2018

# Joint Religiosity and Married Couples' Sexual Satisfaction

Jeffrey P. Dew
*Brigham Young University - Provo*, jeff_dew@byu.edu

Jeremy E. Uecker
*Baylor University*

Brian J. Willoughby
*Brigham Young University - Provo*

# Joint Religiosity and Married Couples' Sexual Satisfaction

Jeffrey P. Dew
Brigham Young University

Jeremy E. Uecker
Baylor University

Brian J. Willoughby
Brigham Young University

Although many studies have examined the association between religion and sexuality, the majority of these studies have focused on nonmarital sex. Unfortunately, despite the fact that a satisfying sexual relationship plays a critical role in married couples' relationship quality and stability, the associations between religiosity and marital sexual satisfaction are not well understood. Thus, to examine the association between religiosity and couples' reports of married sexual satisfaction, the authors of this study used dyadic data from a nationally representative sample of married couples ($N = 1,368$) between the ages of 18 and 45. They used both joint and individual measures of religiosity as well as examining the relationship mechanisms that might link religiosity and sexual satisfaction. In the models, individual-level reports of marital sanctification were positively associated with wives' and husbands' reports of sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, joint religious activities done in the home were positively associated with husbands' reports of sexual satisfaction. Marital commitment, relationship maintenance behaviors, and spousal time fully mediated these associations for husbands, while commitment partially mediated the association for wives.

*Keywords:* commitment, conflict, marital quality, religion, sexuality

Religion and family are closely related institutions (Christiano, 2000; Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2007; Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008)—so closely related that scholars of religion and family life refer to them as "interdependent" (Edgell, 2006, p. 2; Ellison & Hummer, 2010, p. 4). As such, religious institutions' success is associated with the form and function of American family life (Christiano, 2000), and religion continues to emphasize and encourage individuals' investment in family (Edgell, 2006; Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2007; Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008). Researchers have detailed many of the associations between religion and family life in recent years (see Mahoney, 2010, and Ellison & Hummer, 2010, for two recent reviews), including sexuality. Nevertheless, most investigations of religion and sexual behavior focus not on marital sexuality, but on nonmarital sexual behavior (e.g., Freitas, 2008; Regnerus, 2007; Uecker, 2008).

The lack of studies of marital sex is not unique to religion research. Marital sexuality remains an understudied area of inquiry and has recently been called "one of the least researched aspects of marital functioning" (Hernandez, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2014, pp. 432–433). The sexuality of married couples is an important element of positive relationship functioning, long assumed to relate to underlying relationship well-being. Scholars have linked sexual satisfaction to marital quality and instability (Byers, 2005; Yeh, Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger, & Elder, 2006), better mental health outcomes (Davison, Bell, LaChina, Holden, & Davis, 2009; Nicolosi, Moreira, Villa, & Glasser, 2004), and heightened purpose in life (Prairie, Scheier, Matthews, Chang, & Hess, 2011). Given the importance of sexual satisfaction in the lives of married adults, and the close linkages between religion and family functioning, it is imperative for scholars of both religion and family life to better understand how religion is tied to this type of marital functioning. Religion, by potentially imbuing marital relationships with sacred qualities and situating couples in social networks that value marriage (Mahoney, 2010), may lead individuals to invest in their sexual relationship for the overall good of the marriage.

Existing research on religion and sexual satisfaction yields mixed results and is limited in a number of ways. Laumann and colleagues' (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994) seminal study of adult sexual relationships in the United States found that those with no religious affiliation were the least likely to have satisfying sexual relationships. Similarly, Waite and Joyner (2001) reported a positive association between religious service attendance and ratings of sexual pleasure. Other studies, however, have failed to find such an association (Davidson, Darling, & Norton, 1995; Young, Denny, Luquis, & Young 1998). These mixed results may owe to the complexity of religion, which likely has both positive and negative associations with sexual satisfaction depending on the aspect of religion and the social context in question (Pargament, 2002). Further, it is possible that a bidirectional association exists. For example, a couple that is less sexually satisfied may also be less willing to engage in activities, including religious activities, together.

Another reason for these diverse findings may be that studies on religion and sexual satisfaction have relied on limited measures of religious activity, often using a single measure, such as religious affiliation, to tap an individual's religious commitment (though McFarland, Uecker, & Regnerus, 2011, and Greeley, 1991, are exceptions). Moreover, existing studies have not included the mediators through which religion may be associated with sexual satisfaction, limiting our understanding. Finally, previous studies have operationalized religion as an individual-level, rather than a couple-level factor. The individualist nature of the above literature review bears out this fact. This is problematic because within marriage, religion is both an individual-level and couple-level phenomenon; religious homo- or heterogeneity is an important factor in whether religion plays an integral role in married life (Myers, 2006).

We used couple data from the Survey of Marital Generosity (SMG), a 2010–2011 survey of over 1,300 married couples aged 18–45, to address many of these previous limitations and examine the association between individual marital sanctification, joint religious activities in the home, joint worship service attendance, and reported sexual satisfaction. In addition to showing the association between religious characteristics and the sexual satisfaction in a dyadic sample of husbands and wives, we also examined potential mediators, such as marital commitment, marital maintenance behaviors, marital conflict, and time spent together.

This study makes several important empirical, conceptual, and methodological contributions. First, because we have the advantage of having data from both spouses in each couple, we can use the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) to examine associations. Thus, for example, we can check the association between wives' reports of marital sanctification (i.e., the degree to which they imbue their marriage with a sacred character) and their own sexual satisfaction (i.e., an actor effect) as well as the association between husbands' reports of marital sanctification and wives' sexual satisfaction (i.e., a partner effect). Thus, we are able to use multiple reporters to avoid the problem of common reporter bias. Furthermore, having dyadic data allows us to assess joint religious experience. Second, we use multiple measures of religiosity, tapping both behavioral and cognitive elements. Third, the present study explores possible mechanisms through which religious homogamy may be linked to sexual satisfaction among married couples.

## Relational Spirituality

### Religion and Marital Sexuality

Religiosity is related to less sexually permissive attitudes (Hardy & Willoughby, 2017) and lower likelihood of nonmarital sexual behavior (Schmitt & Fuller, 2015). While this suggests that religions across cultures offer sexual exclusivity within marriage as an ideal, they may not offer messages and norms regarding marital sexuality itself. However, religious traditions may promote other attitudes and behaviors that indirectly relate to marital sexual satisfaction. Mahoney's (2010) relational spiritual framework postulated three pathways through which religiosity is associated with family outcomes: (1) individuals' relationship with the divine, (2) individuals' imbuing their relationships with divine attributes or enacting spiritual behaviors within the relationship, and (3) indi-

viduals' involvement within religious communities. Our data allow us to examine these latter two pathways.

Sanctification refers to the process of attributing divine meaning or importance to an element of one's life (Pargament & Mahoney, 2009) and is part of the second pathway within the relational spirituality framework. When religious married couples view their marital union as a divinely appointed relationship, various aspects of that relationship, including sexual intimacy, may take on spiritual characteristics. This may create a sexual sanctification mindset wherein sexual intimacy itself takes on divine importance and may help couples feel more satisfied with their sexual relationship. One study specifically linked sanctification and sexual satisfaction in a small group of newlywed couples (Hernandez, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2011).

