

Couple Relationship Satisfaction: The Role of Recollection of Parental Acceptance, Self-Differentiation and Spousal Caregiving

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Abstract : The actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) was employed in this study to investigate the mediating effect self-differentiation and spousal caregiving have on the relationship between recollection of parental care and acceptance and couple satisfaction. One hundred and forty-four non-clinical couples (N=288) in enduring relationships were recruited. Results for actor effects revealed two mediating paths whereby, among both partners, recollection of maternal (but not paternal) acceptance was associated with their self-differentiation and responsive spousal caregiving, which, in turn, were linked to their spousal relationship satisfaction. Partner effects revealed three mediating paths: for both partners, recollection of childhood maternal acceptance was associated with responsive caregiving, which, in turn, was linked with their partner's relationship satisfaction. Interestingly, the husbands' recollection of maternal acceptance was associated with their partners' responsive spousal caregiving, which was linked to both spouses' relationship satisfaction. Our results may support the theoretical assumptions regarding intergenerational continuity from perceptions of childhood via self-differentiation effecting couple caregiving to couple relationship, but only on the mother's part.

Keywords : couple relationship satisfaction, childhood parental acceptance, self-differentiation, couple caregiving, dyadic perspective

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