Attachment Orientations as Potential Mediators in the Intergenerational Transmission of Marital Satisfaction

Previous research suggests that there is an intergenerational transmission of marital satisfaction; however, the mechanisms that explain this phenomenon remain relatively unknown. In the current study, we examined the role of parent-child attachment orientations and romantic relationship attachment orientations as mediators in the intergenerational transmission of marital satisfaction. Participants were newlywed couples currently living together who had been married for 12 months or less. Each member of the couple separately completed several self-report measures via computer administration. Measures assessed participants’ own marital satisfaction, perceptions of their parents’ marital satisfaction, attachment orientations to their romantic partners, and attachment orientations to their rearing parents. Data was analyzed using the actor-partner interdependence model in a structural equation modeling framework to account for the non-independent nature of the data. We hypothesized that parent-child attachment and romantic relationship attachment would mediate the pathway between parents’ marital satisfaction and participants’ marital satisfaction.