Within the second pathway, couples may also add spiritual or religious meaning to their relationship by engaging in religious behavior together. Married couples, for example, might jointly pray or read sacred texts. As couples share in these joint religious activities, opportunities for emotional closeness may increase. Such closeness may help foster improved physical intimacy and sexual satisfaction (Greeley, 1991).

The third pathway in the relational spiritual framework, individuals' involvement within religious communities, may also be associated with greater sexual satisfaction. Waite and Joyner (2001) found that, for both women and men, worship service attendance was positively associated with the emotional satisfaction and physical pleasure derived from sexual relationships. These associations tended to attenuate, however, after the addition of questions about beliefs of sexual exclusivity. It may be that religious worship service attendance situates individuals within a context where sexual exclusivity is more valued, and perhaps even socially enforced, which may then enhance participants' sexual satisfaction.

What may be most consequential for the association between religion and sexual satisfaction within marriage is the extent to which spouses share religious beliefs and practices (Call & Heaton, 1997). Indeed, the heightened religiosity of one partner can be problematic for marital well-being if it is not matched by the other partner (Curtis & Ellison, 2002). Spouses who share religious convictions likely have similar perspectives on the meaning of marriage, value similar family practices, and experience religious faith as an integrating force (Myers, 2006; Waite & Lehrer, 2003). Spouses who attend religious services together are also embedded in a social network that can be beneficial for marital quality (Curtis & Ellison, 2002), and couples who participate jointly in private religious activity (e.g., pray together) have reported high levels of sexual satisfaction (Greeley, 1991). Thus, the relational spiritual framework (Mahoney, 2010) might suggest that individual marital sanctification paired with joint religious practice are positively associated with marital sexual satisfaction.

### Relational Mediators

The relational spirituality framework suggests that one of religion's main functions within families is the maintenance of those family relationships (Mahoney, 2010). Religion may enhance sexual satisfaction by addressing what might be termed "marital scripts." That is, religiosity may induce couples to foster a higher quality relationship through improved marital interactions and the

acquisition of relational skills because of marriage's perceived sacred quality. Mahoney's (2010) review of the literature found that religiosity was linked to higher reports of marital quality across many marital dimensions. Thus, as religious couples focus on their marriage by investing more effort and energy into the relationship, they might then report higher levels of sexual satisfaction as a byproduct of this improved couple functioning. Higher religiosity or joint religious attendance may therefore shift how spouses both think and act toward their spouse in ways that potentially enhance multiple aspects of the relationship.

While numerous mediators between religiosity and marital sexuality may exist, in the current study we focus on four factors that have been shown to be indicators of healthy marital process in past research: higher levels of marital commitment, relationship maintenance behaviors, time spent together, and lower levels of marital conflict (see Figure 1). While these mediators are not intended to be an exhaustive list, they represent key indicators of healthy process that have been linked to religiosity in past research and have the potential to also relate to marital sexuality. As we discuss these mediators, we acknowledge that religiosity may be associated with giving socially desirable answers regarding marital quality. Certain religious groups—particularly conservative Protestants—may emphasize personal happiness as part and parcel of being religious and thus be more likely to report satisfaction with various aspects of their life (Wilkins, 2008) or to give more socially desirable answers (Regnerus & Uecker, 2007).

**Religion and marital commitment.** Research has shown marital commitment to be among the strongest predictors of marital quality (Clements & Swensen, 2000) and to be associated with positive marital functioning, such as better communication (Stanley, 2005). A link between sexual satisfaction and relationship commitment also exists, though the causal order is not certain (Byers, 2005; Sprecher & Cate, 2004; Waite & Joyner, 2001).

Researchers also have linked religion and marital commitment. Quantitative analyses have consistently found positive associations between religious service attendance, marital sanctification, and commitment to marriage or one's spouse (Amato, Johnson, Booth, & Rogers, 2003; Ellison, Henderson, Glenn, & Harkrider, 2011). Religious homogamy between spouses also is also associated with marital commitment, at least among low-income couples (Lichter & Carmalt, 2009). Religious homogamy—especially joint religious service attendance—was also related to marital commitment in the wider population, though the strength of the association may be weakening (Myers, 2006).

Qualitative analyses have shed further light on the mechanisms linking religion to marital commitment. Lambert and Dollahite (2008) found that religious couples found meaning and sacred purpose in committing to marriage. Partners who are more emotionally invested in relationships report more satisfaction (Waite & Joyner, 2001), meaning religion's association with marital commitment likely translates into heightened sexual satisfaction. Relationship commitment might also signal love and devotion to one's partner, which may translate into higher sexual satisfaction.

**Religion and relationship maintenance behaviors.** As the name implies, spouses use relationship maintenance behaviors to maintain and enhance their marital relationship (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Examples of relationship maintenance behaviors include spouses being kind to each other or discussing their relationship quality (Stafford, 2011). Researchers have shown a positive association between relationship maintenance behavior and marital quality (Dainton, 2000; Dew & Wilcox, 2013). For example, one study of contemporary couples found that both giving and receiving relationship maintenance behaviors were positively associated with relationship satisfaction and negatively associated with conflict levels and with the likelihood that spouses felt they would divorce (Dew & Wilcox, 2013).

Research has also linked religion and relationship maintenance behaviors. Wilcox and Dew (2016) found that religiosity was positively associated with marital relationship maintenance behaviors. Although research has not assessed the link between relation-
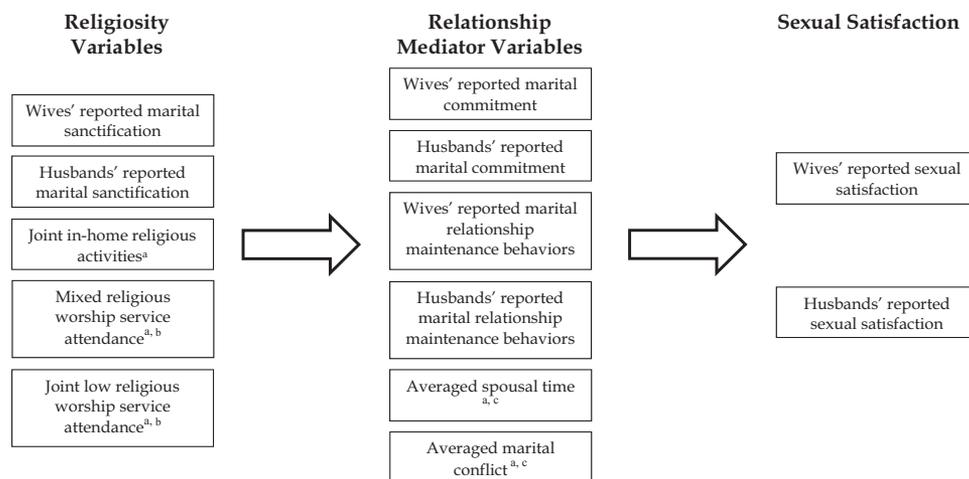


*Figure 1.* Conceptual model of the mediated association between spouses' religiosity and sexual satisfaction. The figure omits the actual regression paths and control covariates for the sake of clarity. The analysis regresses all of the shown mediator variables on the religiosity variables and all of the sexual satisfaction variables on the mediator variables (i.e., the model tests both actor and partner effects). [a] These were couple-level variables. [b] Joint high religious worship service attendance omitted. [c] This variable was the average of wives' and husbands' reports.

ship maintenance behaviors and sexual satisfaction, such behaviors likely relate to greater feelings of intimacy within marriage and likely would be associated with increased sexual satisfaction.

