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The Mediator Role of Relational Resilience on the Relationship between Psychological Aggression Perpetration and Marital Satisfaction among Dual Career Married Couples: A Dyadic Analysis

Purpose of Study

In this study, we aimed to investigate the mediator role of relational resilience on the relationship between psychological aggression perpetration and marital satisfaction within the context of couples' dynamics in marriage relationship.

Method

Participants

The data was collected from heterosexual and married couples, at least one of whom is an academician at a large Midwestern state university. For sample selection, a criterion/convenient sampling method was utilized. The final sample included 80 couples ($N=160, 100\%$). The age of females ranged between 24 and 48 with a mean of 32.41 years ($SD = 5.26$). The mean age of males was 34.71 years ($SD = 6.15$; min = 26 and max = 59). Per education level, participants held associate (2.5% for men; 1.3% for women), undergraduate (28.8% for men; 18.8% for women) and graduate (64.5% for men; 80.0% for women) degrees.

Measures

Demographic information form. We developed a demographic information form to obtain information about couples' basic demographics (sex, age, profession, and education level) and relationship characteristics (length of the relationship, number of children).

Marital life scale (MLS). The MLS is a 10-item uni-dimensional self-report measure, which higher scores greater marital satisfaction, designed to assess marital satisfaction (Tezer, 1986). In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was found as .95 and .95 for subsamples of women and men, respectively.

Relational resilience scale (RSS). The RSS is a 27 item and multidimensional self-report measure developed to gauge couples' recovery ability after they face traumatic experiences

(Aydoğan & Özbay, 2015b). The RSS has four subscales; Actor, Partner, Union and Spirituality. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was found as .95 for females and .92 for males.

Multidimensional measure of emotional abuse (MMEA). We used the Turkish Restrictive Engulfment (RE) subscale of the MMEA (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, & Murphy, 2017) to measure psychological aggression perpetration. We got Cronbach's alpha (α) of .79 in the sample of women and .84 in the sample of men.

Results

To depict the associations among study variables, we calculated Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. For males, the relationship between marital satisfaction and psychological aggression perpetration was negative and weak, while it was positive and moderate between marital satisfaction and relational resilience. Accordingly, we noted strong correlations for males' and females' relational resilience and marital satisfaction. Secondly, we investigated actor and partner effects of the mediator role of relational resilience on the relationship between psychological aggression perpetration and marital satisfaction. In order to understand those relationships within the couple dynamics, we used Actor-Partner Interdependence Mediating Model (APIMeM). The results revealed actor effects of the mediating role of relational resilience on the relationship between psychological aggression perpetration and marital satisfaction for both men and women. On the other hand, no partner effects were observed for both genders.

Discussion & Conclusion

We obtained unique results, which might be related to the participant profile and sample characteristics, highly educated dual career married couples, at least one of which is academician along with our findings supporting the previous literature. Very basically, we found significant relationships among psychological aggression perpetration, relational resilience, and marital satisfaction as in the Western literature and relational resilience further mediated the relationship between psychological aggression perpetration and marital satisfaction. However, we did not find direct or indirect partner effects, which we believe to be unique rather than weird. The findings overall suggest the use of APIMeM as a new analysis in dyadic research to further discuss on the couple dynamics.