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To cite this article: Silvia Pavan, Camilla S. Øverup & Gert Martin Hald (14 Oct 2024): Why Did You Stop? Reasons for Stopping Faking Orgasms and Its Association with Sexual, Relationship, and Life Satisfaction in Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, and the UK, The Journal of Sex Research, DOI: [10.1080/00224499.2024.2401019](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2024.2401019)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2024.2401019>



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# Why Did You Stop? Reasons for Stopping Faking Orgasms and Its Association with Sexual, Relationship, and Life Satisfaction in Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, and the UK

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## ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the phenomenon of faking orgasms, including the reasons why people stop faking orgasms, sociodemographic predictors of faking orgasms, its association with sex toy use, and its association with sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction. A cross-country convenience sample of 11,541 respondents from six European countries (Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, and the UK) was collected in May and June 2022 through respondent panels by Cint, a market research software platform. Participants completed an online self-report survey. The study's main findings showed that around 51% of men and women in the study had never faked orgasms, around 28% had faked orgasms but stopped faking and around 13% currently faked orgasms. Further, the reasons for men and women to stop faking orgasms included becoming more comfortable with not having an orgasm, improving sexual communication with their sexual partner, and the partner paying more attention to the respondents' desires and preferences. Finally, it was shown that faking orgasms was associated with lower sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction. The current study represents one of the few research projects focusing on the phenomenon of stopping faking orgasms and reasons for it, with the added strength of including a large male sample.

Contrary to urban myth framing the act of faking orgasms as a predominantly female behavior, literature has shown that both men and women fake orgasms for several reasons and across different contexts (Barnett et al., 2019; Biermann et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2023; Herbenick et al., 2019; Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Generally, it is estimated that roughly 21–85% of people have ever faked an orgasm with a sexual partner. Among women, research showed that 45–85% of women have ever faked orgasms during sexual activities with a sexual partner (Darling & Davdon, 1986; Fahs, 2014; Ford et al., 2023; Kaighobadi et al., 2012; Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010; Wiederman, 1997; Younis et al., 2018). Conversely, among men, the prevalence rates were typically lower, ranging from 21–71% (Ford et al., 2023; Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010; Séguin & Milhausen, 2016). While research in this area has focused mostly on women, some research found that rates of faking orgasms in both men and women varied by type of behavior (e.g., during penile-vaginal intercourse versus anal intercourse), time frame (e.g., ever, in the last year, in the last relationship) and interpersonal context (e.g., with a romantic partner versus a casual sexual partner).

For both men and women, the probability of faking an orgasm was higher among those who reported trouble achieving an orgasm or experiencing orgasm less frequently (Ford et al., 2023; Hevesi et al., 2022; Wongsomboon et al., 2023). In this regard, research has suggested that reasons for why individuals who have trouble experiencing an orgasm fake are to avoid conflict with their partner, wanting to ensure a pleasurable sexual experience for their partner, wanting sex to end, and

feeling pressure to abide to orgasmic consistency during sex (Biermann et al., 2021; Darling & Davdon, 1986; Ford et al., 2023; Herbenick et al., 2019).

Beyond gender, other sociodemographic variables of relevance in relation to faking orgasms, though scarcely investigated, include age, education, relationship status and length, lifetime sexual partners, sexual orientation, parent status, and nationality/culture. Few of these factors have been jointly investigated within a single study; therefore, it is unclear whether and how these sociodemographic factors relate to orgasm faking when investigated combined.

Ford et al. (2023) found that older age was associated with lower odds of faking an orgasm in women only, while lower education was associated with higher odds of faking orgasms in men only. With respect to relationship status, according to some research, more non-married (i.e., widowed, divorced/separated, never married) women faked orgasms, compared to married women (Darling & Davdon, 1986), and rates of women's faking orgasms were higher during sexual activities in romantic relationships (defined as any relationship characterized by more than only sexual interactions between partners, possibly including other relationship dimensions such as romantic feelings for the other partner; 61.9%) compared to continuing relationships (defined as a primarily or exclusively sexual relationship which lasts longer than one night; 40.8%) and one-night stands (defined as a primarily or exclusively sexual relationship that occurred on one single night; 48%) (Hevesi et al., 2021).

As for lifetime sex partners, in one study, women who had faked orgasms reported more lifetime sex partners and more concurrent sexual partners at the time of the investigation, compared to women who did not fake (Darling & Davdon, 1986). With respect to sexual orientation, Wongsomboon et al. (2023) found that among 211 sexual minority men, a majority (83%) had faked an orgasm in the past two years, with gay men faking more often than bisexual, queer, and pansexual men. As for parent status, no quantitative association has been examined, though Younis et al. (2018) speculated that a common cause for faking an orgasm among married Egyptian women was distraction by external causes, including fear of interference by their children. No research has examined whether faking orgasms varies by cultural/national background, although Biermann et al. (2021) called for such investigations, as most research has been carried out in North America.

Other factors that may be associated with faking orgasms include orgasm frequency and sex toy use. However, these factors are scarcely researched. The association between orgasm frequency and faking orgasms is unknown. However, in one study, greater orgasmic difficulty was associated with greater risk of faking orgasms among Hungarian women (Hevesi et al., 2022). Speculatively, those without orgasmic difficulty may experience (more) orgasms and thus, may fake orgasms less frequently.

The association between faking orgasms and sex toy use is also unknown. However, in one study, for women, faking orgasms was positively associated with having participated in various sexual behaviors and having explored a variety of techniques to achieve orgasms, including sex toy use (Darling & Davdon, 1986). There are several potential reasons why faking orgasms could be related to sex toy use; one reason could be to counteract orgasm difficulty and achieve an orgasm that is not achieved otherwise. It could be speculated that people who fake orgasms may be doing so because they cannot reach an orgasm or are not enjoying the sex; thus, they might use sex toys to add an element of pleasure during sex and aid reaching an orgasm. For this reason, we sought to investigate the association between faking orgasms and sex toy use in the current study.

In sum, different studies have singled out individual factors that may be related to faking orgasms behavior, but no studies have taken a comprehensive and simultaneous look at these factors.

### **Reasons for Stopping Faking Orgasms**

Some research has observed that a large portion of individuals who have ever faked an orgasm stop faking (Darling & Davdon, 1986; Herbenick et al., 2019; Lafrance et al., 2017). Reasons why people stop faking included changes in sexual communication with a partner and changes in personal attitude toward the orgasm experience (Darling & Davdon, 1986; Herbenick et al., 2019; Lafrance et al., 2017; Salisbury & Fisher, 2014). Previous studies that mentioned stopping faking as a result of changes in sexual communication with a partner did not mention whether that was within the same relationship or with the same partner. We could speculate that a change in partner may also lead to stopping faking, as

a change in partner may imply a change in sexual activities, sexual communication, and sexual responsiveness. Other findings suggested that struggling to talk about sex with a partner was associated with a less pleasurable sexual experience, whereby women who had more difficulty communicating with their partner and had a higher desire to please them, faked orgasms more often (Wiederman, 1997). In contrast, women who held the belief that men, in general, do care about women's pleasure and focus on pleasing their partner, faked less often (Harris et al., 2019). In line with these findings, women who stopped faking orgasms reported changes in partner-oriented and communication-based factors, such as sharing with their partner what pleases them sexually, feeling more comfortable with sex, and feeling like their partner accepted them and was happy with them even if they did not have an orgasm (Darling & Davdon, 1986; Herbenick et al., 2019; Salisbury & Fisher, 2014).