**Religion and spousal time.** Scholars have shown that spousal time—the time that spouses spend with each other—is associated with healthy marital relationships (Dew, 2007; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Research has suggested that the more often married couples attended religious services together, the more they reported interacting in a general sense—eating together, shopping, going out for recreation, and so forth (Amato, Booth, Johnson, & Rogers, 2007). This association may extend to other aspects of religiosity. For example, if individuals feel that their marriage is a sanctified institution, they may be more willing to invest time and other resources into it. Alternatively, their particular religious marital script may specify that spouses should spend time together. Further, jointly participating in religious activities in the home may encourage spouses to interact in other areas as well.

Spending more time together and building the marriage may then increase spouses' sexual satisfaction. We know of no research on spousal time and sexual satisfaction, but given the association between marital quality and emotional investment in relationships and sexual satisfaction (e.g., Byers, 2005; Waite & Joyner, 2001), we suspect more time together in shared activities heightens sexual satisfaction in marital relationships.

**Religion and marital conflict.** Marital conflict may also link religiosity and marital sexual satisfaction. Although scholars may sometimes conceptualize marital conflict as the inverse of marital quality, this is not necessarily the case. Studies of divorce, for example, often delineate between low-conflict and high-conflict divorces—but the fact that divorce occurs under both conditions suggests marital quality can be low even in the absence of conflict (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). As Amato and colleagues (2007, p. 44) explained, "Conflict occurs in all marriages, including marriages that are relatively happy and stable. For this reason, the study of conflict is a useful complement to the study of marital happiness and interaction."

Studies have found that religious homogamy may be linked to lower levels of marital conflict. For example, couples who shared a religious perspective on the world had fewer arguments and fights (Curtis & Ellison, 2002). Religiously homogenous couples in this study were less likely to fight over religion itself, gender roles, and use of money. Religion may also help couples overcome their conflict. Lambert and Dollahite (2006) found that religion not only helped couples avoid marital conflict by providing a shared vision and enhancing relational virtues like selflessness and unconditional love, but it also helped them resolve conflict by fostering relationship commitment and a willingness to forgive. To our knowledge, however, there has been no direct empirical investigation of the relationship between marital conflict and sexual satisfaction. It is nevertheless highly likely that these things are inversely related.

Marital commitment, relationship maintenance behaviors, joint time together, and marital conflict each represent a key factor related to healthy marital outcomes and have also been linked to religiosity. While other mediators likely exist between religiosity and sexual satisfaction, these four represent perhaps the most studied links between religiosity and marital quality in past research. However, scholars have not studied these factors vis-à-vis sexual satisfaction, representing a significant gap in the study of

religiosity and marital quality. Therefore, we explore whether these domains mediate the association between religion and sexual satisfaction.

# Method

## Data and Sample

We drew data from the Survey of Marital Generosity (SMG) to analyze our hypotheses. The SMG is a national data set of married couples. A survey research firm (Knowledge Networks) invited participants from its preexisting research panel to participate in the SMG. Participants in the original panel were recruited using both random-digit dialing and random-address-based sampling techniques. A stratified random sample was used to select the panel.

To be invited to participate in the SMG, individuals on the panel had to be married and between the ages of 18 and 45 with a spouse who was between the ages of 18 and 55. Of the 4,510 individuals invited, 2,866 participated in the SMG; this represents a 63% response rate of those invited from the Knowledge Networks panel. Given that we include participant and spouse variables in the same models, for the purposes of this study, participants had to have a spouse who also participated. Participants also had to have poststratification weights. This yielded a sample of 1,368 wives and 1,368 husbands. Because the data are secondary (i.e., we did not interact with the participants to obtain the data), anonymous, contain no identifying information, and the potential harm to participants taking the original survey was minimal, the IRB at Jeffrey P. Dew's university certified that the study did not meet the definition of human subjects research.

## Measures

Our dependent variable was a single item that asked about participants' perceptions of their marital sexual relationship. Specifically, the item asked participants to rate their satisfaction with their marital sexual intimacy. Respondents could respond between 1 (*very unhappy*) to 5 (*very happy*). We acknowledge that using a single item measure as a dependent variable may seem undesirable. Unfortunately, the data set was not designed with assessing sexuality in mind. However, analyses using data from married couples showed that with a sufficient sample size, in this case over 900, a single-item measure performed psychometrically about as well as a multiitem scale (Johnson, 1995). Given that our sample has over 1,300 couples, we suspect that our single-item dependent variable performs adequately.

We had three measures of religiosity. The first item measured the participants' views of religious marital sanctification or the presence of the divine in their relationship. The SMG asked participants to state how much they disagreed or agreed with the statement, "God is at the center of our marriage." Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Marital sanctification was the only individual-level religious variable in the analysis. We left marital sanctification as an individual-level variable because choosing whether or not imbue one's marriage with a sense of the divine is an individual choice and may vary across spouses.

The second item was a measure of joint home-based religious activities. The SMG asked participants, "How often do you pray or

do religious activities with your spouse at home besides grace at meals?" Participants would answer between 1 (*never*) and 6 (*several times a day*). Because couples were reporting on the same behavior, we averaged their reports. Although averaging the reports simplifies the model, it complicates the interpretation. While the wives' and husbands' reports of in-home religious activities share 53% of their variance, there is a lot of variance that is not shared. This might be problematic for couples who have disparate reports. Furthermore, it may be somewhat unclear what precisely the regression coefficients mean when it comes to this averaged report. In spite of this conceptual problem, we used the averaged reports to keep the model simple and because wives and husbands reported the same behaviors.

The third measure, frequency of joint religious worship service attendance, was created using a series of dummy variables. One SMG item asked, "How often do you attend religious worship services?" The response set ranged from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*more than once a week*). Participants also indicated, in a second variable, with whom they regularly attended religious worship services. Data from these two variables suggested that three groups of couples existed. One group were those couples who regularly attended worship service meetings together. The second group were those couples who mutually did not attend worship services. The final group were those couples in which one spouse attended worship services frequently while the other did not.

We used the information from these two variables to construct two dummy variables. If both husbands and wives indicated that they did not attend worship services at least "several times a month," they were put in the group of "mutual nonattenders," or what we call "joint low religious worship service attendance." If one spouse indicated that they attended worship services at least "several times a month" but the other spouse suggested that they attended less frequently, then these couples were put in the group of "mixed religious worship service attendance." We also included in this group any couples who attended frequently, but not together. The omitted group was composed of couples who both indicated that they attended worship service meetings at least several times a month and both indicated joint attendance.

We used four mediator variables. The first was marital commitment. The SMG measured commitment using four items from the personal dedication subscale of the Commitment Inventory (Stanley & Markman, 1992). For example, one item asked participants to note their disagreement or agreement with the statement, "I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we encounter". The response set for these four items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). We took the mean of the four items to create a scale. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .81 for wives and .80 for husbands.

