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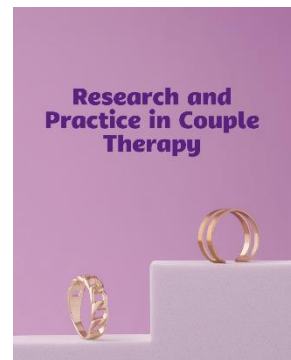
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The Mediating Role of Dyadic Coping in the Relationship between Perceived Partner Responsiveness and Marital Satisfaction: A Structural Equation Modeling Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the mediating role of dyadic coping in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction among married adults in Canada using structural equation modeling. This cross-sectional correlational study was conducted among 642 married adults residing in various provinces of Canada. Participants were recruited through community organizations, counseling centers, and online platforms using voluntary participation procedures. Data were collected using the Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale (PPRS), the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI), and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analyses, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling were performed using SPSS 29 and AMOS 29. The measurement model was evaluated through multiple goodness-of-fit indices, and mediation effects were tested using bootstrap procedures with 5,000 resamples and bias-corrected confidence intervals. The results demonstrated significant positive associations among all study variables. Perceived partner responsiveness was positively associated with dyadic coping ($\beta = 0.72, p < .001$) and marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.27, p < .001$). Dyadic coping was also positively associated with marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.58, p < .001$). The structural model demonstrated excellent fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.13, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, IFI = .96, GFI = .92, RMSEA = .042, SRMR = .046$). Bootstrap analyses indicated a significant indirect effect of perceived partner responsiveness on marital satisfaction through dyadic coping ($\beta = 0.42, p < .001$), confirming partial mediation. The final model explained 52% of the variance in dyadic coping and 68% of the variance in marital satisfaction, indicating substantial explanatory power. The findings indicate that perceived partner responsiveness contributes significantly to marital satisfaction both directly and indirectly through dyadic coping. Couples who perceive greater understanding, validation, and emotional support from their partners are more likely to engage in adaptive collaborative coping processes, which in turn enhance marital satisfaction. These results support contemporary relational theories emphasizing the importance of interpersonal responsiveness and dyadic adaptation in marital functioning and suggest that interventions targeting responsive communication and dyadic coping skills may promote healthier and more satisfying marital relationships.

Keywords: Perceived Partner Responsiveness; Dyadic Coping; Marital Satisfaction; Structural Equation Modeling

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Introduction

Marital satisfaction is widely recognized as one of the most important indicators of relationship quality and family functioning. It reflects individuals' overall evaluation of their marital relationship and encompasses emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal dimensions of couple life. High levels of marital satisfaction have consistently been associated



with psychological well-being, relationship stability, effective parenting, and improved physical health outcomes, whereas low marital satisfaction has been linked to marital distress, conflict escalation, emotional dysfunction, and increased risk of separation and divorce (Gyeong, 2026; Kim, 2026). Because marital relationships constitute one of the most significant social bonds in adulthood, understanding the factors that contribute to marital satisfaction has become a central concern within family psychology, marital therapy, and relationship research.

Contemporary relationship theories emphasize that marital satisfaction does not emerge solely from the absence of conflict but rather develops through ongoing relational processes that foster intimacy, trust, emotional security, and mutual support. Research has increasingly demonstrated that positive relationship dynamics, including effective communication, emotional responsiveness, shared activities, commitment, and supportive interactions, contribute substantially to relationship quality and stability (Körün et al., 2026; Park & Harris, 2025a, 2025b). Within this context, the concept of perceived partner responsiveness has attracted considerable attention because it captures an individual's perception that his or her partner understands, values, accepts, and cares for them. Perceived responsiveness represents a fundamental relational experience that strengthens emotional bonds and facilitates secure interpersonal connections. Scholars have argued that responsiveness functions as a cornerstone of intimacy because individuals who feel understood and supported by their partners are more likely to experience emotional closeness and relationship fulfillment (Fivecoat et al., 2024; Kumar & Singh, 2024).

Perceived partner responsiveness has been conceptualized as the degree to which one partner perceives the other as attentive, validating, and emotionally available during everyday interactions. The construct extends beyond simple social support by emphasizing the subjective experience of feeling genuinely understood and cared for within the relationship. Studies have shown that responsiveness contributes to relational security, trust, and emotional intimacy while simultaneously reducing relational uncertainty and psychological distress (Fivecoat et al., 2024; Kumar & Singh, 2024). Research conducted across diverse cultural contexts has demonstrated that individuals who perceive higher responsiveness from their spouses tend to report greater relationship quality, stronger couple identity, and more adaptive relational functioning. For example, Kumar and Singh found that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the relationship between attachment styles and couple identity in Indian arranged marriages, highlighting its importance as a relational mechanism through which individual characteristics influence relationship outcomes (Kumar & Singh, 2024). Similarly, Fivecoat and colleagues reported that perceived responsiveness was associated with physiological and emotional indicators of relational functioning among married couples (Fivecoat et al., 2024).

