

Sub-Saharan Africans satisfied with their sex lives, with 18 percent rating them a perfect 10

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People in Africa's Sub-Sahara region, a relatively undeveloped area, are generally satisfied with their sex lives, with the most common rating—reported by 18 percent of respondents—being a perfect "10," according to Baylor University research that will be presented at the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (ASA).

Sex life satisfaction was not linked to differences in country-level variables, such as a country's overall wealth. Instead, individual level characteristics, such as having a higher income, more education, and a spouse or "domestic partner" were associated with greater satisfaction, said study author Stephen Cranney, a postdoctoral scholar in Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion and a lecturer of sociology in Baylor's College of Arts & Sciences.

The findings are significant because past research has shown that sexual satisfaction is associated with general well-being, and because they provide a comparison for patterns in developed parts of the world, such as Europe and the United States, Cranney said. The study is also significant because it did not find any evidence that concern about HIV/AIDS was related to [sex life](#) satisfaction, he said.

"Sub-Saharan Africa contains nearly a billion people," he said. "It's important. This area contains some of the least developed countries in the world. It's a prime area to compare against the highly developed countries that traditionally have been the subject of sex life satisfaction research."

The finding that people tend to be satisfied with their sex lives generally holds across countries, according to previous research, Cranney said.

For his study, Cranney used data from the World Gallup Poll to examine socio-demographic and other associations with sex life satisfaction across 31 countries and 25,483 people in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2011.

The study considered age, sex, education, income, religiosity, and relationship status, all factors associated with sexual satisfaction in previous research for other parts of the world.

Findings included:

- In two of the four sub-regions (West Africa and East Africa), males were significantly more satisfied with their sex lives than females. In the other sub-regions, men and women were equally satisfied.
- Peak sexual satisfaction occurred when people were in their late 20s through 30s.
- Neither religiosity nor perceived gravity of the HIV/AIDS problem in one's country were related to sexual satisfaction.

On the issue of gender equality, "In the United States, one study showed that couples with traditional roles actually had more sexual satisfaction and frequency," Cranney said. "That's interesting, because there was the assumption by most researchers that higher gender equality in a marriage would lead to more sexual satisfaction overall. My study found that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the level of gender equality in a marriage wasn't related to sexual satisfaction for either the man or the woman."

Regarding the effect of income, "there's generally an expectation that you deserve your own private space," he said. "Higher incomes may purchase more privacy, cleanliness, and health."

He also noted that the finding that religiosity does not have a clear relationship with sexual satisfaction generally mirrors research in developed countries.

Finally, while the research addressed the possibility that HIV/AIDS concern influences [sexual satisfaction](#), questions remain for future research in the Sub-Sahara. "For example, little is known about how HIV/AIDS affects the sex [life satisfaction](#) of people who have HIV/AIDS compared to those who do not," Cranney said.

The paper, "Sex Life Satisfaction in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Descriptive and Exploratory Analysis," will be presented on Monday, Aug. 22, in Seattle at the American Sociological Association's 111th Annual Meeting.

Provided by American Sociological Association

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