The Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction (IEMSS) Questionnaire assesses the components of the IEMSS, a conceptual framework for understanding sexual satisfaction within relationships. It addresses a number of methodological limitations associated with previous research on sexual satisfaction, namely use of single-item measures with unknown reliability and validity, inclusion in multi-item scales of items that are used as predictors of sexual satisfaction (e.g., sexual frequency), and failure to validate measures for sexual-minority individuals.

The IEMSS proposes that sexual satisfaction is influenced by (a) the balance of sexual rewards and sexual costs in the relationship, (b) how these rewards and costs compare to the expected levels of rewards and costs, (c) the perceived equality of rewards and costs between partners, and (d) the nonssexual aspects of the relationship (Lawrance & Byers, 1995). Sexual rewards are exchanges that people experience as pleasurable and gratifying; sexual costs are exchanges that demand effort or cause pain, anxiety, or other negative affect. Because sexual satisfaction is a function of the history of sexual exchanges, repeated assessments of these components provides a better indication of sexual satisfaction than does a single assessment (Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Lawrance & Byers 1995).

Description and Scoring

The IEMSS Questionnaire comprises three self-report measures that assess the components of the model as well as a checklist of sexual rewards and costs. The Global Measure of Sexual Satisfaction (GMSEX) assesses overall sexual satisfaction. Respondents rate their sex life on five 7-point dimensions: Good-Bad, Pleasant-Unpleasant, Positive-Negative, Satisfying- Unsatisfying, Valuable-Worthless. Ratings are summed such that possible scores range from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater sexual satisfaction. The Global Measure of Relationship Satisfaction (GMREL) is identical to the GMSEX except that respondents rate their overall relationship satisfaction. Higher summed scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction. The Exchanges Questionnaire assesses respondents' levels of sexual rewards and costs. Using 9-point scales, respondents indicate (a) their level of rewards, from Not at all Rewarding to Extremely Rewarding, (b) how their level of rewards compares to the level of rewards they expected to receive, from Much Less Rewarding in Comparison to Much More Rewarding in Comparison, and (c) how their level of rewards compares with the level of rewards their partner receives, from My Rewards Are Much Higher to My Partner’s Rewards Are Much Higher. Parallel items are used to assess respondents’ level of sexual costs, relative level of sexual costs, and perceived equality of sexual costs. The perceived equality items are coded such that the midpoint, which represents perfect equality, is assigned a score of 4 and the endpoints are assigned scores of 0. Thus higher scores represent greater equality between partners.

Scores on the two equality scales (EQREW and EQCST) constitute one of the components of the IEMSS. The two other components (REW – CST and CLREW – CLCST) are calculated by subtracting the cost score from the reward score so that the possible range of scores is –8 to 8.

The 58-item Rewards/Costs Checklist (RCC) was developed based on open-ended questions about the sexual rewards and costs experienced by university students in mixed-sex relationships (Lawrance & Byers, 1992) and revised to include the sexual rewards and costs identified by lesbians and gay men (Cohen, Byers, & Walsh, 2008). Respondents are presented with the checklist twice (in counterbalanced order). They indicate whether each item is a reward in their sexual relationship and whether each item is a cost in their sexual relationship. The total number of sexual rewards and costs are determined by summing the number of rewards and costs endorsed. Responses to individual items indicate the types of rewards and costs experienced.

Response Mode and Timing

For each item, respondents mark a response on a Likert-type scale or checklist. Together, the GMSEX, GMREL, and Exchanges Questionnaire take 10 minutes to complete. The RCC takes another 10 minutes to complete.

Reliability

Studies using married or cohabiting individuals in mixed-sex relationships, married individuals in China, and sexual-minority women indicate that the GMSEX and GMREL...
have high internal consistency, ranging from .90 to .96 for the GMSEX and from .91 to .96 for GMREL (Cohen, 2008; Lawrance & Byers, 1992, 1995; Peck, Shaffer, & Williamson, 2004; Renaud, Byers, & Pan, 1997). Test-retest reliabilities also are high: .84 at 2 weeks, .78 at 3 months, and .73 at 18 months for GMSEX, and .81 at 2 weeks, .70 at 3 months, and .61 at 18 months for GMREL (Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Lawrance & Byers, 1995). As anticipated, for individuals in long-term relationships, test-retest reliabilities are moderate for REW, CST, CL<sup>REW</sup>, CL<sup>CST</sup>, REW − CST, and CL<sup>REW</sup>− CL<sup>CST</sup>, ranging from .43 to .67 at 3 months and from .25 to .56 at 18 months (Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Lawrance & Byers, 1995).