The importance of perceived responsiveness is further supported by broader relationship research demonstrating that interpersonal processes characterized by emotional attunement and mutual understanding facilitate positive relationship outcomes. Communication satisfaction, relational connectedness, and intimacy have repeatedly emerged as critical predictors of marital adjustment and relationship satisfaction (Körün et al., 2026; Seo, 2025). Seo found that intimacy mediated the relationship between communication and couple satisfaction among women in cross-national marriages and their Korean husbands, suggesting that positive interpersonal experiences strengthen relationship quality through emotional connection (Seo, 2025). Likewise, research examining family communication and relational satisfaction has demonstrated strong associations between effective communication patterns, dyadic trust, and relationship well-being (Körün et al., 2026). These findings suggest that responsiveness may represent a key relational process that fosters satisfaction by enhancing positive interactions and emotional closeness between partners.

Although perceived partner responsiveness has demonstrated consistent associations with relationship outcomes, the mechanisms through which it influences marital satisfaction remain insufficiently understood. Contemporary family theories emphasize that relationship outcomes are often shaped not only by direct interpersonal experiences but also by adaptive

processes that couples employ when confronted with challenges and stressors. One theoretical framework that provides insight into these mechanisms is the Vulnerability–Stress–Adaptation model, which proposes that relationship satisfaction emerges from the interaction of enduring vulnerabilities, external stressors, and adaptive relational processes (Ross et al., 2022). According to this perspective, adaptive dyadic processes may explain how positive relational experiences are translated into long-term marital satisfaction. Ross and colleagues demonstrated that adaptive relationship processes play a significant role in predicting relationship functioning across different populations and contexts (Ross et al., 2022). Consequently, identifying adaptive mechanisms that connect responsiveness to marital satisfaction represents an important direction for relationship research.

Among the adaptive relational processes identified in contemporary couple research, dyadic coping has emerged as one of the most influential determinants of relationship quality. Dyadic coping refers to the ways in which partners jointly manage stress through communication, emotional support, collaborative problem-solving, and coordinated coping efforts. Unlike individual coping strategies, dyadic coping emphasizes the interpersonal nature of stress management within intimate relationships and recognizes that couples often face challenges collectively rather than independently. Effective dyadic coping involves communicating stress experiences, providing support, engaging in joint problem-solving, and maintaining relational cohesion during difficult circumstances. Such coping processes have been associated with increased relationship satisfaction, psychological well-being, and relationship resilience across diverse populations (Novianti et al., 2024; Yuan, 2025).

Recent empirical evidence supports the central role of dyadic coping in maintaining healthy relationships. Novianti and colleagues demonstrated that dyadic coping played a significant role in buffering the negative effects of financial strain on marital satisfaction and quality of life among parents in Indonesia (Novianti et al., 2024). Similarly, Yuan found that spousal support served as a protective factor against loneliness among older adults through both mediating and moderating pathways, emphasizing the importance of supportive dyadic processes in promoting well-being (Yuan, 2025). These findings align with broader evidence indicating that couples who effectively manage stress together tend to experience greater relational stability and satisfaction than couples who rely primarily on individual coping strategies.

The relevance of dyadic coping becomes particularly evident when considering the numerous stressors that contemporary couples encounter. Economic hardship, occupational demands, family responsibilities, health concerns, and interpersonal conflicts all have the potential to undermine relationship quality if not managed effectively. Research has shown that financial strain negatively affects marital satisfaction, but adaptive dyadic coping can mitigate these adverse effects by enhancing collaboration and emotional support between partners (Novianti et al., 2024). Likewise, studies examining emotional regulation, conflict management, and relationship well-being have demonstrated that adaptive interpersonal processes protect couples from the detrimental effects of stress and relational difficulties (Berenguer-Soler et al., 2023; Temiz & Elsharnouby, 2022). Berenguer-Soler and colleagues highlighted the protective role of emotional intelligence in preventing emotional flooding during couple conflict, whereas Temiz and Elsharnouby demonstrated significant associations between interpersonal emotion regulation strategies, relationship satisfaction, and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic (Berenguer-Soler et al., 2023; Temiz & Elsharnouby, 2022).

