

**THE ROLE OF TRUST IN RELATIONSHIP,  
INTIMACY AND POSITIVE EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION ON MARITAL SATISFACTION  
AND FLOURISHING AMONG EMIRATI  
MARRIED WOMEN**

**ALHAMMADI NOURA SAEED AHMED KHALAF**

**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

**2025**

**THE ROLE OF TRUST IN RELATIONSHIP,  
INTIMACY AND POSITIVE EMOTIONAL  
EXPRESSION ON MARITAL SATISFACTION  
AND FLOURISHING AMONG EMIRATI  
MARRIED WOMEN**

**by**

**ALHAMMADI NOURA SAEED AHMED KHALAF**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2025**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals who have provided me with their unwavering support and inspiration throughout my PhD journey in Malaysia. First and foremost, my deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor, Prof. Intan H.M. Hashim, for her invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and continuous encouragement during my research. Her mentorship has been instrumental in the completion of this thesis. I am also sincerely grateful to my co-supervisor, A/P Dr. Azmi Zaireeni, for providing constructive advice and introducing new perspectives that enriched my approach to addressing research challenges.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all the Emirati women who participated in this study. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights was vital to the success of this research. Without their valuable contributions, this study would not have been possible. My gratitude extends to the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates, whose support and sponsorship have been integral to the successful completion of this academic endeavour. Their belief in the value of higher education and research has provided me with the opportunity to achieve this significant milestone. My deepest gratitude goes to my family, whose unwavering love and support have been my source of strength and motivation throughout this journey. I am equally thankful to my friends and colleagues at the School of Social Sciences for their camaraderie and encouragement, which have made this experience meaningful and fulfilling. Lastly, and most importantly, I am profoundly grateful to God. In moments of doubt and difficulty, I found solace and strength in Your unwavering presence.

Sincerely,  
Noura AlHammadi

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>ABSTRAK.....</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>xviii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Research Objectives.....	10
1.4 Research Questions.....	11
1.5 Hypotheses.....	12
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	13
1.7 Conceptual Definition of Key Terms .....	17
1.7.1 Flourishing .....	17
1.7.2 Marital Satisfaction .....	18
1.7.3 Trust in Relationships .....	18
1.7.4 Intimacy .....	19
1.7.5 Positive Emotional Expression .....	19
1.8 Operational Definitions .....	19
1.9 Scope of the Study .....	21
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 Flourishing.....	23

2.1.1	Flourishing of Women .....	25
2.2	Relationship .....	29
2.2.1	Relationships and Flourishing.....	32
2.3	Marriage and Marital Satisfaction as Part of Relationships .....	34
2.3.1	Marital Satisfaction and Flourishing.....	40
2.4	Trust in Relationships .....	45
2.5	Intimacy .....	52
2.6	Positive Emotional Expression .....	57
2.7	Women in Emirates .....	63
2.8	Theoretical Framework.....	64
2.8.1	PERMA Theory .....	64
2.8.2	Interdependence Theory.....	68
2.9	Conceptual Framework.....	70
2.9.1	Conceptual Model of the Study .....	70
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>		<b>72</b>
3.1	Research Design of the Study.....	72
3.2	Sampling Technique .....	73
3.2.1	Sample Size.....	73
3.2.2	Sampling Method.....	74
3.3	Research Procedure .....	75
3.3.1	Participants.....	75
3.3.2	Data Collection Procedure .....	76
	3.3.2(a) Inclusion Criteria .....	78
	3.3.2(b) Exclusion Criteria .....	79
3.3.3	Ethical Clearance .....	80
3.4	Instruments .....	81
3.4.1	Demographic Questionnaire .....	81

3.4.2	Trust in Close Relationships Scale.....	81
3.4.3	Intimacy Scale.....	82
3.4.4	Positive Emotional Expression Scale.....	83
3.4.5	ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale .....	84
3.4.6	Flourishing Scale.....	85
3.5	Data Analyses .....	86
3.5.1	Structural Equation Modelling.....	87
3.5.2	Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	87
3.5.3	Maximum Likelihood Estimation .....	88
3.5.4	Overall Goodness-of-fit Measures .....	88
3.5.5	Goodness-of-fit Index .....	89
3.5.6	Root Mean Square Residual.....	89
3.5.7	Incremental Fit Measures.....	89
3.5.8	Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index.....	90
3.5.9	Normed Fit Index .....	90
3.5.10	Comparative Fit Index .....	90
3.6	Pilot Study .....	90
3.7	Chapter Summary .....	92
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS .....</b>		<b>93</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	93
4.2	Data Screening.....	94
4.2.1	Missing Value Exclusion .....	96
4.2.2	Analysis of Assumptions .....	97
4.2.3	Multivariate Normality .....	98
	4.2.3(a) Outliers .....	102
	4.2.3(b) Linearity and Homoscedasticity .....	104
4.3	Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Demographics.....	105