### **Faking Orgasms and Sexual, Relationship, and Life Satisfaction**

The literature around faking orgasm and satisfaction outcomes is scarce and disjointed. One study focusing on women reported a negative association between the rate of faking orgasms and relationship satisfaction (Biermann et al., 2021), such that more frequent faking of orgasms was associated with lower relationship satisfaction. No research, to our knowledge, has examined the association between faking orgasms and sexual and life satisfaction for women.

Only one study focusing on men and the association between faking orgasms and relationship and sexual satisfaction has been identified (Séguin & Milhausen, 2016). This research included 230 men (Canadian or American citizens) and showed that higher frequency of faking orgasms was associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction, except when faking was due to "poor sex/partner" (e.g. "the sex was awkward;" Séguin & Milhausen, 2016, p. 164). Higher frequencies of faking orgasms were associated with higher sexual satisfaction, when people were intoxicated during sex, when they had undesired sex, or when they wanted to improve the quality of the sexual activity (Séguin & Milhausen, 2016). Conversely, more orgasm faking was associated with lower sexual satisfaction, when people had a "poor sex/partner" (Séguin & Milhausen, 2016).

### **Current Study**

This study aimed to add to the literature in the area by examining the rate of faking orgasms, and sociodemographic (e.g., gender, age, educational level, relationship status and length) and sexual behavior (orgasms frequency, sex toy use) predictors of faking orgasms. Further, the study aimed to investigate associations between faking orgasms and sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction. The current study involved data from six European countries, allowing for cross country comparison and an examination of the generality of faking orgasms.

Based on previous literature, we developed the following research questions:

(RQ1) What proportion of adults fake orgasms and what are the reasons for stopping faking orgasms among men and women in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France and the UK?

(RQ2) What sociodemographic and relationship factors predict sexual behavior, specifically having faked orgasms in the past (but having stopped), and currently faking orgasms?

(RQ3) Is faking orgasms associated with sex toy use?

(RQ4) Is faking orgasms associated with satisfaction outcomes, namely sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction?

## Method

### Procedure and Participants

The data were collected by Cint, a globally leading market research software platform, on behalf of Radius, a Danish market research firm, and Sinful ApS, an online international sex toy company based in Denmark. Sinful commissioned Radius to develop the survey and Radius commissioned Cint to collect the data. Cint collaborates with several opt-in respondent panels that recruit participants for surveys. Cint's panel and sample source partners include market research agencies, media owners, (digital and traditional) publishers, nonprofits, and companies with access to large-scale web traffic. Cint's panel partners source participants/panelists through a variety of methods to help build diverse, representative, and engaged panel communities. These include e-mail recruitment through a panel owner's newsletters, specific invitations sent to a panel owner's database, e-mail recruitment using a permission-based database, telephone-based recruitment, face-to-face (F2F) based recruitment.

The data were collected in six countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France, and the UK) simultaneously, during the period from May 17, 2022, to June 8, 2022; participation was done online. The invited sample was selected based on demographics quotas; specifically, interlocked quotas were set up to ensure that the invited sample reflected the population of each country, in terms of gender, age, and region of country. The funder of the survey (Sinful ApS) was not mentioned to the participants, as this could have affected their answers. Participants were compensated for survey participation according to the policy of the panel of which they were a member; typically, participants receive points that can be converted to products or services over time.

The data was cleaned by people at Radius prior to being transferred to Sinful ApS, who subsequently sent the anonymous data to the researchers at the University of Copenhagen. The original cleaning process concerned removal of respondents that were "speeders" and who "straight-lined" through the survey. In total 13,173 clicked on the survey link and 12,071 people completed the survey, across the six countries; in the online supplemental materials file, we provided information about response rates. The data file received by the University of Copenhagen contained 12,044 respondents; this data has also been used by Hald et al. (2024) and Øverup et al. (2024) to answer other research questions, with analyses conducted on different sub-populations of this dataset. The Danish Data Protection Agency provided approval for data processing by the researchers at the University of Copenhagen.

In the current study, we elected to focus on those between the ages of 18 and 80<sup>1</sup>; moreover, we removed those who indicated zero lifetime sexual partners. Subsequently, our sample (for the current article) focused on the responses from 11,541 people. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic make-up of the sample by country, as well as overall. The sample had a mean age of 43 years, and roughly half the sample was female and held a short education. The majority of participants reported identifying as heterosexual and living with their partner and being in monogamous (i.e., "not open") relationships. The majority of the sample reported having children and that the children were still living at home. The majority reported having had 1–5 lifetime sexual partners.

### Measures

The questions in the survey were developed specifically for this study, but some questions were inspired by previous research in the field, specifically, the large Danish Population survey study on sexuality conducted in 2018–19 called "Project Sexus" (see <https://www.projektsexus.dk/>). The survey, called the Sindex, was developed by a working group with representatives from Sinful ApS (their Head of Brand Management, Marketing Director, Art Director, and a Co-founder), and representatives from Radius (a Danish market research firm). The representatives from Radius conducted a general review of empirical literature and wrote the first draft of the items; these were then edited in working group meetings with Radius and Sinful representatives. Items were written in English and then translated to the other languages by members of staff at Sinful ApS (Norwegian and French) and by freelance translators (Danish [but proofread by a native speaking employee at Sinful ApS], Finnish, and Swedish). Back-translation techniques were not employed.

### Gender

Gender was assessed with an item that asked participants to indicate if they identified as a "man," "woman," or "other." For descriptive purposes, we retained all response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded "woman" were coded as 1, those that responded "man" were coded as 0, and those that responded "other" were coded as missing (0.54% of the total sample).

### Age

Age was assessed with an item that asked participants to indicate their age in years with a whole number.

### Educational Level

Educational level was assessed with a single question that asked participants what their highest level of completed education was. Response options were country-specific

<sup>1</sup>We elected to cap the age at 80 years, in part because we observed what we judged to be "unbelievable" values. For instance, 29 people reported being 99 or 100 years old, accounting for .24% of the data (those reporting an age between 81 and 98 accounted for only .08% of the data). In total, by capping the age at 80, we removed only 38 participants, corresponding to .32% of the data.

