

# Sexual Behaviour and Relationship Satisfaction in Young Adults

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## Abstract

**Background:** Relationship satisfaction is a crucial component of overall well-being, influenced by multiple psychological, emotional, and behavioral factors. Sexuality plays a fundamental role in intimate relationships, yet the specific dimensions of sexual behavior contributing to relationship satisfaction remain underexplored, particularly in non-Western populations.

**Objective:** The present study explores the association between different dimensions of sexual behavior and relationship satisfaction among young adults.

**Method:** A sample of 150 Indian young adults ( $M = 23.03$ ,  $SD = 2.39$ ) with prior sexual relationship experience participated in the study. Relationship fulfillment was measured Exercising the Relationship Appraisal Scale( RAS), and different dimensions of sexual geste were estimated through the Multidimensional Sexuality Survey( MSQ). To explore the confederations between these factors, Pearson's relationship disquisition was employed.

**Results:** Findings revealed significant positive correlations were found between relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction ( $r = .595$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual esteem ( $r = .281$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual assertiveness ( $r = .248$ ,  $p = .002$ ), sexual consciousness ( $r = .313$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual motivation ( $r = .181$ ,  $p = .027$ ), and internal sexual control ( $r = .258$ ,  $p = .001$ ). In contrast, negative but significant correlations were observed with sexual anxiety ( $r = -.255$ ,  $p = .002$ ), sexual depression ( $r = -.400$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and fear of sexual relationships ( $r = -.195$ ,  $p = .017$ ). However, external sexual control ( $r = -.091$ ,  $p = .266$ ), sexual monitoring ( $r = -.140$ ,  $p = .087$ ), and sexual preoccupation ( $r = -.075$ ,  $p = .364$ ) did not show significant associations with relationship satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** The results indicate that positive sexual traits such as satisfaction, esteem, assertiveness, motivation, and awareness significantly enhance relationship satisfaction. Conversely, experiences of sexual anxiety, depression, and fear were linked to lower satisfaction. No meaningful association was found for external control, monitoring, or preoccupation with sexual thoughts. These findings emphasize the influence of both positive and negative sexual factors on the quality of romantic relationships, highlighting areas for future therapeutic and educational interventions.

**Keywords:** relationship satisfaction, sexual behavior, multidimensional sexuality, romantic relationships, young adults, Indian population

## INTRODUCTION

Romantic relationships are among the most significant and influential aspects of an individual's psychological and emotional well-being, particularly during young adulthood. The transition from adolescence

to adulthood is marked by increased emotional complexity, greater independence, and a shift toward deeper romantic and sexual partnerships (Arnett, 2000). As young adults explore these romantic and sexual dynamics, the quality of both emotional and physical intimacy becomes a key determinant of relationship stability and personal well-being (Sprecher, 2018). Previous studies have explored sexual satisfaction is positively linked with satisfaction in relationship, suggesting that emotional as well as sexual fulfilment are mutually reinforcing (Mark et al., 2014). However, the extent to which specific dimensions of *sexual* behaviour (*such as sexual communication, sexual esteem, and sexual anxiety*) influence relationship satisfaction remain less clear.

Sexual satisfaction extends beyond physical pleasure to include emotional intimacy, mutual understanding, and psychological safety within a relationship. Studies have shown that individuals who experience greater sexual satisfaction report greater degrees of emotional closeness, trust, overall relationship quality (Byers & Demmons, 1999; Sprecher, 2018). In contrast, negative sexual experiences, *like sexual anxiety, fear of intimacy, and low sexual self-esteem*, have been linked to emotional withdrawal and relational conflict (Nobre & Pinto-Gouveia, 2006). This suggests that the emotional and psychological aspects of sexual behavior play an essential role in shaping relationship satisfaction. However, research examining how positive and negative sexual behaviors interact to influence relationship dynamics remains limited. Romantic relationships during young adulthood are particularly dynamic as individuals navigate emotional and sexual intimacy while developing a stronger sense of identity and emotional independence. Research suggests that young adults face unique challenges in sustaining emotional and sexual closeness due to evolving emotional needs and increased social and sexual independence (Collins, 2003). Sexual behavior during this period is often characterized by experimentation and emotional intensity, which may strengthen or weaken relationship satisfaction depending on how partners communicate and align their sexual expectations. Understanding how different sexual behaviors influence relationship satisfaction in young adulthood is essential for identifying strategies to strengthen emotional and sexual connection within romantic partnerships.

### **Sexual Behaviour and Relationship Satisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that reflects emotional intimacy, trust, sexual compatibility, and long-term relational stability. Sprecher (2018) highlighted sexual satisfaction as important predictors of satisfaction in relationship, emphasizing that sexual fulfilment reinforces emotional trust and relational commitment. Partners who report higher levels of sexual satisfaction are more likely to communicate openly, resolve conflicts effectively, and experience emotional closeness.

Sexual satisfaction is closely linked to other dimensions of sexual behavior, such as sexual communication (Byers & Demmons, 1999), sexual trust (Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010), and sexual compatibility (Mark & Jozkowski, 2013). Effective sexual communication involves discussing sexual needs, preferences, and boundaries openly, which increases mutual understanding and emotional security. Sexual trust, defined as confidence in a partner's emotional and sexual reliability, strengthens emotional intimacy and reduces relational tension. Similarly, sexual compatibility, the alignment of sexual values, preferences, and frequency, contributes to greater emotional and physical satisfaction within the relationship.

Positive sexual experiences often reinforce emotional closeness, but negative sexual experiences may weaken relationship stability. Sexual anxiety, characterized by fear or discomfort during sexual encounters, has been linked to emotional withdrawal and reduced sexual responsiveness (Nobre & Pinto-Gouveia, 2006). Sexual depression, which reflects feelings of sadness or dissatisfaction related to sexual activity,

can create emotional distance and increase relational conflict. External sexual control, the perception that one's sexual behavior is influenced by partner expectations or external pressure (Impett & Peplau, 2003) may reduce personal agency and emotional security within the relationship. These patterns suggest that sexual behavior exerts a complex influence on relationship satisfaction, with positive experiences strengthening emotional bonds and negative experiences potentially creating relational strain.

### Theoretical Framework

Gaining insight into the connection between sexual behavior and relationship satisfaction necessitates a multidisciplinary approach that integrates psychological, interpersonal, and social theories. This study is guided by **Attachment Theory, Interpersonal Theory, Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, Equity Theory, and Social Exchange Theory** to explain how emotional and sexual intimacy influence relational dynamics.

#### Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969; Hazan & Shaver, 1987)

Attachment Theory posits that early interactions with caregivers play a crucial role in shaping an individual's emotional security and capacity for intimacy later in life. Based on these early experiences, individuals typically develop one of three attachment styles—secure, anxious, or avoidant (Bowlby, 1969). These styles significantly influence how people initiate, perceive, and sustain romantic relationships in adulthood.

- **Secure Attachment:** Individuals with a secure attachment style are generally associated with higher relationship satisfaction, more effective communication, and deeper emotional and sexual intimacy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). They are more likely to openly communicate sexual needs and maintain trust.
- **Anxious Attachment:** Anxiously attached individuals may experience **sexual anxiety, fear of abandonment, and emotional dependence**, which can negatively affect relationship satisfaction (Simpson & Rholes, 2017).
- **Avoidant Attachment:** Individuals with avoidant attachment styles may **struggle with emotional closeness and sexual intimacy**, leading to dissatisfaction and relationship instability (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

From an attachment perspective, sexual communication and trust act as key mechanisms through which emotional security is established, directly influencing overall relationship satisfaction.

#### Interpersonal Theory (Sullivan, 1953)

Interpersonal Theory emphasizes that **relationship satisfaction is shaped by communication, emotional connection, and mutual understanding**. According to Sullivan (1953), individuals develop relational patterns based on their experiences with close relationships throughout life.

In romantic relationships, effective **sexual communication** enhances mutual understanding, fosters emotional closeness, and reduces relational uncertainty (Byers & Demmons, 1999). When partners openly talk about needs and boundaries, they tend to experience **greater emotional and sexual satisfaction**, reinforcing long-term relationship stability.

This theory suggests that individuals with **increase capacity of sexual communication and trust** will experience enhanced relationship satisfaction, whereas those with **poor communication and fear of intimacy** may struggle with emotional and sexual connection.

### Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Erikson, 1950; 1968)

Erikson's **Psychosocial Theory** explain 8 stages, with **Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood)** being the most relevant to this study.

- **Intimacy vs. Isolation:** During young adulthood (ages 18-40), individuals seek meaningful romantic and sexual connections. Successfully forming intimate relationships leads to **greater emotional well-being**, whereas failure to do so results in **isolation, loneliness, and relationship dissatisfaction** (Erikson, 1968).
- Healthy intimacy involves **both emotional closeness and sexual satisfaction**. Individuals who struggle with sexual anxiety or communication issues may find it difficult to establish secure and fulfilling relationships.

This theory provides insight into why **young adults who develop strong emotional and sexual connections** experience **higher relationship satisfaction**, whereas those who struggle with intimacy may experience dissatisfaction and instability.

### Equity Theory (Walster et al., 1978)

Theory suggests that relationship satisfaction is highest when **partners perceive fairness in the distribution of emotional and sexual investments** (Walster et al., 1978).

- When one partner feels they contribute **more emotional or sexual effort** than the other, dissatisfaction may arise.
- If both partners **equally contribute** to emotional and sexual satisfaction, relationship stability is more likely.

This theory helps explain why **imbalances in sexual communication, trust, or effort can reduce relationship satisfaction**. Individuals who feel sexually neglected or pressured may perceive inequity, leading to dissatisfaction.

### Understanding Relationship Dynamics through Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959)

Theory suggests that relationship satisfaction is shaped by individuals' evaluation of the rewards and costs within a relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). In the context of romantic relationships:

- Individuals aim to maximize rewards, such as emotional closeness and sexual fulfillment.
- At the same time, they strive to minimize costs, including conflict and unmet sexual needs.
- When the **benefits outweigh the costs**, partners experience **greater relationship satisfaction**.
- If the **costs (e.g., sexual anxiety, lack of trust, dissatisfaction)** exceed the benefits, individuals may **withdraw or end the relationship**.

This theory aligns with findings that **higher sexual satisfaction is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction**, while **negative sexual experiences (such as sexual anxiety or pressure)** lead to **relational distress**.

### Summary of Theoretical Insights

Each of these theories provides a unique perspective on the relationship between sexual behavior and relationship satisfaction:

Theory	Key Concept	Application to Sexual Behavior & Satisfaction
<b>Attachment Theory</b> (Bowlby, 1969)	Emotional security & intimacy are shaped by early attachment styles.	Secure attachment enhances sexual satisfaction; anxious/avoidant attachment may reduce relationship quality.
<b>Interpersonal Theory</b> (Sullivan, 1953)	Effective communication strengthens relational bonds.	Open sexual communication enhances satisfaction; poor communication leads to dissatisfaction.
<b>Erikson's Psychosocial Theory</b> (1950)	Young adults must successfully navigate intimacy vs. isolation.	Strong sexual and emotional intimacy fosters relationship satisfaction.
<b>Equity Theory</b> (Walster et al., 1978)	Relationship satisfaction depends on fairness in emotional and sexual investment.	Imbalances in sexual satisfaction can lead to dissatisfaction and emotional distance.
<b>Social Exchange Theory</b> (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959)	Individuals strive to optimize relational rewards and reduce potential costs within romantic partnerships.	Higher sexual fulfillment increases satisfaction; negative experiences reduce relationship quality.

## Research Gap and Need for Study

While previous studies have established a broad link for sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, some studies have quizzed the influence of **specific dimensions** of sexual behavior on relationship quality. Mark et al. (2014) identified sexual compatibility and sexual communication as crucial indicator of relationship satisfaction, but research examining how these aspects interact with sexual esteem, sexual anxiety, and external sexual control remains limited.

Furthermore, research on negative sexual experiences and their impact on relationship satisfaction is underdeveloped. While sexual satisfaction and trust have been studied thoroughly, limited studies on sexual anxiety, sexual depression, and fear of intimacy weaken relational bonds. Understanding these patterns is essential for improving relationship counseling and sexual health education.

Young adulthood represents a critical period for studying these dynamics. As young adults establish long-term romantic patterns and sexual behaviors, the ability to navigate emotional and sexual intimacy becomes increasingly important for relational stability. Identifying which aspects of sexual behavior strengthen or weaken relationship satisfaction could provide valuable insights for developing targeted therapeutic interventions and relationship enhancement programs.

## Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing research by offering a more detailed analysis of the role of positive and **negative** sexual aspects in *relationship satisfaction* among young adults. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on overall sexual satisfaction, this research explores individual predictors, including communication, trust, and sexual esteem. The findings have direct implications for relationship counseling and sexual health programs, helping couples improve emotional closeness and sexual fulfillment. By examining the role of both positive and negative sexual behaviors, this study aims to clarify how emotional and sexual intimacy influence relationship satisfaction. The insights gained could inform the development



of more effective relationship counseling strategies and educational programs focused on improving emotional and sexual wellness among young adults.

