

The Association Between Perceptions of Love as an Adolescent and Relationship Status as a Young Adult

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Introduction

- There are many predictors which correlate to relationship longevity such as age and economic factors, but not much has been found on the correlation between childhood perceptions of love and future relationship health. (Jaquet, 2001)(Burges, 1939)(Kieran, 1998)
- The research on perceptions of love establishes a correlation between changes in perceptions of love during different parts of a person's life. As their priorities shift with age, that does not consider the relationship status of those in question.(Nieder, 2001) (Sumter et al, 2013)
- This study will analyze different adolescent's concept of an ideal relationship and compare those results to the relationships they foster in the future, in search of a trend between these two. Factors such as, whether an adolescent wanted to be married or have kids, will be cross referenced to whether they got married or had kids as adults, in search of a correlation between childhood expectations and adult relationships.

Research Questions

- Are there associations between adolescent perceptions of love and relationship status of young adults?
- Is sex a factor with either perceptions of love as an adolescent or relationship status as an adult?
- Can childhood perceptions of marriage accurately predict young adult marriage status?

Methods

Sample

- The ADDHEALTH WAVE 1 data is a nationally representative United States study which took place between 1994 and 1995 where 20,745 adolescents were sampled to complete a 45 minute in school questionnaire followed by an in-home interview.
- The ADDHEALTH WAVE 4 dataset examines 15'701 individuals from WAVE 1, in 2008, when they are all 13 years older with in-home interviews.

Measures

- The ADDHEALTH Wave 1 data set asked adolescents' questions about their ideal relationship in this stage of life, one question asked was "Would you get married (in an ideal relationship in this stage in life)?" Yes or No answers were dichotomously coded as 1 or 0 respectively
- The ADDHEALTH Wave 4 data set inquired "How many people have you been engaged too?" which was dichotomously coded as been married and not married as 1 and 0 respectively.

Discussion

- There is a strong correlation between perceptions of love as an adolescent and the romantic statuses of young adults
- Wanting to be married as a child is probably a result of other predictors in an adolescent's life. Things such as the status of parents, income, and religion probably effect this explanatory variable as they also have proven to effect relationship status (Burges, 1939)
- Sex is a covariate for these results but may only be such a strong covariate at the WAVE IV age, as women are more likely to be married at a younger age (Burges, 1939). Perhaps in WAVE V, marriage is more equalized between the sexes and sex becomes less of a covariate
- Further research is required to truly understand the connection between the romantic ideals of an adolescent and the relationship realities of adults, particularly if these ideals can leave to divorce, which is hard to tell when the sample size only includes young adults who are less likely to be divorced.

