

Influence of socioeconomic status and mindset on individual's marital satisfaction during the national lockdown

Joy Kevin^{1*}, Nesrin Risla²

ABSTRACT

The nationwide lockdown announced due to COVID-19 has increased social isolation and kept people confined to their homes. The effect of lockdown may not be the same for everyone, some are happy with their families at home whereas some find it difficult. In some instances, spending more time together with their partners may lead to the arising of different interpersonal problems due to financial and psychological issues produced as a result of lockdown. The purpose of the research is to understand the influence of socioeconomic status and mindset on the marital satisfaction of the individuals in the period of lockdown. A total sample of 172 married individuals, between the age 25 to 60, from Thrissur district of Kerala, is considered as the sample population. The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4), Kuppaswamy's socioeconomic status scale (2019) and Growth mindset scale are used to measure the marital satisfaction, socioeconomic status and type of mindset of the individuals respectively. Simple linear regression, One-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation are used to evaluate the data for statistical significance. The research concludes that there is an inversely proportional relationship between marital satisfaction and fixed mindset. It is also observed that lower socioeconomic status could result in lower marital satisfaction. Type of mindset is also a factor that influences the marital satisfaction of people.

Keywords: *Marital Satisfaction, Socioeconomic Status, Fixed Mindset, Growth Mindset, Type of Mindset, National Lockdown*

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected all over the world including developed nations like the USA, UK, Italy and others including China and India. The Indian government announced a nationwide lockdown on 24th March 2020 for an upcoming 21 days duration, later extending it up to 3rd of May. India is being praised for its wise move as controlling community transmission is the only measure that is considered appropriate against the pandemic currently.

The lockdown resulted in a variety of sociological and psychological consequences due to disruption in daily lives. Humans, being social animals, strive for having connections with others and getting isolated from society during this lockdown period can be traumatic for

¹3rd B.Sc. Student, Department of Psychology, Christ College Irinjalakuda, Kerala, India.

²3rd B.Sc. Student, Department of Psychology, Christ College Irinjalakuda, Kerala, India.

*[Responding Author](#)

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some, leading to psychological issues like anxiety, depression, stress and aggression to name a few. "Changes in the employment situation due to the COVID-19 crisis or the lack of employment activity were related to higher depression scores. The uncertainty about the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, together with the specific features of the job market in Spain, may play a role in this result. Also, the acquaintance with a COVID-19 patient in severe condition or death was related to higher anxiety scores. Thus, relatives of "COVID-19 patients may be prone to suffer anxiety disorders and develop future depression problems as the clinical evolution of their acquaintances extends in time" (Paula Odriozola-González et al., 2020).

A person's subjective feeling of specific elements in his/her marital relation including roles, privacy preferences, prosperities, interpersonal relations and reciprocities, inter marital dispute factors, motivations, understanding of the spouse's mood and attribution can be termed as marital satisfaction. It can be said that one is pleased in marriage when that person reaches one's objectives in marital life. Partners' interaction and the degree of consensus between one's anticipation about marriage and what benefits that marriage gives brings about marital satisfaction. A healthy marriage is the most honouring experience life can offer. It helps a person to feel adequate, approved, wanted and complete to a degree which is impossible in other forms of relationships that humans have. In an international study conducted in 33 countries concluded that most Indians perceive to have better than average marital satisfaction than others around them (Sorokowski, 2017). In cases of couples who are unsatisfied in married relationships and experience stressors, research shows that this negativity usually affects their mental health (Beach et al. 1994), physical health (Grafova, 2007) and often lead to ineffective parenting (Cowan and Cowan, 2005).