**Table 1.** Demographics breakdown (in percent) of the sample, by country and for the full sample.

	DK N = 1,905	FI N = 1,946	FR N = 1,904	NO N = 1,920	SW N = 1,900	UK N = 1,966	Overall Sample N = 11,541
Age (M(SD))	44.41 (14.97)	44.43 (14.93)	43.26 (14.92)	42.33 (14.76)	41.79 (14.79)	43.24 (14.62)	43.25 (14.86)
Gender							
Men	48.71	47.84	45.85	50.36	48.47	48.68	48.32
Women	50.81	51.59	53.73	48.96	50.79	50.97	51.14
Other	0.47	0.57	0.42	0.68	0.74	0.36	0.54
Educational level							
Short	52.23	59.04	55.15	46.82	47.89	55.70	52.84
Medium	36.01	26.05	34.24	41.77	40.26	34.13	35.38
Long	11.76	14.90	10.61	11.41	11.84	10.17	11.78
Sexual orientation							
Heterosexual	78.22	80.83	78.99	74.01	73.05	81.74	77.84
Homosexual	4.78	4.01	4.46	6.25	4.63	5.70	4.97
Bisexual	7.66	8.48	7.04	10.42	8.68	7.22	8.25
Asexual	1.68	1.95	2.42	1.98	2.84	0.92	1.96
Other	1.84	1.59	1.84	1.82	2.74	0.92	1.78
N/A	5.83	3.13	5.25	5.52	8.05	3.51	5.20
Relationship status							
Single and not dating	25.88	29.39	25.84	25.83	27.74	22.74	26.23
Single, dating	11.44	8.43	9.09	9.74	13.00	8.09	9.95
In a relationship, not living together	9.19	10.89	10.77	10.05	11.05	8.14	10.01
In a relationship, living together	51.18	49.02	51.21	50.57	46.16	58.39	51.12
Other	1.63	1.75	2.21	2.71	1.21	1.98	1.91
N/A	0.68	0.51	0.89	1.09	0.84	0.66	0.78
Open Relationship							
No	82.78	77.44	64.32	73.45	71.48	85.86	76.10
Yes	14.78	19.04	32.71	22.59	24.56	12.92	20.94
N/A	2.43	3.52	2.97	3.95	3.96	1.22	2.96
Relationship length							
Less than one year	4.17	3.77	3.56	4.38	5.52	2.98	4.03
1–3 years	11.83	13.72	12.97	14.26	16.74	11.70	13.47
4–6 years	14.52	12.01	12.88	14.18	14.35	13.99	13.65
7–9 years	10.35	11.06	9.58	10.14	9.84	11.01	10.35
10–12 years	10.35	10.72	10.00	11.94	8.83	11.77	10.64
13–15 years	6.26	8.15	8.64	8.16	7.27	7.49	7.67
16–18 years	4.87	6.26	6.02	6.10	5.89	7.03	6.05
19–20 years	3.57	3.52	4.24	4.47	3.68	3.98	3.91
More than 20 years	32.70	29.16	30.51	24.74	25.57	28.90	28.63
N/A	1.39	1.63	1.61	1.63	2.30	1.15	1.60
Parental Status							
Yes, they still live at home	33.07	28.11	42.54	34.43	36.00	44.86	36.51
Yes, but they have moved out/grown up	31.76	30.99	26.94	27.14	28.21	21.52	27.74
No	35.17	40.90	30.51	38.44	35.79	33.62	35.75
No. of sexual partners							
1–5	31.23	33.09	41.49	30.68	29.16	37.54	33.88
6–10	20.68	18.35	20.01	18.33	19.26	21.26	19.65
11–15	11.97	10.74	11.13	12.55	11.47	11.39	11.54
16–20	7.09	6.89	6.46	7.55	7.68	7.88	7.26
21–25	3.99	4.37	3.15	5.78	4.89	3.31	4.25
26–30	4.30	3.49	2.57	3.70	4.84	2.80	3.61
31–40	3.10	3.75	1.73	3.07	3.21	2.64	2.92
40–50	2.31	2.36	1.31	1.77	2.16	1.98	1.98
More than 50	5.41	8.02	4.88	6.46	6.84	4.83	6.07
N/A	9.92	8.94	7.25	10.10	10.47	6.36	8.83

N/A = Do not know/want to answer. Relationship length was only assessed for those reporting that they were in a relationship. All figures are in percent, except for age, for which we provide mean and standard deviation.

and were therefore recoded to represent “short education” (e.g., primary school, high school, business high school, vocational education; coded as 0), “medium-length education” (e.g., medium-cycle tertiary education, bachelor’s degree; coded as 1) and “long education” (e.g., Master’s and PhD degrees; coded as 2).

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation was assessed with an item that asked participants to indicate their sexual orientation, with the following response options: “Heterosexual,” “Homosexual,”

“Bisexual,” “Asexual,” “Other,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” For descriptive purposes, we retained all response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded “Other” or “I do not know/I do not want to answer” were coded as missing (6.98% of the total sample).

### Current Relationship Status

Current relationship status was assessed with a single item that had the following response options: “Single (not dating),” “Single (dating),” “In a relationship (not living together),” “In

a relationship (living together),<sup>2</sup> “Other,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” For analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded “Other” or “I do not know/I do not want to answer” were coded as missing (2.69% of the total sample).

### **Open Relationship**

Open relationship was assessed with a single item that asked participants whether they were in an open relationship, with the following response options: “Yes,” “No,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” For descriptive purposes, we retained all response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded “other” or “I do not know/I do not want to answer” were coded as missing (2.96% of the total sample).

### **Relationship Length**

Length of the relationship was assessed, for those in relationships, with a single item that asked how long they had been in their current relationship, with the following response options: “Less than one year,” “1-3 years,” “4-6 years,” “7-9 years,” “10-12 years,” “13-15 years,” “16-18 years,” “19-20 years,” “More than 20 years,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” For descriptive purposes, we retained all response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded “I do not know/I do not want to answer” were coded as missing (1.60% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate greater length of the relationship.

### **Parental Status**

Parental status was assessed with a single item asking if the participant had any children, with the following response options: “Yes, they still live at home,” “Yes, but they have moved out/grown up,” and “No.”

### **Number of Lifetime Sexual Partners**

Number of lifetime sexual partners was assessed with a single item that asked how many sexual partners the participant would estimate that they have had in total in their life, with the following response options: “0,” “1-5,” “6-10,” “11-15,” “16-20,” “21-25,” “26-30,” “31-40,” “40-50,” “More than 50,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” We note a small error with the response options (i.e., that there is an overlap between the response options “31-40” and “40-50”). However, given the small percentage of endorsement of those response categories (see [Table 1](#)), we do not believe that the error had notable implications for the results. Those that had had 0 lifetime sexual partners were removed from the analyses for the current manuscript. For descriptive purposes, we retained all remaining response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded “I do not know/I do not want to answer” were coded as missing (8.83% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate a higher number of lifetime sexual partners.

<sup>2</sup>It was intended that “Single (dating)” refer to people who are not in a steady relationship (that is, they are single) but are open to and go on dates with one or more people. Conversely, people who are “in a relationship (not living together)” are people who consider themselves in a steady relationship, but do not live with their romantic partner.