Several studies have also emphasized the importance of relational support and communication as protective factors that facilitate adaptive coping and relationship adjustment. Positive interaction patterns, shared activities, connectedness, and commitment have been identified as important contributors to relationship satisfaction and marital stability (Park & Harris, 2025a, 2025b). Furthermore, harmonious marital relationships are characterized by mutual support, emotional understanding, trust, and cooperative problem-solving, all of which closely align with the conceptual foundations of dyadic coping (Idulfilastri

et al., 2024). These findings suggest that couples who perceive higher responsiveness from their partners may be more likely to engage in effective dyadic coping processes, which subsequently enhance marital satisfaction.

The growing literature on marital functioning further indicates that relational experiences often operate through complex mediational pathways. Structural equation modeling studies have increasingly demonstrated that psychological and interpersonal variables exert indirect effects on relationship outcomes through mediating mechanisms. For example, marital conflict has been shown to influence maternal competency through perceived stress and pregnancy-related concerns (Alipour et al., 2023). Similarly, self-differentiation and mentalization have been found to indirectly affect marital satisfaction through family-of-origin health (Kim & Woo, 2025). Other investigations have reported mediating roles for cognitive flexibility, intimacy, and infidelity tendency in explaining relationship outcomes (Ekinci & Canpolat, 2025; Genç, 2026; Seo, 2025). Such findings highlight the importance of examining not only direct associations but also the underlying mechanisms that explain how interpersonal experiences influence marital satisfaction.

Research on marital satisfaction has also identified a broad range of contextual, developmental, and relational factors that contribute to relationship outcomes. Family-of-origin experiences, childhood adversity, attachment processes, relational communication, household dynamics, and personal well-being have all been linked to marital functioning (Arsa et al., 2025; Li et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2025; Sokar, 2024; Sun & Wang, 2023). Shen and colleagues emphasized the influence of family-of-origin experiences on later romantic relationships across cultural contexts (Shen et al., 2025). Sokar demonstrated that childhood maltreatment affects marital relationship quality through multiple mediating pathways (Sokar, 2024). Li and colleagues reported that relational communication moderated the relationship between family adversity and marital satisfaction, underscoring the protective role of positive interpersonal interactions (Li et al., 2022). Similarly, Sun and Wang found that family decision-making, household responsibilities, and physical and mental health significantly influenced marital satisfaction among Chinese families (Sun & Wang, 2023).

In addition, broader psychological well-being and life satisfaction research provides indirect support for the importance of supportive interpersonal relationships. Studies examining well-being, life satisfaction, and psychological adjustment have consistently found that social support, positive interpersonal experiences, and adaptive coping processes contribute to favorable outcomes across diverse populations (Arsa et al., 2025; Ferreira et al., 2023; Ran & Cinamon, 2022). Although these studies were not exclusively focused on marital relationships, they reinforce the notion that supportive relational environments facilitate individual and relational well-being. Furthermore, investigations into behavioral intentions and social functioning have highlighted the significance of interpersonal and contextual influences on human behavior and adjustment (Shisanya et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature examining marital satisfaction, perceived partner responsiveness, and dyadic coping, relatively few studies have simultaneously investigated these constructs within a unified structural framework. Existing research has established that responsiveness contributes to relationship quality and that dyadic coping predicts marital satisfaction, yet the extent to which dyadic coping explains the association between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction remains unclear. Understanding this mediational process may provide important theoretical and practical insights into how positive interpersonal experiences are transformed into enduring relationship satisfaction. Such knowledge could inform couple counseling interventions aimed at strengthening responsiveness, communication, and collaborative coping skills among married partners.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to examine the mediating role of dyadic coping in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction among married adults using structural equation modeling.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional correlational design using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the mediating role of dyadic coping in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction among married adults in Canada. The study was conducted between January and June 2025 across several provinces, including Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec. The target population consisted of legally married individuals who had been living with their spouses for at least one year. Participants were recruited through community organizations, social media platforms, family counseling centers, and online survey distribution networks. Eligibility criteria included being at least 18 years of age, having sufficient proficiency in English or French to complete the questionnaires, and providing informed consent to participate in the study.

A total of 642 married individuals participated in the research. The sample size was determined based on recommendations for SEM studies, which suggest a minimum ratio of 10 to 20 participants per estimated parameter to ensure model stability and adequate statistical power. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 67 years, with a mean age of 41.28 years ($SD = 9.74$). The average duration of marriage was 12.43 years ($SD = 7.86$). Approximately 54.2% of participants were female and 45.8% were male. Participants represented diverse educational, occupational, and socioeconomic backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural composition of the Canadian population.

