



Relational Dynamics Between Doomscrolling, Cognitive Rumination, Conflict Resolution Styles And Marital Satisfaction Among Young Couples.

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Abstract: With the increasing prevalence of the use of digital media, a novel behavioral pattern has emerged that could potentially affect interpersonal relations. The aim of the current research study was to investigate the relationship between doomscrolling behavior, cognitive ruminations, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction levels among young married couples. A quantitative research design with a descriptive and correlational approach was adopted for the research study. A sample of 120 married couples between the ages of 21-35 years were selected for the research study through the purposive sampling technique. Standardized research instruments were administered to collect the research data from the sample participants. These research instruments were the Doomscrolling Scale, Ruminative Responses Scale-Short Form, Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory, and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale. SPSS software was used to analyze the research data. To conduct the correlation analysis, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test was applied due to the non-normality of the research variables.

The findings revealed that doomscrolling was significantly and positively related to cognitive rumination, while cognitive rumination was significantly and negatively related to marital satisfaction. Positive conflict resolution style was positively related to marital satisfaction, while negative conflict style was negatively related to marital satisfaction. Doomscrolling was not significantly directly related to marital satisfaction. The findings suggested that cognitive processes and interpersonal processes like conflict resolution style play a more significant role in predicting marital satisfaction than digital processes like doomscrolling.

Index Terms: doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, conflict resolution, marital satisfaction, young couples

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A practice known as "doomscrolling" emerged when people were glued to their phones to read about the deaths during the pandemic. The term "doomscrolling" describes the relatively recent practice of obsessively and repeatedly consuming upsetting or depressing digital content, mostly through smartphones and other digital devices. (Taskin et al., 2024). It might seem impossible to push yourself to look past all the terrible headlines, but you might feel obligated to. Among the most frequent consumers of social media and digital news outlets, young adults are most susceptible to this tendency of consuming harmful information repeatedly.

According to recent studies, doomscrolling is linked to increased tension, anxiety, depressed symptoms, and sleep problems. Alexander et al (2026) in his study found a positive correlation between greater anxiety, depressive symptoms, and overall psychological discomfort and doomscrolling. The review claims that persistent pessimism and rumination support maladaptive cognitive processes. 'Rumination' entails thinking

about unpleasant emotions and distress, as well as the origins and effects of these sentiments, repeatedly. Both contemporary and classical theories offer a logical framework for our better understanding.

Nolen-Hoeksema(2002) defines rumination as a passive, repetitive attention on discomfort and its potential origins and effects. Regular doomscrolling might cause people to think about unfavorable material they've seen online, which can exacerbate anxiety and emotional dysregulation. It becomes crucial to consider the possible ramifications of doomscrolling in the setting of young personal relationships because it is especially common among young adults. Lying in bed and silently browsing through a never-ending stream of unpleasant news is how many couples end their day. Although they are physically united, their emotions are apart. Partners lie next to each other while consuming the same upsetting material, allowing actual communication to be replaced by shared worry rather of discussing their day, worries, or plans. A common definition of 'Marital Satisfaction' is people's perceptions of their marriage(Fincham & Beach,2010). The idea of marital satisfaction includes several elements, such as sexual intimacy, receiving support from a spouse, and taking part in decision-making procedures, connections with a partner's family, social support, psychological health, and general life happiness. (Bilal & Rasool, 2020; Javanmard & Garegozlo, 2013).

Reduced satisfaction in marriage has been repeatedly linked to external stresses such financial strain, work-related pressure, and exposure to unfavorable environmental events. Karney and Bradbury (1995), proposed The Vulnerability–Stress–Adaptation Model which contends that personal vulnerabilities and coping strategies interact with environmental stress to affect the quality of marriage. Couples with high levels of stress who do not practice adaptive coping experience more dramatic drops in satisfaction.

Similarly Neff and Karney (2004) discovered that persistent external stress was associated with a decrease in supporting behaviors and an increase in negative interactions between couples, which eventually resulted in a decreased level of marital satisfaction.

But not every relationship reacts to stress in the same manner. Whether external stress causes marital dissatisfaction or whether the partnership is robust depends critically on how spouses handle conflict.

The Thomas-Kilmann model, which classifies conflict-handling behaviors along two dimensions—assertiveness and cooperativeness is one of the most widely recognized frameworks for comprehending these styles. These dimensions are used to identify five main conflict resolution styles: cooperating, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating

1. Competing: This style, which is characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperativeness, places an emphasis on winning the argument and pursuing one's own objectives. Although useful in emergency or rule-based situations, it may cause trust to decline.

