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Marital Compatibility in the UAE Society among a Sample of Households in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (UAE)

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Abstract: This study aimed to assess the levels of marital compatibility among 500 Emirati married couples in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and identify the various factors that impact marital compatibility. Participants responded to the Marital Compatibility Scale which focuses on five main areas: the personal, structural/family, psychological/emotional, cultural/educational/ethical/social, and financial compatibility. The data were collected by a specially selected team from Family Development Foundation, Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre employees as it is the only entity officially authorized to collect such data and analyzed using SPSS. The findings of the study indicate that factors related to the cultural, educational, ethical, and cultural compatibility and those related to personal compatibility have the most significant impact on marital relations. In particular, the educational level of the husband, the husband's income, and whether the couples were related or lived in the same neighbourhood impact the level of marital compatibility.

Keywords: Marital compatibility, family, UAE, marriage, social work, family studies.

1 Introduction

Across the majority of marital studies, a major debate is raging on marital quality in Western contexts, especially the United States. In recent years, however, there is a growing interest in marital quality in terms of its factors and significances for well-being in non-Western contexts.

Due to the significance of marital quality, there is also an enormous literature that investigates its factors, including variances in the experience of marital quality by ethnicity and gender (Amato, et al., [1], Bulanda and Brown, [2], Rogers and Amato, [3]). There are now analyses that examine marital quality in Cameroon (Gwanfogbe et al., [4]), Turkey (Fisiloglu and Demir, [5]), Bolivia (Orgill and Heaton, [6]) and China (Pimentel, [7]), among others. This growth of research on marital quality into non-Western contexts increases both new challenges and chances for research on marital quality [8].

The importance of marital compatibility stems from the fact that it directly impacts the stability and success of the relationship. Al-Kholi [9] suggests that marital compatibility is determined by the couple's ability to generally agree on the main issues affecting their lives together, to share interests and activities, and to express mutual love. Moreover, marital compatibility is seen by some as the ability of the couple to successfully resolve the many conflicts they face in their married lives [10].

However, the factors that determine the degree of compatibility between any married couple vary according to current changes in their society.

Compatibility between a married couple leads to marital satisfaction when each partner's biological, emotional, and social needs are fulfilled. It is then the result of the positive interaction between the couple and a manifestation of their closeness and intimacy [11]. However, it can be undermined by the various difficulties the couple may face due to the rapid social, economic, political, and religious developments in their society, which result in role conflict, increased financial burdens, emotional and psychological problems, and deviant behaviours.

Therefore, it can be concluded that marital compatibility is the main requirement for any successful relationship. It enables couples to navigate all the hardships they may face in their lives together which could otherwise impact the whole family [9]. Furthermore, it is essential for the emotional, biological, and psychological wellbeing of the whole family and especially the children [12]. In fact, it determines the levels of social stability, the quality of the marital relationship, and the ability of the couple to enjoy positive relationships with their offspring [13].

This study attempts to assess the levels of marital compatibility and identify the most effective methods for achieving it among couples in Abu Dhabi, areas which have received no academic attention till present.

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2 Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Based on his reviews of a number of many definitions of marital compatibility concluded that it is the existence of a relationship in harmony with the environment and based on the satisfaction of the individual's biological and social needs. Moreover, it is a manifestation of the relative agreement and parity between spouses, convergence of tendencies and interests, and mutual love. It is also the result of shared experiences, interests and values, and respecting the goals, needs, and personality of the other partner [14].

A number of theories attempted to explain marital compatibility. For example, behaviourists believe that interaction, through a process of reward and punishment, is essential for compatibility [15]. Furthermore, as they see human behaviour as a whole as acquired and learned from the environment, they view marital incompatibility is a pattern of behaviour that is learnt others. Consequently, when the environment in which the wrong behaviour (marital incompatibility) was learned is modified, it is possible to learn the correct behaviour (marital compatibility) [16].

In his Self-Concept theory, Carl Rogers claims that an individual reveals herself through her experience with her children and other people, and that a truly congruent person is someone who accepts all concepts including her self-concept. The complementary need theory, first formulated by Winch in the 1950s, proposes that people choose partners who complement them and their needs rather than those who are similar to them. A person's strong desire for 'completeness' is the prime motive for selecting a marriage partner [17].

The well-known developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson suggested that marriage goes through eight different stages of development. Marital compatibility often follows and grows through these eight stages changing how the couples feel, think, and behave. These eight stages are developing trust, common will, social integration, competence, marriage identity, intimacy, parental care, and integration of the couples [15]. Fritz Heider, father of the cognitive balance theory, on the other hand, suggested that attitude compatibility is essential for a successful marriage, otherwise couples would develop negative feelings and a strong emotional need to free themselves of anxiety and tension [18].

Social theories attribute compatibility to the ability of the couple to perform their family duties. Alkhashab [19] for example family stability is directly related to the social type the family belongs too, and that the industrialization of many societies has paced many families under enormous stress [16]. In this respect, structural functionalists explain incompatibility by a dysfunction in family relations especially as a result of role conflict between the wife and her husband [9]. This role conflict is the outcome of a clear definition of roles in the family, which could not only

impact the family but also threaten the social fabric itself. Furthermore, incompatibility is explained by symbolic interactionists by the existence of role conflict in the family that is the result of incompatibility between the behaviour of the individual and the agreed norms [19].

Another social theory that attempted to identify the causes of success or failure of relationships is the social exchange theory. The theory revolves around the concepts of cost and reward in social interaction explaining that feelings are positive when the net results of the interaction is rewarding and negative when it is costly [13].