Marital quality and stability can be affected by low income or material hardship. Being at home is not the same for all. People from low-income families find it hard to stay in single-room houses. Marital relationships are also affected because couples before lockdown spend less time together and they ignore many of their partner's irritating characteristics. Now they spend the whole time together and some may not be able to tolerate certain characteristics and get provoked even for slight mistakes. As China works to contain the COVID-19 with emergency quarantines, one city is reporting a record-high number of divorce requests. Officials report it to be likely due to couples who have been kept in close quarters for long periods of time without access to the outside world (Landsverk, G. 2020). Research in marital relations suggests that common couples with lower incomes have lower levels of marital quality (Brody et al. 1994; Rogers and DeBoer 2001). Low-income individuals tend to experience high tensions and stressors due to economic insecurity that may affect their capacity to respond to family and social relationship issues. They may become susceptible to "family chaos" and dissatisfaction and disruption in relationships due to this lessened ability (Dyk 2004).

Mindset plays a major role in the marital satisfaction of an individual. According to implicit theory (Dweck, 2000), there are two kinds of people, individuals with a fixed mindset, who believe in relatively stable intelligence and other traits, and individuals with a growth mindset who believe in the concept that effort has the ability to change the basic traits of an individual. This theory tries to prove that individuals with a strong growth mindset have much higher potential to overcome challenges faced in life and be successful (Claro et al, 2016; O'Rourke et al, 2014). The positive reinforcements like praise from parents and teachers are assumed to be a significant factor that helps in the development of mindset in

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children. Children who get positive reinforcement for perseverance and effort tend to develop a higher growth mindset than children who get positive reinforcement for intelligence and abilities. People with destiny(fixed) mindset are more impulsive and passionate, fall into relationships easier which are fiery, intimate and intense. They are easily put off by their partner's faults because these faults are considered as indicators that they are not soulmates. If their relation is against their preconceived ideas that have been fixed to be their destiny, they usually end their relationship. They get into more relationships in quest of finding the right one. Couples who both have a destiny mindset believe they are made for each other and are unhappy in their relationship. Whereas those with a growth mindset work on building a long and stable relationship with the ones they have found. They do more to appease their partners. When they encounter things, they don't like about their partner, they usually learn to love or accept it as part of a healthy relationship. They have fewer partners before settling down.

Objectives

The study was conducted to understand the influence of socioeconomic status and mindset on the marital satisfaction of the individuals in the period of lockdown.

Need and significance of the study

The current study tried to understand the influence of mindset and socioeconomic status on marital satisfaction during the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown. The research will be immensely helpful for administrators and policymakers to understand the factors influencing marital satisfaction in families so that they could develop policies that would reduce the negative effects of the variables. It helps couples in self-reflection as they can understand the causes of variations in their marital satisfaction. The study helps couples to externally attribute for the marital problems so that they could work for effective solutions.

Hypotheses

1. There exists no significant relation between growth mindset and marital satisfaction.
2. There exists no significant relation between fixed mindset and marital satisfaction.
3. There exists no significant effect of socioeconomic status upon marital satisfaction.
4. There exists no significant effect of the type of mindset and marital satisfaction.
5. There exists no predictability between fixed mindset and marital satisfaction.

Limitation of the study

The sample was collected from a limited geographical area only and thus this may not be an adequate representation of the general population. Due to the small sample size, the results could not be generalized. The majority of the sample population fall under middle-class families. The random sampling method was not used.

Sample

A total sample size of 172 married individuals aged between 25 to 60 was considered from Thrissur district for the current investigation. 90 among them were those married for less than 10 years, 36 were married for 10-20 years and 46 were married for more than 20 years.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

The Couple Satisfaction Index: The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4) is an abbreviated version of CSI-32 that measures relationship satisfaction. It was developed by Funk, J.L. &

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Rogge, R.D. It consists of 4 items with positive wording. For the first item, it is rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 6 (perfect) and for the remaining three items, on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all true) to 5 (all of the time). To score, responses are simply summed of all items. The total scores range from 0 to 2 and higher scores indicate higher levels of relationship satisfaction. CSI-4 scores falling below 13.5 suggest notable relationship satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the CSI-4 is 0.846. CSI scales indicate strong convergent validity when considering other satisfaction measures and have construct validity when considering anchor scales of satisfaction's nomological net.

Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale: The Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale is a well-established scale to measure socioeconomic status. It was initially developed by Kuppuswamy in 1976 and consists of 3 items. The scale was updated in 2019 by Rabbanie Tariq Wani. Each item has a separate scoring pattern. The scores range from 3 to 29 and classify the population into five SES, as upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper lower and lower classes.

