

The Relationship Between Childhood Parental Environment and Marital Satisfaction



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Introduction

- Childhood parental environments play a huge part in children's development and impact marital satisfaction.
- Living with one's mother in childhood may influence one's timing of marriage (Botha, 2009)
- Parental structure had a strong impact on individuals born in the 1940s compared to other times (Li, 1994).
- Upbringing environment molds individual personalities (Carr, 2019)
- Societal pressures diminish homosexual expression (Higgins, 2004).

Measures

- Marital satisfaction:** 1 for "very happy" and 0 otherwise
- Childhood Parental Environment :** 1 represents "both biological parents"; 2 represents "one biological parent"; 3 represents "biological parent and stepparent"; 4 represents "relative."
- Childhood Family Income Level:** compared with American families in general. 1 represents "below average"; 2 represents "average"; 3 represents "above average."

Methods

Sample

- Analysis using the subgroup of married participants yielded 1,881 responses from a cross-sectional interview conducted in the 2021 General Social Survey (GSS) database

Research Questions

- Is an individuals' Childhood Parental Environment associated with Marital Satisfaction?
- Given this association, what is the relationship, if any, between individuals' Childhood Parental Environment and Marital Satisfaction as influenced by Childhood Family Income Level?

Results

Univariate

- 63.42% of the sample participants recorded very happy for their marriage.
- 77.88% of the sample participants recorded living with both biological parents when they were 16 years old.

Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis** showed that Marital Satisfaction was **not significantly** associated with Childhood Parental Environments ($p = 0.089$; $X^2 = 6.5234$).

Multivariate

- Childhood Family Income Level **does not affect** the relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Childhood Parental Environments. (Figure 3)
- There is **still not a significant difference** in the association between living with one biological parent ($p = 0.929$) or a relative ($p = 0.024$) when looking at their marital satisfaction.
- An individual's marital satisfaction was **still significantly and negatively associated** with his or her childhood satisfaction if he or she lived with one biological parent and one stepparent at the age of 16 ($p = 0.434$).
- After controlling for Childhood Family Income Level, **logistic regression analysis** showed that Marital Satisfaction is **significantly** associated with growing up in a family with an income level above average ($p = 0.031$) or average ($p = 0.021$), compared to American families with income levels below average in general.
- An **Odds Ratio estimate** showed that individuals growing up in a family with an average income were 1.29 times more likely, and individuals growing up in a family with an above-average income were 1.35 times more likely, to develop a very happy marital satisfaction compared to those growing up in a family with income levels below average in general. Individuals growing up with one biological parent and one stepparent were 0.35 percent less likely to develop a very happy marital satisfaction compared to those living with both biological parents.

