DIMENSIONS OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM AND PARTNERS’ SENSE OF COHERENCE – PREDICTORS OF RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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Despite numerous social and cultural changes in recent years, marriages are still the most common form of life for two people. Therefore, psychologists often conduct researches on relationship quality and its correlates. One of the dimensions of relationship quality, particularly often analyzed, is the partners’ relationship satisfaction. Researchers are looking for variables that are related to this satisfaction. In the present study, the focus was on the following variables: partners' sense of coherence and the dimensions of their family systems. This research was based on The Olson Circumplex Model, which focus on three dimensions of family system: flexibility, cohesion and communication. Also, the construct of sense of coherence, derived from Antonovsky salutogenic model, was used.

This study explored the correlation between partners’ sense of coherence and relationship satisfaction. It was also considered, to what extent the dimensions of the family system are related to relationship satisfaction. Data was presented on 50 couples aged 30-50. Participants were asked to complete three questionnaires: SOR, Margasiński, DAS, Spanier, and SOC, Antonovsky.

Results of the analyses pointed to positive correlations between partners’ sense of coherence and their relationship satisfaction. Also, results revealed that the strongest correlation is between sense of manageability (one of three components of sense of coherence) and relationship satisfaction. The regression analysis shows that the dimensions of the family system: Disengaged and Rigid, and sense of coherence, explain 48% of the variance of the relationship satisfaction variable.

The results provide initial support for the following hypotheses. The sense of manageability (understood in this study as interpersonal skills) might be a protective factor in the relationship. Also, there could be a circular relationship between the sense of partners’ coherence, the dimensions of their family systems, and relationship satisfaction.

The findings provide a number of theoretical and practical implications.