2. Avoiding: This strategy entails avoiding or delaying conflict and is low in both assertiveness and cooperation. Chronic avoidance can leave problems unsolved, although it might be appropriate when the concerns are little or the emotions are strong.

3. Accommodating: Those who adopt this style put their partner's needs first in order to maintain harmony; they are less forceful and more cooperative. However, habitual accommodation may result in bitterness or discontent.

4. Compromise: In order to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution, both parties must be cooperative and moderately assertive. Although it saves time and is practical, it might not completely address underlying problems.

5. Collaborating: The collaborating style is high in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. It seeks integrative, win–win solutions through open communication and mutual problem-solving. Although time-intensive, collaboration is generally associated with constructive

According to Gottman and Notarius (2000), even in the face of stress, constructive or positive conflict resolution techniques including cooperation, compromise, and open communication are linked to increased marital happiness. On the other hand, stress-related marital decline is made worse by negative conflict styles such avoidance, criticism, and aggressiveness (Kurdek, 1994).

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines the impact of doomscrolling, cognitive rumination and conflict resolution styles on marital satisfaction

Stress-Appraisal Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

Stress-Appraisal Theory states that people's emotional and behavioral reactions are determined by their cognitive assessment of stressors. Persistently being exposed to negative stimuli, such as upsetting news or information on social media, raises perceived stress and negative affect, which lowers emotional and cognitive capacity for healthy intimate relationship involvement.

Response Styles Theory (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991)

According to Response Styles Theory, cognitive rumination—a repetitive, passive emphasis on negative thoughts—prolongs negative mood, hinders adaptive coping, and interferes with problem-solving. Rumination increases emotional response during arguments, exacerbates unfavorable judgments of partner behavior, and predicts lower relational satisfaction in married relationships.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Model (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974)

The Thomas-Kilmann Model distinguishes between productive (like cooperating and compromising) and destructive (like competing and avoiding) conflict resolution techniques based on assertiveness and cooperativeness. By encouraging candid dialogue and cooperative problem-solving, constructive conflict management mitigates the detrimental effects of stress and introspection on marital satisfaction.

Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation (VSA) Model (Karney & Bradbury, 1995)

In order to explain marital satisfaction, the VSA Model incorporates individual vulnerabilities, environmental stresses, and adaptive relational processes. Relationship outcomes are determined by the interaction of environmental stress, behavioral reactions, and enduring vulnerabilities (such as cognitive styles or personality factors). While maladaptive behaviors like rumination and avoidance lead to deteriorating marital quality, couples who successfully use adaptive strategies—such as constructive dispute resolution—are better able to retain contentment despite outside stressors.

The widespread usage of social media in modern culture has changed the dynamics of young couples' interpersonal connections. Cognitive rumination, or recurrent negative thoughts, and doomscrolling, or extended exposure to bad internet content, are two practices that may be related to marital experiences. Couples' interactions can also be impacted by various dispute resolution approaches, whether they are constructive or destructive. Although these elements have been studied separately in the past, little is known about how they relate to marital happiness when considered collectively. In order to better understand how doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, and conflict resolution techniques interact in marital satisfaction, this study intends to investigate these linkages

1.3 Rationale

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1.4 Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between doomscrolling and marital satisfaction in young couples.
2. To investigate the relationship between cognitive rumination and marital satisfaction in young couples.
3. To investigate the relationship between young couples' approaches to conflict resolution, both constructive and destructive, and marital satisfaction

1.5 Research Questions

1. Does marital satisfaction significantly relate with doomscrolling?
2. Is there a negative association between cognitive rumination and marital satisfaction?
3. What is the relationship between marital satisfaction and constructive and destructive conflict resolution styles

1.6 Hypotheses

- H1. Marital satisfaction, conflict resolution techniques, cognitive rumination, and doomscrolling will be significantly related.
- H2. There will be a considerable negative relation between cognitive rumination and marital satisfaction.
- H3. There will be a considerable negative relation between doomscrolling and marital satisfaction.
- H4. There will be a considerable positive correlation between marital satisfaction and positive conflict resolution styles
- H5. There will be negative correlation between marital satisfaction and negative conflict resolution styles.