4.4	Psychometrics of the Instruments .....	107
4.4.1	Trust in Relationships .....	107
4.4.2	Intimacy .....	108
4.4.3	Positive Emotional Expression .....	110
4.4.4	Marital Satisfaction .....	111
4.4.5	Flourishing .....	113
4.5	Preliminary Analysis .....	115
4.5.1	Correlation Analysis .....	115
4.5.2	Assessment of the Measurement Model .....	116
4.5.3	Structural Equation Modelling Analysis.....	117
4.6	Hypothesis Testing .....	119
4.6.1	H1: What is the level of trust in relationships, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction, and flourishing among Emirati married women?.....	119
4.6.2	H2: To what extent does trust in relationships predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?.....	121
4.6.3	H3: To what extent does trust in relationships predict flourishing among Emirati married women?.....	122
4.6.4	H4: To what extent does intimacy predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?.....	123
4.6.5	H5: To what extent does intimacy predict flourishing among Emirati married women?.....	124
4.6.6	H6: To what extent does positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women? .....	125
4.6.7	H7: To what extent does positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	127
4.6.8	H8: To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?.....	128
4.6.9	H9: To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women?.....	130

4.6.10	H10: What is the relationship between marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	131
4.7	Summary .....	131
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>133</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	133
5.2	Summary of the Findings.....	133
5.3	Discussion.....	134
5.3.1	Discussion of Question 1: What is the level of trust in relationships, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women? ...	134
5.3.2	Discussion of Question 2: To what extent does trust in relationships predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women? .....	138
5.3.3	Discussion of Question 3: To what extent does trust in relationships predict flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	141
5.3.4	Discussion of Question 4: To what extent does intimacy predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women? .....	143
5.3.5	Discussion of Question 5: To what extent does intimacy predict flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	146
5.3.6	Discussion of Question 6: To what extent does positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?.....	148
5.3.7	Discussion of Question 7: To what extent does positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women?.....	151
5.3.8	Discussion of Question 8: To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women? ....	153
5.3.9	Discussion of Question 9: To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	154
5.3.10	Discussion of Question 10: What is the relationship between marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women? .....	156
5.4	Theoretical and Practical Implications .....	157

5.4.1	Theoretical Implications .....	157
5.4.2	Practical Implications.....	159
5.5	Limitations of the Study .....	161
5.6	Recommendations for Future Research.....	163
5.7	Conclusion .....	164
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>		<b>166</b>

**APPENDICES**

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 3.1	Potential Participant Groups in the Study .....	76
Table 3. 2:	Results of the Reliability Test from the Pilot Study .....	91
Table 4. 1	Results of the skewness and kurtosis .....	99
Table 4. 2	Results of the Mahalanobis distance value .....	103
Table 4. 3	Results of Cook’s distance.....	104
Table 4. 4	Results of demographic information of participants (n = 704).....	105
Table 4. 5	Results of the model fit indices of the Trust in Close Relationships Scale .....	107
Table 4. 6	Results of the model fit indices of the Intimacy Scale.....	108
Table 4. 7	Results of the model fit indices of the Positive Emotional Expression Scale .....	110
Table 4. 8	Fit indicators of the hypothesised and final model of the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale. ....	112
Table 4. 9	Fit indicators of the final model of the Flourishing Scale .....	114
Table 4.10	Results of correlation among study variables. ....	115
Table 4.11	Results of variables’ reliability and validity. ....	117
Table 4.12	The model goodness fit indexes for factor analysis.....	118
Table 4.13	Mean and standard deviation of the questionnaires and subscales .	120
Table 4.14	Results of the regression of trust on marital satisfaction .....	121
Table 4.15	Results of the regression of trust on flourishing .....	123
Table 4.16	Results of the regression of intimacy on marital satisfaction .....	124
Table 4.17	Results of the regression of intimacy on flourishing .....	125

Table 4.18	Results of the regression of positive emotional expression levels on marital satisfaction .....	126
Table 4.19	Results of the regression of positive emotional expression on flourishing .....	127
Table 4.20	Results of regression analysis for predicting marital satisfaction from trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression. ....	129
Table 4.21	Results of regression analysis for predicting flourishing from trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression. ....	130
Table 4.22	Summary of the hypothesis verification .....	132

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 2. 1	Three major factors that predict future marital satisfaction, namely, our individual traits, our traits as a couple and our personal and relationship contexts, form what is known as the marriage triangle model .....36
Figure 2. 2	Sternberg’s Triarchic Theory of Love .....52
Figure 2. 3	PERMA Model .....67
Figure 2. 4	Overview of interdependence theory. ....68
Figure 2. 5	Proposed relations between positive psychology, Interdependence, PERMA and wellbeing.....70
Figure 2. 6	Conceptual model of the study .....71
Figure 4. 1	Histograms and boxplot of Trust in Relationships Scale.....99
Figure 4. 2	Histograms and boxplot of the Intimacy Scale .....100
Figure 4. 3	Histograms and boxplot of Positive Emotional Expression Scale..101
Figure 4. 4	Histograms and boxplot of Marital Satisfaction Scale .....101
Figure 4. 5	Histograms and boxplot of Flourishing Scale.....102
Figure 4. 6	Model of the Trust in Close Relationships Scale.....108
Figure 4. 7	Model of the Intimacy Scale .....109
Figure 4. 8	Model of Positive Emotional Expression Scale.....111
Figure 4. 9	Initial measurement model of the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale.....112
Figure 4.10	Final measurement model of the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale.....113

