

What is it about vacationing together that can help couples?

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12 June 2024

Expert Panel, Romance, Sex, Relationships in Travel &
Tourism



A recent research study

About 400 cohabiting couples, no kids in the house, aged 25-55

Longer relationships → less sex and physical intimacy

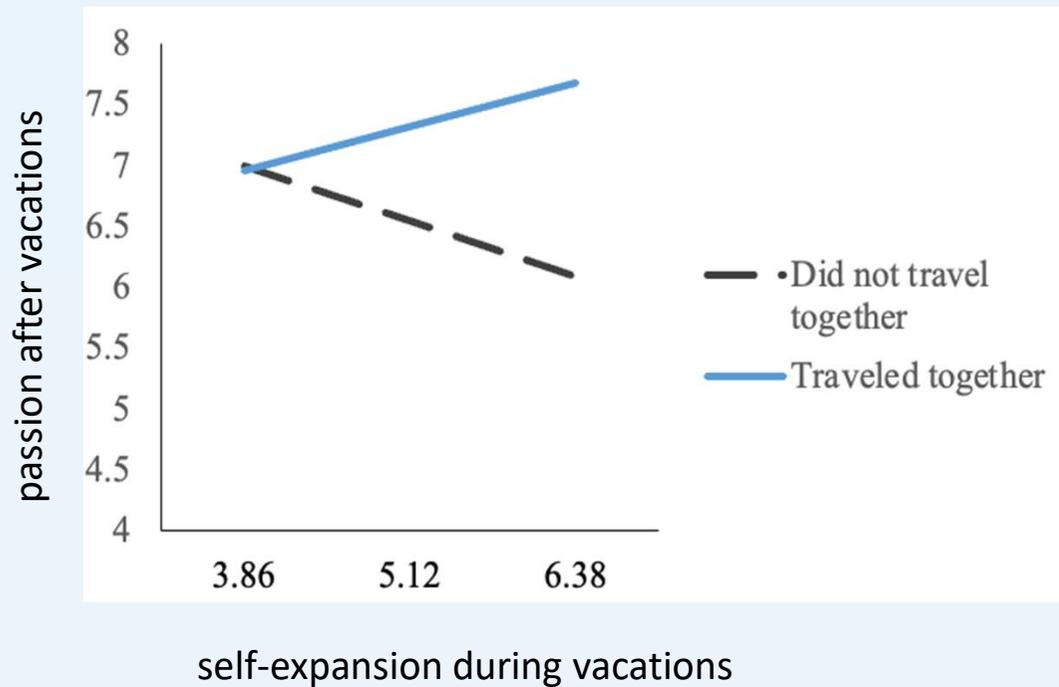
Self-expanding experiences on vacations helped, a lot!

e.g.

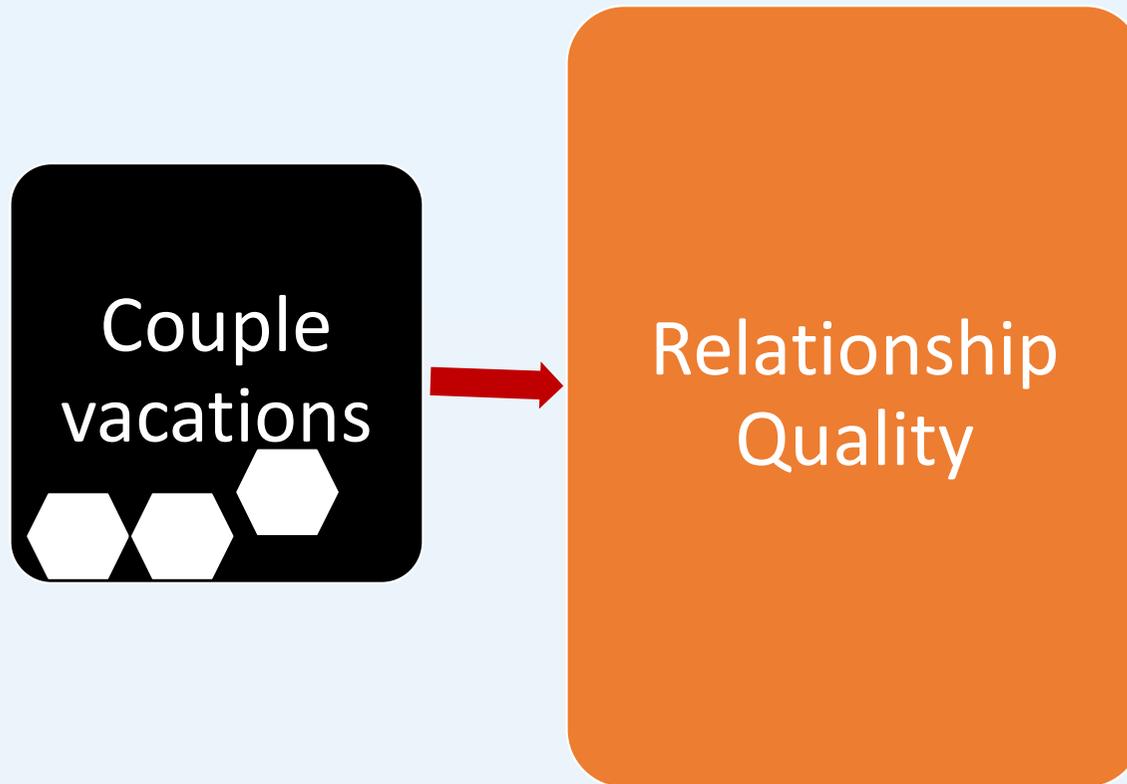


Coffey, J. K., Shahvali, M., Kerstetter, D., & Aron, A. (2024). Couples vacations and romantic passion and intimacy. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 5(1), 100121.

Couples vacations and romantic passion



We generally assume that shared travel experiences are pretty good for you and for your relationships – with not much empirical evidence, and mechanisms are fairly unknown.



Dynamics of shared tourism experiences

1. Shared positive emotions (aka. love)
2. (Shared) challenging experiences
3. Positive resolutions of problems (conflict management skills)
4. Humor and playfulness (reframing)
5. Verbal and non-verbal communication (quantity, quality, bids, reflection)
6. Personality of each partner (and interaction)
7. Motivations/goals/values
8.

shared
leisure
experiences

How can we design for more connection experiences  ?

More love with self, other visitors, friends and strangers,
locals, nature, and even higher up.

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Voices for Insight & Change

We measured self-expansion on vacations, and relationship quality markers post vacation.

- **self-expansion** on vacations – e.g., “During this vacation, I participated in activities that I have never done before.”
- traveled **with partner**– yes/no
- **Number** and **length** of vacations (average 2 or 3 vacations, 7 nights away from home)

Relationship quality at home, following vacations:

- **physical intimacy**
- **passion** post vacation, e.g., “I want my partner physically, emotionally and mentally.”