Measures

Perceived partner responsiveness was assessed using the Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale (PPRS) developed by Reis, Clark, and Holmes (2004). This instrument measures the extent to which individuals perceive their partners as understanding, validating, and caring toward them. The scale consists of 18 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (completely true). Higher scores indicate greater perceived responsiveness from one's partner. The scale evaluates key dimensions of interpersonal responsiveness, including emotional understanding, validation, acceptance, and supportive engagement. Previous studies have demonstrated excellent psychometric properties for the PPRS, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically exceeding .90 and evidence supporting its construct, convergent, and discriminant validity across diverse populations.

Dyadic coping was measured using the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI), developed by Bodenmann (2008). The DCI is a widely used self-report instrument designed to assess how couples cope with stress together. The inventory contains 37 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often). The instrument measures several dimensions of dyadic coping, including stress communication, supportive dyadic coping, delegated dyadic coping, common dyadic coping, and negative dyadic coping. Higher total scores reflect more effective and adaptive dyadic coping processes within the relationship. The DCI has been extensively validated in numerous countries and cultural contexts, demonstrating strong internal consistency, satisfactory test-retest reliability, and robust factorial validity. Previous research has consistently reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .71 to .92 across its subscales.

Marital satisfaction was assessed using the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32), developed by Funk and Rogge (2007). The CSI-32 consists of 32 items designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of relationship satisfaction and marital quality. Items are scored using various response formats and summed to generate a total satisfaction score, with higher scores indicating greater marital satisfaction. The CSI was developed using modern psychometric techniques to improve sensitivity and measurement precision compared with earlier marital satisfaction instruments. Previous studies have demonstrated excellent

reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients typically above .95, as well as strong evidence of convergent validity through significant correlations with other established measures of relationship functioning, commitment, and relationship adjustment.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29 and AMOS version 29. Prior to hypothesis testing, data were screened for missing values, normality, outliers, and multicollinearity. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values, were calculated for all study variables. Pearson correlation analyses were performed to examine bivariate relationships among perceived partner responsiveness, dyadic coping, and marital satisfaction.

The measurement model was first evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the adequacy of the latent constructs and verify the factor structure of each instrument. Composite reliability, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, average variance extracted (AVE), and standardized factor loadings were examined to establish reliability and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the inter-construct correlations.

Following validation of the measurement model, Structural Equation Modeling was employed to test the hypothesized mediation model. Direct, indirect, and total effects were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation procedures. The mediating role of dyadic coping was evaluated using bootstrap resampling with 5,000 bootstrap samples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Mediation was considered statistically significant when the confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero.

Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including the chi-square statistic (χ^2), chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Values of CFI, TLI, IFI, and GFI equal to or greater than .90, RMSEA values below .08, SRMR values below .08, and χ^2/df ratios below 3 were considered indicative of acceptable model fit. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level for all analyses. The final structural model was interpreted based on standardized path coefficients, explained variance (R^2), and the magnitude of direct and indirect effects among the study variables.

Findings and Results

Among the 642 participants included in the final analysis, 348 (54.2%) were female and 294 (45.8%) were male. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 67 years, with a mean age of 41.28 years (SD = 9.74). Regarding educational attainment, 18.4% had completed high school education, 29.6% held a college diploma, 38.9% possessed a bachelor's degree, and 13.1% had completed graduate-level education. The average duration of marriage was 12.43 years (SD = 7.86), ranging from 1 to 38 years. Approximately 71.2% of participants reported having children. In terms of annual household income, 22.7% reported income below CAD 50,000, 41.4% reported income between CAD 50,000 and CAD 100,000, and 35.9% reported income exceeding CAD 100,000 annually. The demographic profile suggested that the sample adequately represented married adults from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds across Canada.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Assessment of Normality for Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived Partner Responsiveness	88.54	14.37	36.00	126.00	-0.48	-0.21
Dyadic Coping	132.68	21.45	71.00	184.00	-0.35	-0.16
Marital Satisfaction	118.92	24.83	42.00	160.00	-0.57	0.11

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and distributional characteristics of the primary study variables. Participants generally reported moderate-to-high levels of perceived partner responsiveness, dyadic coping, and marital satisfaction. The highest mean score was observed for dyadic coping ($M = 132.68, SD = 21.45$), indicating that respondents perceived relatively effective joint coping processes within their marital relationships. Examination of skewness and kurtosis coefficients revealed that all values fell within the acceptable range of ± 2 , suggesting that the distributions approximated normality. Therefore, the assumptions required for maximum likelihood estimation in structural equation modeling were considered satisfied. The relatively moderate standard deviations further indicated adequate variability among participants, supporting the suitability of the data for subsequent correlational and structural analyses.

