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The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale and Its Short Form

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48. Amount of spontaneity in your sex life  
49. Extent of control you feel during/after sexual activity  
50. Extent to which you engage in sexual activities that you dislike but your partner enjoys  
51. Extent to which you engage in sexual activities that you enjoy but your partner dislikes  
52. Worry that you or your partner will get a sexually transmitted infection from each other  
53. How confident you feel in terms of your ability to please your partner sexually  
54. Extent to which you and your partner engage in anal sex/anal play  
55. Your partner’s ability to please you sexually  
56. Extent to which you think your partner is physically attracted to/sexually desires you  
57. Extent to which you are physically attracted to/sexually desire your partner  
58. Extent to which you and your partner are sexually compatible (i.e., well matched in terms of your sexual likes/dislikes)

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

In brief, things that are negative, displeasing, or “too little or too much” are costs.

Note to researcher: The same 58 checklist items are repeated here.

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale and Its Short Form

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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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factor reflected the participant’s perception of the partner’s reactions and sexual activity in general. Taking into account the strong association between the two domains (factor correlations ranged from .52 to .61), our findings pointed to a relatively high homogeneity of the sexual satisfaction construct.

The selection of items per component was performed according to standard criteria of simple structure, factor loadings, and content overlap (redundancy). Respecting both statistical and content-related characteristics, 20 items (10 per component) were retained from the initial set. The two following subscales were created: the Ego-Centered subscale, which measures sexual satisfaction generated by personal experiences/sensations, and the Partner/Sexual Activity-Centered subscale, which measures sexual satisfaction derived from an individual’s perception of the partner’s sexual behaviors and reactions, and the diversity and/or frequency of sexual activities. The two subscales represent the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS).

The Short Version of the NSSS (NSSS-S) was created following a somewhat different procedure. The 20 NSSS items were first divided into five clusters representing the initial conceptual dimensions, and then two to three items per cluster were selected (depending on cluster size) according to their item-total correlation in the NSSS subscales. Additional principal component analysis of the 12 NSSS-S items showed that all items loaded highly (>.59 in student, and >.58 in community samples) on a single factor with eigenvalue > 1.

In all samples, the NSSS scores ranged between 20 and 100, and the NSSS-S scores between 12 and 50, covering the full range. The NSSS, its subscales, and the NSSS-S scores displayed a characteristic asymmetric distribution with the mean scores leaning toward more satisfaction. No differences in sexual satisfaction scores between students and adults were found. However, Croatian participants consistently displayed higher sexual satisfaction than the U.S. participants.

Response Mode and Timing

For each item, respondents are asked to circle the number that best reflects their satisfaction with a particular aspect of their sex life in the preceding six months (“Thinking about your sex life during the last six months, please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects”). Respondents rate their level of satisfaction using the following 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = Not at all Satisfied, 2 = A Little Satisfied, 3 = Moderately Satisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied, 5 = Extremely Satisfied. Most respondents complete the full scale within 5 minutes.

Scoring

The Ego-Centered subscale (Items 1–10), Partner and Activity-Centered subscale (Items 11–20), NSSS (Items 1–20), and NSSS-S (Items 2–3, 5–6, 8, 10–12, 14, 17, 19–20) are computed by summing the related items.

Reliability

Internal consistency in two student samples (\(N_{\text{CRO}} = 544, M_{\text{age}} = 21.3; N_{\text{US}} = 356, M_{\text{age}} = 20.4\) ), two community samples (\(N_{\text{CRO}} = 729, M_{\text{age}} = 34.1; N_{\text{US}} = 212, M_{\text{age}} = 40.7\) ), and a sample of Croatian nonheterosexual men and women (\(N = 360, M_{\text{age}} = 26.1\) ) was satisfactory for the full scale (\(\alpha = .94–.96\) ), both subscales (\(\alpha = .91–.93\) and .90–.94, respectively), and the short version (\(\alpha = .90–.93\) ). No substantial differences related to either gender or sexual orientation were observed. Additional analysis performed on the Croatian student sample dataset showed that the NSSS and NSSS-S internal consistency coefficients were similar in the group of participants currently in a relationship and those who were single (\(\alpha = .87–.96\) ). This remained the case even after separate analyses were done for men and women.

Test-retest reliability of the NSSS and NSSS-S was shown to be satisfactory in a sample of Croatian students (\(N = 219\) ) over a 1-month period. Stability coefficients ranged from .72 to .84, with somewhat stronger associations reported among women.

Validity

Both the NSSS and the NSSS-S were shown to be significantly associated with a global measure of life satisfaction, in the expected direction. Negative correlations with the shortened Sexual Boredom Scale (Watt & Ewing, 1996) scores and positive correlations with relationship intimacy, partner communication about sex, and relationship status were also found to be significant among men and women in both the Croatian and the U.S. student samples. In support of convergent validity, associations between a global (single-item) measure of sexual satisfaction and the NSSS/ NSSS-S scores were significant and strong in both samples (\(r = .44–.67\) ). Correlation coefficients were systematically lower in the U.S. sample.

There were significant differences in the average NSSS and NSSS-S scores between participants in the clinical sample (sex therapy clients; \(N = 54; M_{\text{age}} = 34.6\) ) and nonclinical community sample (\(N = 729; M_{\text{age}} = 34.1\) ), \(t_{\text{NSSS}} = -8.64, df = 709, p < .001\); \(t_{\text{NSSS-S}} = -8.74, df = 735, p < .001\). Participants with sexual difficulties systematically reported lower sexual satisfaction. Cohen’s \(d\) values (ranging from -1.07 to -1.39) suggested that the observed differences are large in size. For example, the overlap between the full NSSS scores in the clinical and nonclinical sample was 32%.

Discriminant analysis was carried out to predict membership in the clinical vs. nonclinical community sample. The inclusion criterion in the first group was the persistent or recurrent distressful presence of one or more sexual disorders related to sexual desire, sexual arousal, orgasm, or sexual pain according to the Diagnostic and Statistical
Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

Exhibit

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale A (Ego-Focused)</th>
<th>Subscale B (Partner and Activity-Focused)</th>
<th>Short Version (NSSS-S)</th>
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Thinking about your sex life during the last six months, please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects:

1. The intensity of my sexual arousal
2. The quality of my orgasms
3. My “letting go” and surrender to sexual pleasure during sex
4. My focus/concentration during sexual activity
5. The way I sexually react to my partner
6. My body’s sexual functioning
7. My emotional opening up in sex
8. My mood after sexual activity
9. The frequency of my orgasms
10. The pleasure I provide to my partner
11. The balance between what I give and receive in sex
12. My partner’s emotional opening up during sex
13. My partner’s initiation of sexual activity
14. My partner’s ability to orgasm
15. My partner’s surrender to sexual pleasure (“letting go”)
16. The way my partner takes care of my sexual needs
17. My partner’s sexual creativity
18. My partner’s sexual availability
19. The variety of my sexual activities
20. The frequency of my sexual activity

Responses are anchored on the following scale: 1 = Not at all Satisfied, 2 = A Little Satisfied, 3 = Moderately Satisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied, 5 = Extremely Satisfied.