If I help my partner, will it hurt me? Perceptions of sacrifice in romantic relationships

ABSTRACT

We proposed and tested a theory of the associations among relationship commitment, perceived harmfulness of relationship sacrifices to the self, and relationship and individual well-being. Results from a cross-sectional study of 145 couples provided reliability and validity data for a measure of the extent to which relationship sacrifices are perceived to be harmful to the self. As predicted, greater perceived sacrifice harmfulness was associated with lower relationship commitment, poorer couple functioning, and higher depressive symptomatology. However, commitment was more robustly predictive of perceived sacrifice harmfulness for males than females; in women, the association was weaker and could be accounted for by partner commitment and relationship satisfaction. Perceived sacrifice harmfulness partially mediated the association between commitment and relationship functioning in males.