

Measuring Sexual Motivation and Marital Satisfaction in Young Adult Men

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Abstract

Satisfaction is a crucial aspect of a marital relationship. The subjective nature of an individual's views and reactions to their marriage is a well-documented phenomenon. The potential for various risks to arise if individuals are dissatisfied with their marriage is considerable. One such risk is the potential for separation. One aspect of sexuality that can influence marital satisfaction is sexual motivation. One of the principal determinants of marital satisfaction is the individual's motive for engaging in sexual relations. The objective of this research is to ascertain the relationship between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young married adult men. This research employs quantitative methods. The subjects of this research were 604 participants. The sampling technique employed a purposive sampling approach, with the subjects comprising married young adult males, aged between 20 and 40 years. Marital satisfaction was gauged utilising the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) instrument, while sexual motivation was quantified using the Multidimensional Sexual-Self Concept Questionnaire (MSCCQ) instrument. The results of Spearman's rho analysis indicate that the p value is .508, which is greater than .05. This indicates that there is no correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult men. Further research is required to ascertain whether there are intervening variables that can explain the correlation between the two research variables.

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INTRODUCTION

The most prominent developmental tasks in young adulthood are the formation of serious relationships with other people and the establishment of a home. One of the crucial aspects of human experience throughout the life course is the capacity to establish, sustain, and enhance a romantic, positive, and meaningful relationship with a partner (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008). Individuals are believed to require feelings of comfort, security, and an abundance of love from others (Khotimah, 2017).

Marriage is a process of development in young adulthood. As humans enter young adulthood, they must undertake a number of developmental tasks, including choosing a life partner, learning to build a family and starting to raise and care for children (Hurlock, 2011). Marriage can be used as an indicator of an individual's well-being. The quality of a married couple can be considered a form of satisfaction derived from their marriage. These qualities may be considered to include the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of the two individuals, both towards other people and towards their own partners (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008). However, the evidence suggests otherwise. For some individuals, the romantic and harmonious relationship that is often assumed to be characteristic of marriage is, in fact, a mere fiction. This is evidenced by the high divorce rate among married couples in Indonesia in 2022.

The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023) has observed that in 2022, there will be 516,334 divorce cases (Annur, 2023). This represents a 15.31% increase compared to the previous year, namely 447,743 cases in 2021. In contrast, the number of divorce case reports in 2020 reached 291,677. Divorce cases in Indonesia exhibit a tendency towards fluctuation. This is evidenced by reports from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, which indicate that divorce cases increased from 2017 to 2019, but decreased in 2020. However, in 2021, there was a significant increase in the number of divorce cases. The increase in divorce cases is at odds with the fundamental purpose of marriage.

This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesia; several other countries have also observed a similar trend. In 1996, 32,775 reports of divorce cases were identified in South Africa (Mohammed & Yehualashet, 2016). In 2016, the United States became the country with the highest rate of divorce cases, with 776,288 reports. The following year, there was an increase, with 787,251 reports of divorce cases. In 2018, the number of reported divorce cases in the United States was 782,038, representing a decline from the previous year. The considerable number of divorce cases reported indicates that a multitude of issues have been identified that are sufficiently problematic to have a detrimental impact on the couple's relationship, resulting in both parties ending their marriage through divorce.

Divorce emerged as the culmination of a long history of unhappiness experienced by both parties during their married life. Consequently, they both

decided to end the marriage through legal means, with careful consideration from both the husband and wife (Mohammed & Yehualashet, 2016). One of the reasons for the continued increase in divorce cases is the personal problems experienced by the husband and wife themselves. In addition, economic, social, family and parenting patterns also play a role in causing divorce to occur. According to data reported by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2021, 279,205 divorces were attributed to relationship disharmony, including instances of quarrels and disputes (Annur, 2023).

The most common cause of divorce is the personal problems of both parties. One such personal problem is dissatisfaction with one's partner. Furthermore, the dissatisfaction of one party with the couple's relationship can also have an impact on the overall marital satisfaction within the relationship. Marital satisfaction can be used as a reference point for a couple's success in navigating their married life and their approach to resolving conflict (Hurlock, 2011).