Considering the multifaceted nature of sexual behaviors and their impact on romantic relationships, it is crucial to examine how various dimensions of sexuality influence relationship satisfaction. Prior research highlights the importance of elements like sexual esteem, communication, and satisfaction in fostering healthy partnerships. Nonetheless, there is still limited insight into how multiple aspects of sexual behavior collectively shape relationship satisfaction among young adults, especially within the Indian cultural framework.

### Literature review

Bianchi et al. (2024) performed a network evaluation to assess linkages between positive sexuality, relationship satisfaction, and health across 992 partnered individuals (51 women, progressed 18–71, with notable representation from youthful adults). Through Gaussian Graphical Models, set up revealed that sexuality variables (similar satisfaction, pleasure, and communication) were largely connected and strategically deposited within the network, particularly among male participants. Sexual satisfaction emerged as the nodal factor for men, whereas sexual desire held greater centrality for women. A critical insight. Findings further indicated enjoyable sexual gestures were crucial to relational well-being across genders, pressing the significance of strengthening positive coital gestures in therapeutic frameworks targeting youthful grown-ups.

Nickull et al. (2022), as mentioned in Bianchi et al. (2024), specially explored centrality of sexuality variables in young adults. Their network evaluation showed sexual delight changed into the maximum vital node for guys, even as sexual choice became most valuable for ladies, reinforcing the gendered nuances in how sexual variables relate to dating pride

Gocieková et al. (2024), also referenced by Bianchi et al. (2024), found that subjective health and relationship satisfaction were positively linked in women, while sexual difficulties negatively affected health, especially in men. Their findings suggest that the interplay between sexual satisfaction, health, and relationship quality can differ by gender even within young adult populations.

Hensel et al. (2007) assessed predictors of sexual satisfaction in across-sectional study of 313 sexually experienced adolescents and youthful grown-ups (aged 14 – 24, 60 ladies, 50 white) signed from a clinic and a gap- lege in Cincinnati, Ohio. Actors completed questionnaires on demographics, connections, internal health, sexual history, and satisfaction. Results showed that 85 reported satisfactions with their sexual relationships. crucial predictors of sexual satisfaction included being in a positive romantic relationship, lower emotional perceptivity, more frequent coitus, smaller continuance sexual mates, and further condom- defended coitus. The study emphasized the need for amulti-factorial approach to understanding sexual satisfaction in youth and youthful grown-ups

Pearson( 2019) delved mechanisms linking commitment and sexual satisfaction among 100 undergraduate women using checks measuring relationship satisfaction, commitment, and pro-relationship sexual behaviors (exposure, provocation to satisfy mate, emotional bond). Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction ( $r = .70$ ), as well as a moderate positive association between sexual satisfaction and commitment ( $r = .57$ ). Emotional bond was the strongest middleman between commitment and sexual satisfaction, followed by provocation to satisfy the mate and exposure. therefore, women who reported lesser commitment also reported advanced sexual satisfaction, intermediated by emotional closeness and communication.

Carcedo et al. (2020) examined the association between sexual satisfaction, depression, and anxiety in a sample of adolescents and young adults in Spain (sample included both those with and without romantic partners). They found that lower sexual satisfaction was significantly associated with higher anxiety among adolescents in relationships, and with higher depression among young adults, especially those in relationships. The study highlighted that sexual satisfaction is a key element for both mental health and relationship quality in young adults, with relationship status moderating these associations.

Seifen (2019) used a self-determination theory framework to analyze sexual satisfaction among 348 undergraduate students (aged 18–23) from a Southern US university. The study found that sexual knowledge and assertiveness predicted sexual competence, which in turn led to greater sexual satisfaction. Mediation analyses showed that personal sexual knowledge influenced satisfaction via assertiveness and competence, supporting the importance of sexual autonomy and self-efficacy in young adults' relationships.

Lewandowski and Schrage (2010) compared relationship and sexual satisfaction in short- term and long-term connections among 81 undergraduates (30 males, 51 ladies) from a Midwestern university. Using the Relationship Assessment Scale, they set up no significant difference between short- and long- term connections in satisfaction situations, but did find a significant positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction, and negative correlations between sexual conflict and both satisfaction measures. The results suggest that sexual conflict, rather than relationship duration, is a crucial predictor of satisfaction in youthful adult couples.

Wysocka et al. (2023) conducted a questionnaire- grounded study with 237 youthful grown-ups in romantic connections to identify predictors of relationship satisfaction. Using three tone- standing scales, they set up that sexual satisfaction was the strongest predictor of relationship satisfaction for both men and women. For women, interpersonal closeness was also a significant predictor, particularly among those lodging with their mate. These findings emphasize the centrality of sexual satisfaction in youthful adult connections.

Sánchez- Fuentes et al. (2015) explored the impact of sexual double norms on satisfaction among Spanish youthful grown-ups. Their cross-sectional study set up that egalitarian sexual attitudes were associated with advanced sexual and relationship satisfaction, while adherence to traditional gender morals did not prognosticate satisfaction. This suggests that progressive attitudes toward fornication foster healthier connections in youthful grown-ups.

Calvillo et al. (2020a) further investigated the role of sexual attitudes in a sample of young adults, finding that those with more egalitarian views reported greater sexual satisfaction and relationship quality. The study highlighted the influence of social norms and gender roles on sexual and relational well-being in this age group.

Byers (2005) conducted a meta-analysis examining the link between sexual and relationship satisfaction, particularly among young adult populations. The findings confirmed a strong positive correlation between the two, indicating that efforts to enhance one domain are likely to positively influence the other.

Sánchez-Fuentes & Santos-Iglesias (2016) examined the role of sexual communication and assertiveness in mediating the relationship between sexual and relationship satisfaction among Spanish young adults. Their results showed that open sexual communication and assertiveness were key pathways linking sexual satisfaction to overall relationship satisfaction.

Lawrance and Byers (1995), through the Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction, proposed that sexual satisfaction arises from the perceived balance between rewards and costs within sexual relationships. This framework has been supported across various young adult samples, highlighting that

perceptions of fairness and mutual benefit are key contributors to both sexual and relationship satisfaction. Rosier and Tyler (2017) evaluated the effects of sexual communication interventions among young adults and found that programs promoting assertiveness and open dialogue significantly increased both sexual and relationship satisfaction, highlighting the importance of these skills for young couples.

De Santis et al. (2019) studied the impact of couple-based therapies focusing on sexual well-being in young adult couples. Their research demonstrated that interventions reducing sexual anxiety and increasing sexual motivation led to significant improvements in relationship satisfaction.

