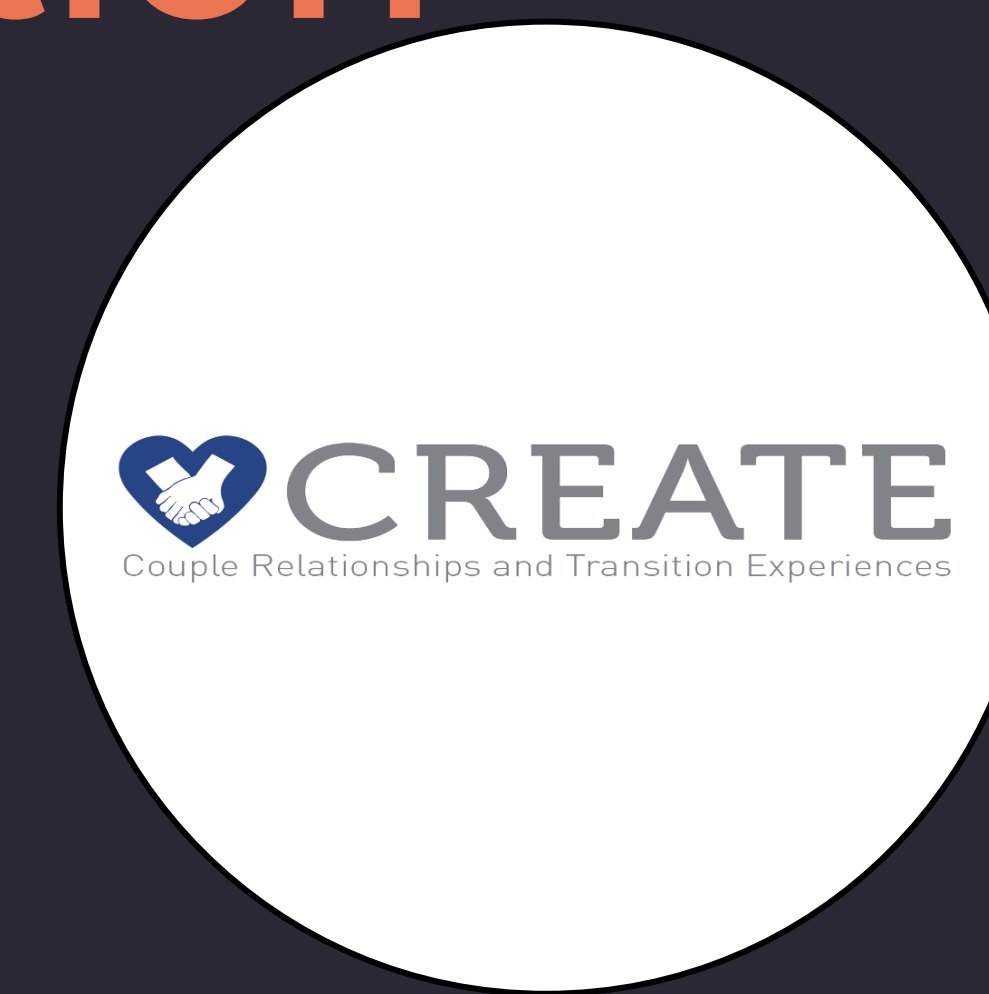




Honoring Otherness: Religiosity and Marital Connection Through Empathy and Commitment



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BACKGROUND

Martin Buber's Dialogical Philosophy provides a possible pathway about what might be mediating the association between religiosity and marital connection. Individuals can truly connect when they honor the other as a whole and legitimate being, in an "I-Thou" relationship. Commitment and empathy might play a mediating role between religiosity and marital connection.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Religiosity will work through commitment and empathy and be associated with higher levels of marital connection as operationalized by relationship satisfaction and harmonious sexual passion

H2: The association between religiosity working through commitment and empathy to predict higher levels of marital connection will hold up over time.