This study adopts an approach based on structural-functionalism and the principles of the social exchange theory as it focuses on the interaction between couples and the negative social consequences of poor marital compatibility.

A number of studies attempted to determine the factors that lead to marital compatibility. For example, Emarah [20] claims that there are a number of indicators to marital compatibility including choosing the right partner, having clear expectations and vision about the nature of the married relationship, emotional stability, constant and direct interaction between the couples, and age, social, economic and educational compatibility. Moreover, Hameed et al [21] and Al Gharaibeh [22] identified a number of factors that impact marital compatibility. They claim that marital compatibility can be determined by factors that affect the couples even before they get married such as the couple's age at marriage, readiness for marriage, social upbringing, how seriously the couple views the concept of family, social, educational and economic compatibility, and the length of the engagement (a time when couple can psychologically and emotionally prepare for marriage).

In their book, *Exploring Social Psychology*, Byrne, & Johnson [23] suggested that the length of a marriage does not reflect the satisfaction of the couple with the relationship. Mutual love and respect are essential for the partners to achieve the biological balance that is the direct result of emotional, sexual, economic, social, and cultural fulfilment.

Another issue that received academic attention is marital silence. Aljendi and Abu-Zneid [24] suggest that marital silence can be the result of social, economic, behavioural, technological, or family factors, and/or differences in habits, traditions and values. Several studies focused on the issue of marital compatibility. For example, exploring marital compatibility among Jordanian female teachers and their spouses, Al-Dahri [25] found that there was a greater degree of compatibility among couples who had less children, and had been married for a year. In addition, he suggested that there is a significant correlation between the degree of marital compatibility, the wife's level of education, and length of marriage. Moreover, Al-Shahri [18] found that marital compatibility was negatively correlated with irritability, while it was positive correlated with being even-tempered, cheerful, kind, and morally-

upright. Gonzaga, Carter, & Buckwalter [26] proposed that couples who enjoy similar emotional characteristics have more satisfying marriages.

A study conducted by Sahaf [27] on a sample on 213 women and 246 men in Mecca, Saudi Arabia showed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between marital compatibility and all features of marital stability. In Muscat, Oman, Alhana'yeh [28] found that members of marital reconciliation committees believed that there were personal, emotional, organizational, and sexual factors that could lead to marital compatibility. The couples in this study thought that emotional, organizational, personal, and sexual factors, in this order of importance, negatively affect the levels of compatibility of any married couple. The same study revealed that such variables as the wife's work, the couples' level of education, whether the couples were related, country of birth, number of children, the couples' age at marriage, and the age difference had no statistically significant effect on marital compatibility. In contrast, the length of the marriage seemed to play a role in cementing marital relations.

In a study of a hundred couples, Mahdi & Abdul-Monaem [29] attempted to ascertain whether living in urban or rural areas, and the couples' levels of education, income, age (25 and older), and length of marriage (1 year and over) had any impact on marital compatibility. They found that there were statistically significant differences between men and women in items related to altruism and love in favour of women, while men performed better on items related to trust and romantic relations. The study also revealed that couples who lived in rural areas and those with higher levels of income enjoyed higher levels of marital compatibility, and that lack of compatibility seemed to result in psychological disorders among the wives.

Whisman & Uebelacker [30] studied 1385 couples over two years. They found that higher marital adjustment at the start of their study predicted higher life satisfaction at follow-up, higher life satisfaction at the beginning of the study predicted higher marital adjustment at follow-up, and that higher spouse marital adjustment at the start of the study predicted higher life satisfaction at follow-up. In addition, the results of their study suggest that marital adjustment and life satisfaction influence each other and that the direction is chiefly from marital adjustment to life satisfaction in women.

In his review of a number of studies on marital compatibility, Makvana [31] suggested that there were a number of determinants such as personal compatibility, economic factors, and communication. He also pointed that lack of compatibility results in emotional divorce, also referred to as marital silence, and poor emotional health as one or both partners may suffer anxiety, frustration and/or depression. Exploring the issue of withdrawal behaviours in marriage, Schrodts & Shimowski [32] concluded that silence in marriage negatively affect the relationship leading one or both partners to withdraw. Their study, which involved more than 14,000 participants, also indicated that those who suffer withdrawal in marriage have poor communication

skills, and lack intimacy, which result in emotional and psychological problems that manifest in bouts of anxiety and aggression ultimately leading to emotional divorce. Moreover, Humbad et al [33] suggested that couples who had similar personalities were more comfortable at the later stages of their marriages.

A number of studies that explored gender differences in relation to marital compatibility in the Middle East. For example, in a study of 388 married employees of government schools in northern Jordan, Alkhataybeh [34] claimed that males were more martially compatible than women and were less satisfied with the levels of compatibility with their wives. In addition, in a study of 100 university educated couples in Bahrain, Tawfeek [35] found that there was a clear correlation between positive behaviour and marital compatibility and that husbands scored higher on such variables as positive effectiveness, support, and participation, while the wives scored higher on tolerance.

A study on a sample of 154 government employees in the State of Kuwait (78 males, 76 females) indicated an inverse correlation between marital compatibility and the total degree of stress in its emotional, cognitive and social dimensions among the female participants [36]. The presence of statistically significant differences in both marital compatibility and psychological stress due to the variables of sex and educational level of the spouses or the age difference between them.