Marital satisfaction is a state of fulfilment and pleasure experienced by a married couple when all aspects of their lives are met with satisfaction. Marital satisfaction can be defined as an individual's evaluation of their relationship with their partner. Marital satisfaction is regarded as a crucial element in evaluating the quality and stability of a marriage (Bradbury, 1995). Marital satisfaction is a subjective global evaluation of a relationship (Marcaurelle et al., 2003) and reveals the extent to which an individual's hopes for marriage are fulfilled in the relationship they are in (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Marital satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors, including passion and satisfaction. A satisfying intimate relationship is considered a significant factor that influences an individual's subjective well-being, acts as a source of happiness, and can enhance the quality of life (Ottu & Akpan, 2011). Marital satisfaction can be defined as a relationship that does not exhibit significant problems and in which both individuals are able to adapt effectively to challenges (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008). It can be posited that marital satisfaction can improve a couple's quality of life. Consequently, the greater the marital satisfaction an individual experiences, the greater their satisfaction with their life.

Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of a couple's relationship. It encompasses the partner's efforts or attitude in meeting their partner's needs, the partner's perception of the quality of their relationship in comparison to others, their feelings of love and hope for their partner, and whether they have any regrets about the relationship. It also considers the number of problems they faced during their relationship and their overall satisfaction with it (Hendrick, 1988). The concept of marital satisfaction encompasses a number of interrelated dimensions. These include the receipt of support from a partner, sexual satisfaction, relationships with the partner's family, psychological well-being, social support and life satisfaction (Javanmard & Garegozlo, 2013).

One of the most significant predictors of the level of marital satisfaction is sexual activity (Dobrowolska et al., 2020). In particular, several studies have demonstrated that sexual activity is considered an important indicator in measuring the quality of a marriage (Christopher & Sprecher, 2000). One of the most effective and important indicators of marital satisfaction is sexual satisfaction and intimacy (Brezsnyak & Whisman, 2004). Larson et al. (1998) reported that sexual problems were ranked as the most significant factor influencing marital relationships.

The occurrence of sexual behaviour within a marital relationship is contingent upon the encouragement or motivation of the couple to engage in sexual relations. Sexual motivation can be defined as a series of goals and needs that individuals seek to achieve during sexual intercourse (Cooper et al., 1998). Sexual motivation is also defined as the reason why individuals engage in sexual relations. Sexual motivation is a series of psychological constructs that describe the stimuli or forces that encourage individuals to engage in sexual activity (Stark et al., 2015). This has an influence on individual well-being, which is related to marital satisfaction (Tóth-Király et al., 2019).

The sexual motivation of an individual can be observed based on the individual's desire to engage in sexual relations, the importance of sexual relations to the individual, the effort the individual makes to obtain sexual relations, and the frequency of sexual relations. The level of sexual motivation exhibited by individuals varies considerably. An individual's level of sexual motivation is influenced by a number of factors, including their biological, cognitive, memory and sexual incentives. An individual's sexual motivation has a profound impact on their life. When an individual's sexual motivation is low, there is a tendency for them to experience depression, stress and negative moods (Bodenmann et al., 2010).

In addition, Snell et al.'s research encompasses the measurement of sexual motivation as a dimension of sexuality (1993) comprises the following dimensions: sexual esteem, sexual preoccupation, internal sexual control, sexual consciousness, sexual motivation, sexual anxiety, sexual depression, external sexual control, sexual monitoring, fear of sexual relationships and sexual satisfaction. Muise et al. (2013) propose that sexual motivation can be divided into two categories: the first is sexual motivation with the aim of maintaining intimacy and closeness between the two partners. The motivation to engage in sexual activity with the intention of maintaining intimacy and closeness between the two partners has been demonstrated to enhance both sexual and relationship satisfaction. In contrast, the second purpose of sexual motivation is to serve as a form of avoidance of potential problems that might arise in a relationship, such as disappointment and conflict. The motivation to engage in sexual activity with the intention of avoiding potential issues in a relationship can have a detrimental effect on the quality of the couple's relationship.