The second mediating variable was relationship maintenance behavior. The four items we used asked participants how frequently they engaged in behaviors that showed that they were interested in maintaining their relationship or giving to their spouse. For example, one item asked how often participants "perform[ed] small acts of kindness for your partner—for example, mak[ing] them coffee in the morning." The other questions asked about granting forgiveness, expressing love and affection, and expressing respect. The response set for all of these items ranged from 1 (*always*) to 5 (*never*). We reverse-coded the items so that higher scores would indicate more frequent maintenance behav-

iors. We took the mean of the items to create a scale of relationship maintenance behaviors. A Cronbach's alpha analysis gave reliability coefficients of .84 for wives and .84 for husbands. Previous research has shown that these items form one scale and have solid psychometric properties (Dew & Wilcox, 2013).

Spousal time was our third mediating variable. We measured spousal time using a single item. This item asked participants, "During the past month, about how often did you and your husband/wife spend time alone with each other, talking, or sharing an activity?" Participants responded between 1 (*never or rarely*) to 6 (*almost every day*). Like our measure of joint home-based religious activities, for this particular variable spouses were reporting on their experience of a joint behavior. Although their reports of spousal time were correlated, $r = .55$, $p < .001$, they were not perfectly correlated. To obviate this problem, we averaged wives' and husbands' report of spousal time. Again, this introduces interpretation issues, but it likely better represents the amount of time that each couple spends together.

Marital conflict was the final mediating variable. We created a scale of marital conflict using three items that asked about the frequency of conflict for "household tasks," "money," and "parenthood," which are all common topics of marital conflict (Papp, Cummings, & Goeke-Morey, 2009). Participants could respond that they fight about each of these topics on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*almost every day*). Because they survey did not ask childless participants about parenting conflict, we took the mean of these variables to create the scale. Again, with this variable wives and husbands reported on a joint behavior (i.e., the frequency of their marital conflict). Their reports of conflict were correlated, $r = .57$, $p < .001$ but not perfectly correlated. Thus, we averaged their reports to get a better handle on how often they were fighting.

The models also used race/ethnicity, marital duration, education, total household income, and number of children in the home as control covariates. We use these covariates because other published studies examining sexual satisfaction used them (e.g., Waite & Joyner, 2001 used race, presence of children, relationship duration, and education in their models). Participants reported their own race/ethnicity. We used dummy coding to create three race/ethnicity variables—African American (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, and other race/ethnicity. The omitted group was White, Non-Hispanic. Participants reported their marital duration in years. Education was originally measured on a scale from 1 (*no formal education*) to 14 (*professional or doctorate degree*). We used three dummy variables in the analyses: less than high school degree, high school degree, and 4-year university degree or higher ("some college/associate's degree" was the omitted category). Total household income was originally measured on a scale from 1 (*less than $5,000*) to 19 (*$175,000 or more*). In the analysis, we used three dummy variables to separate the couples into income quartiles (the fourth quartile was the comparison category). Finally, participants reported the number of children in the home as part of the household roster.

## Analysis

We used two APIM path models (Kenny et al., 2006) to test the hypothesized relationships. In the first path model, wives' and husbands' reports of marital sexual satisfaction were regressed on their own and their spouses' reports of religiosity. Each partici-

pant's sexual satisfaction was also regressed on the couple-level control covariates (e.g., household income quartiles) and their own individual-level control covariates (e.g., education dummy variables). The second path model was the same as the first, except that we added the mediating variables. In the models, we correlated wives' and husbands' exogenous variables (or error terms in the case of endogenous variables).

We conducted the analysis in MPlus (7.4) using the maximum likelihood estimator and robust standard errors. We used robust standard errors for two reasons. First, robust standard errors were required to use the poststratification weights. We used the post-stratification weights so that our data would be nationally representative of married couples with spouses between the ages of 18 and 45. Second, the robust standard errors helped us to be more confident that the skew in our variables had less influence on our findings. Our dependent variables evidenced a slight negative skew, while some of the independent variables evidenced either a strong negative skew (e.g., commitment) or a strong positive skew (e.g., conflict).

Using the weights and robust standard errors likely influenced the findings. Furthermore, MPlus cannot estimate the magnitude and significance of the indirect effects using a bootstrap analysis (Hayes, 2009) while also using weights and robust standard errors. Consequently, we ran the same analyses without weights and robust standard errors to check the findings. We also ran a bootstrap analysis of the confidence intervals of the indirect effects to check their magnitude and significance (we estimated the statistical significance of indirect paths using Sobel tests in the first analysis). All of the coefficients and indirect effects that were statistically significant in the first analysis were also significant in the second analysis. However, the second analysis had additional significant coefficients and indirect relationships. We present our initial analyses because they are more representative and conservative findings (our alternative model findings are available upon request).

Between 0% and 2% of the responses were missing from each variable. A total of 41 couples (or 3%) had at least one variable missing. We used full information maximum likelihood methods (FIML, Johnson & Young, 2011) to obviate missing data issues.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. Wives' and husbands' mean reported sexual satisfaction levels were above the midpoint of the scale (i.e., 3) at 3.68 and 3.57, respectively. The mean of marital sanctification was near the midpoint with a value of 3.61 for wives and 3.56 for husbands. The mean of joint religious activities in the home was 2.55 for couples, indicating a level between less than once per month and once per week. We found that 30.2% of couples reported that they frequently attend religious services jointly, while 19.3% reported a mixed level of attendance with one partner attending frequently and the other attending infrequently. The remainder of couples, 50.5%, mutually reported low religious worship service attendance. Finally, the marital commitment and relationship maintenance behavior means were relatively high for both wives and husbands. The mean of the averaged spousal

Table 1
*Descriptive Statistics (N = 1,368 Couples)*

| Variables | Wives | | | Husbands | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* or % | *SD* | Min–Max | *M* or % | *SD* | Min–Max |
| Sexual satisfaction | 3.68 | 1.10 | 1–5 | 3.57 | 1.22 | 1–5 |
| Marital sanctification | 3.61 | 1.79 | 1–6 | 3.56 | 1.80 | 1–6 |
| Joint in-home religious activities[a] | 2.55 | 1.56 | 1–6 | 2.55 | 1.56 | 1–6 |
| Joint high worship service attendance[a,b] | 30.2% | | | 30.2% | | |
| Mixed worship service attendance[a] | 19.3% | | | 19.3% | | 0–1 |
| Joint low worship service attendance[a] | 50.5% | | | 50.5% | | 0–1 |
| R White, non-Hispanic[b] | 68.9% | | | 68.1% | | |
| R Black, non-Hispanic | 6.4% | | | 7.8% | | 0–1 |
| R Hispanic | 15.6% | | | 16.5% | | 0–1 |
| R Other race/ethnicity | 9.1% | | | 7.6% | | 0–1 |
| Marital duration[a] | 9.87 | 6.16 | 0–26 | 9.87 | 6.16 | 0–26 |
| R does not have high school degree | 6.4% | | | 7.9% | | 0–1 |
| R has high school degree | 22.3% | | | 24.2% | | 0–1 |
| R has some college/associate's degree[b] | 29.6% | | | 29.4% | | |
| R has at least a four-year degree | 41.7% | | | 38.5% | | 0–1 |
| Household first income quartile[a] | 28.6% | | | 28.6% | | 0–1 |
| Household second income quartile[a] | 22.3% | | | 22.3% | | 0–1 |
| Household third income quartile[a] | 25.8% | | | 25.8% | | 0–1 |
| Household fourth income quartile[a,b] | 23.3% | | | 23.3% | | |
| Number of children in the home[a] | 1.68 | 1.33 | 0–11 | 1.68 | 1.33 | 0–11 |
| Marital commitment | 4.24 | .71 | 1–5 | 4.25 | .69 | 1–5 |
| Marital relationship maintenance Behaviors | 3.96 | .74 | 1–5 | 3.89 | .77 | 1–5 |
| Averaged spousal time[a,c] | 4.05 | 1.42 | 1–6 | 4.05 | 1.42 | 1–6 |
| Averaged marital conflict[a,c] | 2.28 | 1.82 | 1–5.5 | 2.28 | 1.82 | 1–5.5 |

[a] Variable measured at the couple level.   [b] Omitted variable in the analyses.   [c] This variable was the average of wives' and husbands' reports.

time variable was above the scale's midpoint, and the mean of the averaged marital conflict variable was low. The values of the control covariates are also in Table 1.

