

Communication and Relationship Satisfaction in Same-Gender Couples as Compared to Different-Gender Couples

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Introduction

- There is a known link between communication and relationship satisfaction: when communication is better, relationship satisfaction is higher.
- Women tend to be more expressive and better at reading nonverbals than men.
- Women are also more likely to self-disclose, and men are more likely to self-disclose to women.
- Between couple types, it seems likely that female same-gender couples could be more communicative, and as a result, show higher relationship satisfaction.

Methods

There were 202 participants, all young adults (ages 18-25). 164 women, 38 men, and no transgender or non-binary participants. 177 identified as heterosexual, 24 as LGBTQ+.

Participants completed the survey online via Qualtrics and reported:

Demographics

Relationship Satisfaction (Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory; Fletcher et al., 1998).

- A relationship quality inventory that asked the participants to agree or disagree with 18 statements, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

Sexual Communication (Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale; Catania, 1998).

- A questionnaire with 13 statements asking how well the participants communicate with their partners concerning sexual matters. The same 5-point response scale as above was used, but we also added a “not applicable” option given that not all participants may be sexually active.

Everyday Communication (Communication Function Questionnaire; Burleson & Samter, 1990).

- A 30-item communication scale that asked how well the participants communicated with their partner on an everyday basis. The same 5-point response scale as above was used.
- ANOVAs were used to compare differences among couples, and regression using the PROCESS macro was used to examine the association between communication and satisfaction.

Results

- There was no significant difference between couple types (same-gender vs. mixed-gender) on either sexual communication or everyday communication, as well as no differences in relationship satisfaction.
- There was a significant association between both types of communication and relationship satisfaction, sexual identity did not moderate these associations.

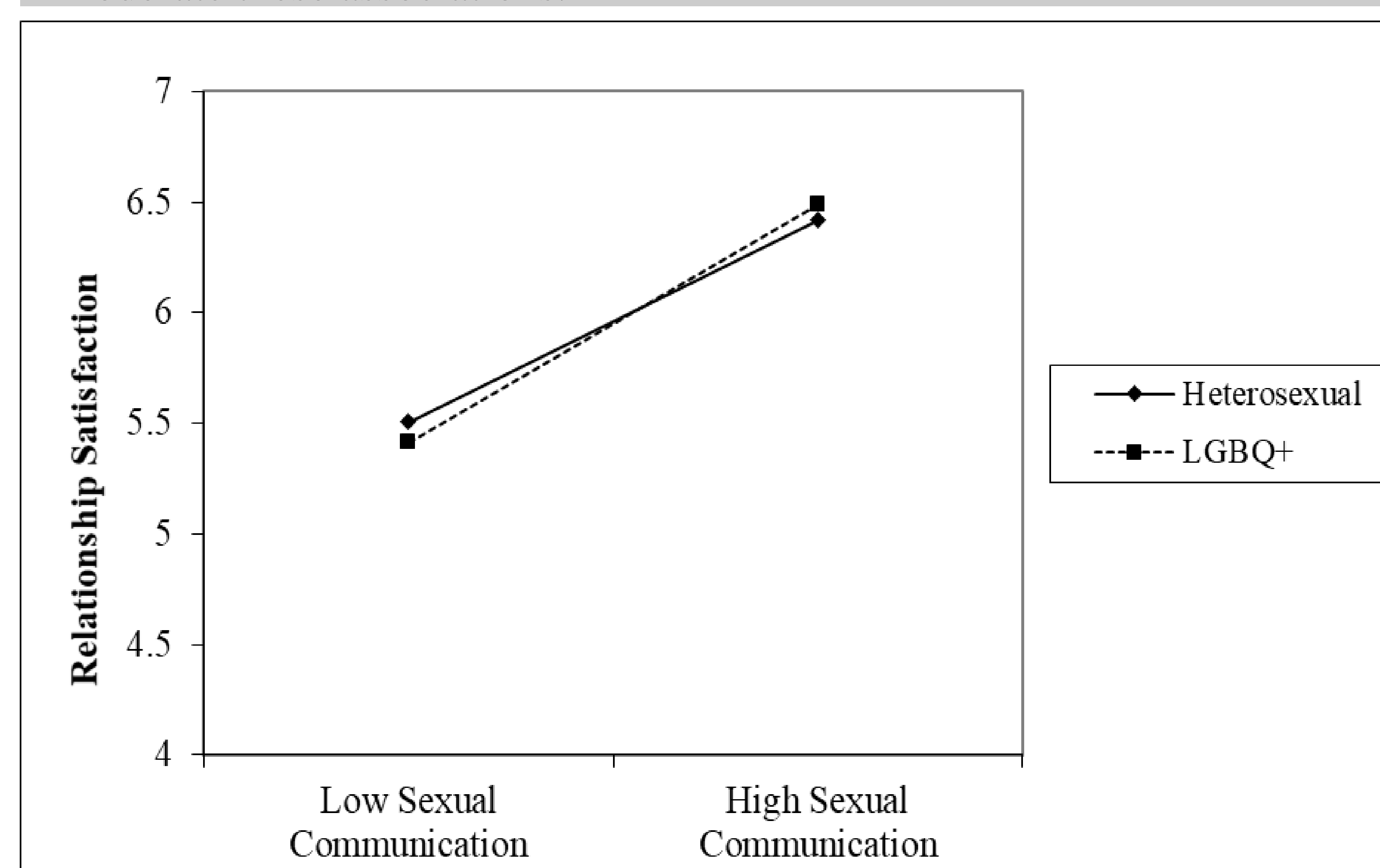


Figure 1. Sexual Communication and Relationship Satisfaction in Different Couple Types