Table 2. Pearson Correlations, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted for Study Variables

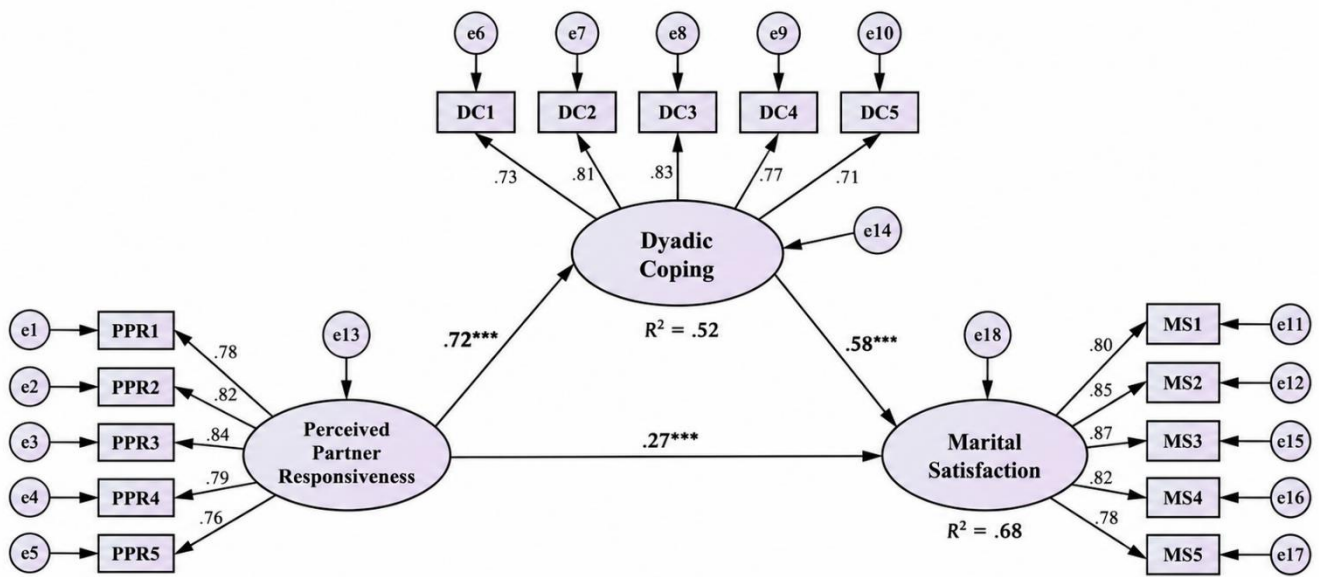
Variable	1	2	3	CR	AVE
Perceived Partner Responsiveness	1			0.93	0.68
Dyadic Coping	0.71**	1		0.91	0.64
Marital Satisfaction	0.69**	0.76**	1	0.95	0.72

As shown in Table 2, significant positive correlations were observed among all study variables. Perceived partner responsiveness demonstrated a strong positive association with dyadic coping ($r = .71, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who perceived their partners as understanding, caring, and responsive were more likely to engage in adaptive dyadic coping processes. Similarly, perceived partner responsiveness was strongly associated with marital satisfaction ($r = .69, p < .001$). The strongest correlation emerged between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction ($r = .76, p < .001$), suggesting that effective joint coping mechanisms play an important role in enhancing relationship quality. The composite reliability values ranged from .91 to .95, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70, thereby indicating excellent internal consistency. Furthermore, average variance extracted values ranged from .64 to .72, surpassing the recommended criterion of .50 and supporting convergent validity of the measurement model.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Value
χ^2	724.83	—
df	341	—
χ^2/df	2.13	< 3.00
CFI	0.96	≥ 0.90
TLI	0.95	≥ 0.90
IFI	0.96	≥ 0.90
GFI	0.92	≥ 0.90
RMSEA	0.042	≤ 0.08
SRMR	0.046	≤ 0.08

The measurement model was evaluated through confirmatory factor analysis before testing the structural relationships among latent constructs. As presented in Table 3, the model demonstrated excellent fit to the observed data. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df = 2.13$) was well below the recommended threshold of 3.00. Incremental fit indices, including CFI (.96), TLI (.95), and IFI (.96), exceeded recommended values, indicating strong correspondence between the hypothesized model and observed covariance matrix. Furthermore, the RMSEA value of .042 and SRMR value of .046 suggested very good model fit with minimal residual error. Collectively, these findings confirmed the adequacy of the measurement model and supported proceeding to the structural model evaluation.