We compared some of the descriptive statistics from the SMG to descriptive statistics from the General Social Survey (GSS). We selected married individuals from the 2010 wave of the GSS who were between the ages of 18 and 45 so that the GSS individuals would be similar to those in the SMG. Our race/ethnicity findings were roughly similar to those of the GSS. Specifically, 6.4% of the wives and 7.8% of the husbands in the SMG self-identified as Black. In the GSS these numbers were 9.1% and 4.1% respectively. In the SMG, 15.6% of the wives and 16.5% of the husbands identified as Hispanic. The GSS had similar numbers—16.7% and 16.3% respectively. Finally, in the SMG, 9% of wives and 7.6% of husbands identified as not White, not Black, and not Hispanic. In the GSS 6.6% of wives and 2.7% of husbands were in that category. Educational attainment levels were also similar in the SMG and GSS. Furthermore, total household income was similar across both studies (the mean of 12.83 on our original income scale corresponded with the GSS mean of $60,034). The GSS mean number of children in the home for male respondents was 1.70 and 1.89 for female respondents. In our sample, it was 1.68 at the couple level. Thus, the SMG seems to be nationally representative with the exception of some slight differences in racial/ethnic composition.

## Unmediated Associations Between Religiosity and Sexual Satisfaction in the APIM

We first examined the unmediated association between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. Table 2 shows the associations between participants' reports of religiosity and sexual satisfaction within the APIM framework. Wives' reported marital sanctification was positively associated with their own reports of sexual satisfaction ($b = .11$, $\beta = .18$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, husbands' reported marital sanctification was related to their own reports of sexual satisfaction ($b = 0.12$, $\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). Joint religious activities in the home were positively associated with husbands' reported sexual satisfaction ($b = 0.08$, $\beta = .10$, $p < .05$). Neither mixed worship service attendance nor joint low attendance were

related to sexual satisfaction when compared with joint high attendance. No partner effects emerged in this analysis and none of the control covariates were associated with wives' and husbands' sexual satisfaction. The path model fit the data well ($\chi^2[12] = 15.46$, $p > .05$, $CFI = .99$, RMSEA $= .02$, SRMR $= .01$). The $R^2$ for wives' reported sexual satisfaction was .08 and it was .10 for husbands.

## Mediated Associations Between Religiosity and Sexual Satisfaction in the APIM

**Religiosity and the potential mediator variables.** We ran the mediator model in one path model, but we split the output across two tables for the sake of clarity. Table 3 shows the association between the religiosity variables, the control covariates, and the potential mediator variables. Wives' marital sanctification was positively associated with their own reports of marital commitment ($b = .08$, $p < .001$). Husbands' reported marital sanctification was positively associated with their own reports of marital commitment ($b = 0.11$, $p < .001$) and their own reports of relationship maintenance behaviors ($b = 0.09$, $p < .001$). It was also positively associated with the averaged spousal time variable ($b = .13$, $p < .001$) and was negatively associated with the averaged marital conflict variable ($b = -0.10$, $p < .001$). Joint in-home activities were associated with wives' reports of relationship maintenance behaviors ($b = .08$, $p < .01$), husbands' reported relationship maintenance behaviors ($b = 0.07$, $p < .01$) and the averaged spousal time variable ($b = 0.10$, $p < .05$). Although mixed religious worship service attendance was negatively associated with four of the potential mediator variables and joint low religious attendance was associated with one, none of the indirect associations between the attendance variables were statistically significant (and none of the direct effects were significant in the first analysis), so we do not discuss them in the text. The model had acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2[48] = 69.57$, $p < .05$, $CFI = .99$, RMSEA $= .02$, SRMR $= .02$). The model explained 13% of the variance in wives' marital commitment, 12% of the variance in husbands' commitment, 12% of the variance in wives' relationship maintenance behaviors, 12% in husbands' relationship mainte-

Table 2

*Path Model Estimates of the Associations Between Religiosity and Sexual Satisfaction*

| Variables | Wives' sexual satisfaction | | | Husbands' sexual satisfaction | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $b$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ | $b$ | $SE$ | $\beta$ |
| Intercept | 2.95*** | .23 | | 2.93*** | .22 | |
| Wives' marital sanctification | .11** | .04 | .18 | .06 | .04 | .08 |
| Husbands' marital sanctification | .05 | .04 | .08 | .12** | .04 | .17 |
| Joint in-home religious activities[a] | .05 | .04 | .07 | .08* | .03 | .10 |
| Mixed religious worship service attendance[a,b] | −.23 | .12 | −.08 | −.09 | .13 | −.03 |
| Joint low religious worship service attendance[a,b] | .14 | .12 | .06 | .16 | .12 | .07 |
| $R^2$ | | .08 | | | .10 | |

*Note.* Model fit statistics: $\chi^2(12, N = 1,368) = 15.46$, $p > .05$, CFI $= .99$, RMSEA $= .02$, SRMR $= .01$. Control covariates omitted for the sake of space. Control covariates included race/ethnicity, marital duration, education, total household income, and number of children in the home.
[a] These were couple-level variables. [b] Joint high religious worship service attendance omitted.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3
*Path Model Estimates of the Associations Between Religiosity and the Potential Mediator Variables*

| Variables | W marital commitment | | H marital commitment | | W marital rel. maintenance behaviors | | H marital rel. maintenance behaviors | | Spousal time | | Marital conflict | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | SE | b | SE | b | SE | b | SE | b | SE | b | SE |
| Intercept | 4.10*** | .15 | 4.30*** | .13 | 3.86*** | .15 | 3.92*** | .15 | 3.72*** | .26 | 2.51*** | .17 |
| W marital sanctification | .08** | .02 | −.02 | .03 | .04 | .03 | −.03 | .03 | .03 | .05 | .01 | .03 |
| H marital sanctification | .03 | .02 | .11*** | .03 | .02 | .02 | .09*** | .03 | .13*** | .05 | −.10*** | .03 |
| Joint in-home religious activities[a] | .02 | .02 | .02 | .02 | .08** | .02 | .07** | .02 | .10* | .04 | .03 | .03 |
| Mixed religious worship service attendance[a,b] | −.23** | .08 | −.10 | .07 | −.24** | .09 | −.22* | .09 | −.07 | .16 | .19* | .10 |
| Joint low religious worship service attendance[a,b] | −.11 | .07 | −.14* | .07 | .01 | .08 | .01 | .08 | .30 | .16 | .02 | .10 |
| $R^2$ | .13 | | .12 | | .12 | | .12 | | .13 | | .07 | |

*Note.* Tables 3 and 4 are from the same path model, but we separate them for the sake of space. Control covariates included race/ethnicity, marital duration, education, total household income, and number of children in the home. Control covariates omitted for the sake of clarity. $\chi^2(48, N = 1,368) = 69.57$, $p < .05$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .02, SRMR = .02. Control covariates omitted for the sake of clarity. [a] Couple-level variables. [b] Joint high religious worship service attendance omitted.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

nance behaviors, 13% of the variance in averaged spousal time, and 7% of the variance in averaged marital conflict.