The Growth Mindset Scale: The Growth Mindset Scale, originally published by Dweck in 1999 consists of 8 items. It is a positive scale with response options used as Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Items 3,5,7,8 measures growth mindset and items 1,2,4,6 measures fixed mindset. The internal validity Cronbach's alpha was high ($\alpha = 0.93$) for the 8-item scale. Data from six validation studies report the reliability of $\alpha = 0.62$ and test-retest reliability of $r = 0.70$ over a 1-week period.

Procedure

Married Individuals between 25 to 60 from Thrissur district of Kerala were considered as the sample population. Convenience sampling was used to collect samples using Google form through the internet. The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4), Kuppuswamy's socioeconomic status scales (2019) and Growth mindset scale were used to measure marital satisfaction, socioeconomic status and type of mindset respectively. Simple linear regression, One-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation were used to evaluate the data for statistical significance.

The aim of the study is to determine the influence of income and mindset on the marital satisfaction of individuals during the period of social isolation. The Pearson correlation was used to assess the degree of marital satisfaction between individuals' fixed mindset and growth mindset. The differences in marital satisfaction among individuals lying in different socio-economic status and with different mindset were analyzed using one way ANOVA. Simple linear regression was used to understand the predictive nature of the fixed mindset on marital satisfaction among individuals. It also observed that most of the individuals who were selected for the study were satisfied with their marriage.

Table No. 1 Pearson's correlation between Marital Satisfaction, Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1, Marital Satisfaction	20.01	4.259	-		
2, Fixed Mindset	11.09	3.52	-0.281**	-	
3, Growth Mindset	14.21	3.183	-0.118	-0.312**	-

N=172. **p<.01

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Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relation between marital satisfaction with fixed mindset and growth mindset. It can be concluded from Table 1 that there exists a relation between fixed mindset and marital satisfaction ($r(172) = -0.281^{**}$, $p = .001$), such that people with higher marital satisfaction (Mean=20.01, SD= 4.259) reported lower fixed mindset (Mean= 11.09, SD= 3.52) and vice-versa. The correlation result shows that there is a significant weak relation between marital satisfaction and fixed mindset of people. It can also be deduced that marital satisfaction and growth mindset (Mean = 14.21, SD = 3.183) have no significant relation between each other ($r(172) = -0.118$, $p = 0.122$). Conclusion for the analysis could be due to the basic nature of fixed mindset individuals, they are much keen in the beliefs of constancy. People with fixed mindset hold a particular set of beliefs about their life partners, the lockdown led individuals to be more observant about their partners. People with a fixed mindset attribute conflicts to internal factors and tend to view these conflicts as signs of failure of relationship (Knee et al., 2003; Franiuk et al.2002). The idea of a fixed mindset is to share a perfect relationship, if a relationship is meant to be it will stay or else fall apart, there is no need of putting efforts to make it better. During lockdown couples are spending more time than usual, so they seem to become irritated by the characteristics that were previously ignored. Those with a fixed mindset find it more difficult to adjust than others, leading to an inversely proportional relation between fixed mindset and marital satisfaction.

Table No. 2 Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA of Marital Satisfaction with socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status	N	M	SD	F-value	Sig.
Upper class	64	20.78	4.406		
Upper middle class	84	19.98	3.495	5.274	0.01
Lower middle class	22	17.45	5.492		

