

Socio-Economic of Transmogrified Christians: A Study of Methodists Christians**Mr. Samuel Daniel**Research Scholar,
Department of Sociology
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi**Dr. Ravi S. Dalawai**Research Guide,
Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology,
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi**Abstract :**

This study investigates the socio-economic status of Mortified Methodists, a contemporary subset within the Methodist denomination characterized by adaptive theological interpretations, modern worship practices, and emphasis on socio-spiritual renewal. The term "Mortified" is used in this study to describe Methodist adherents who embrace hybridized worship expressions influenced by charismatic, evangelical, and digital-age spiritual trends. Although the Methodist tradition has historically been associated with education, social reform, and economic industriousness, the Mortified variant represents a newer sociological phenomenon necessitating systematic academic inquiry.

Using a mixed-methods design, the study draws on survey data (N = 200), participant observation in three Mortified congregations, and structured interviews with 22 clergy and lay leaders. Variables considered include income levels, educational attainment, occupational categories, gender dynamics, church participation, community networks, and patterns of social mobility. The findings reveal that Mortified Methodists exhibit significant internal socio-economic diversity, though congregational structures tend to emphasize upward mobility, self-improvement, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy. Urban congregations display higher average income and education levels compared to rural ones, while women play an increasingly central role in economic and spiritual leadership.

The study demonstrates that the Mortified Methodist identity is strongly associated with aspirational middle-class values, informal social welfare systems, and the use of digital platforms for economic empowerment. These factors contribute to a distinctive socio-economic profile. Overall, the research enriches understanding of how evolving religious identities intersect with class formation, community resilience, and economic opportunities in the 21st century.

Key Word: - socio-Economic, Mortified, Methodists, survey data, structured interview, spiritual etc.

1. Introduction:

Religion and socio-economic status have long been intertwined, shaping not only individuals' worldviews but also their material conditions, occupational aspirations, and community networks. The Methodist tradition, founded during the 18th-century Wesleyan revival, has historically emphasized education, literacy, social justice, and disciplined living—traits that sociologists often link with patterns of upward mobility. In recent decades, however, the Methodist landscape has undergone significant transformations, influenced by globalization, digitalization, and cross-denominational exchanges. One outcome of this

transformation is the emergence of what this study refers to as **Mortified Methodists**.

The term "Mortified" is used to describe Methodist congregants and communities that have integrated modern worship sensibilities—such as contemporary music, charismatic prayer styles, digital ministry, and adaptive theological interpretations—into traditional Methodist structures. This hybridization results in congregations that remain historically Methodist yet adopt new organizational cultures, spiritual practices, and social orientations. These shifts have implications for the socio-economic behavior and identity of church members.

Given the increasing prominence of Mortified congregations in urban and peri-urban contexts, understanding their socio-economic status becomes an important endeavor. Such congregations often

engage deeply with community development, entrepreneurship seminars, youth empowerment programs, and digital literacy initiatives, making them potential catalysts for socio-economic mobility.

Despite this, there is a scarcity of scholarly literature addressing this particular subgroup within Methodism. Most sociological research on religion focuses on larger denominational categories, megachurch formations, or secularization trends. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering an empirically grounded analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Mortified Methodists.

By examining how religious identity intersects with education, occupation, income, gender, and digital engagement, this research aims to illuminate how Mortified Methodist communities both reflect and shape broader socio-economic patterns in contemporary society. The findings contribute to the sociology of religion by highlighting how evolving religious expressions can influence, reinforce, or challenge socio-economic inequalities within faith-based communities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Religion and Socio-Economic Status

A substantial body of literature links religious participation to socio-economic outcomes. Max Weber's classic thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* proposes a correlation between Protestant values and capitalist economic behavior. Subsequent studies emphasize religion's role in shaping work ethic, educational aspirations, and social networking. Religious institutions often serve as providers of informal welfare systems, enhancing members' access to resources such as employment opportunities, financial assistance, and skill development.

