

Increasing Women's Sexual Satisfaction: A Longitudinal & Experimental Study



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Abstract

The goal of this longitudinal experimental study was to increase women's sex/orgasm frequency, sexual desire, and sexual satisfaction within the context of their current romantic relationships. We investigated the potential for the adoption of a sex growth mindset, exposure to sexually communicative and assertive women role models, and increased sexual cognitions to increase women's sex/orgasm frequency, sexual desire, and sexual satisfaction. Women in long-term romantic relationships participated in our study over the course of three weeks. Participants reported increased in sexual growth beliefs and sexual satisfaction.

Background and Current Research

- **Sexual Growth Mindsets:** reflect an understanding that sexual relationships require effort and can change and improve over time.
 - Sexual growth mindsets predict better sexual and relationship satisfaction (Maxwell et al., 2016).
- Sample items:
 - "Sexual satisfaction often fluctuates over the course of a relationship."
 - "A satisfying sexual relationship evolves through hard work and resolution of incompatibilities."
- **Sexual Role Models:**
 - Sexual communication leads to increased sex and orgasm frequency (Jones, Robinson, Seedall, 2017), which predicts higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997).
 - Because past work has found interventions to be successful when role models are involved, the present study used an experimental method that presented participants with a growth mindset role model.

Method

Participants:

- Undergraduate women in different-sex relationships; $N_{T1} = 81$, $N_{T2} = 69$
- $M_{age} = 18.74$, $SD_{age} = 1.16$; 80.2% heterosexual, 42% White
- Time 1 and Time 2 separated by a period of 3 weeks.

Experimental Conditions:

- **Growth Mindset Condition:** "Sexual relationships often change over the course of a relationship, and experts say that this is completely normal... A happy sex life is one that requires effort to sustain-- and we think it's worth it."
- **Growth Mindset + Role Model Condition:** "One subscriber, Ashley, writes: 'When I started my new job, I became too stressed and tired to focus on our intimacy; but we really wanted to make things work, so we discussed our concerns and thought of ways we could adapt to my new schedule. Now we're back to our old habits, and we couldn't be happier!'"

Focal Measures:

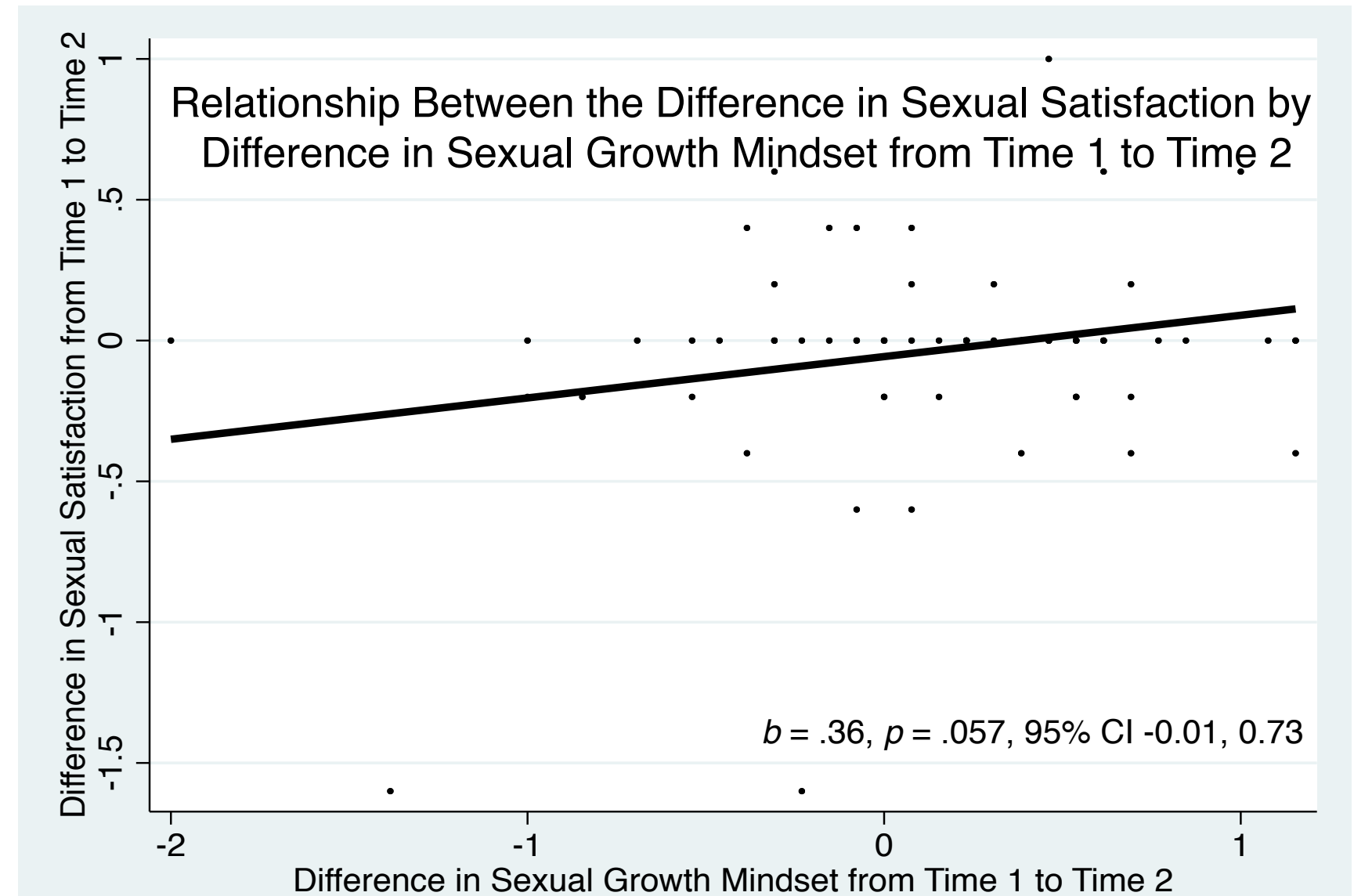
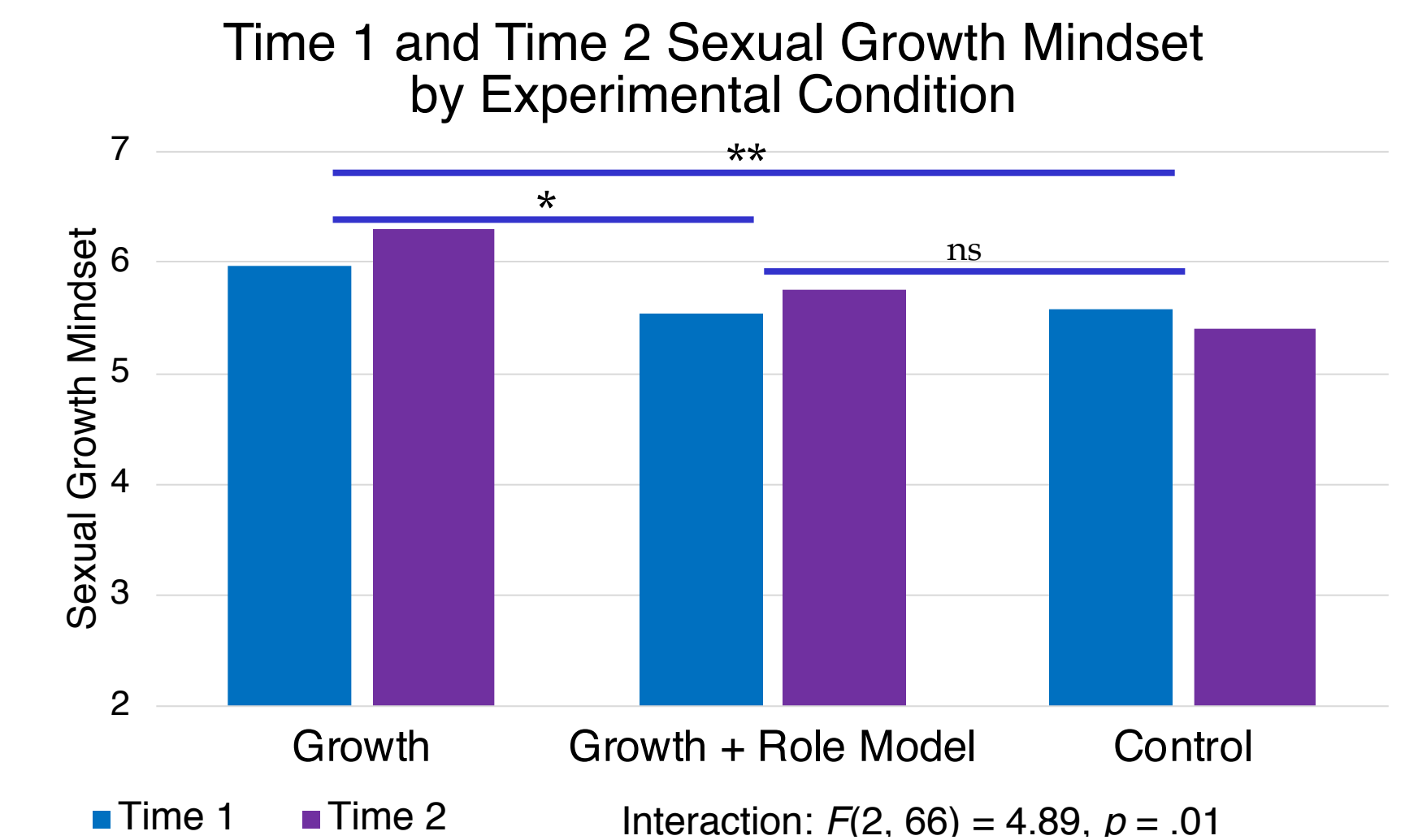
- Sexual Growth Mindset (Maxwell et al., 2016)
- Sexual Satisfaction (GMSEX; Lawrence & Byers, 1998)

Results Summary and Discussion

We ran a series of experimental analyses to try to understand our data.

- There were no main effects of time or condition on any of the focal dependent variables.
- There was a significant interaction of experimental condition and time in predicting sexual growth mindsets, $F(2, 66) = 4.89$, $p = .01$.
 - The Growth Mindset Condition was more effective than the control condition and was more effective than the Growth Mindset + Role Model Condition.
 - The Growth Mindset + Role Model Condition was also more effective than the control condition.
- The change in sexual growth mindset from Time 1 to Time 2 marginally predicted a change in sexual satisfaction from Time 1 to Time 2, $b = .36$, $p = .057$; there was no effect of experimental condition.

Preliminary Findings



Future Directions

Future research will:

- Recruit a more diverse community sample
- Include additional moderators of relationship functioning

Contact

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