### **Orgasm Frequency**

Orgasm frequency was assessed with a single item that asked participants how often they experience an orgasm when they have sex with others, with the following response options: “Every time,” “Often,” “Occasionally,” “Rarely,” “Never,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (15.04% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate more frequent orgasms.

### **Faking Orgasms**

Faking orgasms was assessed with a single item that asked participants if they ever fake orgasms, with the following response options: “Yes” (coded as 3), “No, but I have in the past” (coded as 2), “No, I have never faked orgasm” (coded as 1), and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (9.20% of the total sample).

Those that indicated that they had stopped faking their orgasms were asked to indicate why, with the following response options: “My partner began to pay more attention to my desires and preferences,” “I started to tell my sexual partner what I liked,” “I started to explore how I could get an orgasm on my own,” “I started to feel more confident,” “I have become more comfortable with not having an orgasm,” “I was caught faking orgasms,” “I am no longer sexually active,” “Other,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” These response options are generally in line with findings by Harris et al. (2019), Herbenick et al. (2019) and Salisbury and Fisher (2014). Participants were able to pick three reasons for why they stopped faking orgasms. We retained all response options.

### **Sex Toy Ownership**

Sex toy ownership was assessed with a single question that asked participants whether they owned any sex toys. They were provided with examples, such as a vibrator, BDSM equipment, a penis ring, or a dildo,” to which they could answer “Yes,” “No, but I have owned sex toys in the past,” “No, I have never owned any sex toys” or “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” We retained all response options.

Those that indicated that they had not ever owned any sex toys were then asked whether they had ever considered buying sex toys, with the following response options: “Yes,” “No,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” For descriptive purposes, we retained all response options; for analytic purposes, we recoded the responses, such that those that responded yes were coded as 1, those that responded no were coded as 0, and those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (4.66% of the total sample).

### **Interpersonal Context of Sex Toy Use and Frequency of Sex Toy Use**

Interpersonal context of sex toy use and frequency of use was assessed with several questions. Participants were asked to indicate with whom they used sex toys, with the following response options: “I use them alone,” “I use them with my partner, whom I am in a steady relationship with,” “I use them

with partners I am not in a steady relationship with,” “Other,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Multiple responses were permitted. For the current manuscript, we focus only on the first three response options.

### **Sexual Satisfaction**

Sexual satisfaction was assessed with a single item that asked participants to indicate how satisfied they were with their current sex life in general, with the following response options: “Very satisfied,” “Mostly satisfied,” “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” “Mostly dissatisfied,” “Very dissatisfied,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (5.14% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate greater sexual satisfaction.

### **Relationship Satisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction was assessed with a single item that asked participants to indicate how satisfied they were overall with their current relationship, with the following response options: “Extremely satisfied,” “Satisfied,” “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” “Dissatisfied,” “Extremely dissatisfied,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (2.11% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction.

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction was assessed with a single item that asked participants to indicate how satisfied they were with their life in general at the moment, with the following response options: “Very satisfied,” “Satisfied,” “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” “Dissatisfied,” “Very dissatisfied,” and “I do not know/I do not want to answer.” Those that responded that they did not know or want to answer were coded as missing (2.93% of the total sample). Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction.

### **Plan of Analysis**

All analyses were performed in SAS, version 9.4, using list wise deletion; the raw data were used, and no weights were applied. We began by conducting a series of chi-square analyses, to see if there were country differences in whether people fake orgasms; we also examined whether the reasons for stopping faking orgasms differed by country (RQ1).

These analyses were followed by a multinomial logistic regression that sought to examine whether sociodemographic factors and relationship factors predicted having faked orgasms in the past (but have stopped) and currently faking orgasms (RQ2). We conducted the regressions in two steps: in step 1, socio-demographics predictors (gender, age, educational level, sexual orientation, relationship status, parent status, lifetime number of sexual partners, orgasms frequency, and country of assessment) were included as predictors, and in step 2, we added open relationship status and relationship length as predictors. We elected to take a stepwise approach, as we wished to examine the full sample and the predictors in step 2 were only completed by a subset of the sample (i.e., those who indicated that they were in relationships).

We then conducted a series of chi-square analyses to examine whether faking orgasms was associated with sex toy ownership and use (RQ3). And then lastly, we conducted another series of ordinary least squares regressions to examine whether faking orgasms predicted satisfaction outcomes (sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction; RQ4); all predictors were entered simultaneously.

In all regression analyses, age, number of lifetime sexual partners, and relationship length were entered as continuous variables, while gender, sexual orientation, educational level, parent status, relationship status, open relationship status, country of assessment, and faking orgasms were entered as categorical predictors. Initial assessment of significance was done via Type 3 tests of effect (a type of variable-specific omnibus test, similar to Type 3 sums of squares in ANOVA), and we provided effect size estimates in the form of  $\eta^2$ . In the case of statistically significant categorical variables (e.g., the faking orgasms variable), we conducted follow-up tests to examine between which categories there were significant differences. This was accomplished using the LSMEANS statement in SAS; as there were numerous comparisons made, we elected to employ a Tukey adjustment to the  $p$ -values for each follow-up comparison.<sup>3</sup>

## **Results**

### **RQ1. Proportion of Adults Faking Orgasms and Reasons for Stopping Faking Orgasms**

Table 2 provides an overview, by country, of the frequency of endorsing faking orgasms, as well as the reasons for stopping faking orgasms. Overall, only 13% endorsed currently faking orgasms (8.59% of men and 18.11% of women) and about 51% of the sample reported never having faked orgasms (65.79% of men and 36.41% of women). More men than women endorsed never having faked orgasms, whereas more women than men endorsed currently faking orgasms or having faked orgasms in the past (see Table 3). Although many between-country similarities emerged, there were also some noticeable differences. For example, a greater proportion of French respondents indicated that they faked orgasms, compared to participants from the other countries. Moreover, a greater proportion of respondents from Denmark, Finland, and Norway reported never having faked an orgasm, relative to respondents from France, Sweden, and the UK.

Among participants that indicated having stopped faking orgasms, the reasons offered as response options that were most commonly endorsed by participants were a) they became more comfortable with not having an orgasm (27.97%; particularly the case for people from Finland), b) they started

<sup>3</sup>We elected to apply a Tukey adjustment because the research was exploratory in nature (rather than confirmatory), and the reduction in Type I error rate (from a Bonferroni adjustment) would result in an unacceptable reduction in power, thus leading to potential Type 2 errors. Indeed, in regression analyses, it can be ambiguous what number of comparisons exist in a “family” (to control for the family-wise error rate). There is no firm rule; judgment should weigh the risks of a false positive versus a false negative. In some instances, the researcher may prefer to err on the side of increasing the probability of a false positive to reduce the probability of a false negative when doing exploratory analysis (Nicholson et al., 2022).