$\chi^2(341) = 724.83$, $\chi^2/df = 2.13$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, IFI = .96, GFI = .92, RMSEA = .042 (90% CI: .035 – .049), SRMR = .046

*** $p < .001$

Note. PPR = Perceived Partner Responsiveness; DC = Dyadic Coping; MS = Marital Satisfaction.

Figure 1. Structural Model of the Mediating Role of Dyadic Coping in the Relationship between Perceived Partner Responsiveness and Marital Satisfaction

Table 4. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects in the Structural Model

Path	Standardized β	SE	t-value	p	95% CI
Perceived Partner Responsiveness → Dyadic Coping	0.72	0.04	16.84	< .001	0.64 – 0.79
Dyadic Coping → Marital Satisfaction	0.58	0.05	11.72	< .001	0.48 – 0.67
Perceived Partner Responsiveness → Marital Satisfaction (Direct)	0.27	0.05	5.48	< .001	0.17 – 0.36
Perceived Partner Responsiveness → Marital Satisfaction (Indirect)	0.42	0.04	10.35	< .001	0.34 – 0.51
Perceived Partner Responsiveness → Marital Satisfaction (Total Effect)	0.69	0.05	14.97	< .001	0.60 – 0.77

The structural model results are presented in Table 4. Perceived partner responsiveness exerted a substantial positive effect on dyadic coping ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < .001$), indicating that spouses who perceived greater responsiveness from their partners were significantly more likely to engage in collaborative and supportive coping strategies. Dyadic coping, in turn, demonstrated a strong positive effect on marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < .001$), highlighting its importance as a relational resource that promotes positive marital outcomes. The direct effect of perceived partner responsiveness on marital satisfaction remained statistically significant after accounting for the mediator ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .001$), suggesting partial mediation. Bootstrap analysis with 5,000 resamples revealed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), as the confidence interval did not include zero. The magnitude of the indirect effect exceeded the direct effect, indicating that dyadic coping represented a substantial mechanism through which perceived partner responsiveness influenced marital satisfaction. The final structural model explained 52% of the variance in dyadic coping and 68% of the variance in marital satisfaction, demonstrating strong explanatory power. Overall, the findings supported the hypothesized mediation model and indicated that dyadic coping partially mediated the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction among married adults in Canada.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined the mediating role of dyadic coping in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction among married adults in Canada. The findings supported the hypothesized structural model and demonstrated that perceived partner responsiveness exerted both direct and indirect effects on marital satisfaction through dyadic coping. Specifically, perceived partner responsiveness was positively associated with dyadic coping, dyadic coping was positively associated with marital satisfaction, and dyadic coping partially mediated the relationship between responsiveness and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the structural model accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in both dyadic coping and marital satisfaction, indicating that the proposed framework provides a meaningful explanation of relationship functioning among married couples.

One of the primary findings of this study was that perceived partner responsiveness was strongly and positively associated with marital satisfaction. This finding suggests that individuals who perceive their spouses as understanding, caring, validating, and emotionally supportive are more likely to experience satisfaction within their marriages. The result is consistent with theoretical perspectives emphasizing responsiveness as a fundamental component of intimacy and relational security. When partners perceive that their emotional needs are recognized and valued, they are more likely to develop trust, commitment, emotional closeness, and relational confidence, all of which contribute to marital satisfaction. The finding aligns closely with previous research demonstrating that perceived responsiveness serves as a critical relational resource that promotes positive relationship outcomes. Kumar and Singh reported that perceived partner responsiveness played a significant mediating role in the development of couple identity among spouses, highlighting the importance of feeling understood and supported within intimate relationships (Kumar & Singh, 2024). Similarly, Fivecoat et al. found that perceived partner responsiveness was associated with important emotional and physiological indicators of relationship functioning among married couples, suggesting that responsiveness influences both subjective and objective dimensions of marital well-being (Fivecoat et al., 2024).