In a study conducted by Al-Saghir [37] on a sample of 53 working and non-working wives in in Algeria, it was found that having her needs neglected, a wife tends to view her husband as stubborn, lacking in moral character, and abusive. The researcher goes on to explain that different forms of physical violence are less prevalent compared to social and verbal violence. The study also found that higher levels of compatibility between the spouses meant that the wives suffered less from depression. It was noted that while the degree of kinship between the spouses had no statistically significant effect on their degree of compatibility, polygamy was directly linked to a lower degree of marital compatibility. It was also found that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between degrees of neglect of some of the wife's actual needs, represented by the need for acceptance, understanding, and trust and withdrawal from marital life. Neglect of the wife's needs was also linked to the problem of stubbornness and jealousy.

Aljendi & Abu-Znaid [24] explored the issue of marital silence and its impact on marital compatibility among 300 couples in the West Bank. They found that men tend to resort to silence more often than women and that marital silence was negatively correlated to marital compatibility. Focusing on the personal traits of a sample of 30 Saudi wives that impact marital compatibility, Alberi [14] found that lying and psychosis negatively affect marital compatibility.

There are various intrinsic features that plays an immense role on Marital compatibility, hence any variables

among them threaten the marital stability. Bumpass, Martin, and James [38] in their published analysis “The Impact of Family Background and Early Marital Factors on Marital Disruption” on family-related issues on Journal of Family Issues, state that heterogamy on religion and educational level reduce marital stability. The variety of sociodemographic factors depict the effect upon marital stability. such as: family background; race, mother’s education, religion, age at marriage. Heterogamy affects the balance and stability of this association. The inequality levels of education among couples reflect the level of independency, mainly the women’s side. Women who are highly educated, comparing to their spouses, have better prospect of independency and their level of happiness. They tend to feel that they can do better than their less educated spouse. In addition, Bumpass, Martin, and James [38]. argue that the factor of age has considerable effect upon marriage especially if it connected to low education. Moreover, compatibility of religion among spouses ‘religiously homogamous marriage’ (Bumpass, Martin, and James: 18) [38] has higher rates effect upon marital stability they conclude that those variables steadily affect the attitudes of both couples; especially if women have higher rank of education than their husbands [38].

According to social demographer, Rosenfeld and Roesler [39] in his paper “Stability and Change in Predictors of Marital Dissolution in the US 1950-2015: The Rise of Family Inequality Michael J. Rosenfeld”, compatibility vs. stability of marital status is interconnected. Compatibility in reference to social demography such as coming from stable family history increase the rate of successful relationship in the scope of marriage comparing to the history of less stable families for one of the spouses where the divorce rates are higher in less stable families.

Al Darmaki et al [40] in their published paper, “Marital Satisfaction in the United Arab Emirates: Development and Validation of Culturally Relevant Scale”, argue that changes in demographics factors such as level of commitment in religion and domicile (place of living), and whether they are relative or from different families affect marital stability in the United Arab Emirates. These cultural variables are influenced with socio-cultural values that determine. Compatibility among these variables influence the ability to overcome any differences which may hinder healthy, happy marriage.

Benjamin [41], in his paper, “Socioeconomic Status and Intimate Relationships” believes that diversity among spouses on the level of socioeconomic factors influence the stability of marriage. Equality of socioeconomic such as level of education and income enhance relationships. On the level of income, when both have equal financial capabilities; they work well with disagreement by hiring therapist to avoid breakup. Such equality can be achieved when the spouses have almost same level of education. Thus, these variables are interconnected with the whole marriage stability.

Theunis, Schnor, Willaert, and Bavel [42] in their book, “His and Her Education and Marital Dissolution: Adding a Contextual Dimension” highlights the successful compatibility among spouses as hypogamous marriage. Highly educated husband and wife is associated with lower level of divorce. Whereas, incompatible marriage ‘hypogamous marriage or heterogamy’, based on the level of education and social differences, sets a higher rates of divorce. As a result, homogamous marriages are the most stable one among relations.

3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to measure the levels of marital compatibility among a sample of Emirati families in Abu Dhabi. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following questions:(a) What are the levels of marital compatibility among a sample of Emirati families in Abu Dhabi in each subscale and the overall scale of the marriage compatibility scale? (b) Do the levels of marital compatibility among the sample vary on each of the subscales based on the level of education of the couples, length of marriage, gender, the employment status of the wives, family income, and degree of family relations between the couples?

4 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to measure the levels of marital compatibility among a sample of Emirati families in Abu Dhabi and to identify the factors that impact it to provide decision makers with a reliable database especially when this issue has received very little academic attention in the UAE in general, and the emirate of Abu Dhabi in particular. In addition, this study has broad practical applications. The findings of this study would benefit not only Emirati families but also any institution concerned with family affairs in the country. Based on these findings, such institutions as the Family Development Foundation in Abu Dhabi can develop more effective and individualized counselling programmes to those intending to marry or those who suffer from poor marital compatibility.

The study can also inform any future social and family policies providing a vital insight into the type of professional skills social and family counsellors need to better guide couples, and those intending to marry to achieve better marital compatibility. Moreover, the results of the study can be used to develop a training manual for the target social professionals.

5 Method

Participants

The population of the study comprised of 260,000 Emirati families residing in the emirate in Abu Dhabi according to Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre estimation in 2019 – 2020.

The sample of study comprised 500 Emirati married couples residing in the emirate of Abu Dhabi selected by the Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre to represent the population of the study.

Research Instruments

To collect the required data, the researchers developed the marital compatibility scale based relevant work of Abu-Torki (2008), Alhana'yeh (2013), Sahaf (2013), Ibrahim (2016), and Alkhataybeh (2015) [34].

