

Within-Couple Associations Between Communication and Relationship Satisfaction Over Time

Johnson et al. (2022)

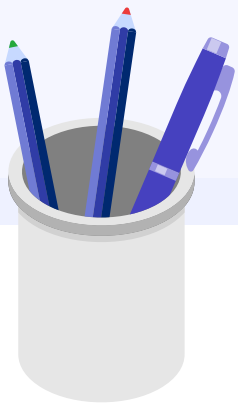
How does having more or less positive communication than usual affect your and your partner's relationship satisfaction and future communication?

Data Were Analyzed Across 3 Studies...

One with 316 mixed-sex couples who completed surveys every 4 months for 16 months...

...One with 365 German couples from Switzerland whose discussion of conflicts (e.g., finances, chores) were observed across 5 time points...

...And one with 3,405 mixed sex German couples who completed surveys at 3 time points.



In all 3 studies positive and negative communications and relationship satisfaction were analyzed, except for study one that did not assess positive communication.

Results of the Analysis Revealed That...

Across the three studies, communication did not consistently predict future relationship satisfaction (or vice versa).



However...

- There was robust evidence that couples were more satisfied than normal at times when they communicated less negatively than was typical for them.



In Short...

Although changes in communication were not associated with future satisfaction with the relationship, the findings show strong links between reductions in negative communication coinciding with an uptick in relationship satisfaction.

This finding underscores the notion that at times when couples are functioning well, they tend to function well in multiple domains. Future work should focus on understanding the broader conditions necessary for optimal couple functioning, one of which seems to be minimal negative communication.