Abstract

Background: Previous studies have provided mixed evidence in support of the structure of Bartholomew’s attachment framework. The current study examined the comparability of the correlations among the attachment prototypes as well as the underlying factor structure of the Relationship Questionnaire in independent samples of Spanish and American young adults. Method: Participants were 547 students from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and 1425 from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro who completed the Relationship Questionnaire. Results: Secure attachment was negatively correlated with fearful attachment, as was preoccupied attachment with dismissing attachment. The secure-fearful association in the American sample represented a medium effect size, whereas the remaining correlations represented small effect sizes. Except for the secure-fearful association, the correlations among prototypes were comparable in magnitude across samples. A principal components analysis yielded two factors that explained similar amounts of variance in the two samples. The pattern of loadings was relatively comparable in both samples; however, it was not entirely consistent with the theoretical model. Conclusions: The findings provided only partial support to the structure of the theoretical framework invoked. We discuss an alternative interpretation of the two factors, as well as further measurement considerations and directions for future research.

Keywords

Attachment, Relationship Questionnaire, dimensions, prototypes, factor structure, cross-cultural.