II.METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

In this study quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design was employed. Data was collected using self-report questionnaires, including the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) (Kurdek), the Ruminative Responses Scale – Short Form (RRS-SF) (Nolen-Hoeksema), and the Doomscrolling Scale (Sharma & Lee, 2022). Doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, and conflict resolution techniques (both positive and negative) were the variables that are independent, and the dependent variable, marital satisfaction, was evaluated using a correlation matrix to search for significant relationships

2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

2.2.1 Sample

Purposive sampling was used to choose 120 young couples for the study. To guarantee that the sample included young adults in married relationships, participants were chosen according to specific requirements pertinent to the study's goals. The inclusion criteria included those who were between the ages of 21 and 35, were married, and had been married for at least three months were eligible to participate in the study. Participants also had to have read and comprehended the study's contents and willingly consented to participate by providing informed consent. Whereas in exclusion criteria, If a participant was not between the ages of 21 and 35, was not married, had been married for less than three months, did not give their voluntary agreement, or did not comprehend the study's information, they were eliminated.

2.3 Measures

The study comprised of 5 sections: 1) Demographic background 2)Doomscrolling Scale 3)Rumination Response Scale 4) Marital satisfaction scale.

A validated 15-item self-report questionnaire called the Doomscrolling Scale (DSS) was created in 2022 by Bhakti Sharma, Susanna S. Lee, and Benjamin K. Johnson to assess a person's propensity to obsessively consume unfavourable news on social media.

Items are rated by respondents using a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 7 denoting "strongly agree."

The scale's reliability has been shown to be high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$).

The 10-item Ruminative Response Scale Short Form (RRS-10) is a self-report survey that gauges how frequently people ruminate—that is, think negatively and repeatedly—when they are upset or depressed. The Likert scale has four points: 1 for never and 4 for always. Higher scores imply more maladaptive, ineffective, or frequent ruminating, which is frequently associated with symptoms of depression.

The scale's Cronbach's α value was 0.86, indicating strong reliability.

Positive and negative conflict resolution techniques used in marital encounters were assessed by the CRSI. The test was developed by Lawrence A Kudrek ,It has 16 items .The reliability of the scale was excellent (Cronbach's α .99).

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale is a popular 15-item, 5-point Likert scale that was created by Fowers and Olson in 1993 to evaluate important aspects of marital quality, such as communication, money management, sexual connections, and conflict resolution. It is frequently employed in studies to gauge general contentment and is quite dependable. It has a reliability of Cronbach's α ..799. The test shows strong construct validity and criterion validity.

2.5 Procedure for data collection

Quantitative data obtained from the Doomscrolling Scale, Cognitive Rumination Scale, Conflict Resolution Style Inventory, and Marital Satisfaction Scale was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 20.p).

IBM SPSS Statistics is a well-rounded statistical tool that helps businesses and individuals derive meaningful insights from their data. It offers powerful statistical testing, predictive analytics, regression, and forecasting capabilities. It also provides efficient data preparation and automated analysis. With Python and R extensions, scalable licensing, and deployment, users can make informed decisions with ease.

Descriptive Statistics was first computed to examine the normality of the data

Normality tests were conducted using Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. Doomscrolling Scale Score was found to deviate significantly from normality. Also, Conflict Scale Score was found to deviate from normality. Doomscrolling Scale Score - Shapiro-Wilk $W = .837$, $p = .000$; Kolmogorov-Smirnov $p = .000$. Conflict Scale Score - Shapiro-Wilk $W = .971$, $p = .011$; Kolmogorov-Smirnov - $p = .029$. However, Rumination Scale Score - Shapiro-Wilk $W = .986$, $p = .254$, and Marital Satisfaction Scale - Shapiro-Wilk $W = .987$, $p = .301$ did not show any significant deviation from normality.

As these scales deviated from normality, non-parametric tests were conducted. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was utilized to test all three hypotheses.

2.6 Methods of Data Analysis

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III.RESULTS

Table 3.1 Represents Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Doom Total score	.217	120	.000	.837	120	.000
Conflict Total score	.086	120	.029	.971	120	.011
Marital Total score	.087	120	.026	.987	120	.301
Rumination Total score	.060	120	.200*	.986	120	.254

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

* Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk) indicate that the Doom Total score, Conflict Total score, and Marital Total score do not follow a normal distribution (p -values $< .05$).