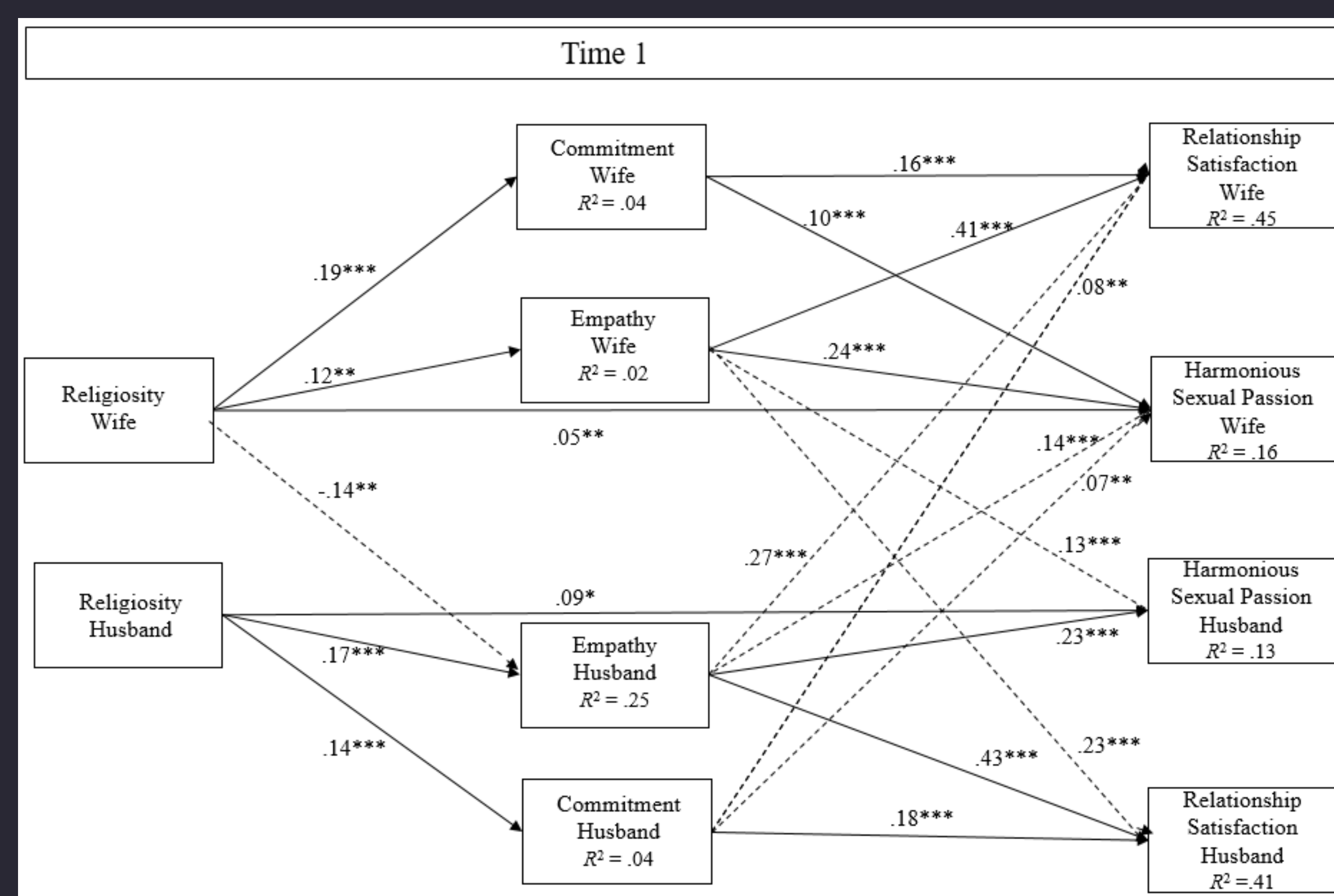
METHODS

Participants: 2,187 couples were recruited through a nationwide two-stage cluster stratification. Data were collected through the CREATE project conducted by the BYU School of Family Life.

Measures:

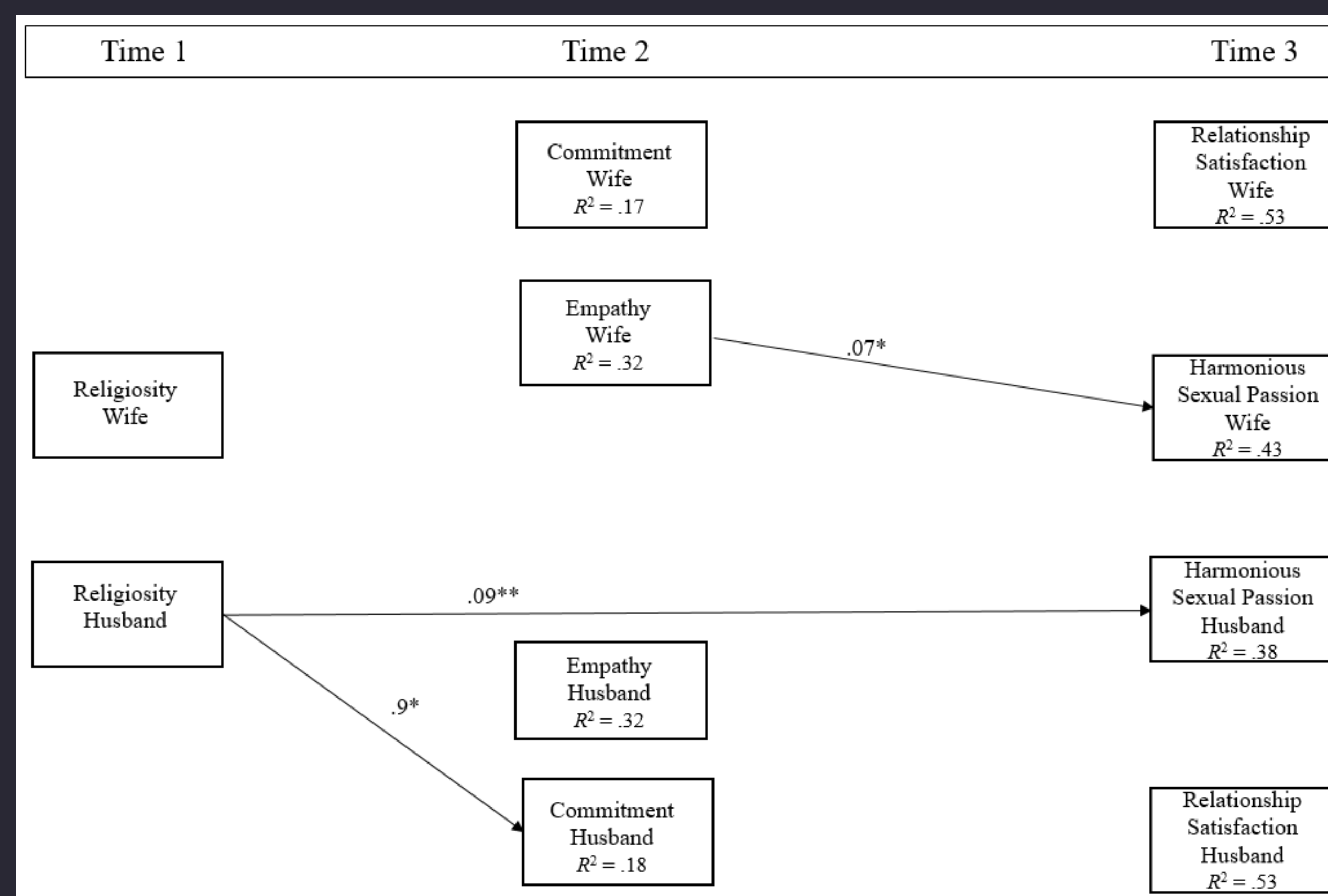
- Religiosity (Busby, et al., 2001) $\alpha = W .90, H = .91$
- Empathy (Busby et al., 2010) $\alpha = W .92, H .90$
- Commitment (Stanley & Markham, 1992) $\alpha = W .80, H .82$
- Harmonious Sexual Passion (Busby et al., 2018) $\alpha = W, .90 H .90$
- Relationship Satisfaction (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) $\alpha = W .95, H .95$

Analyses: We estimated an APIMeM path model to investigate the effects of religiosity on relationship satisfaction and harmonious sexual passion, through commitment and empathy. We then estimated a dynamic longitudinal mediation model. Age, race, and education were used as control variables. All analyses were conducted in StataSE 15 and MPlus 8.



Concurrent APIMeM Model

Religious couples' empathy and commitment are linked to feelings of marital connection



Dynamic Longitudinal Mediation

RESULTS

- Religiosity was associated with increased commitment and empathy for husbands and wives.
- Commitment mediated relationship satisfaction for husbands and wives in a concurrent setting.
- Empathy mediated harmonious sexual passion for husbands and wives in a concurrent setting.
- There is a significant direct effect between religiosity and harmonious sexual passion for husbands and wives.
- Very few of these effects held up over time.

DISCUSSION

Martin Buber's dialogical I-Thou philosophy of human relationships provides a framework through which we can examine the associations between religiosity and marital connection.

- Buber asserted that the most important work we do as human beings is in relation to one another.
- Religion also encourages quality of connection, and can enhance marriages by imparting marital meanings.
- Commitment and empathy partially mediate the relationship between religiosity and marital connection.
- These effects fall away in a longitudinal model.
- Individuals need to keep these virtues ever-present in their relationships to see a partner in this powerful, loving, and honoring way.



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