**Validity**

Evidence for the validity of the IEMSS Questionnaire is based on a sample of university students (Lawrance & Byers, 1992). Construct validity for GMSEX was supported by a significant correlation of −.65 (p < .001) with scores on the Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS; Hudson, Harrison, & Crosscup, 1981). For GMREL, construct validity was supported by a significant correlation with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976; r = .69, p < .001). Further, a higher level of rewards was negatively correlated with the ISS (r = −.66, p < .001) as well as a single-item measure of sexual satisfaction (r = −.64, p < .001). The level of costs was significantly correlated with the ISS (r = .30, p < .01) and a single-item measure of sexual satisfaction (r = .70, p < .001); however, it was not significantly correlated with a single-item measure of sexual satisfaction (r = −.15). Recent researchers have found that higher scores on the GMSEX and/or GMREL are associated with each other as well as with multiple indicators of sexual and relationship functioning, including sexual communication, sexual esteem, sexual cognitions, sexual desire, sexual frequency, and communality (Cohen, 2008; MacNeil & Byers, 2009; Peck et al., 2004; Renaud & Byers, 2001). Finally, the items on the Exchanges Questionnaire and the components of the model are all significantly and uniquely correlated with GMSEX, and multiple assessments enhance the prediction of sexual satisfaction, providing strong support for the validity of the IEMSS (Byers & MacNeil, 2006; Lawrance & Byers, 1995). The IEMSS is tested by entering GMREL in the first step of a hierarchical regression analysis and the four exchange components in the second step.

**References**


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**Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire**

**GMSEX**

Overall, how would you describe your sexual relationship with your partner?

1. 
   - Very Bad
   - Very Unpleasant
   - Very Good
   - Very Pleasant

2. 
   - Very Pleasant
   - Very Good

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**Exhibit**

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**Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire**

**GMSEX**

Overall, how would you describe your sexual relationship with your partner?

1. 
   - Very Bad
   - Very Unpleasant
   - Very Good
   - Very Pleasant

2. 
   - Very Pleasant
   - Very Good
### GMREL

In general, how would you describe your overall relationship with your partner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Bad</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<table>
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<th>Very Unpleasant</th>
<th>Very Pleasant</th>
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<td>2.</td>
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<th>Very Negative</th>
<th>Very Positive</th>
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<td>3.</td>
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<th>Very Unsatisfying</th>
<th>Very Satisfying</th>
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<td>4.</td>
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<th></th>
<th>Worthless</th>
<th>Very Valuable</th>
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### Exchanges Questionnaire

When people think about their sexual relationship with their partner, most can think of both rewards and costs about their sexual relationship. Rewards are things that are positive or pleasing: things they like about their sexual relationship. Costs are things that are negative or displeasing: things they don’t like about their sexual relationship.

1. Think about the rewards that you have received in your sexual relationship with your partner within the past three months. How rewarding is your sexual relationship with your partner?
   - Not at all Rewarding
   - Extremely Rewarding

2. Most people have a general expectation about how rewarding their sexual relationship “should be.” Compared to this general expectation, they may feel that their sexual relationship is more rewarding, less rewarding, or as rewarding as it “should be.” Based on your own expectation about how rewarding your sexual relationship with your partner “should be,” how does your level of rewards compare to that expectation?
   - Not at all Rewarding
   - Extremely Rewarding
3. How does the level of rewards that you get from your sexual relationship with your partner compare to the level of rewards that your partner gets from the relationship?

My Rewards Are Much Higher
Partner’s Rewards Are Much Higher

4. Think about the costs that you have incurred in your sexual relationship with your partner within the past three months. How costly is your sexual relationship with your partner?

Not at all Costly
Extremely Costly

5. Most people have a general expectation about how costly their sexual relationship “should be.” Compared to this general expectation, they may feel that their sexual relationship is more costly, less costly, or as costly as it “should be.” Based on your own expectation about how costly your sexual relationship with your partner “should be,” how does your level of costs compare to that expectation?

Much Less Costly in Comparison
Much More Costly in Comparison

6. How does the level of costs that you incur in your sexual relationship with your partner compare to the level of costs that your partner gets from the relationship?

My Costs Are Much Higher
Partner’s Costs Are Much Higher

Rewards/Costs Checklist (RCC)

Note to researcher: The presentation order of the Rewards Checklist and the Costs Checklist is counterbalanced across participants. The items are identical in both Checklists. The response options for the Rewards Checklist are Reward and Not a Reward. The response options for the Costs Checklist are Cost and Not a Cost.

Instructions. We will be asking you some more questions about your sexual relationship with your partner. Before answering them, it is important that you carefully read the following information.

When people think about their sexual relationship with their partner, most can give concrete examples of positive/pleasing things they like about their sexual relationship. These are rewards. Most people can also give concrete examples of negative/displeasing things they don’t like about their sexual relationship. These are costs.

For example, take oral sex.

Oral sex would be a reward if you feel that you engage in this sexual activity “just the right amount” and you enjoy it.

Oral sex would be a cost if you would like to engage in oral sex more often or less often than you do, or you do not enjoy it.