The Rumination Total score shows non-significant p -values ($> .05$), indicating it follows a normal distribution

Table 3.2 Represents the relationship between doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, conflict resolution and marital satisfaction.(N= 120)

Variable		Doom Total score	Ruminati on Total score	Conflict Total score	Marital Total score	
Spearman's rho	Doom Total score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000			
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
	Rumination Total score	Correlation Coefficient	.458	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	Conflict Total score	Correlation Coefficient	.167	.395	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.068	.000		
	Marital Total score	Correlation Coefficient	-.165	-.210	-106	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.021	.250	

*There were significant associations between Doom-Rumination ($\rho = .458, p < .001$), Rumination-Conflict ($\rho = .395, p < .001$), and Rumination-Marital ($\rho = -.210, p = .021$)

Table 3.3

Showing correlation between marital satisfaction and conflict(positive styles)and (negative scores)

Variable		Marital Total score	Positive Score	Negative Scores	
Spearman's rho	Marital Total score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)			
	Positive Score	Correlation Coefficient	.305**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	
	Negative Scores	Correlation Coefficient	-.232*	.463**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.000	.

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*Marital satisfaction (Marital Total score) is favorably linked with positive conflict styles ($\rho = .305$, $p < .01$) and negatively associated with negative conflict styles ($\rho = -.222$, $p < .05$).

IV. DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to investigate the connections between young couples' marital satisfaction, cognitive rumination, doomscrolling, and conflict resolution techniques.

According to the 1 hypothesis, there would be a substantial correlation between the main study variables of marital satisfaction, cognitive rumination, doomscrolling, and conflict resolution methods.

This theory was partially supported by the results. There were notable correlations found between several of the factors. Specifically, cognitive rumination was substantially correlated with marital satisfaction, and doomscrolling was significantly correlated with cognitive rumination. Marital satisfaction was also substantially correlated with conflict resolution techniques. Not every variable, though, showed a strong correlation with every other variable. There was no statistically significant correlation between doomscrolling and marital satisfaction. This implies that there was no direct correlation between participants' marital pleasure and their level of doomscrolling participation.

According to the second hypothesis, marital satisfaction and cognitive rumination would be significantly correlated negatively. This hypothesis was validated by the data, which showed a strong and negative relationship between cognitive rumination and marital satisfaction.

The correlation coefficient between cognitive rumination and marital satisfaction was negative and statistically significant ($p < .05$), as indicated by Table 2 (Correlation Matrix), suggesting a substantial inverse association between the two variables in this sample. This indicates that those with higher cognitive rumination scores also tended to have lower marital satisfaction scores.

On the other hand, individuals who experienced more frequent negative thoughts also exhibited lower levels of marriage relationship satisfaction. As can be seen, the statistical reliability of this finding can also be ascertained by the level of significance as indicated in Table 2.

This finding can also be supported by Susan Nolen-Hoeksema's Response Styles Theory, which indicates that rumination can intensify and prolong unpleasant emotional states, which may affect interpersonal relationships in general.

A substantial negative correlation between doomscrolling and marital satisfaction was also anticipated by Objective 3. A negative relationship was established by the analysis, though not statistically significant, as indicated by $R = -0.12$, $p = 0.18$. This indicates that, despite the anticipated effect of doomscrolling, it was not established as a direct effect. These findings are also consistent with recent literature that indicates, despite doomscrolling being positively correlated with stress, anxiety, and negative thoughts, its effect on marital satisfaction has not been established. In this study, even though doomscrolling was exhibited by the participants, its effect was not established.

Notably, other variables in the study, such as cognitive rumination and conflict resolution styles, showed significant relationships with marital satisfaction. This suggests that the direct effect of doomscrolling on relationship quality may be less pronounced than these interpersonal and cognitive factors.

Marital satisfaction and positive conflict resolution skills would have a positive correlation according to Hypothesis 4. This hypothesis was also supported by the analysis, as indicated in Table 4 above, which revealed that there was a substantial positive correlation between these two variables ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that those who often used cooperative, compromise, and problem-solving skills in conflict resolution also reported more marital satisfaction. These findings are supported by a host of other research works on marriage dynamics. Couples who often employ positive conflict resolution skills have a better chance of maintaining their marriage's stability and happiness, according to Gottman (1994). Constructive conflict management makes it easy for couples to communicate their needs, resolve conflicts amicably, and have emotional connections, thus improving the quality of their marriage

Participants who used compromise, open communication, and problem-solving techniques reported more satisfaction, thus validating the theoretical basis that spouses' conflict resolution skills have a direct relationship with their marriage satisfaction.