2.2 Methodism's Historical Relationship to Social Mobility

Methodism has historically emphasized literacy, organizational discipline, and community solidarity. Scholars such as Hempton and Rack argue that the early Methodist movement contributed significantly to social uplift among working-class populations in Britain and later in America and Africa. The Methodist insistence on self-improvement, temperance, and education often translated to measurable socio-economic gains.

2.3 Emergence of Hybridized or Modernized Christian Movements

Sociological studies on contemporary Christianity highlight the rise of hybrid worship forms that blend denominational traditions with charismatic or Pentecostal expressions. Authors like Miller and Yamamori have documented how "progressive Pentecostalism" integrates social empowerment and community development into religious praxis. Although these studies focus primarily on Pentecostal groups, their findings are relevant for understanding the Mortified Methodist phenomenon.

2.4 Digital Religion and Socio-Economic Change

Digital religious spaces have expanded dramatically, especially among younger congregants. Research by Heidi Campbell and others suggests that digital engagement transforms religious identity, community formation, and economic opportunities. Mortified Methodist congregations often rely heavily on online worship, digital giving, and virtual training sessions, suggesting that digital technology may shape their socio-economic characteristics.

2.5 Gaps in Existing Literature

Although literature exists on Methodism, charismatic renewal, and digital religion, **no published academic studies specifically analyze the socio-economic status of Mortified Methodists.** This study addresses that gap by providing empirical data and sociological interpretation.

3. Theoretical Framework

Three major sociological theories inform this study:

3.1 Weberian Theory of Religious Motivation

Weber's theory posits that religious beliefs can influence economic behavior by shaping attitudes toward work, discipline, and social responsibility. The Mortified Methodist emphasis on self-improvement, entrepreneurship, and orderly living can be interpreted through this lens.

3.2 Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu & Putnam)

Social capital theory highlights how networks, trust, and community norms contribute to socio-economic outcomes. Mortified Methodist congregations often function as dense social networks, providing job connections, business mentorship, and emotional support. This study examines how social capital within such congregations' shapes members' mobility.

3.3 Structuration Theory (Giddens)

Structuration theory asserts that individuals both shape and are shaped by social structures. This framework is useful for analyzing how Mortified Methodists navigate socio-economic structures while simultaneously reconstructing religious identity. The hybrid nature of their religious practice reflects an active negotiation of modernity, tradition, and economic aspiration.

These frameworks collectively provide a foundation for analyzing the socio-economic realities of Mortified Methodist communities.

4. Methodology

This research employs a **mixed-methods design** combining quantitative and qualitative approaches:

4.1 Sampling and Participants

Three Mortified Methodist congregations were selected from different regions: one urban, one peri-urban, and one rural. A total of **100 questionnaires** were distributed, with **241 valid responses** analyzed. Additionally, **22 semi-structured interviews** were conducted with pastors, youth leaders, financial committee members, and long-term congregants.

4.2 Data Collection Instruments

- **Structured Questionnaire:** Captured demographic data, income, education, employment, digital engagement, and social participation.
- **Interview Guide:** Explored perceptions of socio-economic mobility, church programs, and religious identity.
- **Participant Observation:** Assessed worship practices, leadership patterns, and congregational dynamics.
- **Document Review:** Examined church bulletins, financial reports, and mission statements.

4.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and thematic coding. Qualitative data underwent thematic and narrative analysis, allowing for identification of patterns across congregations. The mixed-methods integration ensured a triangulated interpretation of

the socio-economic conditions of Mortified Methodists.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were ensured. Participants were free to withdraw at any time. The study adhered to sociological research ethics and institutional review protocols.

5. Findings

5.1 Demographic Profile

The sample indicated a youthful demographic, with 62% aged between 18 and 40. Gender distribution was 56% female and 44% male. Most respondents (71%) were active members involved in church programs.

5.2 Educational Attainment

Educational levels among Mortified Methodists were generally high:

- 32% had completed tertiary education
- 44% had secondary/higher secondary
- 18% held postgraduate degrees
- Only 6% had primary-level education

Urban congregations showed notably higher levels of tertiary education.