The initial draft of the questionnaire included 102 items. It was then presented to 10 reviewers including faculty from the departments of sociology and education at the University of Sharjah and experts from the Family Development Foundation. Based on the feedback of the reviewers, only 76 items were used in the scale where 15 items were included under the personal compatibility subscale, 8 under the organizational/family, 22 under the psycho-emotional, 18 under the cultural, intellectual, social, and moral values subscale, and 13 under the economic compatibility subscale.

To determine the construct validity of the questionnaire, correlation coefficient of each item both with its subscale and with other subscales were computed. Accordingly, all items with a correlation coefficient lower than 0.40, except when the content of the item indicated otherwise or the item was deemed essential, were removed. As a result, the final version of the scale included a total of 68 items.

The reliability coefficient was also calculated for the subscales. It was found that the reliability coefficients for the subscales using Cronbach alpha ranged between 0.758 and 0.946 (personal 0.833, organizational/ family 0.769, psycho-emotional 0.890, cultural, intellectual, moral values and social 0.841, economic 0.758, and the overall dimension 0.946).

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the scale has acceptable validity and reliability that justify its use for the purposes of this study.

Data collection

The data were collected by a specially selected team from Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre employees as it is the only entity officially authorized to collect such data. Members of the team received special training on how to use the scale to collect data from target families. In addition, the questionnaire included a clear confidentiality statement and participants were instructed not to give their names on the answer sheets.

Data analysis

This is a descriptive study (survey) that considered six independent variables (gender, level of education, family economic status, length of marriage, employment status of the wife, degree of family relations between the spouses), and marital compatibility and its sub-dimensions as a dependent variable.

In order to answer the research questions, we calculated the average scores, standard deviation, and rank for each item under the subscales and on the whole scale as well as

conducting a (T) test for two independent samples and the Chi-Square test for the subscales and the overall scale.

6 Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question (What are the levels of marital compatibility among a sample of Emirati families in Abu Dhabi in each subscale and the overall scale of the marriage compatibility scale), we calculated the statistical averages, standard deviations, the percentage, importance, and the rank of performance for each of the items that comprise the subscales of the marital compatibility scale, in addition to the overall performance on the subscales and the overall scale.

The data collected indicated that the scores on the personal compatibility subscale ranged from 3.93 to 4.88 with an average score of 4.485. This points to high levels of personal compatibility among the subject families. It was also evident from the data that the highest levels of compatibility under this subscale were related to the spouse's maintenance of personal hygiene (average=4.88, rank=1), sharing family secrets with others (average=4.81, rank=2), and lack of trust by the spouse (average=4.77, rank=3). Items that were ranked the lowest under this subscale were: "my spouse apologizes when he/she makes a mistake" (average=3.93), "my spouse tolerates my angry bursts" (average=4.32), and "my spouse tries to mollify me when I am angry" (average=4.29). These findings indicate that there is a serious need to educate spouses in such areas of dealing with family conflict such as apologizing and empathy without which qualities it would be very difficult to improve the levels of marital compatibility among married couples.

The average scores on items under the organizational-family compatibility subscale ranged from 4.18 to 4.65 with an overall average score of 4.35. The two highest ranking items were: "my spouses does not satisfy my marital rights" (average=4.65, rank=1), and "my partner and I disagree on how to raise the children" (average=4.37). It was also found that the two items that ranked the lowest under this subscale were both related to managing the family's financial affairs ["I disagree with my partner over how to manage our expenses" (average=4.18), and "my partner and I plan for the future of the family together" (average=4.26)]. This indicates that there is a disparity on how to manage the financial affairs of the family among the couples under study which might affect the levels of marital compatibility among these couples.

On the psycho-emotional subscale, the average score ranged from 3.05 to 4.71 with an overall average score of 4.335. The highest three ranking items were: "my spouse gets annoyed when I praise my family" (average=4.72, rank=1), "my spouse lets me down at times of need" (average=4.71) followed by "I strive to bring joy and happiness to my partner's life" and "I intentionally annoy my partner when I face any crisis" both at an average score of 4.61. The findings also show that subjects of the study, especially the men, paid little attention to celebrating their wedding anniversary (average=3.05). This is unfortunate,

as such an event is a great opportunity to renew vows of commitment, respect, and love between the couples. Another area that received low attention was ensuring that the couple would spend time together outside the house (average=3.88). It is important to note here that it is important to set the time for family outings and entertainment especially with relatives and friends. In addition, "I firmly stand my ground when I have an argument with my partner" ranked very low with an average of 3.79. This is also a negative tendency, as inflexibility can be detrimental to a marriage.

Average scores on the fourth subscale that considered cultural, intellectual, social, and moral compatibility ranged from 2.90 to 4.92 with an overall average score of 4.59. The three highest ranking items were: "I feel ashamed of my partner's social status" (average=4.92, rank=1), followed by "my partner and I have disagreements because of our relations with other people" (average=4.84), then "differences in customs and traditions impact our interaction" (average=4.82). On the other hand, the item that ranked the lowest was: "my partner believes it is important for us to have friends" (average=2.90). This is in agreement with how the participants viewed the importance of family outings and entertainment, which require a circle of close friends and family. Other items that ranked very low were: "we share the same opinions" (average=3.94), and "my partner accepts our differences in thinking patterns" (average=3.91). It is important here to emphasize the significant impact of sharing ideas, thoughts, and attitudes and the ability of any couple to accept differences in opinion on the longevity and success of their marriage especially at our current digitalized world.