**Table 2.** Frequencies (in percent) of faking orgasms and reasons for stopping faking orgasms, by country.

	DK N = 1,905	FI N = 1,374	FR N = 1,412	NO N = 1,424	SW N = 1,373	UK N = 1,519	Chi-square p-value	Overall N = 11,541
Do you ever fake orgasms?							$p < .001$	
N/A	10.13	8.68	9.24	9.53	11.63	6.10		9.20
No, I have never	53.81	55.09	42.96	55.26	48.37	47.97		50.58
No, but I have in the past	23.15	25.18	29.25	24.58	26.84	31.33		26.74
Yes	12.91	11.05	18.54	10.63	13.16	14.60		13.47
Reasons for stopping faking	DK N = 441	FI N = 490	FR N = 557	NO N = 472	SW N = 510	UK N = 616	Chi-square p-value	Overall N = 3,086
My partner began to pay more attention to my desires and preferences	19.95	19.59	28.19	26.48	20.98	29.06	$p < .001$	24.37
I started to tell my sexual partner what I liked	26.08	24.29	24.96	27.75	25.29	30.19	$p = .547$	26.54
I started to explore how I could get an orgasm on my own	12.93	12.04	20.65	25.85	20.20	20.45	$p < .001$	18.86
I started to feel more confident	20.63	21.43	25.49	29.87	25.69	20.29	$p = .002$	23.82
I have become more comfortable with not having an orgasm	28.57	39.59	26.21	28.18	25.69	21.59	$p < .001$	27.97
I was caught faking orgasms	5.90	3.88	8.08	7.84	6.67	2.76	$p < .001$	5.77
I am no longer sexually active	12.93	13.27	15.44	12.92	9.41	7.79	$p < .001$	11.83
Other	14.06	11.43	4.31	9.32	9.41	11.36	$p < .001$	9.85
N/A	7.26	5.92	6.46	4.87	7.25	5.68	$p = .600$	6.22

N/A = Do not know/want to answer.

**Table 3.** Frequencies (in percent) of faking orgasms and of reasons for stopping faking orgasms, by gender.

	Men N = 5,577	Women N = 5,902	Chi-square p-value
Do you ever fake orgasms?			$p < .001$
N/A	6.89	11.06	
No, I have never	65.79	36.41	
No, but I have in the past	18.74	34.41	
Yes	8.59	18.11	
Reasons for stopping faking	Men N = 10,45	Women N = 2,031	Chi-square p-value
My partner began to pay more attention to my desires and preferences	24.21	24.42	$p = .897$
I started to tell my sexual partner what I liked	26.51	26.54	$p = .985$
I started to explore how I could get an orgasm on my own	19.33	18.51	$p = .583$
I started to feel more confident	26.22	22.65	$p = .028$
I have become more comfortable with not having an orgasm	25.36	29.30	$p = .021$
I was caught faking orgasms	11.96	2.61	$p < .001$
I am no longer sexually active	14.55	10.44	$p < .001$
Other	6.99	11.28	$p < .001$
N/A	6.12	6.30	$p = .847$

communicating to their sexual partner what they liked (26.54%; particularly the case for people from Norway and the UK), and c) the partner began to pay more attention to the respondents' desires and preferences (24.37%; particularly the case for people from France, Norway, and the UK). Some of the reasons for stopping faking orgasms varied by gender (Table 3). That is, men were more likely to report that they stopped faking because they started to feel more confident, they were caught faking, and because they were no longer sexually active, while women were more likely to report that they stopped faking because they had become more comfortable with not having an orgasm and for other (non-specified) reasons.

## RQ2. Who Fakes Orgasms

The multinomial logistic regressions examining predictors of faking orgasms can be seen in Table 4. The first part of the multinomial logistic regression examined predictors of having faked orgasms in the past (versus not faking orgasms ever). Women (versus men), those with medium and long (versus short) educations, those of asexual, bisexual, and homosexual (versus heterosexual) orientation, those in a relationship and not

living together (versus single and not dating), those with children (versus no children), and those with more lifetime sexual partners, and with higher orgasm frequency were more likely to have faked orgasms in the past (versus not having faked orgasms ever). Those of older age and those from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden (versus those from the UK) were less likely to have faked orgasms in the past.

The second part of the multinomial logistic regression examined predictors of currently faking orgasms (versus not faking orgasms ever). Women, those of homosexual (versus heterosexual) orientation, those with children (versus no children), those with more lifetime sexual partners, and those from France and Norway (versus those from the UK) were more likely to be faking orgasms (versus not having faked orgasms ever). Those of older age, those in a relationship and living with their partner (versus single and not dating), those with greater orgasm frequency, and those from Finland and Norway (versus those from the UK) were less likely to be currently faking orgasms.

A subset analysis was conducted to examine being in an open relationship and relationship length as predictors; these analyses focused only on those in relationships. Participants who were in an open relationship were more likely to have



**Table 4.** Multinomial regression examining sociodemographic predictors of faking orgasms.

Effect	Faking: No, but have in the past				Faking: Yes			
	<i>b</i>	$X^2$	<i>p</i>	OR	<i>b</i>	$X^2$	<i>p</i>	OR
Step 1								
Intercept	-0.528	14.37	<.001		-0.686	15.72	<.001	
Gender	1.364	661.76	<.001	3.912	1.531	478.32	<.001	4.621
Age	-0.030	190.78	<.001	0.970	-0.041	208.58	<.001	0.960
Education								
Medium	0.115	4.41	.036	1.122	0.016	0.05	.822	1.016
Long	0.184	5.20	.023	1.202	-0.010	0.01	.924	0.990
Sexual Orientation								
Asexual	0.576	10.00	.002	1.778	-0.135	0.27	.606	0.873
Bisexual	0.436	24.71	<.001	1.547	0.215	3.64	.057	1.239
Homosexual	0.306	7.10	.008	1.358	0.537	16.09	<.001	1.711
Relationship status								
In relationship, living together	-0.092	2.05	.152	0.912	-0.418	26.91	<.001	0.658
In relationship, not living together	0.193	4.40	.036	1.212	-0.121	1.08	.298	0.886
Single and dating	0.165	3.12	.077	1.180	0.196	3.10	.078	1.216
Parent status								
Yes, live at home	0.421	44.67	<.001	1.523	0.748	88.45	<.001	2.113
Yes, have moved out	0.422	30.30	<.001	1.525	0.525	26.89	<.001	1.690
No. of lifetime sexual partners	0.087	64.89	<.001	1.091	0.110	65.79	<.001	1.116
Orgasm frequency	0.038	4.66	.031	1.038	-0.057	6.97	.008	0.944
Country								
Denmark	-0.450	26.43	<.001	0.638	-0.203	3.34	.068	0.816
Finland	-0.373	18.82	<.001	0.688	-0.374	10.71	.001	0.688
France	0.018	0.04	.835	1.018	0.430	16.86	<.001	1.537
Norway	-0.524	35.93	<.001	0.592	-0.513	19.65	<.001	0.599
Sweden	-0.311	12.90	<.001	0.732	-0.218	3.75	.053	0.804
Step 2 <sup>a</sup>								
Open relationship	0.385	20.90	<.001	1.469	0.886	71.22	<.001	2.426
Relationship length	-0.078	22.13	<.001	0.925	-0.064	8.70	.003	0.938

Reference groups: Gender: male; Education: short education; Sexual orientation: heterosexual; relationship status: single and not dating; Parent status: no children; Country: UK; Open relationship: No. <sup>a</sup> these analyses focused only on people who reported being in a relationship.

faked orgasms in the past and to be currently faking orgasms (versus not having faked orgasms ever). Conversely, those in longer lasting relationships were less likely to have faked orgasms in the past and to be currently faking orgasms (versus not having faked orgasms ever).