The positive association between responsiveness and marital satisfaction may also be explained through attachment and interpersonal process frameworks. Responsive partners create an environment characterized by emotional safety and acceptance, allowing individuals to disclose vulnerabilities, seek support, and engage in authentic interactions without fear of rejection. Such experiences foster secure relational bonds and increase positive evaluations of the relationship. The present findings are further supported by studies emphasizing the role of communication quality and interpersonal understanding in marital functioning. For example, Körün et al. demonstrated strong associations among communication satisfaction, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction, indicating that positive interpersonal exchanges contribute substantially to relationship quality (Körün et al., 2026). Likewise, Seo found that communication contributes to couple satisfaction through intimacy, suggesting that emotionally supportive interactions create pathways toward greater marital fulfillment (Seo, 2025). Together, these findings reinforce the argument that perceived responsiveness constitutes a foundational component of healthy marital relationships.

Another important finding was the significant positive relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and dyadic coping. Participants who reported greater responsiveness from their spouses also reported more effective dyadic coping strategies. This finding suggests that when partners feel understood, valued, and emotionally supported, they become more willing and capable of engaging in collaborative efforts to manage stress and challenges. Responsive interactions may facilitate open communication regarding stressors, encourage mutual support, and strengthen confidence in the couple's ability to

confront difficulties together. Consequently, perceived responsiveness appears to serve as an important relational precursor to adaptive dyadic coping.

This finding is consistent with broader relationship literature emphasizing the importance of supportive interpersonal processes in fostering adaptive relationship functioning. Research has shown that positive relational experiences contribute to greater connectedness, shared engagement, and constructive interactions between partners (Park & Harris, 2025a). Similarly, studies examining harmonious marital relationships have identified mutual understanding, support, and cooperation as essential characteristics of successful marriages (Idulfilastri et al., 2024). The present findings extend this literature by suggesting that perceived responsiveness may represent one of the mechanisms through which supportive relationships facilitate effective dyadic coping. When partners perceive one another as emotionally available and responsive, they may be more likely to communicate stress openly and engage in collaborative problem-solving, thereby strengthening their capacity for adaptive coping.

The results also revealed a strong positive association between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction. Couples who reported more effective dyadic coping demonstrated higher levels of marital satisfaction, indicating that collaborative stress management is a critical determinant of relationship quality. This finding is highly consistent with the systemic perspective of intimate relationships, which emphasizes that stress affects both partners and that successful adaptation often depends on collective rather than individual coping efforts. Effective dyadic coping promotes emotional support, enhances relationship cohesion, and reduces the negative consequences of stress on relationship functioning. Consequently, couples who manage challenges together may experience stronger emotional bonds and more positive evaluations of their marriages.

This result aligns closely with findings reported by Novianti et al., who demonstrated that dyadic coping played a protective role in mitigating the negative effects of financial strain on marital satisfaction and quality of life (Novianti et al., 2024). Likewise, Yuan found that supportive spousal processes buffered the adverse effects of negative life events and contributed to psychological well-being among older adults (Yuan, 2025). Similar conclusions can be drawn from studies examining interpersonal emotion regulation and relationship adjustment. Temiz and Elsharnouby reported that adaptive interpersonal emotion regulation strategies were associated with both relationship satisfaction and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic (Temiz & Elsharnouby, 2022). These findings collectively suggest that adaptive relational processes serve as important protective resources that enable couples to maintain satisfaction despite experiencing external and internal stressors.

The most significant contribution of the present study lies in the finding that dyadic coping partially mediated the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and marital satisfaction. The indirect effect was substantial and statistically significant, indicating that responsiveness influences marital satisfaction not only directly but also through its impact on collaborative coping processes. This finding supports the proposition that adaptive relational mechanisms play a crucial role in translating positive interpersonal experiences into favorable relationship outcomes. In practical terms, spouses who perceive greater responsiveness from their partners appear more likely to engage in supportive and cooperative coping behaviors, which subsequently enhance marital satisfaction.

The mediational finding is highly consistent with the Vulnerability–Stress–Adaptation framework, which posits that adaptive relationship processes mediate the effects of interpersonal experiences and contextual stressors on marital outcomes (Ross et al., 2022). According to this model, positive relational characteristics contribute to satisfaction largely because they facilitate adaptive responses to stress and relational challenges. The present results provide empirical support for this proposition by demonstrating that dyadic coping serves as an important adaptive mechanism linking responsiveness and satisfaction. Similar mediational processes have been identified in other areas of relationship research. For example, Kim and Woo reported indirect effects of self-differentiation and mentalization on marital satisfaction through family-of-origin health

(Kim & Woo, 2025). Ekinçi and Canpolat demonstrated that cognitive flexibility mediated the relationship between romantic relationship experiences and relationship attitudes (Ekinçi & Canpolat, 2025). Seo identified intimacy as a mediator between communication and couple satisfaction (Seo, 2025). Collectively, these studies support the notion that relationship outcomes frequently emerge through intervening psychological and interpersonal mechanisms rather than through simple direct associations.