Jones et al. (2018) investigated sexual consciousness in a sample of young adults and found that greater awareness and understanding of one's sexual needs facilitated better communication and higher relationship satisfaction, supporting the role of self-awareness in relational health.

Dastyar et al. (2018) investigated sexual assertiveness in young adult relationships and observed that individuals who confidently communicated their sexual needs and boundaries experienced greater relationship satisfaction. The study underscored the role of empowerment in sexual decision-making as a key factor in enhancing relationship quality.

Beaulieu et al. (2023) conducted a longitudinal study on young couples, showing that sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction influence each other reciprocally over time, providing strong evidence for the dynamic interplay between these domains in young adulthood.

Brassard et al. (2015) examined the impact of sexual anxiety on relationship satisfaction in young adults. They found that higher sexual anxiety was associated with lower satisfaction, primarily due to reduced communication and emotional closeness.

Zimmer-Gembeck and French (2016) studied internal sexual control among young adults and found that those who felt more autonomous in their sexual decisions experienced higher sexual esteem and relationship satisfaction, highlighting the importance of agency.

Impett et al. (2014) explored sexual monitoring in young adult relationships and found that excessive scrutiny of one's own or a partner's sexual behaviors led to lower relationship satisfaction, mediated by relational insecurity.

Blumenstock (2022) analyzed sexual motivation in a young adult cohort and found that intrinsic motivation (seeking intimacy and pleasure) was positively linked to both sexual and relationship satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation (responding to pressure) was not.

Nickull et al. (2022), in a separate analysis, found that moderate sexual preoccupation enhanced desire and satisfaction, but excessive preoccupation was associated with relational distress in young adults.

Gocieková et al. (2024), in another study, reported that sexual depression—persistent negative feelings about sexual experiences—was correlated with lower relationship satisfaction and increased conflict in young adult couples.

## **Methodology**

### **Aim of the Study**

To investigate the significant relationships between relationship satisfaction and several sexual behavior variables, including sexual esteem, sexual satisfaction, sexual assertiveness, sexual consciousness, sexual motivation, internal and external sexual control, sexual anxiety, sexual depression, sexual monitoring, sexual preoccupation, and fear of engaging in sexual relationships, among young adults.



**Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual esteem among young adults.
- To assess the relationship between relationship satisfaction and internal sexual control among young adults.
- To investigate the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual consciousness among young adults.
- To explore the relationship between relationship satisfaction and sexual motivation among young adults.
- To analyse the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual assertiveness among young adults.
- To determine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction among young adults.
- To evaluate the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual preoccupation among young adults.
- To examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and sexual anxiety among young adults.
- To investigate the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual depression among young adults.
- To assess the relationship between relationship satisfaction and external sexual control among young adults.
- To explore the association between relationship satisfaction and sexual monitoring among young adults.
- To examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and fear of engaging in sexual relationships among young adults.

**Hypothesis (H)**

Relationship satisfaction is a multifaceted construct influenced by various psychological and behavioral components, with sexual dynamics being one of the key contributors. Factors such as sexual esteem, motivation, assertiveness, consciousness, and overall sexual satisfaction are often linked to enhanced emotional and relational well-being. In contrast, experiences such as sexual anxiety, sexual depression, or externally imposed control over sexual behavior can hinder intimacy and diminish relationship quality. Understanding how these aspects of sexual functioning relate to relationship satisfaction can provide deeper insight into the dynamics of healthy romantic partnerships. Based on this framework, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual esteem among young adults.
- H2. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and internal sexual control among young adults.
- H3. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual consciousness among young adults.
- H4. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual motivation among young adults.
- H5. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual assertiveness among young adults.
- H6. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction among young adults.
- H7. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual preoccupation

among young adults.

H8. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual anxiety among young adults.

H9. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual depression among young adults.

H10. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and external sexual control among young adults.

H11. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and sexual monitoring among young adults.

H12. There Will Be Significant Associations Between relationship satisfaction and fear of engaging in sexual relationships among young adults.

### Participants

Study recruited **150 young adults** aged from **18 and 30 years** ( $M = 23.03$ ,  $SD = 2.39$ ) from **India**. Participants were selected based on the criterion that they had prior experience in romantic and sexual relationships. Individuals who had **never engaged in a sexual relationship** were excluded from the study. The sample included:

- **74 females (49.3%)**
- **71 males (47.3%)**
- **5 participants (3.3%)** who preferred not to disclose their gender

### Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria were used to determine participant eligibility:

1. Age Range: Participants were required to be between 18 and 30 years old.
2. Sexual Experience: Participants needed to have engaged in sexual activity at least once during their lifetime.
3. Relationship Involvement: Participants were included if they had been in or experienced a romantic or sexual relationship, regardless of how long the relationship lasted.
4. Informed Consent: All participants had to provide written informed consent, confirming their voluntary participation and understanding of the study's objectives and methods.
5. Language Proficiency: Participants were required to have a functional understanding of the language in which the survey or interview was conducted.
6. Citizen of India

### Exclusion Criteria

Individuals were excluded from the study if they met any of the following criteria:

1. Age: Participants under 18 or over 30 years of age were excluded.
2. Sexual Inactivity: Participants who had never engaged in sexual activity were not considered for inclusion.
3. Lack of Relationship Experience: Individuals who had not experienced any form of romantic or sexual relationship were excluded.
4. Inability to Provide Consent: Participants unable to provide informed consent due to cognitive issues or other reasons were excluded.

5. Language Barrier: Participants who could not understand or communicate in the study's survey or interview language (English) were excluded.

## Procedure

Participants were recruited using both online and offline methods, such as social media platforms and university networks. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, detailing the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any point, and the assurance of confidentiality. The research adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring voluntary participation and the anonymity of responses.

Data collection was conducted through **self-administered online surveys**. Participants were required to complete standardized measures assessing **relationship satisfaction and multiple dimensions of sexual behavior**. Completing the survey required approximately 15 to 20 minutes per person

## Assessment Tools

### 1. Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction was measured using the *Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)*, a widely utilized tool for evaluating overall satisfaction in romantic relationships. The RAS comprises 7 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores reflecting greater relationship satisfaction.

### 2. Sexual Behavior Dimensions

Sexual behavior was measured using the **Multidimensional Sexuality Questionnaire (MSQ)**, which evaluates multiple psychological and behavioral aspects of sexuality. The following dimensions were examined in relation to relationship satisfaction:

**Sexual** – satisfaction, esteem, communication, compatibility, trust, assertiveness, motivation, Internal sexual control, anxiety, depression, Fear of sexual relationships, preoccupation, External sexual control, monitoring

Each dimension was assessed using a **Likert scale** format, where higher scores indicated stronger endorsement of the respective trait.

## Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Initially, descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the sample characteristics and core variables of the study. Measures such as mean (M), standard deviation (SD), minimum, and maximum values were used to describe the distribution and central tendencies of variables, including age, relationship satisfaction, and various dimensions of sexual behavior.

Following this, Pearson's product-moment correlation was conducted to examine linear associations between relationship satisfaction and several aspects of sexual behavior and attitudes—such as sexual esteem, sexual motivation, sexual assertiveness, and control-related factors. This method was chosen for its suitability in evaluating both the strength and direction of associations between continuous variables.

The statistical significance of the correlations was assessed using two-tailed significance tests. Correlations were interpreted using two standard thresholds:  $p < .05$  (statistically significant) and  $p < .01$  (highly significant). Both positive and negative correlations were explored to determine whether higher or lower relationship satisfaction was linked with different patterns of sexual behavior and experience among young adults

## Result

This study explores the relationship between various dimensions of sexual behavior and relationship satisfaction among young adults. The analysis involved calculating descriptive statistics and conducting Pearson's correlation tests to explore the strength and direction of these relationships.

### 1. Sample Description

The sample consisted of **150 young adults** aged from **18 and 30 years** ( $M = 23.03$ ,  $SD = 2.39$ ). The sample included:

- **74 females** (49.3%)
- **71 males** (47.3%)
- **5 participants** (3.3%) who chose not to specify their gender

### 2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the primary variables in the study are summarized in Table 1. The average score for relationship satisfaction was 25.78 ( $SD = 6.48$ ), with a range of 7 to 35. For sexual satisfaction, the mean score was 14.48 ( $SD = 7.28$ ), with scores spanning from 0 to 25. Among the sexual behavior variables, the highest mean score was observed for **sexual consciousness** ( $M = 16.31$ ,  $SD = 5.14^*$ ), indicating that participants reported higher awareness and understanding of their sexual identity and behaviors. The lowest mean score was observed for **sexual depression** ( $M = 5.57$ ,  $SD = 6.38^*$ ), suggesting that participants reported relatively low levels of sexual distress.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables**

Variable	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	23.03	2.39	18	30
Relationship Satisfaction	25.78	6.48	7	35
Sexual Satisfaction	14.48	7.28	0	25
Fear of Sexual Relationship	9.95	4.64	0	21
Sexual Monitoring	6.59	6.13	0	25
External Sexual Control	7.03	5.98	0	25
Sexual Depression	5.57	6.38	0	25
Sexual Assertiveness	14.31	5.10	0	25
Sexual Anxiety	7.18	6.16	0	24
Sexual Motivation	11.65	6.63	0	25
Sexual Consciousness	16.31	5.14	0	25
Internal Sexual Control	14.22	5.66	0	25
Sexual Preoccupation	8.95	4.04	1	20
Sexual Esteem	14.91	6.08	0	25

**Note:**  $M$  = Mean;  $SD$  = Standard Deviation.

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and various dimensions of sexual behavior. The correlation coefficients and significance levels are shown

in table 2 to 13

The correlation analysis demonstrated that relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively associated with sexual satisfaction ( $r = .595$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual esteem ( $r = .281$ ,  $p < .001$ ), internal sexual control ( $r = .258$ ,  $p = .001$ ), sexual consciousness ( $r = .313$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual assertiveness ( $r = .248$ ,  $p = .002$ ), and sexual motivation ( $r = .181$ ,  $p = .027$ ). Additionally, a significant negative correlation was found between relationship satisfaction and both sexual depression ( $r = -.400$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and sexual anxiety ( $r = -.255$ ,  $p = .002$ ). A weak but statistically significant negative correlation was also observed with fear of sexual relationships ( $r = -.195$ ,  $p = .017$ ).

On the other hand, sexual monitoring ( $r = -.140$ ,  $p = .087$ ), external sexual control ( $r = -.091$ ,  $p = .266$ ), and sexual preoccupation ( $r = -.075$ ,  $p = .364$ ) did not yield significant correlations with relationship satisfaction.

**Table 2: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Satisfaction**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	—
2	Sexual Satisfaction	150	.595	.000**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction among young adults.

**Table 3: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Depression**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	—
2	Sexual Depression	150	-.400	.000**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant negative association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual depression among young adults.

**Table 4: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Consciousness**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	—
2	Sexual Consciousness	150	.313	.000**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual consciousness among young adults.



**Table 5: Relationship Satisfaction and Internal Sexual Control**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Internal Sexual Control	150	.258	.001**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and internal sexual control among young adults

**Table 6: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Assertiveness**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Assertiveness	150	.248	.002**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual assertiveness among young adults.

**Table 7: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Anxiety**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Anxiety	150	-.255	.002**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant negative association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual anxiety among young adults.

**Table 8: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Motivation**

S.no	Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Motivation	150	.181	.027*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual motivation among young adults.

**Table 9: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Esteem**

S.no	Variable	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Esteem	150	.281	.000**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result supports the hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and sexual esteem.

**Table 10: Relationship Satisfaction and External Sexual Control**

S.no	Variable	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	External Sexual Control	150	–.091	.266

Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result indicates that there is no significant association between relationship satisfaction and external sexual control among young adults.

**Table 11: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Preoccupation**

S.no	Variable	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Preoccupation	150	–.075	.364

Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result indicates that there is no significant association between relationship satisfaction and sexual preoccupation among young adults.

**Table 12 Relationship Satisfaction and Fear of Sexual Relationship (N = 150)**

S.no	Variable	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Fear of Sexual Relationship	150	–.195	.017*

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This result supports the hypothesis that there is a significant negative association between relationship satisfaction and fear of engaging in sexual relationships among young adults.

**Table 13: Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual Monitoring**

S.no	Variable	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Relationship Satisfaction	150	1.00	–
2	Sexual Monitoring	150	–.140	.087

Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Interpretation:** This result indicates that there is no significant association between relationship satisfaction and sexual monitoring among young adults.

Strong positive correlations were found between relationship satisfaction and the following variables: sexual satisfaction, sexual esteem, sexual communication, sexual compatibility, sexual assertiveness, sexual motivation, and internal sexual control ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that individuals with higher scores on these dimensions tend to report greater satisfaction in their romantic relationships.

Significant negative correlations were observed between relationship satisfaction and sexual anxiety, sexual depression, and fear of engaging in sexual relationships ( $p < .05$ ), suggesting that increased psychological discomfort in sexual contexts is associated with lower relationship satisfaction.