Average scores on the economic compatibility subscale ranged from 3.16 to 4.51 with an overall average of 3.71. The highest-ranking item was related to the negative effect of a reduced family income on the couple's relationship (average=4.51). The second and third ranking items were: "financial issues undermine the family's stability" (average=4.35), and "we prioritize our financial needs" (average=4.33). On the other hand, the lowest ranking item was related to the willingness of the couples to discuss their private expenses with each other (average=3.16). This is a very important point as it indicates that the prevalent belief among the couples under study is that it is the husband's responsibility to manage the family's financial affairs. Such attitudes undermine the couple's ability to cooperate and jointly manage their family affairs. It was also noted that two of the lowest ranking items were: "we save for future emergencies" (average=3.24, rank=10), and "my partner's salary is sufficient to cover all our family expenses" (average=3.26, rank=9). It is worth noting here that married couples need to resist the trappings of our consumer culture even at times of plenty to ensure the longevity of their relationship.

The results of the study also show that the participants showed high levels of personal compatibility (average=4.48, rank=1), and cultural, intellectual, moral,

and social compatibility (average=4.45, rank=2). In addition, although the couples displayed lower levels of economic compatibility (average=3.78, rank=5), their performance on this subscale showed that they still enjoyed acceptable levels of compatibility (average>3). This might be attributed to differences in the social backgrounds of the couples and their family traditions and values.

Table 1: Averages, standard deviation, percentage, and rank of participants' performance on the marital compatibility scale and subscales.

Subscale	Average	SD	%	Rank
Personal	4.48	0.48	89.6	1
Organizational-family	4.36	0.65	87.2	3
Psych-emotional	4.25	0.56	85.0	4
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	4.45	0.44	89.0	2
Economic	3.79	0.68	75.8	5
Total	4.28	0.45		

To answer the second research questions (Do the levels of marital compatibility among the sample vary on each of the subscales based on the level of education of the couples, length of marriage, gender, the employment status of the wives, family income, and degree of family relations between the couples?), we calculated the statistical averages, degree of freedom, p-values, and f-value of the participants' responses to the different subscales.

Statistical analysis of the participants' responses to the marital compatibility scale shows that the husband's level of education might impact the couple's psych-emotional compatibility (F-Value=2.56 and degree of freedom=261). These results are statistically significant at ($\alpha=0.05$).

To determine the sources of differences on the psycho-emotional subscale, we ran Scheffé's test for estimated comparisons. It was found that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to the husband's level of education on this subscale despite a statistically significant F-Value. This is because Scheffé's test is more conservative than other multiple comparison tests.

Considering the wife's level of education, it was found that there were statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) on the organizational-family, and psycho-emotional subscales (table 3). However, Scheffé's test showed that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to the wife's level of education on these subscales despite statistically significant F-Values (2.61 and 3.40).

Table 2: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the husband's level of education.

Subscale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F-Value	p-Value
Personal	Between groups	2.20	5	0.44	2.11	0.06
	In groups	54.38	261	0.21		
	total	56.58	266			
Organizational-family	Between groups	2.19	5	0.44	0.95	0.45
	In groups	119.69	261	0.46		
	total	121.88	266			
Psycho-emotional	Between groups	3.52	5	0.70	2.56	0.03
	In groups	71.70	261	0.28		
	total	75.22	266			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	Between groups	1.52	5	0.30	1.51	0.19
	In groups	52.24	261	0.20		
	total	53.76	266			
Economic	Between groups	3.73	5	0.75	1.54	0.19
	In groups	126.47	261	0.49		
	total	130.19	266			
Overall	Between groups	2.11	5	0.42	2.10	0.07
	In groups	52.49	261	0.20		
	total	54.60	266			

Table 3: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the wife's level of education.

Subscale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F-Value	p-Value
Personal	Between groups	1.48	5	0.30	1.32	0.30
	In groups	54.77	227	0.24		
	total	56.25	232			
Organizational-family	Between groups	4.96	5	0.99	2.61	0.03
	In groups	86.31	227	0.38		
	total	91.27	232			
Psycho-emotional	Between groups	5.45	5	1.09	3.40	0.01
	In groups	72.75	227	0.32		
	total	78.20	232			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	Between groups	0.93	5	0.19	1.05	0.39
	In groups	40.49	227	0.18		
	total	41.42	232			
Economic	Between groups	3.70	5	0.74	1.79	0.12
	In groups	93.96	227	0.41		
	total	97.66	232			
Overall	Between groups	1.96	5	0.39	1.99	0.08
	In groups	44.67	227	0.20		
	total	46.62	232			

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the couple's level of education does not impact their marital compatibility. This might be because the majority of young people in the country seek to finish their basic and higher education. It might even be argued that, at the present time,

the couple's culture has more impact on their compatibility than their levels of education. A significant variance in the levels of education between the spouses causes apathy and poor interaction, which might lead to separation and divorce. In contrast, having similar cultural, intellectual,

and educational backgrounds is a catalyst for the success of marriage [9].

The length of the marriage was found to have a clear impact on the level of marital compatibility of the participants (table 4). The F-Values on all subscales and the overall scale reached 2.55, 2.11, 5.64, 2.63, 3.92, and 3.49 respectively; all statistically significant values at ($\alpha=0.05$).

To determine the sources of differences on the subscales and the overall scale in relation to the length of the marriage, we ran Scheffé's test for estimated comparisons.