You will be asked to complete the same list twice. One time you will be asked to indicate whether each item in this list is generally a reward in your sexual relationship with your partner or not a reward. The other time you will be asked to indicate whether each item is a cost in your sexual relationship with your partner or not a cost.
Note that things can be both rewards and costs. For example, oral sex would be both a reward and a cost if you enjoy oral sex but want it more or less frequently. Further, some items may be neither rewards nor costs in your sexual relationship.

**Rewards Checklist**

This is a list of possible rewards and costs in your sexual relationship. Please indicate whether each item in this list is generally a reward in your sexual relationship with your partner or not a reward.

In brief, things that are positive, pleasing, or “just right” are rewards.

1. Level of affection you and your partner express during sexual activities
2. Degree of emotional intimacy (feeling close, sharing feelings)
3. Extent to which you and your partner communicate about sex
4. Variety in sexual activities, locations, times
5. Extent to which you and your partner use sex toys
6. Sexual activities you and your partner engage in to arouse each other
7. How often you experience orgasm (climax)
8. How often your partner experiences orgasm (climax)
9. Extent to which you and your partner engage in intimate activities (e.g., talking, cuddling) after sex
10. Frequency of sexual activities
11. How much privacy you and your partner have for sex
12. Oral sex: extent to which your partner stimulates you
13. Oral sex: extent to which you stimulate your partner
14. Physical sensations from touching, caressing, hugging
15. Feelings of physical discomfort or pain during/after sex
16. How much fun you and your partner experience during sexual interactions
17. Who initiates sexual activities
18. Extent to which you feel stressed/relaxed during sexual activities
19. Extent to which you and your partner express enjoyment about your sexual interactions
20. Extent to which you and your partner communicate your sexual likes and dislikes to each other
21. Ability/inability to conceive a child
22. Extent to which you and your partner engage in role-playing or act out fantasies
23. How you feel about yourself during/after engaging in sexual activities with your partner
24. Extent to which your partner shows consideration for your wants/needs/feelings
25. How your partner treats you (verbally and physically) when you have sex
26. Having sex when you’re not in the mood
27. Having sex when your partner is not in the mood
28. Extent to which you let your guard down with your partner
29. Extent to which your partner lets their guard down with you
30. Method of protection (from sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy) used by you and your partner
31. Extent to which you and your partner discuss and use protection (from sexually transmitted diseases and/or pregnancy)
32. How comfortable you and your partner are with each other
33. Extent to which way in which your partner influences you to engage in sexual activity
34. Extent to which you and your partner argue after engaging in sexual activity
35. Extent to which you and your partner are/are not sexually exclusive (i.e., have sex only with each other)
36. How much time you and your partner spend engaging in sexual activities
37. How easy it is for you to have an orgasm (climax)
38. How easy it is for your partner to have an orgasm (climax)
39. Extent to which your sexual relationship with your partner reflects or breaks down stereotypical gender roles (the way women and men are expected to behave sexually)
40. How your partner responds to your initiation of sexual activity
41. Being naked in front of your partner
42. Your partner being naked in front of you
43. Extent to which your partner talks to other people about your sex life
44. Extent to which you and your partner read/watch sexually explicit material (e.g., erotic stories, pornographic videos)
45. Pleasing/trying to please your partner sexually
46. Extent to which sexual interactions with your partner make you feel secure in the relationship
47. Extent to which you get sexually aroused
The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale and Its Short Form

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PAMELA BROUILARD, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS; \(k = 20\)) was developed as a universal tool for assessing sexual satisfaction and tested in two cultures (Croatia and the United States; Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, in press). Unlike the majority of similar measures, the NSSS is not gender, sexual orientation, or relationship status specific. Its conceptual framework is derived from the sex counseling and psychotherapy literature and includes the following five dimensions: (a) sexual sensations, (b) sexual presence/awareness, (c) sexual exchange, (d) emotional connection/closeness, and (e) sexual activity. In order to facilitate the use of the NSSS in clinical and nonclinical studies, a short version of the scale (NSSS-S; \(k = 12\)) was developed. The NSSS-S demonstrates reliability and validity comparable to the full-scale instrument.

Description
The NSSS was created within a research project more broadly focused on the impact of pornography on young people’s sexual socialization (Štulhofer, Buško, & Landripet, 2010; Štulhofer et al., 2007). Scale construction and validation were carried out using seven independent samples with over 2,000 participants, aged 18–55 years, in Croatia and the U.S. Of the seven, three were college student samples, two were community samples, one was a clinical sample (sex therapy clients), and the final one was a sample of nonheterosexual Croatian men and women. In all but two samples, online surveying tools were used to collect data.

Principal component analysis was carried out on an initial pool of 35 Likert items generated by the proposed five-dimensional conceptual framework. It extracted six components with eigenvalues > 1, which were then rotated to oblique position using the oblimin method. Closer inspection of this structure suggested that a forced two-factor solution would be the best strategy to pursue. The obtained two-factor solution proved stable in both student and adult Croatian and the U.S. samples, among female and male participants, as well as in the nonheterosexual Croatian sample. The first factor was primarily focused on personal experiences and sensations, whereas the second

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