



# Marital Satisfaction, Social Support and Mental Health among Dual-Income Couples

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## ABSTRACT

The increasing occurrence of dual-income couples has changed family dynamics, particularly in modern Indian context. While dual incomes contribute to financial stability and enhanced living standards of life, they also initiate challenges related to work–family balance, role conflict, and psychological factors. The present study tried to study the relationship among marital satisfaction, perceived social support, and mental health among dual-income couples in North U.P.

A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design was used in the research. The sample consisted of dual-income married individuals selected through purposive sampling. Standardized instruments, including the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), were utilized for collecting data. Suitable statistics (descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, regression, and mediation analysis) was used to analyze the data of the study.

The findings showed a significant positive relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health. Social support was also positively associated with both marital satisfaction and mental health. Further analysis showed that social support partially mediates the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health. The study also indicated highlights the critical role of emotional and instrumental support in maintaining marital coherence and mental health among dual-income couples.

**Keywords:** Marital Satisfaction, Social Support, Mental Health, Psychological Well-Being, Marital Relationship

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, family structures have gone through radical change with the quick rise of dual-income couples. Economic pressures, educational achievement, and changing gender norms have contributed to an increasing number of households in which both partners are engaged in paid employment. In countries such as India, this change reveals not only financial necessity but also increasing aspirations for independence and equality within marriage. While dual incomes increase economic stability and living standards, they also facilitate new challenges related to balancing work and family responsibilities.

Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their marital relationship, including emotional closeness, communication, trust, and conflict resolution. In dual-income couples, marital satisfaction may be inclined by factors such as time restrictions, work-related stress, and the just distribution of household responsibilities. When partners successfully manage these demands and maintain open communication, marital satisfaction promises to be higher. Conversely, continuous stress and imbalance can lead to dissatisfaction and stress in the marital relationship.

Social support plays a vital role in maintaining both marital status and individual well-being. It incorporates emotional, informational, and contributory assistance received from significant others, including spouses, family members, friends, and colleagues. Among dual-income couples, partner support is very important, as it directly



influences cooperation in daily tasks, emotional bonding, and the ability to cope with stressful situations. Suitable social support can facilitate marital satisfaction by raising mutual understanding and shared responsibility.

Mental health, defined as a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, is closely associated with both marital satisfaction and social support. Dual-income couples often face various role demands, which can result in work–family conflict, fatigue, and psychological distress. However, understanding relationships and satisfying marriages can safeguard these negative effects, encouraging resilience and overall psychological well-being. Individuals who perceive such kind of social support and experience satisfying marital relationships are more likely to show lower levels of stress.

The interrelationship among marital satisfaction, social support, and mental health is very much important in the context of dual-income couples. While each variable individually contributes to psychological well-being, their combined impact provides a more complete understanding of family dynamics. Social support may act as an intervening factor through which marital satisfaction influences mental health, helping individuals cope more effectively with stress and improving psychological outcomes.

Despite the growing occurrence of dual-income households, especially in urban Indian settings (Northern U.P), there is a relative shortage of integrated research studying these three variables all together.

Therefore, the present study tries to study the relationships among marital satisfaction, social support and mental health among dual-income couples. By examining these inter-dynamics, the present study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide insights for mental health professionals, policymakers.

## **Review of studies**

Current studies report that marital satisfaction in dual-income couples is influenced by both individual and contextual factors. Abid et al. (2022) showed that neuroticism was negatively associated with marital satisfaction, while perceived social support played a central facilitating role.

Yoo and Lim (2020) showed that higher levels of work–family conflict significantly decreased marital satisfaction. Effective coping strategies, including seeking social support, helped defend these negative effects. He also said that marital satisfaction is not only dependent on interpersonal dynamics but is also shaped by external stressors such as work-related demands.

Social support has constantly been acknowledged as a key factor influencing marital status. Abid et al. (2022) indicated that social support fully intervened the relationship between personality traits and marital satisfaction, highlighting its central role in relationship functioning.

Ramesh and Ajayan (2025) found in their study that complex relationship, where higher dependence on external social support was sometimes associated with essential marital distress. This shows that social support is generally beneficial but the nature and source of support play an important role in decisive marital consequences.

Mental health among dual-income couples has been extensively studied in relation to stress, role conflict, and lifestyle factors. Research shows that individuals handling multiple roles often experience higher levels of stress and psychological strain.

Deng et al. (2024) found that addictive use of short-videos negatively affected marital satisfaction by reducing quality interactions time between partners. This indicated the role of life-style factors in influencing marital relationships and mental health.