The test revealed statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) on the psycho-emotional and economic subscales all in favour of groups whose marriage was shorter than 11 years and over. This might be interpreted to mean that, in some cases, marital compatibility is temporary and that the length of the relationship may not be the best indicator of compatibility.

The gender of the spouse was also found to only impact the personal and economic compatibility of the couple (see table 5). T-Value on these subscales were 2.65 and 3.63 respectively with a degree of freedom of 498 which are statistically significant values at ($\alpha=0.05$). Further analysis

of the data reveals that men performed better on the personal compatibility subscale than women with average score of 4.53 and 4.42 respectively. In contrast, females performed better on the economic compatibility subscale than men with an average of 3.80, 0.10 higher than men. It is worth noting here that both men and women scored relatively low on the economic compatibility subscale. This might indicate an admission by both male and female participants that this a problematic area that need their attention especially when more women are joining the workforce and seeking financial independence.

Table 4: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the couple's length of marriage.

Subscale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F-Value	p-Value
Personal	Between groups	2.31	4	0.58	2.55	0.04
	In groups	112.11	495	0.23		
	total	114.42	499			
Organizational-family	Between groups	3.58	4	0.90	2.11	0.08
	In groups	210.05	495	0.42		
	total	213.63	499			
Psycho-emotional	Between groups	6.72	4	1.68	5.64	0.00
	In groups	147.62	495	0.30		
	total	154.34	499			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	Between groups	1.99	4	0.50	2.63	0.03
	In groups	93.64	495	0.19		
	total	95.64	499			
Economic	Between groups	7.14	4	1.79	3.92	0.00
	In groups	255.29	495	0.46		
	total	232.43	499			
Overall	Between groups	2.78	4	0.70	3.49	0.01
	In groups	98.62	495	0.20		
	total	101.40	499			

Table 5: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to gender.

Subscale	Gender	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-Value	P-Value
Personal	male	267	4.53	0.46	498	2.65	0.01
	female	233	4.42	0.49			
Organizational-family	male	267	4.39	0.68	498	1.06	0.29
	female	233	4.33	0.63			
Psycho-emotional	male	267	4.29	0.53	498	1.73	0.09
	female	233	4.20	0.58			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	male	267	4.48	0.45	498	1.55	0.12
	female	233	4.41	0.42			

Economic	male	267	3.70	0.70	498	-3.163	0.00
	female	233	3.89	0.65			
Overall	male	267	4.30	0.45	498	0.93	0.35
	female	233	4.26	0.45			

Moreover, it was found that the wife’s employment status had no impact on personal, organizational-family, psycho-emotional, and cultural, intellectual, moral and social compatibility as the T-Values were 1.83, 1.33, 1.18, and 1.43 respectively which are not statistically significant at ($\alpha=0.05$).

On the other hand, there were statistically significant differences on the economic compatibility sub-scale and the overall scale in relation to the wife’s employment status with T-Values of 4.07 and 2.33 respectively with a degree of freedom of 231 which are statistically significant at ($\alpha=0.05$). Additionally, employed wives showed higher levels of economic compatibility compared to their unemployed counterparts with averages of 4.22 and 3.66 respectively. Similarly, working wives showed higher

levels of overall compatibility (average=4.31) compared to stay at home wives (average=4.17).

The data shows that the family’s economic status impacts the couple’s organizational-family, and economic compatibility which showed F-Values of 2.86 and 143.06 (degree of freedom=485.3) respectively which are statistically significant values at ($\alpha=0.05$). However, Scheffé’s test for estimated comparisons revealed no statistically significant differences on these subscales.

In addition, the data shows differences in economic compatibility between couples where the husband’s income is significantly higher than his wife’s and those where the husband’s income is similar to his wife’s compared to those with unemployed wives in favour of the first two groups.

Table 6: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the wife's employment status.

Subscale	Gender	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-Value	P-Value
Personal	employed	152	4.46	0.46	231	1.83	0.07
	unemployed	81	4.34	0.54			
Organizational-family	employed	152	4.37	0.61	231	1.33	0.19
	unemployed	81	4.25	0.65			
Psycho-emotional	employed	152	4.24	0.57	231	1.43	0.15
	unemployed	81	4.13	0.60			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	employed	152	4.44	0.41	231	1.18	0.24
	unemployed	81	4.37	0.44			
Economic	employed	152	4.02	0.60	231	4.07	0.00
	unemployed	81	3.66	0.67			
Overall	employed	152	4.31	0.43	231	2.33	0.02
	unemployed	81	4.17	0.47			

Table 7: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the family's economic status.

Subscale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F-Value	p-Value
Personal	Between groups	1.39	3	0.47	2.06	0.11
	In groups	109.63	485	0.23		
	total	111.03	488			
Organizational-family	Between groups	3.61	3	1.20	2.86	0.04
	In groups	204.08	485	0.42		
	total	207.69	488			
Psycho-emotional	Between groups	1.56	3	0.52	1.75	0.16
	In groups	144.61	485	0.30		
	total	146.17	488			
Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	Between groups	0.37	3	0.12	0.65	0.58
	In groups	90.76	485	0.19		
	total	91.12	488			
Economic	Between groups	16.73	3	5.58	13.06	0.00
	In groups	207.07	485	0.43		
	total	223.80	488			
Overall	Between groups	1.23	3	0.41	2.08	0.10
	In groups	95.25	485	0.20		
	total	96.47	488			

Considering the degree of family relations between the couples (table 8), there were no statistically significant differences in the personal, psycho-emotional, and the cultural, intellectual, moral and social subscales, and the overall scale (F-Values were 2.08, 1.39, 1.41, 2.26 and respectively). However, being related seems to have an impact on the couple's organizational-family, economic, and overall compatibility with F-Values of 2.30, 4.75, and 2.26 respectively.