Results

Univariate

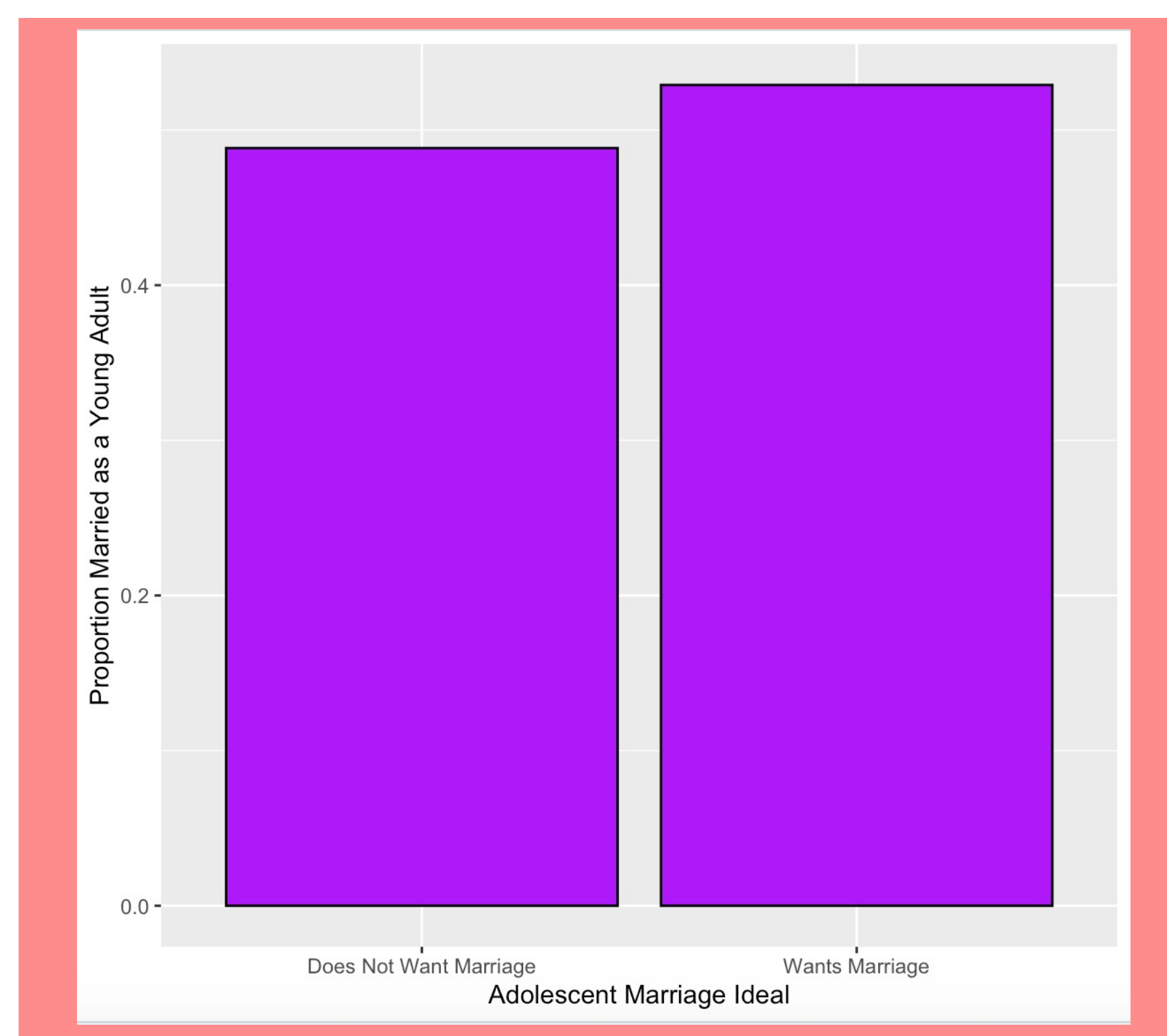
- 76.6% of valid* adolescent respondents do not want marriage
- 30.4% of valid adolescent respondents wanted marriage
- 49.7% of valid young adults responded as have previously gotten married
- 50.3% of valid young adults responded as never been married

*Valid meaning not n/a

Bivariate

- A chi-squared analysis test showed that **wanting to be married as an adolescent** was significantly and positively correlated **with getting married as an adult** ($\chi^2=6.11$ $p=0.0134$) (Figure 1).
- A logistical regression test showed that there is no significant correlation between **biological sex** and **wanting to be married as an adolescent**. (O.R.=0.95 $P=0.46$)

Figure 1. Whether or not marriage is part of an ideal relationship as an adolescent and proportion married as a young adult

