

The Effect of Intergenerational Trauma on Marital Stability: The Mediating Roles of Cognitive Emotion Regulation, Trust, and Intimacy


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Family systems theories propose that relational patterns are transmitted across generations,” the theoretical discussion is informative but lacks integration with specific family systems models. The authors should explicitly reference Bowen’s Family Systems Theory and describe how constructs such as differentiation of self, emotional cutoff, and multigenerational transmission processes relate to intergenerational trauma and marital stability. This would provide a stronger conceptual foundation for the proposed model.

In the “Study Design and Participants” section, the authors state that participants were recruited through online advertisements, social media platforms, counseling centers, and university-affiliated recruitment networks. This recruitment strategy likely introduced self-selection bias. The manuscript should include a more thorough discussion of sampling limitations and explain how participants recruited through counseling settings may differ from the general married population.

The sentence “Participants represented diverse educational, occupational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural composition of Canadian society” requires empirical support. The manuscript should provide demographic information regarding ethnicity, immigration status, cultural background, or geographic distribution to substantiate the claim that the sample adequately reflects Canadian multicultural diversity.

The description of the Intergenerational Trauma Scale indicates that the instrument was developed by Danieli (1998). However, no information is provided regarding the scale's prior validation in Canadian populations or its suitability for multicultural samples. The authors should report evidence supporting cultural validity and explain whether any adaptation procedures were undertaken before administration.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph defining intergenerational trauma ("Intergenerational trauma refers to the transmission of psychological distress...") would benefit from greater conceptual precision. The manuscript currently combines diverse forms of trauma (e.g., war trauma, abuse, neglect, family dysfunction) into a single construct. The authors should clarify whether their operationalization reflects collective trauma, familial trauma, attachment-related trauma, or cumulative adverse experiences, and explain how these dimensions are represented in the Intergenerational Trauma Scale used in the study.

In the paragraph discussing evidence from military veteran families ("For example, research involving families of military veterans demonstrated..."), the literature review relies heavily on findings from specialized populations. The authors should critically discuss whether findings from military families generalize to the broader Canadian married population sampled in the current study and acknowledge potential differences in trauma transmission mechanisms across populations.

The paragraph beginning "One potential mechanism through which intergenerational trauma may influence marital stability is cognitive emotion regulation" provides a useful theoretical rationale; however, it does not explain why cognitive emotion regulation was selected over other established mediators such as attachment insecurity, emotional dysregulation, psychological flexibility, or communication quality. The authors should justify their selection of mediators and explain how cognitive emotion regulation offers unique explanatory value within the proposed model.

The section discussing trust ("Trust constitutes another central component of successful marital relationships") would benefit from a more nuanced conceptualization. Trust is presented as a unidimensional construct, yet marital trust often includes predictability, dependability, faith, and emotional security. The authors should specify which dimensions are captured by the Dyadic Trust Scale and discuss whether different facets of trust may differentially influence marital stability.

The paragraph beginning "Intimacy is another fundamental characteristic of healthy and enduring marital relationships" discusses intimacy broadly but does not clarify whether the study focuses on emotional, sexual, intellectual, recreational, or social intimacy. Given that the PAIR instrument measures multiple intimacy domains, the authors should explain whether intimacy was modeled as a higher-order latent construct or whether specific subdimensions contributed differently to marital stability.

The final paragraph of the Introduction claims that "relatively few studies have integrated cognitive emotion regulation, trust, and intimacy within a single structural framework explaining marital stability." This statement is central to establishing novelty. However, no systematic review of previous SEM-based models is provided. The authors should cite and compare existing multivariate models to clearly demonstrate the incremental contribution of the present study.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.