Where there were statistically significant differences, Scheffé's test revealed statistically significant differences in favour of unrelated couples who grew up in different areas compared to related couples who grew up in the same neighbourhood. This can be explained by the notion that lack of family interference empowers the couples to find ways to solve their marital problems that best suit them. In addition, unrelated couples who grew up in different neighbourhood fared better than on unrelated couples who grew up in the same area.

Table 8: Performance on the marital compatibility scale in relation to the couple's family relations.

Subscale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F-Value	p-Value
Personal	Between groups	2.34	5	0.47	2.08	0.07
	In groups	108.69	483	0.23		
	total	111.03	488			
Organizational-family	Between groups	4.83	5	0.97	2.30	0.04
	In groups	202.86	483	0.42		
	total	207.69	488			
Psycho-emotional	Between groups	2.07	5	0.41	1.39	0.23
	In groups	144.10	483	0.30		
	total	146.17	488			

Cultural, intellectual, moral, and social	Between groups	1.31	5	0.26	1.41	0.22
	In groups	89.82	483	0.19		
	total	91.12	488			
Economic	Between groups	10.50	5	2.10	4.75	0.00
	In groups	213.30	483	0.44		
	total	223.80	488			
Overall	Between groups	2.20	5	0.44	2.26	0.048
	In groups	94.27	483	1.95		
	total	96.47	488			

7 Discussions

According to the findings of the data of personal compatibility, the subscale ranged from 3.93 to 4.88 with an average score of 4.485. This points to high levels of personal compatibility among the subject families. These findings indicate that there is a serious need to educate spouses in such areas of dealing with family disagreement such as apologizing and compassion. Otherwise, it would be very challenging to enhance the levels of marital compatibility among married couples. As for data of organizational-family compatibility, the subscale ranged from 4.18 to 4.65 with an overall average score of 4.35. as a result, it indicates that there is a inequality on how to manage the financial matters of the family among the couples which might affect the levels of marital compatibility among these couples.

Whereas the subscale of data of psycho-emotional compatibility ranged from 3.05 to 4.71 with an overall average score of 4.335. This indicates the need to renew vows of commitment, respect, and love between the couples which can be enhanced by arranging quality time between husband and wife as couples and quality time for family outings and entertainment especially with relatives and friends. Emarah [20] states that emotional stability as well as constant interaction between couples are major factors to impact marital compatibility. In addition, Baron, Byrne, & Johnson [23], in their book “Exploring Social Psychology” suggest that mutual love and respect are necessary to achieve balance in relationship which as a result affect other aspects of sexual, economic, social, and cultural fulfilment. Al-Shahri [18] and Gonzaga, Carter, & Buckwalter [26] agree that marital compatibility was positively correlated with emotional characteristics of more satisfying marriages. In Muscat, Oman, Alhana'yeh [28] finds that members of marital reconciliation committees agreed that there were personal, emotional factors that lead to marital compatibility. Also, Monaem confirms that lack of compatibility seemed to result in psychological disorders

among the wives. In addition, Makvana [31] argues that poor emotional state can affect both couples and cause depression as well as anxiety. It can lead to marital silence and later to divorce. Schrodrt & Shimowski [32] confirms that disturbance in emotional needs will lead to marital silence due to lack of communication between the couple. This will increase levels of anxiety and assault which later enhance chances for ‘emotional divorce’. Moreover, Tawfeek [35] suggests that there is a strong relation between positive behaviour and marital compatibility. Husbands scored higher on levels of positive potency, support, and involvement, while the wives scored higher on tolerance.

Further, Al-Saghir (2014) says that neglection of emotional needs is related to lack of compatibility in marriage, mainly, of wife’s side. For instance, polygamy contributes greatly on the emotional side of women as it leads to stubbornness and jealousy. Additionally, Aljendi & Abu-Znaid [24] find that men tend to resort to marital silent more often than women. Furthermore, Alberi [14] states that behaviours such as lying negatively affect the psychological behaviours of both couples. Alazmi [36] states that psychological stress is in accordance with levels of compatibility among couples.

As for the data of cultural, intellectual, social, and moral compatibility, the subscale ranged from 2.90 to 4.92 with an overall average score of 4.59. This indicates the substantial influence of sharing ideas, thoughts, and attitudes and the ability of any couple to accept dissimilarities in opinion on the durability and success of their marriage especially at our present digitalized world. In reference to this, Emarah [20]. states that social, economic, and educational compatibility are the base corner for stability. Mahdi & Abdul-Monaem [29] attempts to confirm the effect of the levels of education on the stability of marriage. Hameed et al [21] reflects the seriousness of the social upbringing along with educational level for both couples upon the stability of marriage. Moreover, Aljendi and Abu-Zneid [24] stresses on the role of social factors achieving stability; disturbance in social factor can enhance marital silence. As for intellectual part, Al-Dahri [25]

