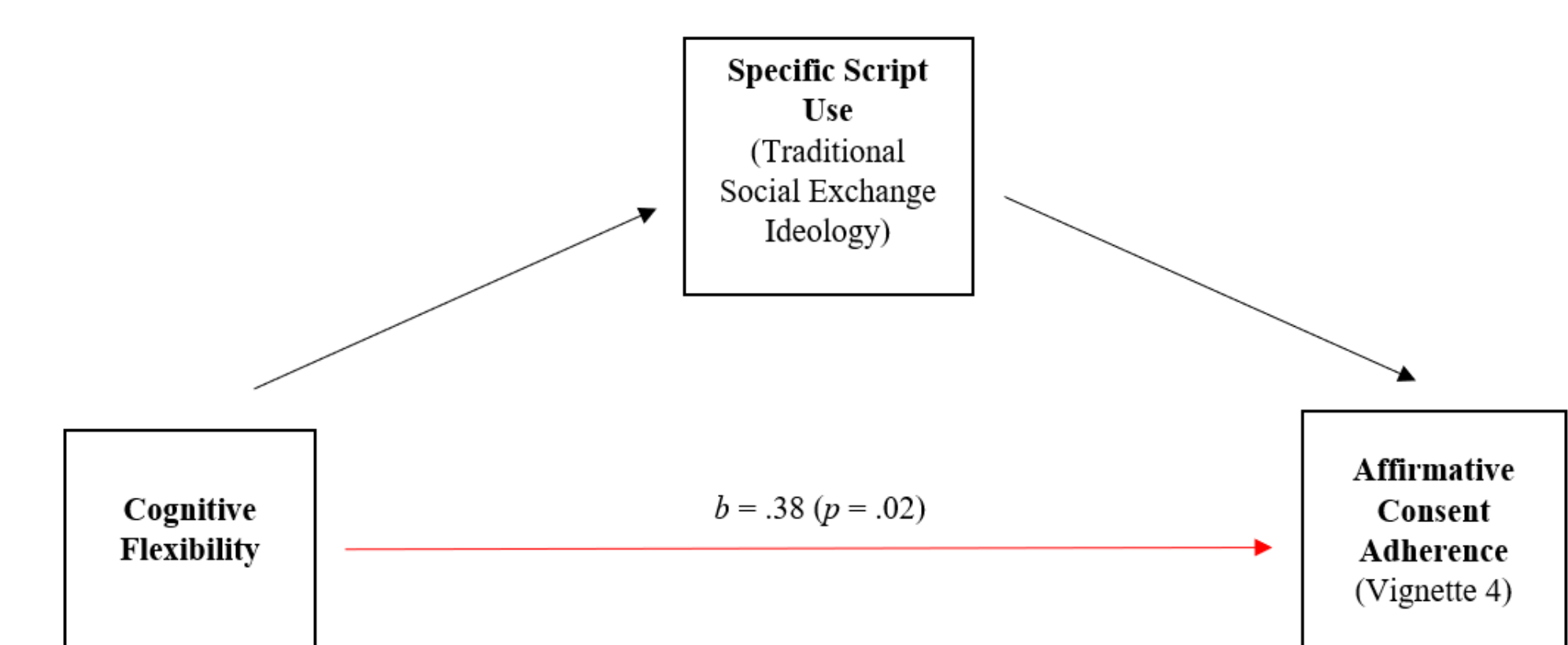
- Participants:** Criteria for participation included being 18 years or older and attending Florida State University. Participants recruited from study webpage, via email, and offered as extra credit in select FSU undergraduate classes.
- Measures:**
 - Cognitive Flexibility Scale
 - Economics of Sex Endorsement Scale
 - 6 Sexual Interaction Vignettes
 - Vignette 1 – verbal consent and non-verbal refusal
 - Vignette 2 – non-verbal consent and verbal refusal
 - Vignette 3 – enthusiastic verbal and non-verbal consent
 - Vignette 4 – nonverbal, enthusiastic consent
 - Vignette 5 – unenthusiastic, no response, passive communication of lack of consent
 - Vignette 6 – Coercion induced agreement to unwanted sex
 - Communication Style Inventory
- Analysis:**
 - Primary hypotheses were analyzed using Process to test mediation models via a series of regressions.
 - Exploratory relationships between communication styles and the vignettes were tested via correlation analyses

Results Cont.

- Figure 2:** Mediation Model for Vignette 1



- Figure 3:** Mediation Model for Vignette 4



Results

- Significant results: (preliminary)**
- Mediation Models**
 - Vignette 1: there was a significant negative, direct relationship between Traditional Social Exchange Ideology and Affirmative Consent Adherence ($b = -.26, p = .02$).
 - Vignette 4: there was a significant positive, direct relationship between Cognitive Flexibility and Affirmative Consent Adherence ($b = .38, p = .02$).
- Exploratory Correlations With Communication Styles**
 - Vignette 3: there was a significant positive relationship between the preciseness subscale and Affirmative Consent Adherence ($r = 0.3, p = 0.02$).
 - Vignette 5: there was a significant negative relationship between the expressiveness subscale and Affirmative Consent Adherence ($r = -0.27, p = .04$).

Discussion

- Results of this pilot study emphasize the complexity of sexual communication.
- Barriers to affirmative consent may be strongest when consent communication is non-verbal.
- Future research should be multifaceted and incorporate both specific scripts and the participant’s tendency to rely on scripts

References

- Im, J., Dimond, J., Berton, M., Lee, U., Mustelier, K., Ackerman, M., & Gilbert, E. (2021). Yes: Affirmative Consent as a Theoretical Framework for Understanding and Imagining Social Platforms. *Chi Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 403, 1-18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445778>
- Shumlich, E., & Fisher, W. (2020). An exploration of factors that influence enactment of affirmative consent behaviors. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 57(6), 1-14. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00444499.1761937>