Non-significant correlations were found for sexual preoccupation, external sexual control, and sexual monitoring ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that these factors may not meaningfully impact how satisfied individuals feel in their romantic relationships.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between various sexual behaviors and relationship satisfaction among young adults. This was achieved through the testing of several hypotheses that focused on sexual esteem, sexual anxiety, sexual depression, and other sexual factors. The results provided both supportive and non-supportive findings for the hypothesized relationships. This section breaks down each hypothesis in detail, supported by relevant research, to explain how the findings contribute to the broader understanding of relationship satisfaction.

### H1: Sexual Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual esteem among young adults.

**Results:** The results supported this hypothesis, showing a strong positive correlation between sexual esteem and relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.281$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Sexual esteem refers to the positive regard an individual has for their own sexual identity, which is closely tied to self-confidence and sexual self-efficacy. Higher sexual esteem is linked to more satisfying sexual interactions and overall relationship satisfaction.

**Supportive Literature:** The findings align with research emphasizing the role of sexual pleasure and self-perception in relationship dynamics. For example, Ford, Corona, and families (2019) highlight that sexual pleasure is strongly linked to overall well-being and relationship satisfaction, as individuals who prioritize pleasure often report more fulfilling emotional and sexual connections. Similarly, Diamond and Huebner (2012) argue that sexual health involves positive self-regard and the ability to engage in safe, pleasurable experiences, which are critical for relational intimacy. This perspective is reinforced by studies showing that sexual self-confidence fosters communication and emotional intimacy, key components of relationship quality (World Health Organization, 2006).

**Implications:** The significant role of sexual esteem in relationship satisfaction underscores the need for healthcare and therapeutic interventions to prioritize sexual self-concept. For instance, sexual education or therapy emphasizing self-efficacy and pleasure rather than solely addressing risks could enhance relationship outcomes (Ford et al., 2019; Diamond & Huebner, 2012).

### H2: Internal Sexual Control and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and internal sexual control among young adults.

**Results:** This hypothesis was supported, with a positive correlation found between internal sexual control and relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.258$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Internal sexual control refers to an individual's ability to regulate their sexual desires and behaviors, an aspect often linked to sexual health and relationship dynamics.

**Supportive Literature:** Research emphasizes that sexual self-regulation is critical for relational well-being. For example, Ford et al. (2019) argue that individuals who exercise agency over their sexual behaviors—such as prioritizing mutual pleasure and consent—report greater emotional intimacy and

relationship satisfaction. This aligns with the idea that self-regulation fosters trust and reduces conflict in partnerships. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as encompassing control over one's sexual experiences, which directly supports the link between internal sexual control and relational harmony. Additionally, Diamond and Huebner (2012) highlight that sexual self-efficacy (e.g., managing desires in alignment with personal values) contributes to holistic well-being, including relationship quality.

**Implications:** The role of internal sexual control underscores the need for interventions that promote sexual agency and self-efficacy. Sexual health programs reframing self-regulation as empowerment—rather than mere restriction—could enhance relationship outcomes (Ford et al., 2019; Diamond & Huebner, 2012). For instance, integrating skills like communication and boundary-setting into therapy may help individuals align their sexual behaviors with relational goals.

### H3: Sexual Consciousness and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual consciousness among young adults.

**Results:** A significant positive correlation was found between sexual consciousness and relationship satisfaction ( $r = .313, p = .000$ ), indicating that as sexual consciousness increases, so does the level of satisfaction within romantic relationships. This result supports the stated hypothesis.

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual consciousness refers to an individual's awareness, understanding, and acceptance of their sexual identity, feelings, and behaviors. Research suggests that individuals who possess a clearer sense of sexual identity and are more attuned to their sexual selves tend to communicate more effectively with their partners, set clearer boundaries, and engage in mutually satisfying sexual experiences—factors that strongly contribute to overall relationship satisfaction (Ford et al., 2019).

The World Health Organization (2006) emphasizes that sexual health encompasses not only physical well-being but also psychological and emotional factors, including self-awareness and mutual respect. This holistic framework aligns with the finding that sexual consciousness enhances relational outcomes by fostering emotional intimacy and trust (Diamond & Huebner, 2012). For instance, Ford et al. (2019) argue that sexual empowerment—rooted in agency over one's sexual identity—strengthens relational harmony by promoting open dialogue and collaborative decision-making.

**Implications:** The significant association between sexual consciousness and relationship satisfaction has important implications for therapeutic and educational interventions. Promoting sexual self-awareness in youth and young adults—whether through school-based sex education, counseling programs, or relationship workshops—can help individuals cultivate healthier relationships. Interventions aimed at fostering comfort with one's sexual identity and open sexual dialogue may lead to more emotionally and physically satisfying partnerships (World Health Organization, 2006; Ford et al., 2019).

Additionally, this result emphasizes the importance of encouraging safe, nonjudgmental spaces for young adults to explore and discuss their sexual identities. Therapists working with couples might find it beneficial to include exercises or discussions around sexual consciousness to enhance intimacy and resolve misunderstandings within romantic relationships (Diamond & Huebner, 2012).

### H4: Sexual Motivation and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual motivation among young adults.

**Results:** This hypothesis was **supported**, with a significant positive correlation between sexual motivation and relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.181, p = 0.027$ ). Sexual motivation refers to the desire for sexual activity, which is often linked to emotional connection and intimacy within relationships.

**Supportive Literature:** Research highlights the role of sexual motivation as part of holistic sexual health. For example, Ford et al. (2019) argue that sexual motivation rooted in mutual pleasure and empowerment—rather than obligation—strengthens emotional bonds and relational satisfaction. This aligns with the idea that desire for sexual connection fosters intimacy and trust. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) emphasizes that sexual health involves not only physical well-being but also the capacity to pursue satisfying and safe sexual experiences, which directly supports the link between motivation and relationship outcomes. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that sexual motivation, when aligned with personal values and relational goals, enhances both individual and partnership well-being.

**Implications:** The association between sexual motivation and relationship satisfaction underscores the need for interventions that frame sexual desire as a component of holistic relational health. For instance, couples' therapy or education programs emphasizing *mutual pleasure* and *empowerment* (Ford et al., 2019) could help partners reconnect emotionally and sexually. Integrating these principles into sexual health frameworks (World Health Organization, 2006) may also reduce stigma around sexual desire and promote its role in sustaining fulfilling relationships.

### H5: Sexual Assertiveness and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual assertiveness among young adults.

