Abstract

The aim of the current study was to examine the association between sense of control and relationship satisfaction as a function of the impact of the 2008 recession in America. Among other predictions, we hypothesized an interaction where those impacted by the recession would experience more relationship satisfaction if they were high in control compared to those with low control. Data used in this study was taken from the third wave (2013-2014) of the National Survey of Mid-life in the United States (MIDUS), and our sample included participants who self-reported being in a married or cohabitating relationship (N = 2,328). Results found that in individuals who had been negatively affected by the recession, relationship satisfaction was higher if they had high levels of self-control than if they had low levels of self-control. Contrary to our hypothesis, a stronger association was found between low levels of self-control and relationship satisfaction, rather than high levels of self-control. These findings point to future research on stress and relationship satisfaction in pressured environmental settings, and if personal characteristics can buffer against relationship distress during stressful events. Applications of this data on individual characteristics include possible insight into the design of therapy or treatment styles in clinical settings as well.