**Mediated effects.** Table 4 shows the estimates of the mediated association between the religiosity variables and sexual satisfaction as well as the estimates of the association between the mediators and sexual satisfaction. With the mediator variables in the model, none of the religiosity variables were statistically significant predictors of husbands' sexual satisfaction. The association between wives' marital sanctification and sexual satisfaction declined from $b = .11$ to $b = .07$, but it did not drop below significance.

All of the mediator variables were associated with sexual satisfaction, and many of them produced both actor and partner effects. Wives' marital commitment was positively associated with wives' sexual satisfaction ($b = .32$, $p < .001$). Husbands' marital commitment was positively associated with their own reports of sexual satisfaction ($b = .21$, $p < .001$). Wives' relationship maintenance behaviors were positively associated with both their own ($b = .28$, $p < .001$) and their husbands' reports of sexual satisfaction ($b = .35$, $p < .001$). This was also the case for husbands' relationship maintenance behaviors ($b = .12$, $p < .05$, for wives' sexual satisfaction and $b = .21$, $p < .001$, for husbands' sexual satisfaction). The averaged spousal time variable was positively associated with wives' ($b = .18$, $p < .001$) and husbands' ($b = .15$, $p < .001$) sexual satisfaction, whereas the averaged marital conflict variable was negatively associated with wives' ($b = −.20$, $p < .001$) but not husbands' sexual satisfaction.

Table 5 includes the results from the Sobel tests of the indirect effects. All of the coefficients shown in Table 5 are statistically significant at least at the .05 level. We subjected these results to another test by replicating them in a bootstrapping analysis using the maximum likelihood estimator but without robust standard errors and the poststratification weights. The statistical significance results were the same in the bootstrapped models, and the magnitudes were nearly identical. The difference was that in the bootstrapped model, more indirect effects were statistically significant—which might be expected, given the lack of robust standard errors.

The following indirect effects emerged. First, wives' commitment was the only variable to mediate the association between wives' religious sanctification and their sexual satisfaction. The mediation was only partial. Second, three of the four variables (husbands' commitment, husbands' relationship maintenance behaviors, and averaged spousal time) mediated the association between husbands' marital sanctification and their sexual satisfaction. These three variables fully mediated this association. Further, husbands' relationship maintenance behaviors, wives' relationship maintenance behaviors, and spousal time fully mediated the association between joint in-home religious activities and husbands' sexual satisfaction.

## Discussion

We used a nationally representative sample of married couples to study the association between religiosity and marital sexual satisfaction. Reports of religiosity were associated with greater sexual satisfaction for both wives and husbands. Specifically, participants' reports of religious marital sanctification were positively related to their own reports of sexual satisfaction, extending

Table 4
*Path Model Estimates of the Mediated Associations Between Religiosity and Sexual Satisfaction*

| Variables | Wives' sexual satisfaction | | Husbands' sexual satisfaction | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $b$ | SE | $b$ | SE |
| Intercept | .48 | .40 | −.11 | .43 |
| W marital sanctification | .07* | .03 | .06 | .04 |
| H marital sanctification | −.01 | .04 | .04 | .03 |
| Joint in-home religious activities[a] | .01 | .03 | .02 | .03 |
| Mixed religious worship service attendance[a,b] | −.01 | .10 | .07 | .11 |
| Joint low religious worship service attendance[a,b] | .11 | .10 | .14 | .11 |
| W marital commitment | .32*** | .07 | −.07 | .08 |
| H marital commitment | −.12 | .07 | .21** | .08 |
| W marital relationship maintenance behaviors | .28*** | .06 | .35*** | .06 |
| H marital relationship maintenance behaviors | .12* | .06 | .21*** | .06 |
| Averaged spousal time[a,c] | .18*** | .03 | .15*** | .03 |
| Averaged marital conflict[a,c] | −.20*** | .05 | −.11 | .06 |
| $R^2$ | .36 | | .29 | |

*Note.* Tables 3 and 4 are from the same path model, but we separate them for the sake of clarity. $\chi^2(48, N = 1,368) = 69.57$, $p < .05$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .02, SRMR = .01. Control covariates omitted for the sake of space. Control covariates included race/ethnicity, marital duration, education, total household income, and number of children in the home.
[a] These were couple-level variables. [b] Joint high religious worship service attendance omitted. [c] This variable was the average of wives' and husbands' reports.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

earlier results demonstrating connections between marital sanctification and positive relational outcomes (Mahoney, 2010). Also extending previous findings linking joint religious activities to relational well-being (Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Greeley, 1991), we found a positive association between joint religious activities in the home and higher reports of sexual satisfaction for husbands. We note that we did not find significant associations between joint/mixed attendance/nonattendance at religious worship services and sexual satisfaction.

Mediation models provided further insight. Marital commitment, relationship maintenance behaviors, and averaged spousal time mediated the associations between husbands' sanctification, joint religious activities in the home, and their sexual satisfaction. Commitment partially mediated the association between wives' sanctification and sexual satisfaction.

Although results are cross-sectional and sequential causation should not be inferred, such mediation is consistent with the relational spirituality framework. This framework asserts that marital sanctification and religious activity contribute to the maintenance of family relationships. In this particular study, sanctification and in-home religious activities were associated with marital dynamics (relationship maintenance behaviors and spousal time) and protective relational beliefs (commitment), which were then associated with sexual satisfaction. Such mediation may explain why religiosity and marital sexual satisfaction may be linked despite being seemingly unrelated constructs. Religious activity or sanctification may not directly relate to the sexual functioning and satisfaction of couples. Instead, religiosity might change the marital scripts of spouses. It might encourage them to shift their marital dynamics toward attitudes and behaviors that enhance intimacy generally and sexual functioning specifically within the relationship. Put another way, joint religious activities and sanctification may provide a foundation on which married couples can build and maintain meaningful and positive interactions with each other (Mahoney, 2010). Such positive interactions will likely benefit such couples in many areas of their lives, including their sexual intimacy.

Table 5
*Statistically Significant Tests of Indirect Effects Using the Sobel Test*

| Variables | Wives' sexual satisfaction | Husbands' sexual satisfaction |
|---|---|---|
| | Size of standardized indirect effect | Size of standardized indirect effect |
| W Marital Sanctification through W commitment | .04** | |
| H Marital sanctification through H commitment | | .03* |
| H Marital sanctification through H relationship maintenance behaviors | | .03* |
| H Marital sanctification through averaged spousal time | | .03* |
| Joint in-home religious activities through H relationship maintenance behaviors | | .02* |
| Joint in-home religious activities through W relationship maintenance behaviors | | .03** |
| Joint in-home religious activities through averaged spousal time | | .02* |

*Note.* In a bootstrapping analysis using the maximum likelihood estimator (i.e., without robust standard errors and the post-stratification weights) these indirect pathways also emerged and were statistically significant. Their magnitudes were nearly identical.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

As we discuss these findings, we should acknowledge, however, that the association between religiosity and sexual satisfaction have small magnitudes. The indirect relationship magnitudes from spouses' religious variables to participants' sexual satisfaction were likewise small. We will discuss this issue further in the limitations section.