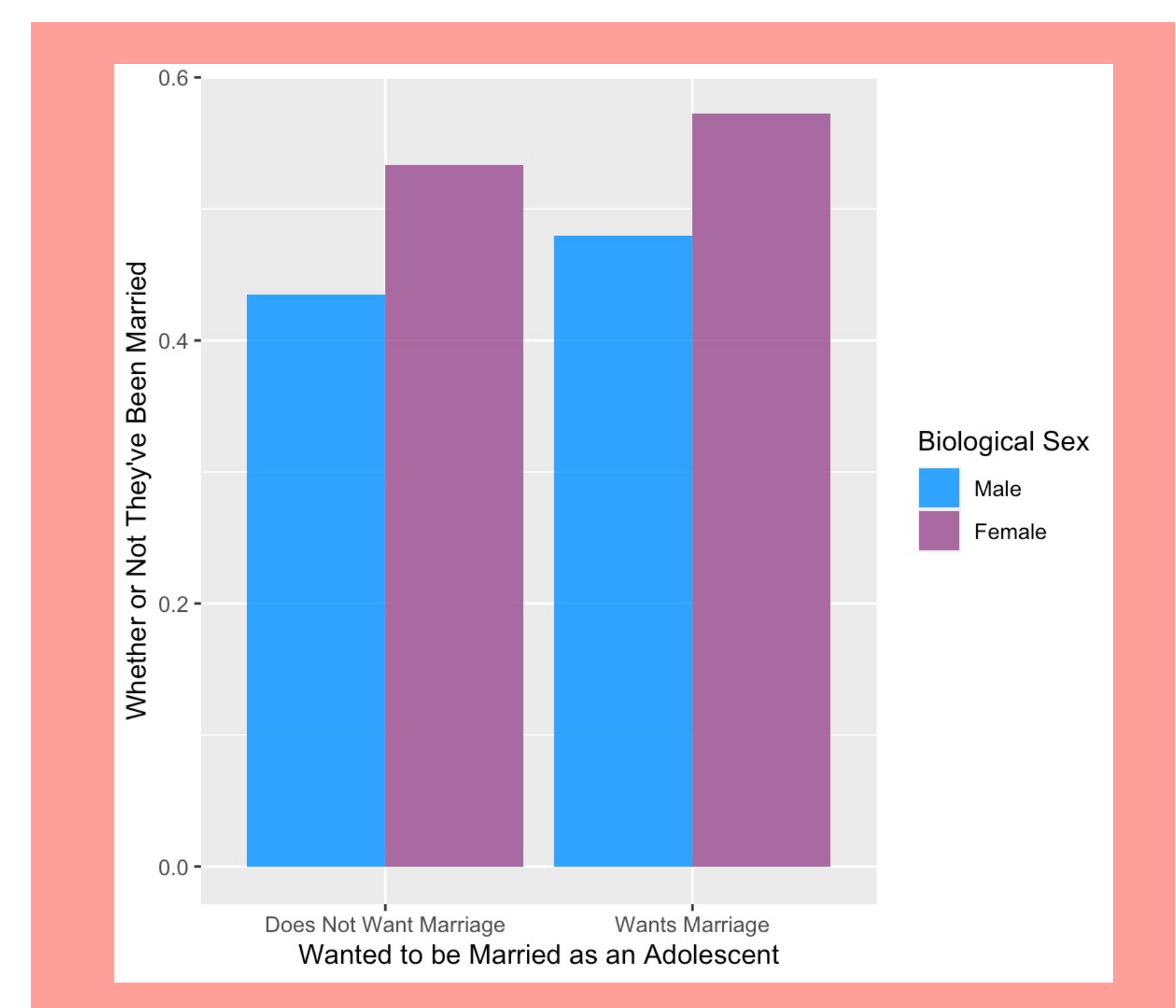


- Additionally, logistic regression showed a strong correlation between **biological sex** and **getting married as a young adult**. Women are much more likely to be married as young adults than men. (O.R.=1.47 $P<0.001$)

Multivariate

- **Biological sex** does not appear to moderate the relationship between **wanting to get married as an adolescent** and **getting married as adults** however, biological sex does increase the likelihood of **getting married** significantly (Figure 2).
- After controlling for biological sex, **wanting to be married as an adolescent** still has a positive and significant effect on **being married as a young adult** (O.R.=1.184, $p<0.012$).

Figure 2. Wanting to be Married as an adolescent vs. If They've been Married as an adult by Biological Sex



Sources

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