

The Effect of Big Five on Sexual Satisfaction

- Gender Difference

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Abstract: Satisfaction in intimate relationship is a significant area of interest for many adults in contemporary society. Some researchers have found that personality and sexual satisfaction determine marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of recent studies elucidating how personality affects sexual satisfaction differently between genders among unmarried young Chinese adults. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the link between the Big Five personality and sexual satisfaction in this demographic. The researcher collected the data through quantitative research by distributing the questionnaire among young adults in China, with ages between 18-28 years old, and obtained 161 respondents. The data was statistically tested by using the SPSS v29. The findings showed Conscientiousness is the solely personality dimension in Big Five personality that significantly positively correlated with sexual satisfaction, and Conscientiousness does not significantly predict sexual satisfaction for both males and females. The present study provides evidences for the understanding of the relation between personality and sexual satisfaction.

Keywords: Personality, big five personality, sexual satisfaction, intimate relationship.

1. Introduction

Throughout the decades, China has undergone significant transformations in its social, cultural, and ideological landscapes driven by its rapid economic growth. However, in recent years, the emergence of the coronavirus epidemic has significantly impacted China's socio-economic condition and individual's life. The prevailing uncertainty regarding the stability of both present and future life circumstances has led many individuals to adopt a belief in non-marriage. Consequently, exploring the factors that influence intimacy satisfaction is essential for the increasing population of unmarried couples.

Sexual satisfaction (SS) with an intimate relationship is a crucial aspect of one's overall well-being. Three primary factors - interpersonal communication, sexual communication, and affective communication - are highlighted by the literature as pivotal to relationship satisfaction [1]. It is highly probable that personality would manifest in ways that impact close relationships. Personality is a concept that has been extensively examined in the realm of psychology. It encompasses the unique ways in which individuals distinguish themselves from one another. In resent inclusive and diverse societal environment, it is evident that people encounter individuals who possess distinct qualities

and characteristics compared to themselves. Certain individuals possess a natural inclination towards being more outgoing, easily irritated, or optimistic. When people delve into these distinctions, they are essentially examining an individual's personality based on the concept that individuals differ from one another regarding their standing on several core personality traits, which are stable across different situations and over time [2].

However, there is a scarcity of recent investigations into how personality influences sexual satisfaction in China. Thus, this study aims to examine the degree of personality traits and sexual satisfaction level among unmarried young adults in China, explore the personality-sexual satisfaction relationship in heterosexual, and compare the difference of this relationship across gender. Given that personality and SS are key determinants of overall marital satisfaction, it is crucial to investigate their interplay among unmarried couples [3]. This will pave the way for further research aimed at enhancing satisfaction and resolving conflicts within intimate relationships.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Personality

The Five-Factor Model (FFM), a prevalent framework for personality traits, categorizes them into five overarching dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness [4]. These dimensions offer a framework for comprehending and classifying diverse facets of personality. Individuals who are highly extraverted tend to display assertiveness and sociability [4]. Agreeableness people often exhibit cooperation and politeness [4]. Conscientious people tend to be highly task-focused and organized, displaying a strong sense of orderliness [4]. High neuroticism often find themselves more susceptible to experiencing adverse emotions like being anxious, depressed, and irritated [4]. Ultimately, individuals who are highly open tend to possess a wide array of interests, embracing novelty over routine [4].

The dimensions of the Big Five have significant connections to various crucial life outcomes [5-10]. For instance, academic success is often closely linked to high conscientiousness, while scholastic achievement can sometimes be positively influenced by a high level of openness [5]. Traits like agreeableness and openness are strong predictors of performance variations and trends in the workplace, while conscientiousness is a key determinant of job performance improvement [6]. Furthermore, high neuroticism tend to perceive more stress, have a less favorable view of their health, and feel less satisfied with their lives [7]. Subsequent researchers also refined this finding. Davarinejad et al. discovered that emotional divorce was less likely to occur when "conscientiousness" was elevated, while it was more likely to occur when "neuroticism" was heightened [8]. In addition to the conventional personality models, The concept of Dark Triad, introduced by Paulhus and Williams, encompasses three socially hostile traits: Narcissism, Psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, can also influence personal relationships with intimate partners [9,10]. Ferreiros and Clemente found that individuals with dark personalities and elevated levels of moral disengagement encountered more significant relational difficulties, whereas repeated infidelities served as the most potent predictor of dark personality traits and moral disengagement [10]. This indicates that personality forecasts the quality of intimacy, while behaviors in romantic relationships in turn predict personality.