Yoo and Lim (2020) indicated in their study that work–family conflict negatively influences marital satisfaction, on the other hand coping strategies (such as problem-solving and seeking social support) moderate its effects.

Recent Indian research highlights unique socio-cultural dynamics affecting dual-income couples. Ramesh and Ajayan (2025) showed in their study that work-related status alone does not determine marital quality; rather, communication patterns, coping strategies, and emotional support are more influential.



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## Objectives of the Study

There were five objectives in the present study:

1. To study the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health among dual-income couples.
2. To explore the relationship between social support and marital satisfaction among dual-income couples.
3. To study the relationship between social support and mental health among dual-income couples.
4. To assess the predictive role of marital satisfaction on mental health among dual-income couples.
5. To measure the mediating role of social support in the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health among dual-income couples.

## Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the review of literature and theoretical background, the following hypotheses were framed.

1. There will be a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health among dual-income couples.
2. There will be a significant relationship between social support and marital satisfaction among dual-income couples.
3. There will be a significant relationship between social support and mental health among dual-income couples.
4. Marital satisfaction will significantly predict mental health among dual-income couples.
5. Social support will significantly mediate the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health among dual-income couples.

## METHOD

The present study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlation research design to examine the relationships among marital satisfaction, social support, and mental health among dual-income couples.

### Participants

The total number of participants in the present study was 100 working women who were purposively selected from the Prayagraj and Sultanpur cities of Uttar Pradesh. Their age ranged from 30 to 45 years. Among the working women, 56 were employed in government service and remaining were employed in private service. Their educational qualification ranged from graduation to PhD degree. Their income ranged from 20 thousand to 85 thousand per month. Their spans of marriage life were from 1 to 15 years.

### Instruments Used

**Marital Satisfaction Scale:** This scale was developed by K. M. Singh (1977), the scale was used to measure the level of satisfaction within the marital relationship. The scale assesses dimensions such as communication, understanding, affection, and adjustment between spouses. The split-half reliability coefficient of the scale was reported to be approximately 0.70.

**Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS):** This scale was developed by Gregory D. Zimet and colleagues (1988), the MSPSS was used to assess perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. The scale demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91 for the total scale.

**General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12):** This scale was developed by David P. Goldberg (1972), the GHQ-12 was used to measure psychological well-being and mental health status. The internal consistency reliability of the scale, measured by Cronbach’s alpha, ranges from 0.82 to 0.90.

**Procedure:** Each participant was requested to answer a set of questions on different scales. While the participant agreed or accepted the request of the researcher, they were then given all the scales to answer. In this way, the data was collected and further processed by applying suitable statistics.

### Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using suitable statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to understand the nature of the variables. Pearson’s product moment correlation was used to examine relationships among variables. Regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive role of marital satisfaction on mental health. Mediation analysis using Process Macro (Model 4) was employed to examine the mediating role of social support.

## RESULTS

The present reports the statistical analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the relationships among marital satisfaction, social support, and mental health among dual-income couples.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Marital Satisfaction, Social Support, and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	S.D
MaritalSatisfaction	72.45	8.62
SocialSupport	65.30	7.95
MentalHealth	21.80	5.40

Table 1 mean scores for marital satisfaction indicate a moderate to high level of satisfaction among participants. Social support levels are also moderately high. The mental health score suggests a moderate level of psychological well-being.

Table 2: Pearson’s Correlation Matrix among Marital Satisfaction, Social Support, and Mental Health

Variables	1	2	3
MaritalSatisfaction	1		
SocialSupport	0.52**	1	
MentalHealth	0.61**	0.55**	1

**Note:**  $p < .01$  indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 showed that Maritalsatisfaction is positively and significantly correlated with mental health ( $r = 0.61, p < 0.01$ ). Table 2 also showed that Social support is positively correlated with marital satisfaction ( $r=0.52, p<0.01$ ) and with mental health ( $r=0.55, p<0.01$ ).

Table 3: Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Marital Satisfaction on Mental Health

Predictor	Beta( $\beta$ )	R <sup>2</sup>	p-value
Marital Satisfaction	0.61	0.37	<0.01

**Note:**  $\beta$  = Standardized Regression Coefficient; R<sup>2</sup> = Coefficient of Determination;  $p < .01$  indicates statistical significance.



Regression analysis was used to examine the predictive relationship between variables. Table 3 showed that marital satisfaction significantly predicts mental health, explaining 37% of the variance. This shows that higher marital satisfaction is associated with better mental health outcomes.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis of Social Support in the Relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Mental Health

Path	Beta ( $\beta$ )	p-value
Marital Satisfaction→Social Support	0.52	<0.01
Social Support→Mental Health	0.38	<0.01
Marital Satisfaction→Mental Health (direct)	0.41	<0.01
Marital Satisfaction→Mental Health (total)	0.61	<0.01

**Note:**  $\beta$  = Standardized Path Coefficient;  $p < .01$  indicates that the mediation paths are statistically significant.