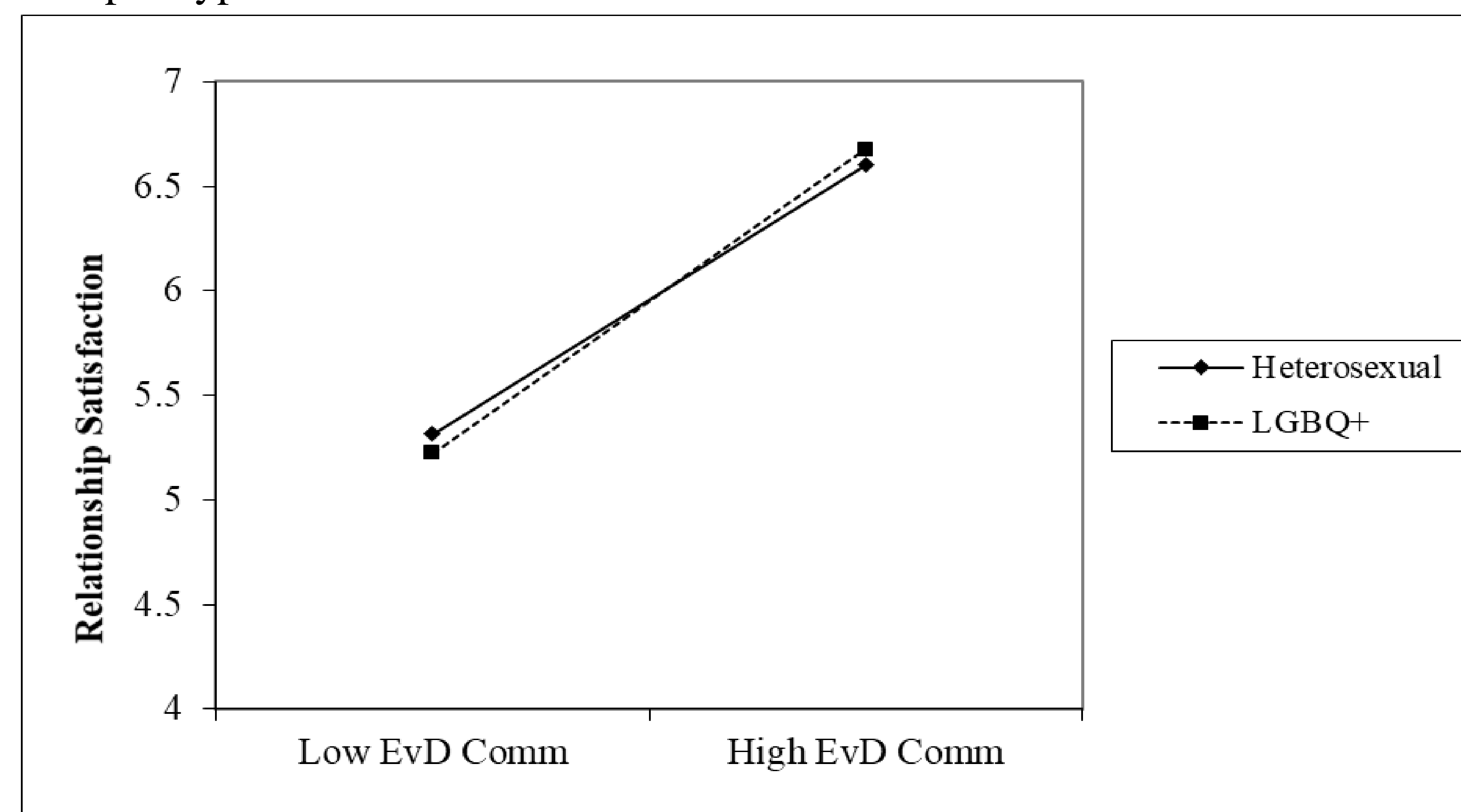


Figure 2. Everyday (EvD) Communication and Relationship Satisfaction in Different Couple Types



Conclusions

- The results suggest that there is no difference between couple types. However, the small number of LGBTQ+ participants gives an unclear view if this is actually the case.
- The next steps for this research include recruiting more LGBTQ participants, in hopes of getting a more equal sample size.

Impact

- Relationship research as a whole is an important field that provides insights to the general population as well as therapists and relationship educators, in particular. Knowing what parts of a relationship affect people and how much is crucial in figuring out what a relationship problem may be and where it lies.
- LGBTQ+ research is still in its infancy, and any research we do on LGBTQ+ couples in particular will help destigmatize their relationships and lead to positive benefits for couples in the community.