Further research was conducted by McNulty et al. (2016), which revealed that sexual satisfaction has a stronger influence on men than on women. Further research was conducted by Mitchell et al. (2020) who investigated sexual motivation in single relationships and open relationships (involving more than one partner). Their findings indicated that couples in open relationships tend to engage in sexual relations solely for the purpose of seeking pleasure and experiencing pleasure for themselves. Conversely, a single relationship posits the opposite. One of the sexuality variables proposed by Snell et al. (1993) is sexual motivation, which is closely related to individual sexual satisfaction.

In light of the aforementioned research, it can be seen that studies on sexual motivation in a relationship have been conducted with subjects representing both partners. Previous research on sexual motivation also examined relationship satisfaction. There is a paucity of research on sexual motivation and marital satisfaction, particularly when examining young adult males. In light of the aforementioned explanation of the phenomenon, researchers are interested in further investigating the relationship between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult men.

METHOD

Design

This research employs a quantitative methodology with a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between two variables: sexual motivation and marital satisfaction.

Participants

The study population comprised young adults residing in Indonesia. The total sample size for this study was 604 participants, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The following characteristics were considered in the selection process: The participants were aged between 20 and 40 years and were married.

Instruments

This research employs two measurement instruments: the Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire (MSSCQ), developed by Snell (2001). The questionnaire addresses the motivations of participants in a sexual context. The scoring for the Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire (MSSCQ) is based on five answer categories: "not at all typical of me" (score 0), "slightly typical of me" (score 1), "somewhat typical of me" (score 2), "very typical of me" (score 3), and "very typical of me" (score 4). The questionnaire comprises five items, with a Cronbach's α value of 0.918 from the MSSCQ measuring instrument.

Table 1*The Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire (MSSCQ)*

No.	Aspect	Item Number	Total Item
1.	<i>Sexual Motivation</i>	11, 31, 51, 71, 91	5
Total			5

The second measuring tool is the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), developed by Hendrick et al. (1998). The questionnaire is designed to elicit an individual's subjective feelings in order to assess their happiness in the context of marriage. The scoring for the Relation Assessment Scale (RAS) measuring tool is based on two answer categories, with the answer choices "high/always" (score 5) and "low/never" (score 1). The questionnaire comprises six items, with a Cronbach's α value of 0.742 from the RAS measuring instrument.

Table 2*Relation Aessment Scale (RAS)*

No.	Dimension	Item Number	Total Item
1.	Unidimensional	1,2,3,5,6,7	6
Total			6

Procedure

The data collection process was conducted by researchers between 18 October 2023 and 10 November 2023. Two measuring tools or instruments were employed: the MSSCQ and the RAS. The data collection process is conducted via a Google form, which is disseminated via social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter. The Google form comprises three sections, each of which must be completed by the participants. The first section requests the participants' identity details. The second section contains the RAS measuring instrument, while the third section contains the MSSCQ measuring tool. In the section pertaining to identity, participants were requested to provide demographic data, including their name, age, religion, occupation, highest level of education, age at marriage, number of children, whether they were in a long-distance marriage relationship, and the length of their long-distance marriage.

Data Analysis

This research employs inferential data analysis techniques. This research comprises two tests: the assumption test, which employs the normality test and the linearity test, and the hypothesis test, which utilises the Spearman rho correlation technique. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS) version 25 for Windows software.

RESULT

Participant Demographic Data

A total of 604 participants were recruited for this research, representing a diverse range of backgrounds. These included age, education, religion, occupation, age at marriage, number of children, and long-distance marriage (LDM) status. The participants in this research were distributed across a range of regions in Indonesia, with a fairly comprehensive geographical coverage. A summary of the demographic data of the participants in this research is presented in tabular form by the researcher as follows:

Table 3
Participant Demographic Data

Category	Total (N)	%
Age		
20	0	0.0
21	2	0.3
22	2	0.3
23	6	1
24	20	1.7
25	26	4.3
26	29	4.8
27	44	7.3
28	60	9.9
29	52	8.6
30	87	14.4
31	30	5
32	40	6.6
33	26	4.3
34	19	3.1
35	31	5.1
36	10	1.7
37	12	2
38	11	1.8
39	11	1.8
40	96	15.9
Religiosity		
Buddha	2	0.3
Hindu	3	0.5
Moslem	511	84.6
Catholic	39	6.5
Confucian	1	0.2
Christian	48	7.9
Job		
Construction worker	3	0.5
Teacher	13	2.2
Civil servant	115	19.1
Privat Employee	311	51.5
Self-employed	144	23.8
Another job	18	3
Education		
Elementary	1	0.2
Junior High School	4	0.7
Senior High School	141	23.3