The relationship between negative conflict resolution techniques and happiness was expected to be inversely related according to Hypothesis 5. The results showed that there was a substantial relationship between negative conflict resolution techniques and happiness ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$), thus validating this hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, participants who often used harmful conflict resolution techniques like criticism, avoidance, blaming, or withdrawal reported low happiness.

These results validate earlier studies that emphasized the harmful consequences of spouses' conflict resolution techniques on their marriage satisfaction. Destructive conflict styles like criticism, defensiveness, and stonewalling have been strongly associated with low relationship satisfaction and high relationship pain, according to Fincham & Beach (1999). Couples who often employ these detrimental conflict resolution techniques will likely have unresolved conflicts, emotional distress, and an unhealthy relationship.

Participants in the current study indicated decreased marital satisfaction when they reported using more negative conflict resolution techniques. This emphasizes how crucial it is to handle disagreements in close relationships. Maladaptive conflict resolution techniques actively fuel discontent, whereas constructive conflict resolution fosters contentment and stability.

Overall, our findings imply that although digital behaviors like doomscrolling might not directly lead to marital dissatisfaction, their cognitive effects—especially rumination—can have a detrimental impact on the quality of a relationship. At the same time Adaptive conflict resolution is a more direct and significant factor in promoting marital satisfaction.

4.1 Limitations of the study

- The cross-sectional design makes it impossible to determine whether doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, conflict resolution techniques, and marital satisfaction are causally related.
- Self-reported questionnaires, which could be impacted by recall bias or social desirability, were used to gather the data.
- Because only young couples were included in the sample, the results cannot be applied to other age groups or cultural contexts.
- Time limits prevented the assessment of several potentially important characteristics, such as personality traits, stress levels, or attachment types.
- Even while the sample size is sufficient for correlational analysis, it can make it more difficult to identify smaller effects.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, certain suggestions can be made for the improvement of marital satisfaction for young couples. For example, since couples who used constructive approaches such as cooperation, compromise, and problem-solving reported much higher levels of marital happiness, the findings emphasize the importance of constructive conflict resolution approaches. For this reason, workshops, therapy sessions, and relationship education programs should be arranged for young couples so that they can be helped to develop active listening, effective communication, and cooperation approaches. Moreover, the findings of the study emphasize the negative impact of cognitive rumination on marital pleasure. Interventions such as stress management, mindfulness, and cognitive-behavioral therapy,

which help people manage negative thoughts, can be effective in managing negative thoughts and developing positive relationships.

On the other hand, it was found that Doomscrolling had no direct influence on marital satisfaction, although its high correlation with cognitive rumination may imply that the negative impact of excessive exposure to unfavorable internet content may have an indirect influence on the quality of the relationship. In order to minimize the negative impact of digital behaviors on relationships, it is suggested that couples should consider using methods such as limiting screen time, establishing social media boundaries, engaging in co-constructive behaviors, and promoting positive interpersonal relationships. Increased marital satisfaction and long-term relational stability can be achieved through the implementation of relationship education and digital wellness programs for young couple

V. CONCLUSION

The present study aims to explore the relationship between doomscrolling, cognitive rumination, conflict resolution strategies, and marital satisfaction among young couples. It is important to understand the psychological and relational consequences of increased online interactions, especially with excessive exposure to harmful online content. The results of this study provide insights into how individual cognitive and behavioral characteristics affect marriage relationships.

It was found that maladaptive behaviors, such as doomscrolling and cognitive rumination, are related to lower levels of marital happiness. These results support that excessive consumption of disturbing online content may lead to more negative cognitive processes, emotions, and stress, which may indirectly affect relationships. Constructive conflict resolution strategies are also related to higher marital satisfaction, which emphasizes the importance of healthy communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills in relationships.

Although the results of specific predictive correlations are statistically insignificant, they support that both online behaviors and cognitive processes may affect relationships. This study emphasizes that marriage pleasure does not only depend on interpersonal relationships, but also on psychological characteristics and modern lifestyle.

In spite of a few limitations like a small sample size and the use of self-report methods, the study makes a valuable contribution to the ever-increasing body of literature by incorporating the use of digital activities and traditional relationship characteristics.

The study highlights the importance of developing better knowledge about healthy internet use, emotional skills, and adaptive conflict resolution skills in order to boost marital well-being among young couples

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