Sex Frequency and Perceived Relationship Quality

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Previous research indicates that couples who engage in sexual intercourse more frequently experience higher levels of overall relationship satisfaction. This study measured perceptions of overall relationship satisfaction according to sexual frequency and support. Participants read one of three stories which depicted a married couple who had one of three levels of intercourse frequency (i.e., level 1 = low sex frequency 1-4 times a month, level 2 = medium sex frequency of 5-12 times a month, level 3 = high sex frequency 13-16 times a month) and rated the couple’s relationship satisfaction and level of positive attitudes on a Likert type scale (5 = extremely satisfied to 1 = extremely negative). A One-way ANOVA was conducted for relationship satisfaction and positive spousal attitudes. The hypothesis was partially supported. As predicted, the low sex frequency group was perceived as the least satisfied in the relationship. \( F(2,54) = 6.862, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.2 \). There was no difference between the groups in perceptions of positive spousal attitudes according to sex frequency. These results suggest that people believe sex frequency to be important for overall relationship satisfaction, but that there is a drop off.

The act of sex itself, promotes meaningful companionship between couples (Trond Viggo, Leif Edward Ottesen, & Mons, 2019). Positive thoughts and attitudes among partnerships is linked with couples who engaged in sexual acts frequently (Hicks, McNulty, Metzer, & Olson, 2016). Sexual frequency demonstrates no significance for the outcome of the quality of a relationship; however, the more often a couple is sexually active, the more likely it is that couples hold each other in high regard, leading to greater relationship satisfaction (Hicks, McNulty, Metzer, & Olson, 2016).

It was expected that the lowest sexual frequency couple in the story would receive the lowest rating for relationship satisfaction.

Participants

- Heterosexual men and women who reported not having their desired sexual frequency met, also reported being dissatisfied with their relationship (Smith et. al., 2011).
- The act of sex itself, promotes meaningful companionship between couples (Yabiku & Gager, 2009).
- The frequency of sex depends on an individual’s attitudes toward casual sex (Trond Viggo, Leif Edward Ottesen, & Mons, 2019).
- Positive thoughts and attitudes among partnerships is linked with couples who engaged in sexual acts frequently (Hicks, McNulty, Metzer, & Olson, 2016).
- Sexual frequency demonstrates no significance for the outcome of the quality of a relationship; however, the more often a couple is sexually active, the more likely it is that couples hold each other in high regard, leading to greater relationship satisfaction (Hicks, McNulty, Metzer, & Olson, 2016).
- Sexual frequency in a relationship reduces stress levels (Yabiku & Gager, 2009).
- Not Reported = 1

Participants read one of three stories online depicting a couple in which the amount of sex they engaged in varied, based on the random assignment of groups. Participants then rated their perceived level of relationship satisfaction and positive spousal attitudes of the couple.

Conclusion

- It is perceived that couples who engage in intercourse two or more times a week have higher levels of relationship satisfaction, compared to couples whose sex frequency is less than twice a week.
- It is perceived that sexual frequency has no effect on the level of positive spousal attitudes that couples have toward each other.
- These results relate to previous studies in that frequent sex between partners is an important piece to relationship satisfaction.