2.2. Sexual Satisfaction

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs serves as a lens through which to view sexual satisfaction. This theory divides human needs into five distinct layers and proposes that these levels form a hierarchical structure: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. It emphasizes that people must first meet their basic needs before they can effectively seek more

complex ones. The lower the level of need, the more vital and essential it is. Sexual satisfaction is often related to physiological and belonging needs. It is a component of both physiological requirements, as sex is one of the basic physiological functions and behavioral motivations in human beings, and belonging needs, as it refers to the circumstances and desires for creating romantic connections with others. In this study, SS can be viewed as the fulfillment of the higher degree of love and belonging needs that people desire after meeting their basic sexual physiological needs.

Sexual satisfaction significantly contributes to an individual's overall well-being, with studies suggesting that it is deeply connected to multiple aspects of human well-being [11-14]. For instance, studies by Dundon and Rellini have explored the connection between SS and general well-being, suggesting that satisfaction in one's sex life can contribute significantly to a sense of overall well-being [11]. The research conducted by Scott et al. reinforces this association, establishing a positive correlation between SS and an individual's health status, encompassing both physical and psychological aspects [12]. Moreover, research by Davison et al. has associated high SS with improved quality of life, indicating that SS is not just a basic human need but has broader implications for how individuals perceive and experience their lives [13]. The findings from these studies underscore that sexual satisfaction as a significant component of one's daily life. Moreover, multiple variables outside personality can influence sexual satisfaction. Kim and Jeon indicated that, among male individuals, the factors that greatly affected sexual satisfaction were the number of sexual activity, satisfaction during marriage, and cognitive ability [14]. However, the most influential factors on sexual satisfaction among women were marital satisfaction, the number of sexual encounters, the lack of depressive symptoms, age, and the duration of cohabitation [14].

2.3. The Relationship between Personality and Sexual Satisfaction

The psychoanalytic theory proposed by Freud posits that personality and behavior are influenced by unconscious forces [15]. The unconscious is a component of the individual's personality that remains outside of their conscious awareness [15]. It encompasses deep-seated desires, demands, and needs that are concealed from conscious awareness due to their disturbing nature [15]. Freud's psychoanalytic theory also suggests that the behavior is driven by both sexual and aggressive instincts that reside in individuals' unconscious mind [15]. Thus, his theory alludes a connection between personality and various needs, and a profound internal conflict when one's needs are left unfulfilled, such as sexual satisfaction.

Numerous investigations have delved into the relationship between personality and SS [16-18]. For instance, the presence of perfectionism traits can significantly impact the level of sexual satisfaction within married couples [16]. It has been observed that high perfectionism tend to correlate with low sexual satisfaction [16]. The levels of marital adjustment and depression indicate that the study sample is representative of community, non-distressed populations [16]. Upon excluding marital satisfaction and depression, researchers discovered that, for males, only socially recognized perfectionism correlates with diminished levels of both overall sexual satisfaction and satisfaction with their spouse [16]. For women, all measures of perfectionism, save self-oriented perfectionism, have negative and substantial correlations with sexual satisfaction [16]. Furthermore, regression analyses indicate that the wife's other-oriented perfectionism uniquely predicts her overall diminished sexual satisfaction and her husband's reduced satisfaction with her contributions to the sexual relationship [16]. Moreover, being agreeable, conscientious, extravert, and open have been found to be linked to high level of marital satisfaction [17]. In addition, individuals who are emotionally stable, agreeable, responsible, and sociable often report greater satisfaction in their sexual experiences [18]. The analysis also revealed that there were no notable differences in how these traits influenced partner relationship satisfaction across both male and female, regardless of their marital status [18]. All of

studies above indicated that personality traits substantially contribute to shaping both sexual and relationship satisfaction, regardless of gender or marital status [16-18].

3. Research Method

3.1. Participant

The research encompassed a cohort of 161 respondents, including 86 females and 75 males. The occupied participants' age was 27-28 years, with the frequency of 69. The predominant demographic of participants consisted of Han ethnic group from China.

3.2. Materials

3.2.1. Big Five Inventory (BFI)

The Big Five Inventory (BFI), crafted by John et al. , is a psychological instrument extensively employed to gauge personality [19]. This research utilizes the BFI-10, a concise 10-item adaptation developed by Rammstedt and John [20]. It structured as an ordinal scale, was designed for an efficient and adaptable evaluation of personality [20]. Respondents evaluate each BFI item on a 5-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with the final score interpreted as the mean of total responses [20].

3.2.2. Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ)

In this study, the Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) established by Nomejko and Dolińska-Zygmunt was used to assess the level of sexual satisfaction in unmarried young adults in China [21]. This section comprises a total of 10 items. Each SSQ item is scored by participants on a 4-point scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 4 representing "strongly agree" [21]. The potential spectrum of scores spans from 10 to 40. An elevated score from a participant is indicative of a higher level of sexual satisfaction, whereas a reduced score points to the opposite.