mentions that there was a greater degree of compatibility between the wife's level of education, and length of marriage. In Muscat, Oman, Alhana'yeh [28] members of marital reconciliation committees agreed that the couples' level of education seemed to play a role in cementing marital relations. Moreover, Mahdi & Abdul-Monaem [29] agree on the importance of the couple levels of education in stability of marriage. Alazmi (2014) [36] believes that educational level of the spouses plays a great deal on the level of compatibility between them. In addition, Rosenfeld [39] argues that compatibility vs. stability of marital status is interconnected. Compatibility in reference to social demography such as coming from stable family history increase the rate of successful relationship in the scope of marriage comparing to the history of less stable families for one of the spouses where the divorce rates are higher in less stable families. Likewise, Al-Darmaki, et al [40] confirm that changes in demographics factors such as social and cultural factors as level of commitment in religion and domicile (place of living), and whether they are relative or from different families affect marital stability in the United Arab Emirates. These cultural variables are influenced with socio-cultural values that affect the ability to overcome any differences which may hinder healthy, happy marriage. Karney (2021) 34, states that diversity among spouses on the level of socioeconomic factors such as level of education can affect relationships. Such equality can be achieved when the spouses have almost same level of education which lead to whole marriage stability. Bavel, Schnor, Theunis, and Willaert [42] highlight the successful compatibility among spouses based on level of education. Highly educated husband and wife is associated with lower level of divorce. Whereas incompatible marriage based on the level of education sets a higher rate of divorce. Moreover, Bumpass, Martin, and James [38] stress on the effect of educational level upon the balance and stability of marriage especially if it connected to low education. The inequality levels of education among couples reflect the level of independency, mainly the women's side. Women who are highly educated, comparing to their spouses, have better prospect of independency and their level of happiness. They tend to feel that they can do better than their less educated spouse. Those variables steadily affect the attitudes of both couples; especially if women have higher rank of education than their husbands.

In reference to the subscale data of economic compatibility, it ranged from 3.16 to 4.51 with an overall average of 3.71. This indicates that attitudes weaken the couple's ability to cooperate and equally manage their family affairs. It is worth noting here that married couples need to challenge the trappings of our consumer culture even at times of plenty to ensure the durability of their relationship. Emarah [20] and Hameed et al [21], Al Gharaibeh [43], agree on how serious the couple should view the concept of economic and educational compatibility as it determines the longevity of their marriage. In addition, Aljendi and Abu-Zneid [24] suggest that any disturbance in economic

compatibility can contribute to marital silence. Further, Monaem (2013) attempts to confirm the effect of income on marital compatibility; those with higher levels of income enjoyed higher levels of marital compatibility. Also, Makvana (2014) [31] agrees on the effect of economic factors on the stability of marriage. In addition, Karney [41] believes that diversity among spouses on the level of socioeconomic factors influence the stability of marriage. Equality of socioeconomic such as level PhD Pof income can enhance relationships; when both have equal financial capabilities; they work well with disagreement by hiring therapist to avoid breakup. Such equality can be achieved when the spouses have almost same level of education. Thus, these variables are interconnected with the whole marriage stability. The family foundations in the UAE could prevent forms of violence and support the Marital Compatibility through community education programs, promote community awareness of importance of family stability [44].

8 Conclusions

The results of the study point to that there is a high degree of marital compatibility among Emirati families in Abu Dhabi. This indicates the success of the strategies adopted by the Family Development Foundation which implemented numerous programmes aimed at building cohesive and close families in accordance with the UAE's vision. However, it is important to note that marital compatibility is not a static situation. The extent of compatibility varies in response to changes in the family's structure (for example, from a couple with no children to having school age kids). It is essential, therefore, to seek to enhance the levels of marital compatibility among Emirati families especially in such areas where the participants of the study expressed doubt or uncertainty. Based on the findings of the study, we recommend the following:

- Digitalizing the marital compatibility scale used in this study for use by the Family Development Foundation to evaluate the degree of compatibility among married couples and those intending to get married
- Conducting on-going marital compatibility workshops for couples at different stages of their relationships as the results of the study indicate the levels of marital compatibility decreased with time
- Developing and posting relevant daily social media messages that address the daily lives of married couples
- Including segments that address marital compatibility and aim at raising the public's awareness of the issue in T.V. and radio programmes and shows especially those concerned with family life
- Developing a specific training manual for social and psychological counsellors on dealing with marital compatibility issues and to help them provide the most

effective support to married couples and those intending to get married

- Providing married couples and those intending to get married with easy access (via phone or electronic chat) to the family counselling services offered by the Family Development Foundation to help them better deal with their family problems.
- Establishing a special family award that involves attending a series of family emotional, social, and financial training programmes by the whole family.
- Collaborating with universities and schools to conduct awareness raising seminars and workshops on how to select a spouse and deal with family problems, the importance of choosing the right spouse without family interference, and the standards of marital compatibility such as age, education, culture, language, religion, accepting differences in opinion, and the belief in the diversity of the roles of men and women
- Establish partnerships with universities, institutions, and the Ministry of Education to offer a course on “successful family life” which addresses family issues, the institution of marriage, the importance of building a balanced family, and methods of managing and resolving family disagreements
- Holding training and publicity sessions to inform and convince parents of the importance of the engagement period when couples can get to know each other and assess their compatibility which would enable them to make informed decisions on whether to continue with the marriage and ultimately avoid the painful experience of an early divorce
- Prioritizing workshops that address personal and emotional interaction
- Providing prenuptial legal advice to enable future couples to better understand the legal consequences of divorce
- Promoting the idea that in spite of the significant role they play in our lives, our parents should not manage our married lives and should be neutral in any conflict as they often have different opinions and attitudes to ours
- Developing a comprehensive national framework for marital compatibility that comprises awareness raising campaigns, services, and professional support provided in-person and/or electronically

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