### RQ3. Faking Orgasms: Associations with Sex Toy Use

We also examined whether faking orgasms was associated with sex toy use.

A series of chi-square analyses examined associations between faking orgasms and sex toy ownership and use (see Table 5). These analyses suggested that a larger proportion of participants that had never faked orgasms also had never owned any sex toys, while a larger proportion of those that had faked orgasms in the past and those that currently faked orgasms owned sex toys.

Of those that had not owned sex toys, a larger percentage of those that faked orgasms had considered buying a sex toy, relative to those that had never faked orgasms and those that used to fake orgasms.

**Table 5.** Frequencies (in percent) of Sex Toy Ownership and Sex Toy Use, by faking orgasm.

	Faking: No, I have never N = 5,838	Faking: No, but I have in the past N = 3,086	Faking: Yes N = 1,555	Chi-square <i>p</i> -value
Do you own any sex toys? E. g., a vibrator, BDSM equipment, a penis ring, or a dildo				<i>p</i> < .001
N/A	3.24	2.40	2.70	
No, I have never	49.71	30.88	25.53	
No, but I have in the past	14.13	20.19	16.40	
Yes	32.92	46.53	55.37	
	Faking: No, I have never N = 2,798	Faking: No, but I have in the past N = 895	Faking: Yes N = 384	Chi-square <i>p</i> -value
Have you ever considered buying sex toys? – Yes <sup>a</sup>	25.77	32.07	34.64	<i>p</i> < .001
	Faking: No, I have never N = 1922	Faking: No, but I have in the past N = 1436	Faking: Yes N = 861	Chi-square <i>p</i> -value
Sex toy use <sup>b</sup>				
I use them alone	49.90	63.51	73.87	<i>p</i> < .001
I use them with my partner	65.04	64.00	53.08	<i>p</i> < .001
I use them with partners I am not in a steady relationship with	12.02	10.79	11.61	.544

N/A = Do not know/want to answer.

<sup>a</sup>sample contained only those that indicated that they had never owned a sex toy.

<sup>b</sup>sample contained only those that indicated that they owned a sex toy.

Of those that did own sex toys, a larger percentage of those that faked orgasms used sex toys alone, relative to those that had never faked orgasms and those that used to fake orgasms. Conversely, a larger percentage of those that had never or used to fake orgasms used sex toys with their partner, relative to those that faked orgasms. Overall, relatively few endorsed using sex toys with casual partners, regardless of whether they faked orgasms.

#### RQ4. Faking Orgasms: Associations with Sexual, Relationship, and Life Satisfaction

A series of ordinary least squares regressions were conducted to examine whether sociodemographic factors and faking orgasms predicted sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction. Table 6 provides the Type 3 analysis of effects. The proportion of variance explained by inclusion of these variables (Step 1) was 9% for sexual satisfaction, 6% for relationship satisfaction, and 8% for life satisfaction. As the results for the demographic variables are extensive, we elected to focus on the faking orgasms predictor only. Please see the supplemental materials for a break-down of the results for the demographic variables.

Faking orgasms was a statistically significant predictor of all three satisfaction outcomes, although the overall effect was very small. Follow-up tests for this predictor were conducted to examine which faking orgasms responses differed from each other; the reported *p*-values are based on a Tukey-adjustment for multiple testing.

For sexual and life satisfaction, those that reported currently faking orgasms were less satisfied ( $M_{sexual} = 3.620$ ;  $M_{life} = 3.368$ ) than those that had faked orgasms in the past ( $M_{sexual} = 3.711$ ,  $p = .037$ ;  $M_{life} = 3.468$ ,  $p = .009$ ). Those that had never faked ( $M_{sexual} = 3.661$ ;  $M_{life} = 3.434$ ) did not differ from those that had faked in the past ( $p_{sexual} = .180$ ;  $p_{life} = .390$ ) or from those that currently faked orgasms ( $p_{sexual} = .480$ ;  $p_{life} = .103$ ). A similar pattern of differences was identified for relationship satisfaction. Those that reported faking orgasms were less relationally satisfied ( $M = 3.763$ ) than those that had never faked an orgasm ( $M = 3.967$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and those that had faked orgasms in the past ( $M = 3.922$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Those that had

never faked and those that had faked in the past did not significantly differ from each other in terms of relationship satisfaction ( $p = .240$ ).

We also examined whether the association between faking orgasms and the outcomes varied by country, and although there were significant interactive effects, these were very small. This suggested that the interactions may not meaningfully explain the outcomes, and thus, we elected not to interpret these further.

#### Discussion

The current study sought to comprehensively investigate the phenomenon of faking orgasms, including the reasons people stop faking orgasms, sociodemographic and relationship predictors of faking orgasms, its association with sex toy use, and its association with sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction.

RQ1 explored the proportion of adults faking orgasms and the reasons why men and women stop faking orgasms. Our results showed that around 40% of individuals fake orgasms at some point in time. They either have faked in the past but have stopped (~27%) or currently still fake orgasms (~13%). While our results are in line with previous research regarding the percentage of people who fake orgasms (21–85%) at some point in time, we found that only 13% of the sample reported currently faking orgasms. We also identified country differences in the rates of faking orgasms, suggesting that faking orgasms may be tied to cultural background, whereby culturally mediated beliefs, sexual scripts, and gender norms may affect sexual behavior (Biermann et al., 2021). While it remains unclear why France specifically showed a greater proportion of individuals faking orgasms, it is perhaps unsurprising to see lower rates of faking orgasms among the Nordic countries. Among people living in the Nordic countries, there might be more comfort in engaging in conversations about sex, with fewer taboos around sexual behavior due to a more liberal and open approach toward sexuality, as well as access to sex education and sex positive policies and beliefs (Fischer et al., 2022; Paton et al., 2020; Roien et al., 2022; Sauer & Siim, 2020) compared to other (especially southern) European countries,

**Table 6.** Predictors of sexual satisfaction, life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction: type 3 analysis of effects.