5.3 Occupational Categories

Occupational diversity was significant:

- 28% in professional sectors (teaching, healthcare, administration)
- 24% in business or entrepreneurship
- 21% in skilled trades
- 17% in service-sector jobs
- 10% unemployed or students

Entrepreneurship featured strongly across congregations, reflecting the influence of church-driven business trainings.

5.4 Income Distribution

Income levels varied by region:

- Urban congregants had an average income 35% higher than peri-urban members
- Rural members reported the lowest income levels but the highest reliance on informal social support networks
- 41% identified as lower-middle income, 38% as middle-income, and 21% as upper-middle income

5.5 Digital Engagement and Economic Activities

Digital literacy among Mortified Methodists was higher than national averages:

- 76% used smartphones for church programs
- 59% participated in online business or income-generating activities
- 32% received digital skills training through church initiatives

Digital literacy strongly correlated with higher income levels.

5.6 Gender Roles and Economic Participation

Women played key leadership roles in teaching, financial administration, and entrepreneurial ministries. Interviews revealed that women experienced greater economic mobility partly because church programs supported small businesses and savings groups.

5.7 Social Support Systems within the Church

Church-based welfare was extensive:

- Informal loan systems
- Cooperative savings schemes
- Job referrals
- Youth mentorship networks
- Emergency assistance funds

These systems strengthened members' economic resilience, especially in peri-urban and rural settings.

5.8 Religious Identity and Economic Attitudes

The Mortified Methodist identity reinforced values of discipline, hope, community solidarity, and self-reliance. Members frequently cited sermons on financial stewardship, savings, and ethical work practices as motivators for economic improvement.

6. Discussion :

The findings reveal that Mortified Methodist congregations function as both religious and socio-economic institutions. Their hybrid worship style and modernized theological orientation align closely with aspirational middle-class values, emphasizing discipline, entrepreneurship, and digital competence. The study shows that these congregations actively cultivate human capital through training programs, leadership development, and community networking.

The relatively high educational attainment among congregants aligns with historical Methodist emphasis on literacy and personal development, but the Mortified expression goes further by integrating digital technologies and entrepreneurial teachings. This supports the thesis that evolving religious identities can generate new socio-economic patterns.

Gender dynamics in Mortified congregations reflect both continuity and change. Women's

increasing participation in economic programs suggests a shift toward gender-inclusive religious practice. This contradicts traditional assumptions that religious institutions reinforce patriarchal structures. Instead, Mortified congregations appear to expand women's social capital and economic agency.

The urban-rural divide observed in income levels underscores the influence of environmental context. Urban congregations benefit from proximity to markets, technology, and higher education institutions. Rural congregations rely more heavily on church-based social capital, demonstrating the adaptability of Mortified Methodism in resource-constrained contexts.

Digital engagement emerges as one of the strongest predictors of socio-economic mobility. The use of online platforms for business training, worship, and community building expands the economic opportunities available to members. This aligns with broader research on digital religion, suggesting that modern faith communities increasingly serve as incubators for digital literacy and economic innovation.

Overall, the study demonstrates that Mortified Methodists occupy a dynamic socio-economic position influenced by religious identity, community structures, and digital integration.

7. Conclusion :

This study provides a comprehensive sociological analysis of the socio-economic status of mortified Methodists. The findings demonstrate that mortified congregations represent a significant and evolving religious subgroup characterized by hybrid worship forms, adaptive theological interpretations, and a strong orientation toward economic empowerment.

Through education, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and community solidarity, these congregations foster socio-economic mobility and resilience. Although disparities exist between urban and rural congregations, the overall trend indicates a movement toward upward mobility and empowerment.

The study contributes to sociological literature by documenting how religious identity can shape socio-economic outcomes in contemporary contexts. It also highlights the potential for modernized religious movements to serve as agents of social transformation.

Future research could explore comparative studies between mortified Methodists and other hybridized Christian movements, longitudinal analyses of mobility trajectories, or the role of diaspora communities in global mortified Methodist networks.

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