Diploma	85	14.4
Bachelor	336	55.6
Post-graduate	37	6.1
Marriage Duration		
<1 year	45	7.5
1-5 years	342	56.6
6-10 years	108	17.9
>10 years	109	18
The number of children		
0	90	14.9
1	286	47.4
2-3	204	33.8
>3	24	4
Long Distance Marriage		
Yes	201	33.3
No	403	66.7
Long Distance Marriage Duration		
1-5 years	188	93.5
6-10 years	8	4
>10 years	5	2.5

Note. N = 604 participants

The demographic data obtained indicates that the majority of participants in this study are 40 years old, with 96 participants (15.9%) representing the largest proportion. The majority of participants are Moslem, with 511 participants (84.6%) comprising the majority. The majority of participants work as private employees, with 311 participants (51.5%) representing the largest proportion. The majority of participants had a Bachelor's degree (S1), with 336 participants (55.6%) holding this qualification. The majority of participants were married for between one and five years, with 342 participants (56.6%) falling into this category. The majority of participants had one child, with 286 participants (47.4%) having this number of children. The majority of research participants had never been in a long-distance marriage (LDM), with 403 participants (66.7%) falling into this category. Finally, the majority of participants who had been in a long-distance marriage (LDM) for between one and five years were 188 participants (93.5%).

Research Data Description

The process of analysing research results utilised by researchers is a descriptive analysis technique, which has the objective of describing the data obtained in the research. Furthermore, this research employs ordinal categorisation, which is the process of placing research data results into specific categories or criteria (Azwar, 2022).

Table 4*The Categorisation of Sexual Motivation*

Categorisation	Frequency	%
Low	68	11.3
Middle	64	10.6
High	472	78.1
Total	604	100

Table 4 indicates that the majority of married young adult men (472 participants, 78.1%) exhibit a high level of sexual motivation.

Table 5*The Categorisation of Marital Satisfaction*

Categorisation	Frequency	%
Low	73	12.1
Middle	23	3.8
High	508	84.1
Total	604	100

Table 5 indicates that the majority of married young adult men (508 participants, 84.1%) exhibit high levels of marital satisfaction.

The Results of the Data Analysis**Test Assumptions: Normality and Linearity**

The normality test is employed to ascertain whether the research data to be analysed is normally distributed. A relationship between variables is considered normal if the significance level (p) is greater than .05, as determined by the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The results of the normality test indicate that a significance level (2-tailed) of $0.000 < .05$, which suggests that the correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult men is not normal.

The objective of the linearity test is to ascertain the significance of the linear relationship between two variables. A linear relationship between variables is considered to exist if the significance level (p) is greater than .05, as indicated by the deviation from linearity. The results of the test indicate that the significance value of the deviation from linearity is less than 0.05. The results of this study indicate that the correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult men is not linear.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to ascertain the relationship between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult males utilising the

Spearman's rho technique. A correlation is considered to exist between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction if the significance level (p) is less than .05.

Table 6

Hypothesis Testing

Variabels	Sexual Motivation	Marital Satisfaction
<i>Sexual Motivation</i>		.027
<i>Marital Satisfaction</i>	.027	

Table 6 indicates that the correlation coefficient value is $r = .027$, while the significance value (p) is .508, which is greater than the significance level of .05. The results of the correlation test indicate that there is no significant correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in married young adult men.

DISCUSSION

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that there is no correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in early adult men who are married. The results of the hypothesis test indicate that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected, and the null hypothesis (H_o) is accepted. The results of the Spearman's rho correlation test demonstrate that the significance value or Sig. (2-tailed) is greater than .05, specifically at .508. This indicates that there is no correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction.