The lack of an association between religious worship service attendance and sexual satisfaction contradicts the relational spirituality framework. The framework posits that participation within religious communities is important, but no associations surfaced. A post hoc analysis (not shown) suggested that the multivariate model was to blame. When neither marital sanctification nor joint religious home activities were in the model, spouses with mixed religious worship service attendance and joint low attendance reported lower sexual satisfaction than spouses who had joint high attendance. This finding held for both wives and husbands. Thus, the "private religion" variables explained more independent variance in sexual satisfaction than the "public religion" variable. This is similar to the findings of Ellison and colleagues (2011), who found that the association between shared attendance at religious services and relationship quality was attenuated by other religious factors while the effect of shared in-home worship activities was not. Thus, our findings are further evidence of Ellison and colleagues' (2011, p. 972) conclusion that "nonorganizational indicators of couples' religiousness appear to be even more predictive of relationship quality than shared affiliation or attendance."

We also found distinct pathways of religious associations for wives and for husbands. For wives, the story was somewhat straightforward: Marital sanctification was associated with higher marital commitment, which in turn was associated with higher sexual satisfaction. Although this pathway was also operative for husbands, husbands' marital sanctification and participation in joint in-home religious activities were also associated with more relationship maintenance behaviors and time spent with their spouse, which were related to higher sexual satisfaction. Some scholars have noted that for women, many social institutions and norms may encourage their investment in marriage and family life, but religion is one of the few institutions that does so for men. Edgell (2006, p. 65), upon finding religion to be less related to women's helping and caring behaviors than it is among men, concludes, "perhaps . . . women find encouragement for these behaviors from a wide range of sources, whereas for men, their church community may be the primary place where they find encouragement and support for these kinds of behaviors or are expected to take them on." We similarly identify a stronger link between religion and men's relationship investment (in Table 3), although our results indicate that, in least in terms of its association with sexual satisfaction, it is religious beliefs and private practices that matter more than a man's religious community.

This study has limitations. First, our cross-sectional data prohibit our ability to eliminate the possibility of reverse causation where variations in sexual satisfaction within a marriage may make joint religious behaviors and sanctification more difficult. For example, if a married couple is having specific difficulties with their sexual dynamics, such conflicts may relate to a general decrease in joint activities in the marriage, including joint religious activities. Further, such a couple may find it difficult to place divine importance on their relationship as they struggle to view their relationship and partner in a positive light. Future studies that can disentangle these complex and dynamic construct relationships through longitudinal work should be an important priority for future scholars. Future studies should also explore other possible mediators between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. While we focused on four key aspects of relational functioning, other factors, such as emotional closeness or social networking, may also be potential mediators that should be examined in future studies.

Second, we used many single-item measures in the models. Having multiple-item scales of each construct—like we had for commitment and relationship-maintenance behaviors—would have made the measures more reliable. We could have also used structural equation modeling if we had had multiple items for each construct. We do note again, however, that with sufficiently high numbers of participants, single items perform statistically well (Johnson, 1995).

Third, we were unable to include age in the model. Although we included a closely related variable—marital duration—as a control covariate, we were reluctant to introduce age. Age and marital duration are obviously not perfectly correlated, but they are often highly correlated (in our data marital duration is correlated at $r = .67$ for wives' age and $.65$ for husbands' age). Thus, we did not want introduce a source of multicolinearity into the model. This may be a problem because religious attendance and sanctification may vary over the life course, for example.

Finally, as noted above, both the direct and indirect findings of the associations between religiosity and sexual satisfaction were small. We counter this limitation, however, by suggesting that sexual satisfaction is a complex phenomenon. Consequently, it is unsurprising that any single distal dimension of life, like religion, would share 8–10% of the variance. It is also noteworthy that individual and joint religiosity were associated with sexual satisfaction, while other important structural issues—such as income and education—were not associated.

The tradeoff of these limitations is a nationally representative data set. We can say that these findings represent the associations tested for couples between the ages of 18 and 45 (at least in 2010). Having broadly generalizable findings enhances their importance.

In spite of these limitations, the results of the present study suggest important implications for the study of couple religiosity and sexual satisfaction. By using multiple measures of religiosity, a national sample, and dyadic data, we add to the growing body of literature that show an association between religiosity and sexual satisfaction among married couples. We also examined these associations more closely by testing mechanisms through which they may occur. This study should contribute to future research that examines the many ways in which religion is associated with couples' lives and the growing body of research that suggests the process of sanctification within marriage has important implications for the well-being of couples. While effects sizes were small, religious activities appear to relate to marital behaviors and sexual outcomes of married couples.

## References

Amato, P. R., Booth, A., Johnson, D. R., & Rogers, S. J. (2007). *Alone together: How marriage in America is changing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Amato, P. R., Johnson, D. R., Booth, A., & Rogers, S. J. (2003). Continuity and change in marital quality between 1980 and 2000. *Journal of*

*Marriage and Family, 65,* 1–22. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737 .2003.00001.x

Amato, P. R., Loomis, L. S., & Booth, A. (1995). Parental divorce, marital conflict, and offspring well-being during early adulthood. *Social Forces, 73,* 895–915. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/sf/73.3.895

Byers, E. S. (2005). Relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction: A longitudinal study of individuals in long-term relationships. *Journal of Sex Research, 42,* 113–118. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224490 509552264

Call, V. R., & Heaton, T. B. (1997). Religious influence on marital stability. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 36,* 382–392. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1387856

Christiano, K. J. (2000). Religion and the family in modern American culture. In S. K. Houseknecht & J. G. Pankhurst (Eds.), *Family, religion, and social change in diverse societies* (pp. 43–78). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Clements, R., & Swensen, C. H. (2000). Commitment to one's spouse as a predictor of marital quality among older couples. *Current Psychology, 19,* 110–119. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12144-000-1007-7

Curtis, K. T., & Ellison, C. G. (2002). Religious heterogamy and marital conflict findings from the National Survey of Families and Households. *Journal of Family Issues, 23,* 551–576. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/ 0192513X02023004005

Dainton, M. (2000). Maintenance behaviors, expectations for maintenance, and satisfaction: Linking comparison levels to relational maintenance strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 17,* 827–842. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407500176007

Davidson, J. K., Darling, C. A., & Norton, L. (1995). Religiosity and the sexuality of women: Sexual behavior and sexual satisfaction revisited. *Journal of Sex Research, 32,* 235–243. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/ 00224499509551794

Davison, S. L., Bell, R. J., LaChina, M., Holden, S. L., & Davis, S. R. (2009). The relationship between self-reported sexual satisfaction and general well-being in women. *Journal of Sexual Medicine, 6,* 2690– 2697. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-6109.2009.01406.x

Dew, J. (2007). *Do you have the time? Changes in and implications of spouses' time together* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from etda .libraries.psu.edu

Dew, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2013). Generosity and the maintenance of marital quality. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 75,* 1218–1228. http:// dx.doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12066

Edgell, P. (2006). *Religion and family in a changing society.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Ellison, C. G., Henderson, A. K., Glenn, N. D., & Harkrider, K. E. (2011). Sanctification, stress, and marital quality. *Family Relations, 60,* 404– 420. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00658.x

Ellison, C. G., & Hummer, R. A. (2010). *Religion, families, and health: Population-based research in the United States.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Freitas, D. (2008). *Sex and the soul: Juggling sexuality, spirituality, romance, and religion on America's college campuses.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Greeley, A. M. (1991). *Faithful attraction: Discovering intimacy, love, and fidelity in American marriage.* New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates.