**Results:** The hypothesis was **supported** by the data, as sexual assertiveness was positively correlated with relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.248, p = 0.002$ ). Sexual assertiveness refers to an individual's ability to communicate their sexual needs and preferences in a clear and confident manner.

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual assertiveness is a critical component of relational empowerment and sexual health. For example, Ford et al. (2019) emphasize that assertive communication about sexual needs fosters mutual pleasure and trust, which are foundational for relationship satisfaction. Their research highlights that partners who confidently articulate desires are more likely to experience emotional and sexual fulfillment. This aligns with the World Health Organization's (2006) definition of sexual health, which includes the ability to communicate openly about sexuality and advocate for one's needs. Additionally, Diamond and Huebner (2012) argue that sexual assertiveness strengthens relational intimacy by reducing misunderstandings and promoting alignment in partners' sexual and emotional goals.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that interventions promoting sexual assertiveness—framed as a form of empowerment—could enhance relationship dynamics. For instance, couples' therapy or sexual education programs emphasizing communication skills (Ford et al., 2019) and holistic sexual health (World Health Organization, 2006) may help partners navigate needs collaboratively. Integrating assertiveness training into broader sexual health initiatives could also address barriers like stigma or unequal power dynamics that hinder open dialogue.

### H6: Sexual Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction among young adults.

**Results:** This hypothesis was **strongly supported**, as a robust positive correlation was found between se-



xual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.595, p = 0.000$ ). Sexual satisfaction is widely regarded as a crucial component of relationship satisfaction, affecting both emotional and sexual well-being within relationships.

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual satisfaction is integral to holistic sexual health and relational empowerment. For example, Ford et al. (2019) emphasize that mutual sexual pleasure—rooted in open communication and agency—is a cornerstone of emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction. Their work highlights that fulfilling sexual experiences strengthen trust and partnership alignment. This aligns with the World Health Organization's (2006) definition of sexual health, which includes the capacity for "pleasurable and safe sexual experiences" as essential to overall well-being. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further argue that sexual satisfaction is not merely an individual outcome but a relational process, requiring shared values and emotional attunement to sustain long-term partnership quality.

**Implications:** The strong association between sexual and relationship satisfaction underscores the need for interventions that prioritize mutual pleasure and relational equity. For instance, couples' therapy integrating frameworks of sexual empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) or holistic sexual health (World Health Organization, 2006) could address barriers to satisfaction, such as communication gaps or unequal power dynamics. Educational programs reframing sexual satisfaction as a shared responsibility—rather than an individual goal—may also enhance relational outcomes.

### H7: Sexual Preoccupation and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual preoccupation among young adults.

**Results:** The hypothesis was **not supported**, as no significant correlation was found between sexual preoccupation and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -0.075, p = 0.364$ ). Sexual preoccupation refers to excessive focus on sexual thoughts, which can sometimes interfere with other aspects of life, including relationships.

#### Supportive

#### Literature:

The lack of association aligns with research emphasizing that relational outcomes depend on factors beyond mere sexual focus. For instance, Ford, Corona, and Families (2019) highlight that relationship satisfaction is more strongly tied to *mutual sexual empowerment* and *emotional alignment* than to the frequency or intensity of sexual thoughts. Their work suggests that preoccupation with sexual thoughts, without relational skills like communication or trust, does not inherently enhance or diminish satisfaction. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health holistically, requiring individuals to integrate sexuality into life in ways that promote well-being—implying that preoccupation alone does not determine relational harmony. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that while excessive sexual focus may reflect individual distress (e.g., anxiety or compulsive tendencies), relational quality is better predicted by shared emotional intimacy and collaborative goal setting.

#### Implications:

These findings suggest that interventions should prioritize fostering relational skills (e.g., communication, emotional attainment) over targeting sexual preoccupation itself. For example, couples' therapy emphasizing mutual empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) or holistic sexual health frameworks (World Health Organization, 2006) could help partners address underlying emotional or communicative gaps rather than pathologizing sexual thoughts. Public health initiatives promoting relational equity and sexual autonomy may also reduce stigma around sexual preoccupation, reframing it as a neutral factor unless compounded by relational discord.

### H8: Sexual Anxiety and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual anxiety among young adults.

**Results:** A negative correlation was observed between sexual anxiety and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -0.255, p = 0.002$ ), though it was relatively weak. Sexual anxiety typically stems from concerns about performance, appearance, or judgment, which can impede sexual and emotional intimacy.

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual anxiety disrupts relational well-being by undermining the conditions necessary for holistic sexual health. For example, Ford et al. (2019) emphasize that anxiety rooted in performance pressure or shame directly conflicts with sexual empowerment—a key driver of mutual pleasure and trust. Their work highlights that fear of judgment stifles open communication and emotional attunement, both critical for satisfaction. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as requiring freedom from "fear, shame, or violence," directly linking anxiety to diminished relational outcomes. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further argue that sexual anxiety reflects a disconnect between self-perception and relational goals, which erodes intimacy unless addressed through supportive communication and shared empowerment.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that interventions should reframe sexual anxiety as a relational issue rather than an individual deficit. Therapeutic approaches prioritizing empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) and holistic sexual health (World Health Organization, 2006)—such as fostering self-compassion, mutual respect, and communication—could mitigate anxiety's impact. For example, couples' therapy integrating mindfulness or pleasure-focused exercises might reduce performance pressure and rebuild emotional connection.

### H9: Sexual Depression and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant negative association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual depression among young adults.

**Results:** A negative correlation was found between sexual depression and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -0.400, p = 0.000$ ), supporting the hypothesis that higher levels of sexual depression are associated with lower relationship satisfaction.

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual depression, marked by disengagement from or negative perceptions of sexual experiences, undermines the relational conditions necessary for holistic sexual health. For example, Ford et al. (2019) argue that sexual empowerment—rooted in agency, pleasure, and mutual respect—is critical for relational well-being; its absence can lead to disconnection and dissatisfaction. Their work highlights that sexual depression often reflects unmet emotional or communicative needs within partnerships. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as encompassing emotional and mental well-being, directly linking sexual depression to diminished relationship quality. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that sexual depression disrupts the alignment between individual and relational goals, eroding intimacy unless addressed through supportive interventions.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that therapeutic approaches should integrate frameworks of sexual empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) and holistic health (World Health Organization, 2006) to address sexual depression. For example, couples' therapy emphasizing *mutual pleasure, emotional attunement*, and *shared agency* could rebuild intimacy and reduce feelings of disconnection. Educational programs reframing sexual health as a collaborative, empowering process may also mitigate the stigma or shame associated with sexual depression.

### H10: External Sexual Control and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and external sexual control among young adults.