The findings of this study diverge from those of previous research, which indicated that sexual motivation exerts an influence on marital satisfaction. Previous research has indicated that sexual motivation has significant implications for the emotional well-being of both partners Muise et al. (2013). Research conducted by Tóth-Király et al. (2019) also indicates that sexual motivation exerts an influence on individual well-being, which is closely related to marital satisfaction.

There are several reasons why the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected in this study. The first reason for rejecting the alternative hypothesis is the existence of gender differences, which can influence individual sexual motivation. One of the topics discussed in marital psychology according to the evolutionary perspective theory Klusmann (2002) is gender differences in sexual motivation. Research conducted by Klusmann (2002) indicates that men's motivation for engaging in sexual relations is to fulfill their physical satisfaction.

This research also corroborates the observation that as marriage ages, men's sexual desire will increase, while their sexual motivation will decrease. In contrast, the opposite applies to women. Another perspective that corroborates this assertion is the findings of Meston and Buss (2007), which demonstrated that men are more inclined to engage in sexual relations without emotional involvement compared to women. This opinion is also consistent with the findings of Impett et al. (2008), which indicated that men tend to be motivated by physical satisfaction, whereas

women tend to prioritize emotional fulfillment. Another opinion that supports this statement is research conducted by Siegel et al. (2021), which states that emotional and physical needs factors influence the sexual motivation of men and women.

The second potential contributing factor is the possibility that sexual desire may decline with the age of a relationship and the presence of children in a relationship (Muise et al., 2013). The third cause is the continued societal perception that discussing or expressing sexual matters is still considered taboo. Consequently, it is evident that men experience a sense of awkwardness or reluctance in expressing their feelings regarding sexual motivation and satisfaction with their current marriage or relationship. As Perls (in Zarbakhsh et al., 2013) notes, the continued taboo status of sexual matters is a consequence of cultural and parental teachings that have been internalised by individuals.

Sexual motivation is one of the determinants of sexual satisfaction. This prediction is a significant finding, even when gender moderation is considered (Hurlbert et al., 1993; Stephenson et al., 2011). Sexual motivation can be defined as an individual's conscious reason for engaging in sexual activity. It is relatively straightforward for individuals to evaluate the relationship between motivation and satisfaction in a sexual context. In contrast to marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction is only one aspect of marital satisfaction (Fowers & Olson, 1993). However, there is an explanation that an individual's sexual satisfaction can be positively correlated with general well-being (Laumann et al., 1999; Ventegodt, 1998). Consequently, individuals also compare sexual aspects and various other aspects of marital satisfaction to ascertain whether they are satisfied or not with their current marriage.

Subsequently, it is essential to critique the interrelationship between motives, behaviour and the evaluation of specific contexts. This route enables the reader to gain an understanding of the interconnectivity between various components within the evaluation process. This also applies to the context of understanding human sexuality. The evaluation of behaviour will be more straightforward than that of motivation, which is more difficult to observe (Toates, 2009).

In a series of previous studies, it was demonstrated that marital satisfaction is associated with sexual satisfaction (Colson et al., 2006; Davison et al., 2009; Lam et al., 2005). Additionally, Sprecher (2002) controlled for a more general definition of marital satisfaction to obtain interaction results between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. This research employs the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) instrument to assess marital satisfaction. Each item of this measuring instrument is relatively general in nature, and the context of the relationship in question is not specifically related to marital relations. The selection of measurement instruments employed in this research represents a limitation.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis and discussion conducted in this research indicate that there is no significant correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in early adult married men. The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that the significance value (p) was .508, which was greater than .05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction in young adult married men.

Considering the findings of this research, the researcher offers suggestions for future researchers who may wish to investigate related variables, namely sexual motivation and marital satisfaction. It is recommended that future researchers interested in sexual motivation and marital satisfaction variables compare young adult female and male subjects. In addition, it is important to consider sexual behaviour as an intervening variable to explain the correlation between sexual motivation and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, future researchers interested in developing this research should consider other marital satisfaction instruments, such as the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale. It is recommended that young adult couples, young adult marriage practitioners, and young adult couples who are about to get married pay greater attention to and increase their literacy regarding sexuality, with a particular focus on the psychological aspects of sexuality in married couples.

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