3.3. Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to participants through WeChat, ensuring that their involvement in the study was entirely confidential, voluntary and anonymous. Participants have the rights to seek feedback and receive a debriefing regarding the content of the questionnaire. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling. Furthermore, the researcher employed the snowball sampling method, whereby existing participants will be asked to refer others from their social network who meet the study's criteria to enroll in the study.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1. Demographic Analysis

161 online questionnaires were successfully shared with the young adults from the mainland China. Table 1 illustrates the findings of the respondents' demographic information.

Table 1: Demographic information.

Demographic Information (n=161)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
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Table 1: (continued).

Gender	Male	75	46.6
	Female	86	53.4
Age	18-20	5	3.1
	21-23	25	15.5
	24-26	62	38.5
	27-28	69	42.9
Race	Chinese	161	100

The present study’s demographic information showed that out of 161 respondents, 75 are male (46.6%) while 86 are female (53.4%). The predominate age of the respondents is 27-28 years old, followed by 24-26 (38.5%), 21-23 (15.5%), and 18-20 (3.1%). The respondents are all Chinese (100%).

4.1.2. Big Five Personality

The first study objective is to identify the level of five personality dimensions among unmarried young adults in China. Table 2 showed the descriptive statistics of participants’ five personality dimensions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic of Personality.

Personality (OCEAN)	Mean (SD)	Frequency (f)	Level
Extraversion	3.10 (0.80)	161	Moderate
Agreeableness	3.19 (0.84)	161	Moderate
Conscientiousness	3.01 (0.74)	161	Moderate
Neuroticism	3.0 (0.70)	161	Moderate
Openness	3.20 (0.83)	161	Moderate

The Big Five Inventory consists of five personality dimensions, consisting of a total of ten items, including five reverse-items. The 10 items are then computed according to their dimensions based on the scoring guidelines.

Based on the findings, the highest mean score of personality dimensions was marked on the young adults’ Openness tendency ($M = 3.20 \pm 0.83$), followed by Agreeableness ($M = 3.19 \pm 0.84$), Extraversion ($M = 3.10 \pm 0.80$), Conscientiousness ($M = 3.01 \pm 0.74$), and the lowest mean score for Neuroticism ($M = 3.0 \pm 0.70$).

4.1.3. Sexual Satisfaction

The second study objective is to identify the level of SS among unmarried young adults in China. Table 3 showed the descriptive statistics of participants’ sexual satisfaction.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic of Sexual Satisfaction.

SSQ	Mean (SD)	Frequency (f)	Level
Sexual Satisfaction	2.41 (0.27)	161	Moderate

Overall, the total mean score of sexual satisfaction among unmarried young adults is marked as moderate satisfaction level ($M = 2.41 \pm 0.27$).

4.2. Inferential Analysis

4.2.1. The Relationship between Personality and Sexual Satisfaction

The third objective of this study is to identify the relationship between personality and SS among unmarried young adults in China. Table 4 showed the results of correlation analysis.

Table 4: Inferential Statistic of Relationship between Personality and Sexual Satisfaction.

Dimension (BFI)	SexualSatisfaction (SSQ)	
	r	p
Extraversion	0.038	0.632
Agreeableness	-0.032	0.683
Conscientiousness	0.174*	0.027
Neuroticism	-0.036	0.652
Openness	-0.107	0.177

The findings in Table 4 demonstrated the insignificant relationship between Extraversion and SS ($r = 0.038$, $p > 0.05$), Agreeableness and SS ($r = -0.032$, $p > 0.05$), Neuroticism and SS ($r = -0.036$, $p > 0.05$), Openness and SS ($r = -0.107$, $p > 0.05$) among unmarried young adults in China. The solely personality dimension in BFM that significantly positively correlated with SS was Conscientiousness ($r = 0.174$, $p < 0.05$).

4.2.2. The Relationship between Conscientiousness and Sexual Satisfaction across Gender

The fourth aim of this research is to ascertain whether gender influences the correlation between Personality and SS. Based on the above findings, no substantial link was observed between Personality dimensions and SS, with the exception of Conscientiousness. Consequently, this study specifically examined the significance of gender's impact on the relationship between Conscientiousness and SS, showed in Table 5.

Table 5: Linear Regression Results of Conscientiousness and Sexual Satisfaction across Gender.

Gender	Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			B	Std.Error	Beta		
Male	1	(Constant)	2.384	0.111		21.511	<0.001
		Conscientiousness	0.030	0.035	0.101	0.868	0.388
Female	1	(Constant)	2.116	0.132		16.078	<0.001
		Conscientiousness	0.080	0.043	0.198	1.848	0.068

a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Satisfaction

The linear regression analysis results pertain to the dependent variable, SS, and include two models, one for males and one for females.