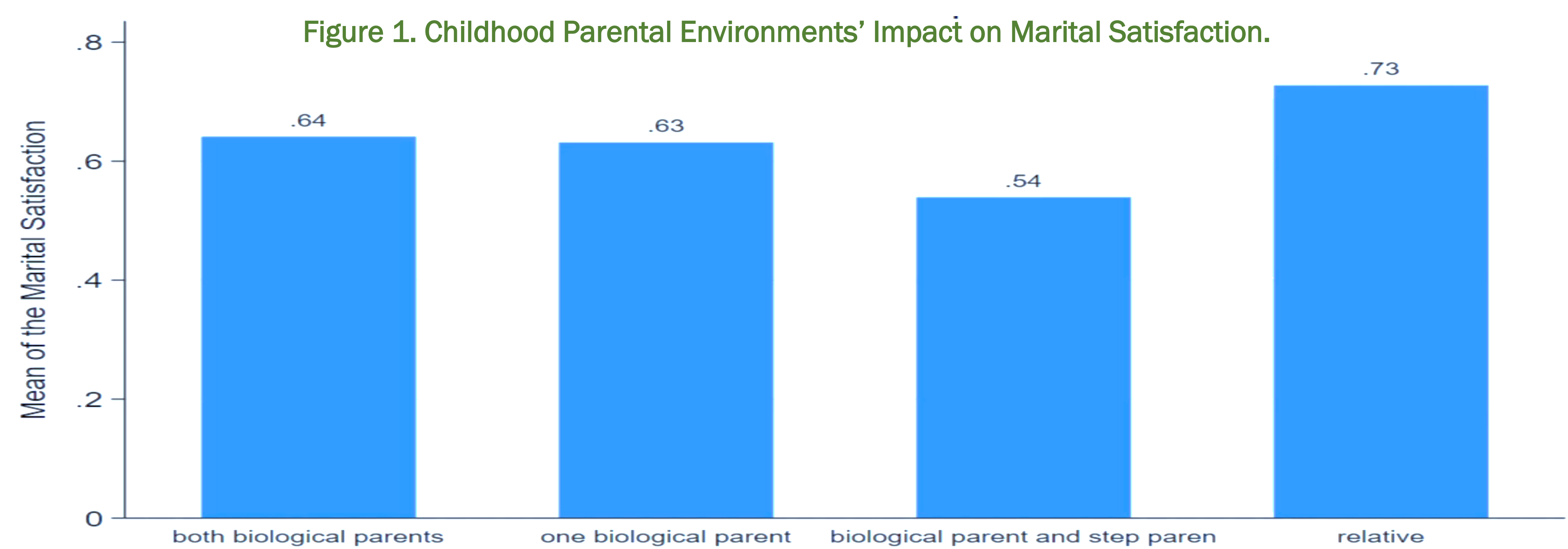


Figure 2. Likelihood of Marital Satisfaction Based on Parental Structure, Controlled for Income Level.

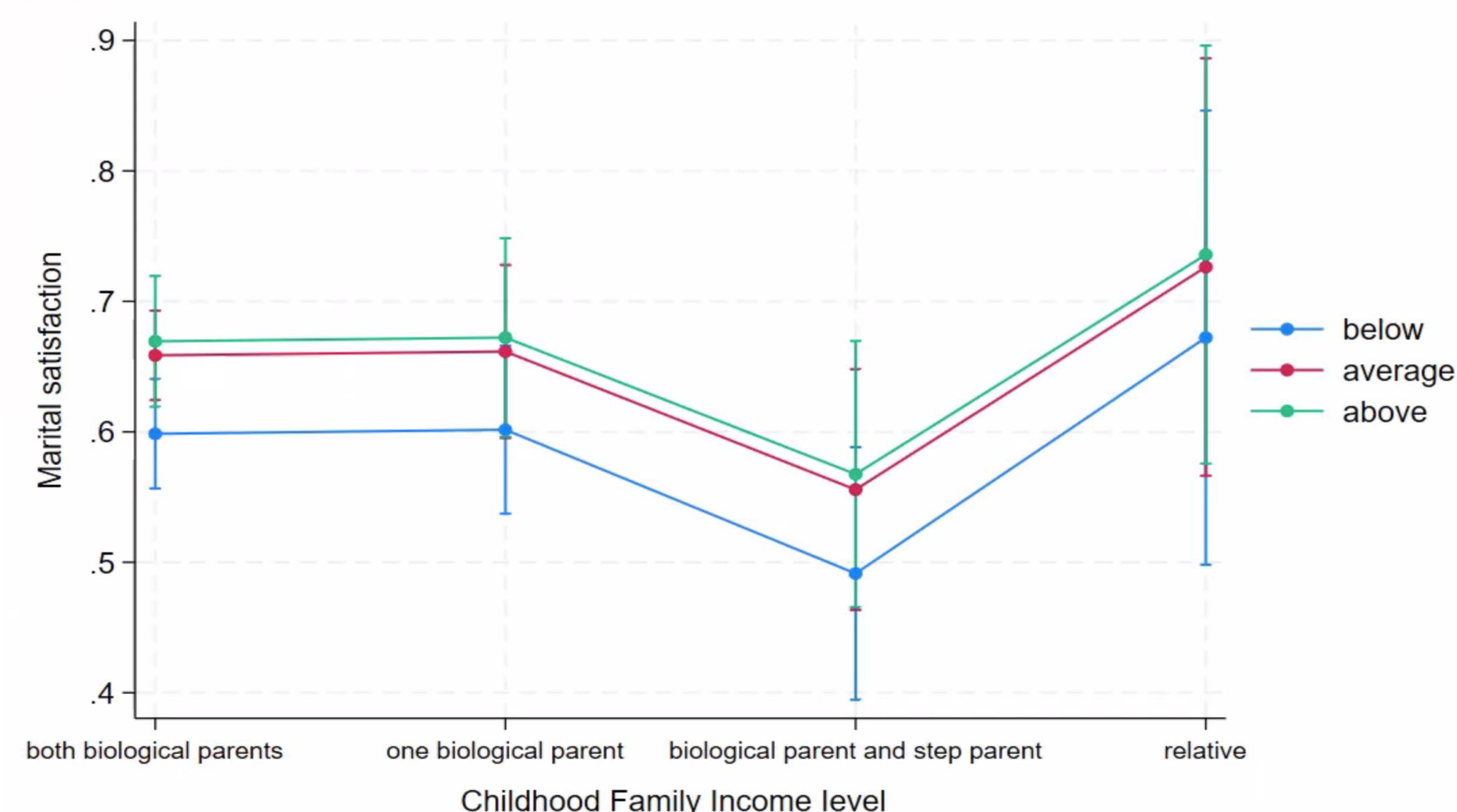
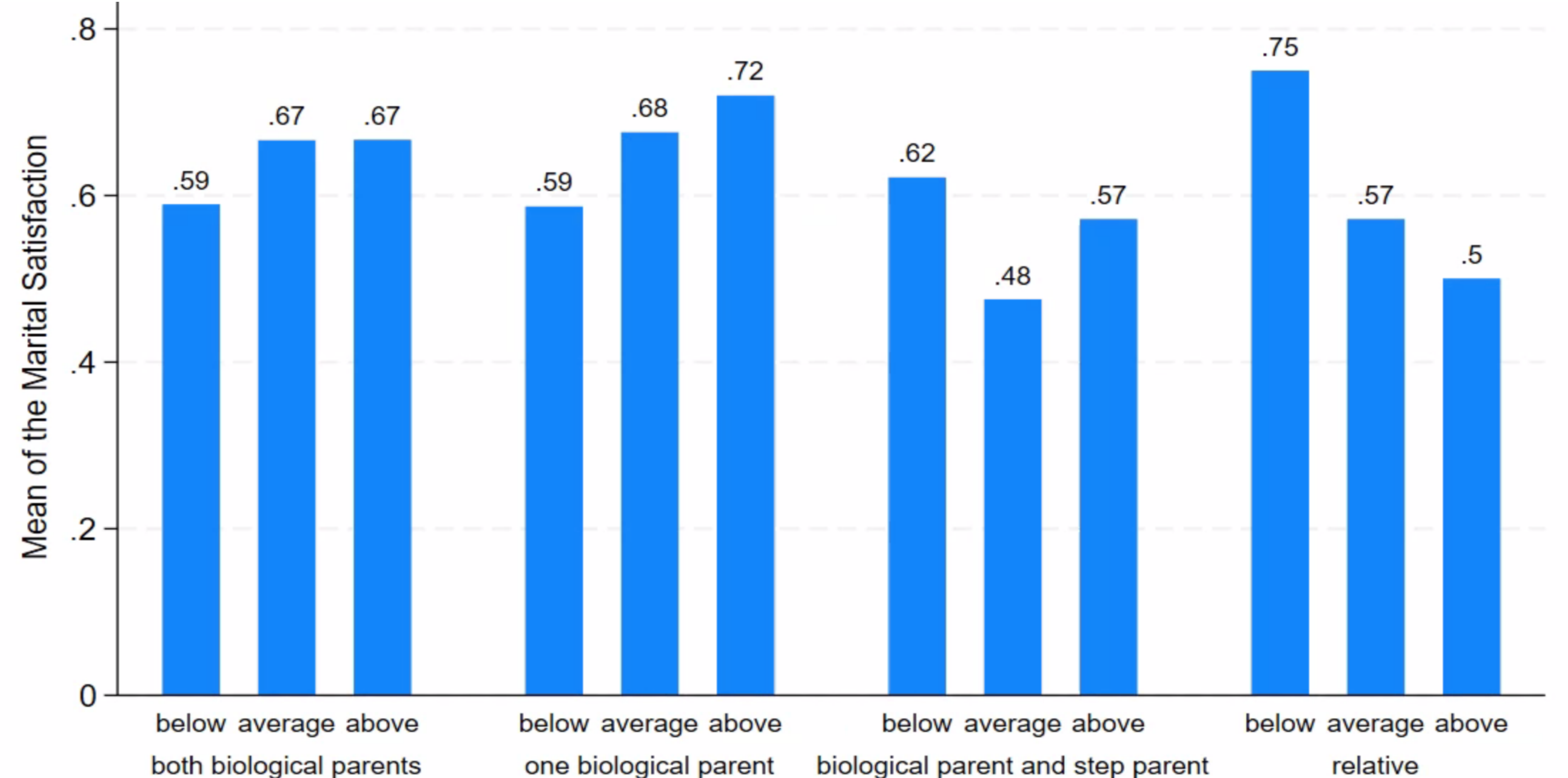


Figure 3. Childhood Parental Environments' and Family Income Level Impact on Marital Satisfaction.



Discussion

- Childhood Parental Environment **does not** impact individual Marital Satisfaction. Individuals who grew up with one biological parent and one stepparent have **lower** marital satisfaction compared to those who lived with both biological parents during childhood (Figure 1).
- Marital satisfaction is more closely related to childhood financial factor. Individuals' marital satisfaction difference between growing up in an average and above-average income levels is **not obvious** (Figure 2).
- This study can be helpful for the LGBTQ+ group to fight for their adoption rights, as well as for building more mental health support for children who live with one biological parent and one stepparent.
- Small sample size might limit the legitimacy of the results**
- Further studies must consider/include the following:
 - More precise research in marital satisfaction evaluation and income level.
 - Research on individuals who growing up with one biological parent and one stepparent

Reference

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