Hardy, S. A., & Willoughby, B. J. (2017). Religiosity and chastity among single young adults and married adults. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 9,* 285–295. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rel0000112

Hayes, A. F. (2009). Beyond Baron and Kenny: Statistical mediation analysis in the new millennium. *Communication Monographs, 76,* 408– 420. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637750903310360

Hernandez, K. M., Mahoney, A., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Sanctification of sexuality: Implications for newlyweds' marital and sexual quality.

*Journal of Family Psychology, 25,* 775–780. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ a0025103

Hernandez, K. M., Mahoney, A., & Pargament, K. I. (2014). Sexuality and religion. In D. I. Tolman & L. M. Diamond (Eds.), *APA handbook of sexuality and psychology, Vol. 2: Contextual Approaches* (pp. 425–447). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. http://dx.doi .org/10.1037/14194-013

Johnson, D. R. (1995). Assessing marital quality in longitudinal and life course studies. In J. Conoley & E. B. Werth (Eds.), *Family assessment* (pp. 155–202). Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Johnson, D. R., & Young, R. (2011). Toward best practices in analyzing datasets with missing data: Comparisons and recommendations. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73,* 926–945. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00861.x

Kenny, D. A., Kashy, D. A., & Cook, W. L. (2006). *Dyadic data analysis.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Lambert, N. M., & Dollahite, D. C. (2006). How religiosity helps couples prevent, resolve, and overcome marital conflict. *Family Relations, 55,* 439–449. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2006.00413.x

Lambert, N. M., & Dollahite, D. C. (2008). The threefold cord: Marital commitment in religious couples. *Journal of Family Issues, 29,* 592– 614. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0192513X07308395

Laumann, E. O., Gagnon, J. H., Michael, R. T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States.* Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Lichter, D. T., & Carmalt, J. H. (2009). Religion and marital quality among low-income couples. *Social Science Research, 38,* 168–187. http://dx .doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2008.07.003

Mahoney, A. (2010). Religion in families 1999 to 2009: A relational spirituality framework. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72,* 805–827. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00732.x

McFarland, M. J., Uecker, J. E., & Regnerus, M. D. (2011). The role of religion in shaping sexual frequency and satisfaction: Evidence from married and unmarried older adults. *Journal of Sex Research, 48*(2–3), 297–308. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224491003739993

Myers, S. M. (2006). Religious homogamy and marital quality: Historical and generational patterns, 1980–1997. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68,* 292–304. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00253.x

Nicolosi, A., Moreira, E. D., Jr., Villa, M., & Glasser, D. B. (2004). A population study of the association between sexual function, sexual satisfaction and depressive symptoms in men. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 82,* 235–243. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2003.12.008

Papp, L. M., Cummings, E. M., & Goeke-Morey, M. C. (2009). For richer, for poorer: Money as a topic of marital conflict in the home. *Family Relations, 58,* 91–103. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008 .00537.x

Pargament, K. I. (2002). The bitter and the sweet: An evaluation of the costs and benefits of religiousness. *Psychological Inquiry, 13,* 168–181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1303_02

Pargament, K. I., & Mahoney, A. (2009). Spirituality: The search for the sacred. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 611–620). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Prairie, B. A., Scheier, M. F., Matthews, K. A., Chang, C. C. H., & Hess, R. (2011). A higher sense of purpose in life is associated with sexual enjoyment in midlife women. *Menopause, 18,* 839–844. http://dx.doi .org/10.1097/gme.0b013e31820befca

Regnerus, M. D. (2007). *Forbidden fruit: Sex and religion in the lives of American teenagers.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press. http://dx .doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195320947.001.0001

Regnerus, M. D., & Uecker, J. E. (2007). Religious influences on sensitive self-reported behaviors: The product of social desirability, deceit, or

embarrassment? *Sociology of Religion, 68,* 145–163. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/socrel/68.2.145

Schmitt, D. P., & Fuller, R. C. (2015). On the varieties of sexual experience: Cross-cultural links between religiosity and human mating strategies. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 7,* 314–326. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rel0000036

Sprecher, S., & Cate, R. M. (2004). Sexual satisfaction and sexual expression as predictors of relationship satisfaction and stability. In J. H. Harvey, A. Wenzel, & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *The handbook of sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 235–256). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stafford, L. (2011). Measuring relationship maintenance behaviors: Critique and development of the revised relationship maintenance behavior scale. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 28,* 278–303. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407510378125

Stafford, L., & Canary, D. J. (1991). Maintenance strategies and romantic relationship type, gender, and relational characteristics. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 8,* 217–242. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407591082004

Stanley, S. (2005). *The power of commitment: A guide to active, lifelong love.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (1992). Assessing commitment in personal relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54,* 595–608. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/353245

Uecker, J. E. (2008). Religion, pledging, and the premarital sexual behavior of married young adults. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70,* 728–744. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00517.x

Waite, L. J., & Joyner, K. (2001). Emotional satisfaction and physical pleasure in sexual unions: Time horizon, sexual behavior, and sexual exclusivity. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63,* 247–264. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00247.x

Waite, L. J., & Lehrer, E. L. (2003). The benefits from marriage and religion in the United States: A comparative analysis. *Population and Development Review, 29,* 255–275. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2003.00255.x

Wilcox, W. B., & Dew, J. (2016). The social and cultural predictors of generosity in marriage: Gender egalitarianism, religiosity, and familism. *Journal of Family Issues, 37,* 97–118.

Wilcox, W. B., & Nock, S. L. (2006). What's love got to do with it? Equality, equity, commitment and women's marital quality. *Social Forces, 84,* 1321–1345. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0076

Wilcox, W. B., & Wolfinger, N. H. (2007). Then comes marriage? Religion, race, and marriage in urban America. *Social Science Research, 36,* 569–589. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2006.02.005

Wilkins, A. C. (2008). "Happier than non-Christians": Collective emotions and symbolic boundaries among Evangelical Christians. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 71,* 281–301. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/019027250807100308

Wolfinger, N. H., & Wilcox, W. B. (2008). Happily ever after? Religion, marital status, gender and relationship quality in urban families. *Social Forces, 86,* 1311–1337. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0023

Yeh, H. C., Lorenz, F. O., Wickrama, K. A. S., Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. (2006). Relationships among sexual satisfaction, marital quality, and marital instability at midlife. *Journal of Family Psychology, 20,* 339–343. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.20.2.339

Young, M., Denny, G., Luquis, R., & Young, T. (1998). Correlates of sexual satisfaction in marriage. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 7,* 115–127.

## E-Mail Notification of Your Latest Issue Online!

Would you like to know when the next issue of your favorite APA journal will be available online? This service is now available to you. Sign up at https://my.apa.org/portal/alerts/ and you will be notified by e-mail when issues of interest to you become available!