Mediation analysis was conducted using the Process Macro (Model4). Table 4 showed that marital satisfaction significantly predicts social support and social support significantly predicts mental health. Table 4 also indicated direct effect of marital satisfaction on mental health decreases after including social support. Overall, this indicates partial mediation, meaning social support partially explains the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health.

## DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study on marital satisfaction, social support, and mental health among dual-income couples. The results are interpreted in light of the study objectives, hypotheses, and relevant studies and researches.

The present study indicated a significant positive relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health. Individuals reporting higher marital satisfaction also showed improved psychological well-being, including lower levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional distress.

Findings of this present study are in line with earlier researches signifying that a satisfying marital relationship acts as a protecting factor for mental health. A supportive and cordial marital situation provides emotional safety, facilitates coping mechanisms, and reduces psychological strain. In dual-income couples, where both partners face work-related stress, marital satisfaction becomes even more important for maintaining mental strength.

The results also consistent with the assumption that marriage, when described by mutual understanding and effective communication, contributes positively to overall psychological well-being.

The study also showed a significant positive relationship between social support and marital satisfaction. This finding consistent with the concept that emotional and instrumental support supports relationship bonds. In dual-income couples, shared responsibilities and cooperative problem-solving facilitate relationship quality.

Couple support occurred as mainly important, motivating the idea that internal support within the relationship is more significant than external sources. When partners feel understood and supported, they are more likely to experience satisfaction and stability in their marriage.

The findings also demonstrate a significant positive relationship between social support and mental health. Individuals with higher perceived social support reported better psychological well-being. This result aligns with the stress-buffering model, which suggests that social support mediates the negative effects of stress. Dual-income couples often experience role overload and work–family conflict; however, strong support systems help



individuals manage these challenges effectively.

The present study also found a mediating role of social support in the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health. The results demonstrate partial mediation, signifying that marital satisfaction influences mental health both directly and indirectly through social support. This finding shows that social support acts as a mechanism through which marital satisfaction enhances psychological well-being.

The findings of the study can also be interpreted through several theoretical viewpoints. Social exchange theory suggests that individuals evaluate the relationships based on rewards and costs. Higher marital satisfaction reflects greater perceived rewards, leading to better mental health. Stress-buffering model elucidates how social support reduces the negative impact of stress, thereby improving mental health. Role theory elucidates dual-income couples manage multiple roles, which can lead to either role conflict or role enrichment. Supportive relationships help convert role strain into positive experiences.

In the context of India, dual-income couples often navigate a complex interplay of modern work demands and traditional family expectations. Despite increased workforce participation, women frequently continue to bear a larger share of household responsibilities.

This imbalance can lead to stress and reduced marital satisfaction if not managed effectively. However, when partners engage in equitable role-sharing and provide mutual support, both marital satisfaction and mental health improve significantly. The findings of this study highlight the importance of shifting toward more democratic relationships in Indian households.

## CONCLUSION

The present study explores the relationships among marital satisfaction, social support, and mental health among dual-income married women in North Uttar Pradesh. The findings showed that marital satisfaction is significantly and positively associated with mental health, suggesting that individuals who experience higher satisfaction in their marital relationships tend to report better psychological well-being or lower psychological distress.

Social support was also found to be positively related to both marital satisfaction and mental health, highlighting its important role in strengthening marital relationships and enhancing psychological adjustment. The results further revealed that marital satisfaction significantly predicts mental health, explaining a meaningful proportion of variance in psychological outcomes.

Importantly, social support was found to partially mediate the relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health. This indicates that marital satisfaction contributes to mental health both directly and indirectly through the availability and perception of social support. In other words, supportive interpersonal relationships help strengthen the positive impact of marital satisfaction on psychological well-being.

## Future Directions

Future studies should use dyadic research designs, collecting data from both spouses rather than only one partner. This would allow a more accurate understanding of how marital satisfaction and perceived support operate within the couple system, including partner effects and mutual influences.

Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples, covering different regions, rural–urban populations, and varied socio-economic groups. This would improve the generalizability of findings across the broader Indian context.

Finally, qualitative or mixed-method approaches can be used in future research to gain deeper insight into lived experiences, particularly how couples negotiate stress, share responsibilities, and maintain relationship quality in dual-income settings.



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