For male model, the constant term is 2.384 with a standard error of 0.111, indicating a significant starting point for the model at the $p < 0.001$ level. The coefficient for Conscientiousness is 0.030 with a standard error of 0.035. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.101, suggesting a weak positive relationship between Conscientiousness and SS among males. The t-value for Conscientiousness is 0.868, which is not significant at the confidence level ($p = 0.388$), indicating that Conscientiousness does not significantly predict SS for males.

For female model, the constant term is 2.116 with a standard error of 0.132, which is significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. The coefficient for Conscientiousness is 0.080 with a standard error of 0.043. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.198, indicating a slightly stronger positive relationship between Conscientiousness and SS for females compared to males. The t-value for Conscientiousness is 1.848, which is not significant at the confidence level ($p = 0.068$), suggesting that while there is a trend, Conscientiousness does not significantly predict SS for females.

5. Discussion & Suggestion

5.1. Summary of Findings

This study explores the connection between the personality and sexual satisfaction in Chinese young adults aged 18-28. The findings revealed that the average scores for the BFI fell within a moderate range, with values between 3.0 and 3.2 on a scale of 5. The moderate mean scores observed across all Big Five traits suggest a harmonious distribution of personality characteristics within the sample, highlighting the diversity and representativeness of the population studied. Specifically, openness received the highest mean score, which implies that the individuals in the sample population exhibit a tendency towards open-mindedness and a willingness to embrace new experiences. On the other hand, the average score for sexual satisfaction was 2.41 with a standard deviation of 0.27. The findings suggest that the participants experienced a moderate level of sexual satisfaction. This indicates that the participants, on average, did not report extremely high or low levels of SS but rather fell somewhere in the middle.

In exploring the personality-sexual satisfaction relationship, it was observed that conscientiousness exhibited a strong positive correlation with sexual satisfaction ($r = 0.174$, $p < 0.05$). This means that those who exhibit greater conscientiousness might find themselves experiencing enhanced satisfaction about sex. The findings indicate a link between conscientiousness and sexual satisfaction, consistent with earlier research [18]. The linear regression analysis provided additional evidence for this observation, indicating that conscientiousness was a significant correlate of SS for both genders. It shows the possible impact of personal variations in responsibility, organization, and goal-directed actions on sexual well-being.

5.2. Implication & Recommendation

In light of the findings, a number of recommendations can be proposed. Firstly, it is important for sexual health education and interventions to integrate personality assessments in order to customize strategies that align with the distinct characteristics of individuals. For example, initiatives designed to improve sexual satisfaction may gain from the understanding of the conscientiousness trait, as this study indicates a significant connection between conscientiousness and sexual satisfaction. Secondly, professionals such as therapists and counselors in the field can utilize these insights to assist individuals in recognizing how their personality characteristics may be impacting their sexual satisfaction. This may result in tailored approaches focused on enhancing sexual well-being. Finally, the results indicate that having a partner who exhibits conscientiousness may contribute positively to

sexual satisfaction. This may guide individuals in their partner selection or in nurturing their relationships, fostering a mutual awareness and dedication to each other's sexual health and satisfaction.

5.3. Future Research Direction

This study presents multiple opportunities for further exploration in future research endeavors. Initially, longitudinal studies may shed light on the developmental progression of personality-sexual satisfaction link, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of how this relationship evolves over time. Secondly, exploring alternative personality frameworks, like the HEXACO model that incorporates the additional dimension of Honesty-Humility, could offer a more profound insight into the personality traits influencing sexual satisfaction [22]. Ultimately, recognizing sexual satisfaction in intimate relationship as a sophisticated blend of numerous factors is crucial. This includes not only individual personality traits but also broader cultural and social influences, personal values and beliefs, sexual health and education, the quality and status of intimacy, sexual orientation and biological mechanism. Understanding these interactive effects and potential moderators can provide deeper insights into this multifaceted topic.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this research highlights the connection between the personality and sexual satisfaction among young individuals. It emphasizes the possible influence of conscientiousness on sexual satisfaction and offers valuable perspectives for future studies and interventions related to sexual health and well-being. The article advocates for individuals and organizations to evaluate the possible influence of personality while tackling relevant issues and to incorporate other viewpoints beyond the personality for a more nuanced approach to problem-solving. The results of the study stress the importance of taking into account personality variations in the field of related areas, in order to facilitate an enhanced quality of life for both individuals and couples. The reference for future research into numerous personality models and their potential links to sexual satisfaction has been laid, as well as the hereditary or environmental variables that may play a role in moderating these relationships.

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