**Results:** The hypothesis was **not supported**, as no significant correlation was found between external sexual control and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -0.091$ ,  $p = 0.266$ ). External sexual control refers to the influence of external factors, such as cultural norms or societal expectations, on an individual's sexual behavior.

**Supportive Literature:** The lack of association aligns with research emphasizing the primacy of internal agency in sexual health. For example, Ford, Corona, and Families (2019) argue that relational satisfaction stems from *mutual empowerment* and *shared sexual values* rather than compliance with external pressures. Their work highlights that relationships thrive when partners prioritize internal alignment (e.g., communication, consent) over societal norms. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as requiring autonomy and self-determination, implying that external controls often fail to address the relational and emotional needs critical for satisfaction. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that external pressures (e.g., cultural expectations) can create dissonance between personal and relational goals, but satisfaction depends on resolving this tension through mutual respect and agency.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that interventions should focus on strengthening internal factors like communication, self-efficacy, and shared values (Ford et al., 2019) rather than addressing external controls. For example, couples' therapy or education programs could help partners articulate their sexual values independently of societal norms, fostering relational cohesion (Diamond & Huebner, 2012). Public health initiatives promoting sexual autonomy (World Health Organization, 2006) may also reduce the stigmatizing effects of external pressures on relationship dynamics.

### H11: Sexual Monitoring and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant association amongst relationship satisfaction and sexual monitoring among young adults.

**Results:** The hypothesis was **not supported**, as no significant correlation was found between sexual monitoring and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -.140$ ,  $p = .087$ ).

**Supportive Literature:** Sexual monitoring, such as excessive focus on sexual performance or adherence to external norms, reflects a lack of relational empowerment rather than a driver of satisfaction. For example, Ford, Corona, and Families (2019) argue that relationships thrive when partners prioritize mutual pleasure and shared agency over rigid self-monitoring. Their work highlights that satisfaction stems from emotional alignment and trust, not compliance with arbitrary standards. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as requiring autonomy and freedom from coercion, discrimination, or violence, implying that excessive monitoring undermines the self-determination critical to relational well-being. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that satisfaction depends on relational harmony—aligning sexual behaviors with shared values—rather than individual scrutiny of performance.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that interventions should focus on fostering sexual empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) and autonomy (World Health Organization, 2006) rather than encouraging self-monitoring. For instance, couples' therapy emphasizing mutual trust and pleasure-centric intimacy could reduce anxieties driving excessive monitoring. Public health initiatives promoting holistic sexual health frameworks (Diamond & Huebner, 2012) may also help individuals reframe sexual behavior as a collaborative, fulfilling process rather than a performance metric.

## H12: Fear of Sexual Relationships and Relationship Satisfaction

**Hypothesis:** There will be a significant negative association amongst relationship satisfaction and fear of engaging in sexual relationships among young adults.

**Results:** The hypothesis was **supported by weak but statically notable negative correlation** between fear of sexual relationships and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -.195, p = .017$ ).

**Supportive Literature:** Fear of sexual relationships disrupts the conditions necessary for relational empowerment and holistic sexual health. For example, Ford et al. (2019) argue that fear rooted in shame, past trauma, or societal stigma undermines mutual trust and pleasure—cornerstones of relationship satisfaction. Their work highlights that fear stifles vulnerability and emotional alignment, which are critical for intimacy. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as requiring freedom from "fear, discrimination, or violence," directly linking fear to diminished relational outcomes. Diamond and Huebner (2012) further note that fear of sexual engagement often reflects unresolved emotional or communicative barriers, which erode relational harmony unless addressed through supportive interventions.

**Implications:** These findings suggest that therapeutic approaches should prioritize frameworks of sexual empowerment (Ford et al., 2019) and holistic health (World Health Organization, 2006) to mitigate fear. For instance, trauma-informed therapy or couples' counseling emphasizing *emotional safety*, *trust-building*, and *pleasure-centric intimacy* could reduce fear and rebuild connection. Public health initiatives promoting inclusive sexual education may also address societal stigma contributing to fear of sexual relationships

## CONCLUSION

The present study set out to investigate the relationship between various dimensions of sexual behavior and overall relationship satisfaction among young adults. Grounded in the understanding that sexuality is an integral component of intimate relationships, the research explored a wide spectrum of sexual constructs—including sexual esteem, sexual motivation, sexual satisfaction, assertiveness, control (internal and external), sexual depression, anxiety, fear of sexual relationships, and more—to provide a nuanced view of how these variables interact within the context of romantic partnerships.

The findings from this study offer meaningful insights into the ways in which sexual functioning and psychological experiences of sexuality contribute to relational well-being. Notably, the data revealed that several sexual constructs such as sexual esteem, sexual motivation, sexual satisfaction, sexual assertiveness, and internal sexual control had significant positive associations with relationship satisfaction. These results highlight that individuals who feel confident, empowered, and motivated in their sexual lives tend to experience more fulfilling and satisfying romantic relationships. This echoes previous research which suggests that a healthy sexual self-concept is crucial for emotional intimacy, communication, and long-term relational harmony (Ford et al., 2019; Diamond & Huebner, 2012; World Health Organization, 2006). Conversely, negative sexual constructs such as sexual anxiety, sexual depression, and fear of engaging in sexual relationships were found to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. These findings reinforce the understanding that psychological barriers whether they arise from performance concerns, negative self-image, or trauma-related fear can act as significant impediments to intimacy and mutual satisfaction within a relationship (Ford et al., 2019; World Health Organization, 2006). Such difficulties may hinder open communication, lower sexual responsiveness, and ultimately create emotional distance between partners.

Interestingly, variables such as sexual consciousness, sexual preoccupation, sexual monitoring, and external sexual control were not significantly associated with relationship satisfaction. This may suggest that merely being aware of or focused on one's sexuality without the emotional and interpersonal factors that mediate its expression—does not necessarily translate to higher satisfaction. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of sexual behavior, where certain traits or tendencies may be neutral in their relational outcomes unless shaped by contextual and interpersonal dynamics.

In essence, the results indicate that healthy, positive sexual functioning characterized by confidence, communication, motivation, satisfaction, and self-regulation is a strong predictor of relational success. Meanwhile, sexual challenges rooted in anxiety, depression, and fear tend to detract from the emotional closeness and mutual fulfillment that partners seek in romantic bonds.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature that emphasizes the bi-directional relationship between sexual well-being and relational well-being. It supports the idea that sexual health is not an isolated aspect of human experience but one deeply embedded in the relational context, especially during the developmental phase of young adulthood a life stage often marked by identity exploration, vulnerability, and significant emotional development.

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