Source	Sexual satisfaction			Relationship satisfaction <sup>a</sup>			Life satisfaction		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Step 1	$\eta^2 = .09$ , $N = 9,189$			$\eta^2 = .06$ , $N = 5,861$			$\eta^2 = .08$ , $N = 9,335$		
Gender	0.42	.517	0.000	10.21	.001	0.002	0.10	.754	0.000
Age	326.56	<.001	0.034	20.38	<.001	0.004	83.07	<.001	0.009
Education level	0.77	.463	0.000	1.79	.167	0.001	5.88	0.003	0.001
Sexual orientation	1.79	.146	0.000	8.99	<.001	0.005	55.48	<.001	0.018
Relationship status	114.41	<.001	0.036	19.18	<.001	0.003	120.51	<.001	0.037
Parental status	15.93	<.001	0.004	7.30	<.001	0.003	10.31	<.001	0.002
Open relationship	–	–	–	0.41	.521	0.000	–	–	–
Relationship length	–	–	–	49.22	<.001	0.008	–	–	–
No. sex partners	0.06	.810	0.000	8.37	.004	0.001	0.05	.828	0.000
Country	16.79	<.001	0.009	7.28	<.001	0.006	9.84	<.001	0.005
Faking orgasms	3.35	.035	0.001	15.29	<.001	0.005	4.38	.013	0.001
Faking orgasms*country	3.64	<.001	0.004	2.27	.012	0.004	1.98	.031	0.002

$\eta^2$  is a measure of variance explained in the outcome by all predictors (and interaction effects) included in the model.  $\eta_p^2$  = partial eta squared, which measures the proportion of the variance in a dependent variable explained by an independent variable, partialling out other independent variables (and interactions, if entered) from the outcome. We used the following guidelines for interpreting  $\eta^2$  and  $\eta_p^2$ : 0.01 indicates a small effect, 0.06 indicates a medium effect, 0.14 indicates a large effect (Maher et al., 2013; Richardson, 2011).

<sup>a</sup>these analyses focused only on people who reported being in a relationship.

which share different views on sexuality and gender norms, mostly affected by the social influence of the Catholic Church, and who may still be tied to older traditional and religious beliefs (Fischer et al., 2022).

Among participants that indicated having stopped faking orgasms, the reasons that were most commonly endorsed included that the partner began to pay more attention to the respondents' desires and preferences, that participants started communicating to their sexual partner what they liked, started to explore how to get an orgasm on their own, began to feel more confident, and became more comfortable with not having an orgasm. These results support previous research underlining the importance and pivotal role of sexual communication in the experience of pleasure (Byers, 2011; Darling & Davdon, 1986; Herbenick et al., 2019; Øverup et al., 2024; Wiederman, 1997). Furthermore, it is interesting that our results showed that men and women mostly stopped faking for the same reasons; however, a larger percentage of men stopped faking because they were caught faking. Darling and Davdon (1986) mentioned that women who fake orgasms reported feeling guilty for doing so and how "faking orgasms detracts from the potential of the sexual relationship" (p. 192). Since men and women shared similar reasons for why they stopped faking orgasms, it is possible that men also felt guilt and shame about faking orgasms. Possibly, men felt shame in being caught doing something that is considered deceiving and manipulative (Goodman et al., 2017; Rubinsky & Ambrus, 2023). On one hand, they may be confronted by their sexual partner, possibly encouraging more open and transparent communication, which may improve sexual understanding. On the other hand, they might hold on to feelings of guilt and shame that may result from being caught, and simply will avoid such behavior going forward. Another explanation could be that the feelings of shame and guilt may derive from stigma. It may be more widely accepted and expected of women to fake orgasms, while it may be assumed that men always have orgasms during sex. As such, men may be trying to uphold the expectation of orgasmic consistency.

RQ2 identified the characteristics of the people who fake orgasms. Our findings corroborated previous research in the area. We found that being a woman (Ford et al., 2023), being homosexual (Wongsomboon et al., 2023), having more lifetime sexual partners (Darling & Davdon, 1986), and having children was associated with higher odds of faking orgasms. It is interesting that having more lifetime sexual partners was associated with higher odds of faking, as it could be speculated that having more sexual experience would be tied to knowing oneself better, being more confident, and advocating about one's sexual desires with a sexual partner. However, it may be that people fake orgasms because of difficulty in achieving an orgasm, and as a result, seek sexual pleasure and orgasms with new sexual partners. In addition, it may be understandable to see higher odds of faking among those who have children in the home. Possibly, parents may need or wish to "cut it short" as they may have other pressing priorities (e.g., fatigue, fear of child hearing or seeing; Younis et al., 2018).

Furthermore, we identified a significant association between relationships status and faking orgasms. Namely, people in romantic relationships were less likely to report

faking orgasms than those who were single and not dating. With the data at hand, it is not possible for us to determine when participants might have stopped faking orgasms, whether during the current or a past relationship. As such, it is also not possible for us to investigate whether the change in faking orgasm behavior stems from an intrapersonal motive, whereby an individual may take a decision for oneself and decide to stop engaging in certain behaviors, or whether the change might stem from an interpersonal effect, whereby a person might have a new partner that better caters to their needs, or with who they communicate better. However, these findings are in line with research that demonstrated that women more often reported reaching orgasm and enjoying the sexual activity during relationships versus casual hookups, and more in repeated hookups versus first time hookups (Armstrong et al., 2012; Wongsomboon et al., 2020). It may be that being in a relationship gives more time and space for people to learn about themselves, to build intimacy with a partner, and to communicate their sexual preferences (Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Lawrance & Byers, 1995; MacNeil & Byers, 2005, 2009). A large body of literature demonstrated that intimacy is a major dimension of romantic relationships and is built from emotional and sexual disclosure and partner responsiveness to such disclosure (Byers, 2002; Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Dindia & Timmerman, 2003; Laurenceau et al., 1998, 2004; Lawrance & Byers, 1995; MacNeil & Byers, 2005, 2009; Reis, 2017). Furthermore, Dindia and Timmerman (2003) underlined the importance of managing sexuality through communication skills to accomplish relationship development and bonding. The same may apply to individuals living together versus single and dating: proximity and sharing a physical space may create more chances for sexual experiences and sexual communication. In fact, 24% of men and 24% of women reported stopping faking orgasms because of partner's increased attention to their sexual preferences and desires, supporting the notion that partner responsiveness may be pivotal in stopping faking orgasms and attaining orgasms. Indeed, partner responsiveness is a key factor in sexual functioning and (physical and emotional) sexual satisfaction and well-being (e.g., Merwin & Rosen, 2020; Muise et al., 2023), likely regardless of relationship status.

Curiously, we found that people in open relationships were more likely to have faked and be currently faking orgasms. This is interesting because in one study people in consensual non-monogamous relationships reported slightly higher sexual satisfaction and orgasm rates compared to people in monogamous relationships (Conley et al., 2018). We can only speculate as to why we found a greater likelihood of faking orgasms amongst people who were in open relationships. It may be that multiple sexual partners may provide more opportunities for orgasming as well as for faking.