The partial nature of the mediation observed in this study is also theoretically meaningful. Although dyadic coping explained a substantial portion of the relationship between responsiveness and marital satisfaction, a significant direct effect remained. This suggests that perceived responsiveness contributes to marital satisfaction through multiple pathways. In addition to facilitating collaborative coping, responsiveness may directly enhance emotional intimacy, trust, commitment, security, and relational confidence. Previous research has demonstrated that relationship satisfaction is influenced by a diverse range of interpersonal processes, including communication quality, commitment, consensus, need fulfillment, and positive interaction patterns (Park & Harris, 2025a, 2025b). Therefore, dyadic coping likely represents one of several mechanisms through which responsiveness influences marital outcomes.

The findings of the present study can also be interpreted within the broader context of marital development and relational resilience. Research has consistently shown that marital satisfaction is influenced by multiple personal, interpersonal, and contextual factors, including family-of-origin experiences, childhood adversity, attachment patterns, communication quality, and psychological well-being (Li et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2025; Sokar, 2024). Despite these influences, couples who develop adaptive relational processes often demonstrate greater resilience and relationship stability. For instance, relational communication has been shown to moderate the effects of family adversity on marital satisfaction (Li et al., 2022), while childhood experiences influence relationship quality through multiple mediating pathways (Sokar, 2024). The present findings contribute to this literature by identifying perceived partner responsiveness and dyadic coping as complementary protective factors that strengthen marital functioning.

Furthermore, the current results are consistent with recent evidence indicating that relationship satisfaction is closely linked to broader indicators of psychological and social well-being. Marital satisfaction has been associated with mental health, life satisfaction, personal well-being, and social adjustment across diverse cultural contexts (Arsa et al., 2025; Ran & Cinamon, 2022). Research examining marital adjustment has also highlighted the importance of personality characteristics, self-differentiation, communication patterns, and relational commitment in shaping relationship outcomes (Genç, 2026; Gyeong, 2026; Kim, 2026). By demonstrating the central role of responsiveness and dyadic coping, the present study adds to the growing body of evidence suggesting that supportive interpersonal dynamics constitute essential foundations for both relational and individual well-being.

Overall, the findings indicate that marital satisfaction is strongly influenced by how spouses perceive one another's responsiveness and by their ability to cope collaboratively with stress. Couples who feel understood, accepted, and supported appear more capable of engaging in adaptive dyadic coping processes, which subsequently enhance relationship satisfaction. These results provide important empirical support for contemporary theories of relationship functioning and highlight the value of examining interpersonal and coping processes simultaneously within a comprehensive structural framework.

One limitation of the present study is its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal inferences regarding the relationships among perceived partner responsiveness, dyadic coping, and marital satisfaction. Although the structural model was theoretically grounded and demonstrated excellent fit, longitudinal studies are needed to establish temporal ordering and causal pathways. Another limitation concerns the reliance on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability, common method variance, and subjective response biases. Additionally, the sample consisted of married adults from Canada,

which may limit the generalizability of the findings to unmarried couples, newlyweds, or individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Future research should employ longitudinal and dyadic research designs to examine how responsiveness, dyadic coping, and marital satisfaction evolve over time. Researchers may also investigate potential moderating variables such as gender, cultural background, attachment style, duration of marriage, and socioeconomic status. Additional studies could explore other mediating mechanisms, including intimacy, trust, commitment, forgiveness, emotional regulation, and communication quality. Cross-cultural investigations would further enhance understanding of whether the observed relationships operate similarly across diverse sociocultural contexts.

The findings have several practical implications for relationship education, counseling, and marital therapy. Couple interventions should emphasize the development of responsive communication patterns that help partners feel understood, valued, and emotionally supported. Practitioners may also focus on strengthening dyadic coping skills by teaching couples how to communicate stress effectively, provide mutual support, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Relationship enrichment programs can incorporate exercises designed to enhance empathy, emotional responsiveness, and shared coping strategies. By fostering both perceived responsiveness and dyadic coping, counselors and educators may contribute to stronger marital relationships, greater relationship satisfaction, and improved long-term relational stability.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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