The descriptive statistics associated with marital satisfaction across different socioeconomic status are reported in table 2. From the table, it can be observed that individuals who are in lower middle socioeconomic class have the lowest mean marital satisfaction ($M = 17.45$) and people who are in upper socioeconomic class have the highest mean marital satisfaction ($M = 20.78$). Further, the homogeneity of variances was also considered on the basis of Levene's F test, $F(2, 170) = 3.506$, $p = .032$. A between-group ANOVA was performed to determine the effect of marital satisfaction on their socioeconomic status and it yielded a statistically significant effect ($F(2,170) = 5.274$, $p = 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.059$). Eta square was calculated to determine the effect size of the ANOVA and it was concluded that there is a weak relation between the variables. There is a significant difference in the marital satisfaction of an individual when the socioeconomic status is considered. Games-Howell post-hoc tests were administered following a Statistically significant ANOVA (Hayter, 1989). Post-hoc tests couldn't find a significant relation between individual variables. The analysis concludes that even though there is a relation between socioeconomic status and marital satisfaction there is no significant difference between different categories of socioeconomic classes and marital satisfaction. From the analysis, it could not be conclusively concluded that there exists a sufficient relation between socioeconomic status and marital satisfaction. Conger and Elder (1994) found that economic suffering brings economic tension that often generates ill-tempered and traumatic psychological states that may cause lower degrees of marital quality. Models of family stress were developed by Conger et al. (1990) that consist of economic tension that may create more bitterness and

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less comfort in interactions between couples. Marital problems are reported in families where younger husbands have lower income, says Amato and Rogers (1997). From couples of rural areas Brody et al. (1994) established that high-income levels have a link with lower degrees of marital disputes. People are jobless due to lockdown and they are facing unprecedented economic hardships. Economically stable individuals are able to cope with this situation, whereas those who are in lower middle class and lower class find it difficult to sustain. They tend to project their problems caused by this economic hardship into their interpersonal relationships. This may be the reason for low marital satisfaction in low income families.

Table No. 3 Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA of Marital Satisfaction with Type of Mindset

Mindset	N	M	SD	F-value	Sig.
Growth mindset	112	19.8	4.006		
Fixed mindset	42	19.29	5.048	5.443	0.01
Equal growth and fixed mindset	18	23	2.275		

The descriptive statistics associated with marital satisfaction across different mindset are reported in table 3. From the table, it can be observed that individuals with a fixed mindset have the lowest mean marital satisfaction (M = 19.29) and people with Equal growth and fixed mindset have the highest mean marital satisfaction (M = 20.78). Further, the homogeneity of variances was also considered on the basis of Levene's F test, $F(2, 170) = 5.886, p = .003$. A between-group ANOVA was performed to determine the effect of marital satisfaction on their type of mindset and it yielded a statistically significant effect ($F(2,170) = 5.443, p = 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.061$). Eta square was calculated to determine the effect size of the ANOVA and it was concluded that there is a moderately strong relation between the variables. Games-Howell post-hoc tests were administered following a statistically significant ANOVA (Hayter, 1989). Post-hoc test finds a statistically significant mean difference between individuals who have an equal ratio of growth and fixed mindset compared with people who are high at growth mindset ($M = -3.196, p = .01$) and with the people who are high at fixed mindset ($M = -3.714, p = .010$). The mean difference between people with an equal ratio of growth and fixed mindset and those with growth or fixed mindset on marital satisfaction is approximately 10%. Even though there is a significant difference in the marital satisfaction of an individual when the mindset is considered, the sample size of each variable is comparatively small. People who strongly have a fixed mindset are likely to set short term dating goals and put less effort into developing relationships and thus they feel less content with their relationships. They take the initiative to end their relationships.

Table No. 4 Simple linear regression between Marital Satisfaction with Fixed mindset

Variables	R	R ²	Change R ²	β	F value	Sig.
X = Marital satisfaction	0.281	0.079	0.074	-0.281	14.567	0.01
Y = Fixed mindset						

To determine the ability to predict marital satisfaction based on their fixed mindset, simple linear regression was calculated. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1,171) =$

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14.567, $p=.01$), with an R^2 of .079 between marital satisfaction and fixed mindset. Individuals predicted marital satisfaction is equal to $23.783 - 0.340$ when the fixed mindset is measured. Individuals' average marital satisfaction decreased .34 for each unit of a fixed mindset. From this result it's clear that an individual's fixed mindset can predict marital satisfaction with a percentile score of 8%.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that there is an inversely proportional relationship between marital satisfaction and fixed mindset. It also shows that lower socioeconomic status could result in lower marital satisfaction. Type of mindset is also a factor that influences marital satisfaction of people.

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Conflict of Interest

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