RQ3 investigated the association between faking orgasms and sex toy use. Our analyses looking at the associations between faking orgasms and sex toy ownership and use suggested that a larger proportion of those that had never faked orgasms also had never owned any sex toys, while a larger proportion of those that had faked orgasms in the past and those that currently faked orgasms owned sex toys. This suggests that sex toy ownership and use may be associated with

faking orgasms. This is in line with previous research indicating that faking orgasms is positively associated with exploring a variety of techniques to achieve orgasm, including the use of a vibrator (Darling & Davdon, 1986). A possible explanation for these results may be that individuals who fake orgasms may use sex toys to seek sexual pleasure that they may not be finding in other sexual activities. Instead, those who have never faked may not be equally interested in the use of sex toys as they may be satisfied with their sex life as it is. Further support for this is found in our results showing that of those that had not owned sex toys, a larger percentage of those that faked orgasms had considered buying a sex toy, relative to those that had never faked orgasms and those that used to fake orgasms. This may indicate that wanting to use a sex toy, among those who fake, might be independent orgasm seeking behavior, or seeking further sexual pleasure. In addition, among those that did own sex toys, a larger percentage of those that faked orgasms used sex toys alone, relative to those that had never faked and those that used to fake orgasms, supporting the indication that these individuals may be using sex toys to seek sexual pleasure that they may not be finding in other partnered sexual activities, to more easily reach orgasms or to feel more pleasure while using sex toys (alone). Also, a larger percentage of those that had never faked or used to fake orgasms, used sex toys with their partner, relative to those that faked orgasms. These results indicate that sex toy use (with a partner) is related to not faking orgasms, which may be a result of openness to sexual exploration. The findings suggest that there may be a difference underlying the association between faking orgasms and using sex toys alone versus with a partner, which warrants further research in the future.

Our last research question focused on the association between faking orgasms and sexual, relationship, and life satisfaction. Across the three satisfaction outcomes, faking orgasms was a statistically significant predictor. Specifically, those that reported faking orgasms reported lower sexual and life satisfaction than those that had faked orgasms in the past. With respect to relationship satisfaction, those that reported faking orgasms also reported lower satisfaction than those that had never faked an orgasm and those that had faked orgasms in the past. Our results are in line with previous literature indicating that individuals who fake orgasms may conceal being unsatisfied with their sexual activities and their relationship dissatisfaction (Biermann et al., 2021; Darling & Davdon, 1986; Fahs, 2014; Hevesi et al., 2022). Of note, no previous literature addressed the association between faking orgasms and life satisfaction. However, it would be plausible to see a negative association between faking orgasms and life satisfaction, given that previous research has argued that life satisfaction results from the accumulation of satisfaction across different domains, including sexual and relationship dimensions (Cummins, 1996). It has been observed that those who fake orgasms desire changes in their sexual lives (Darling & Davdon, 1986) and those who stop faking have made changes in the way they communicate about sex with their partner and gained self-confidence and comfort within their sex lives (Herbenick et al., 2019). Sexual satisfaction was positively correlated with feeling comfortable openly communicating about sexuality and both men and women who reported higher

levels of self-disclosure and higher rates of sexual communication with their partner also reported higher sexual and relationship satisfaction (Byers, 2001; Darling & Davdon, 1986; Herbenick et al., 2019; Øverup et al., 2024). In addition, reports of best orgasms were associated with interpersonal connection and self-awareness and self-confidence (Biermann et al., 2021; Fahs, 2014; Hevesi et al., 2022).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Strengths of the study include 1) a large sample; 2) that included both women and men, in contrast to previous research, which mostly focused solely on women (Barnett et al., 2019; Biermann et al., 2021; Herbenick et al., 2019); 3) investigating the phenomenon within different cultural contexts; and 4) studying a number of different variables, that had not been researched before, and their association with faking orgasms. Investigating reasons why people stop faking orgasms is innovative as previous research has predominantly focused on why people fake orgasms (e.g., Barnett et al., 2019; Fahs, 2014; Goodman et al., 2017; Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Our findings identified many similarities in the reasons why men and women stop faking, but also singled out reasons that are specific to men which has only scarcely been done before.

Study limitations include that the sample was a self-selected opt-in sample that may not be representative of the population (Görizt, 2007; Sohlberg et al., 2017). Opt-in panels may introduce bias as they tend to prioritize individuals who have an interest in the research at hand, and they tend to exclude people who lack access to the Internet, a connecting device, and technology savviness (Sohlberg et al., 2017). We therefore caution against generalizing the results to the background populations. Furthermore, regardless of the care taken in translating the surveys to six different languages, translational bias may have influenced study results and comparisons across cultures (Wong et al., 2023). In addition, the data used for the study was secondary data and the survey items and response options were not constructed by the authors. While Radius ApS based the survey on a review of the literature, the survey did not contain validated questionnaires for most of the constructs assessed, and some of the response options provided for some questions were not exhaustive. For instance, with respect to reasons for stopping faking orgasms, roughly 10% of the sample endorsed “other” as a response option. Unfortunately, participants were unable to write in answers to this response option. We encourage future research to allow for open-ended responses and/or to use qualitative methods, so that we may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons for faking orgasms as well as the reasons for stopping faking orgasms.

It is worth noting that there are differences in the sexual response between men and women, which could lead to different orgasm and faking behaviors. For men, orgasm and ejaculation are often used interchangeably, but refer to two different events within the male sexual response. While they commonly occur simultaneously, it may happen for only one to occur without the other. For women, orgasms are achieved through stimulation of the clitoris: either

directly through external clitoral stimulation or indirectly by vaginal contact that stimulates the back of the clitoral area. Research suggests that women are less likely to orgasm vaginally from penetration (Herbenick et al., 2018). Thus, for women, faking may occur more in connection with penetration than with external clitoral stimulation. Future research should seek to employ intensive longitudinal methods or event-contingent diary methods, using validated psychometric tools measuring male and female orgasms, to examine faking behavior in relation to orgasm type, quality, and intensity.

Our study explored reasons why people may stop faking orgasms but not why they fake orgasms in the first place. There are likely myriad reasons for faking orgasms and these may (or may not) be related to, or overlap, with reasons why people stop faking orgasms. Reasons to fake orgasms could be 1) because they just want the sex to end, 2) because they want to excite and pleasure a partner, or 3) to avoid upsetting a partner for not having an orgasm. We encourage future researchers to further explore reasons for faking in relation to the motivation and scope of such behavior.

Moreover, we have mentioned that faking orgasms behavior may stem from intrapersonal processes whereby a person makes a personal decision to stop engaging in faking or may stem from interpersonal processes whereby a person may stop faking due to changes in relation to one other. Future research should investigate when people stop faking orgasms, including how faking orgasms behavior may change over time (some may just keep faking, while others might stop), in what context or circumstance does a person stop faking, and what is the source of or reasoning behind such change. Research addressing these topics would allow us to better understand where stopping faking orgasms behavior may stem from, and why it occurs.

Lastly, we recommend future researchers to further delve into the association between faking orgasms and sex toy use to understand the dynamics underlying this association; for one, it may be interesting to examine whether sex toy use could improve those aspects of one's sex life that are the reasons for faking orgasms. We also encourage future investigations to include a diverse sample to promote balanced investigation across genders, sexual orientations, and nationalities.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Regitze Rothoff for her assistance with literature searching.




## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

Sinful ApS has supported the research through an unrestricted research grant to the third author through the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

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