Figure 4.11	Final measurement model of the Flourishing Scale.....	114
Figure 4.12	Hypothetical model of relationships among trust in relationships, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction, and flourishing.....	118
Figure 4.13	Hypothetical model of relationships between trust and marital satisfaction .....	122
Figure 4. 14	Hypothetical model of relationships between trust and flourishing .....	123
Figure 4.15	Hypothetical model of relationships between intimacy and marital satisfaction .....	124
Figure 4.16	Hypothetical model of relationships between intimacy and flourishing.....	125
Figure 4.17	Hypothetical model of relationships between positive emotional expression and marital satisfaction .....	126
Figure 4.18	Hypothetical model of relationships between positive emotional expression and flourishing.....	127
Figure 4.19	Hypothetical model depicting the predictive relationship among trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression on marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.....	128
Figure 4.20	Hypothetical model depicting the predictive relationships of trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression with flourishing in Emirati married women.....	129
Figure 4.21	Hypothetical model depicting the predictive relationships of marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women.....	131

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UAE	United Arab Emirates
TIRS	Trust in Close Relationships Scale
GWB	General Well-being
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
PEES	Positive Emotional Expression Scale
EMS	ENRICH Marital Satisfaction scale
FS	Flourishing Scale
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
MLR	Multivariate Logistic Regression
NIN	National Identification Number
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
EM	Expectation Maximisation
MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimator
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
GFI	Goodness-of-fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

DF	Degrees of Freedom
p	P-value
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
IM	Intimacy
PEE	Positive Emotional Expression
MS	Marital Satisfaction
FLO	Flourishing
IS	Intimacy Scale
PEES	Positive Emotional Expression Scale

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A	Trust in Close Relationships Scale
Appendix B	Intimacy Scale
Appendix C	Positive Emotional Expression Scale
Appendix D	ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale
Appendix E	Flourishing Scale
Appendix F	Ethical Approval

**PERANAN KEPERCAYAAN DALAM HUBUNGAN, KEINTIMAN DAN  
EKSPRESI EMOSI POSITIF TERHADAP KEPUASAN PERKAHWINAN  
DAN KEMAKMURAN DALAM KALANGAN WANITA EMIRATI YANG  
BERKAHWIN**

**ABSTRAK**

Kepuasan perkahwinan dan berkembang maju dipengaruhi oleh faktor budaya khusus, termasuk tradisi, nilai dan adat resam yang membentuk identiti masyarakat Arab. Dalam konteks Emiriah Arab Bersatu (UAE), kajian mengenai konstruk ini masih terhad dan kurang menggunakan alat ukur yang sesuai dengan budaya tempatan. Kajian ini menilai bagaimana kepercayaan dalam hubungan, keintiman dan ekspresi emosi positif meramal kepuasan perkahwinan dan perkembangan diri (berkembang maju) dalam kalangan wanita Emirati yang telah berkahwin, di samping mengambil kira pembolehubah psikologi tambahan yang mungkin mempengaruhi hasil ini. Reka bentuk kajian kuantitatif keratan rentas telah digunakan. Seramai 704 wanita Emirati yang telah berkahwin telah dipilih melalui kaedah persampelan bertujuan dan rantaian salji di kawasan bandar utama di UAE. Peserta melengkapkan beberapa instrumen piawai termasuk Skala Kepercayaan dalam Hubungan Rapat, Skala Intimasi, Skala Ekspresi Emosi Positif, Skala Kepuasan Perkahwinan ENRICH dan Skala Berkembang Maju. Pemodelan persamaan berstruktur menunjukkan bahawa kepercayaan merupakan peramal terkuat bagi kepuasan perkahwinan ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ) dan berkembang maju ( $\beta = 0.45, p < 0.001$ ), diikuti oleh keintiman ( $\beta = 0.36, p < 0.01$ ) dan ekspresi emosi positif ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.05$ ). Walaupun tiga pembolehubah ini menyumbang secara signifikan, nilai  $R^2$  yang sederhana menunjukkan pengaruh faktor lain seperti ciri keperibadian, pengawalan emosi, dan tekanan budaya. Dari sudut teori, kajian ini menyokong penggunaan Model PERMA

dan Teori Saling Bergantungan dalam konteks budaya Arab-Islam, di mana perkahwinan dianggap sebagai institusi sosial utama. Dari segi praktikal, dapatan kajian ini memberi panduan berguna kepada ahli terapi, kaunselor dan penggubal dasar untuk membangunkan program intervensi perkahwinan yang peka budaya bagi wanita Emirati, terutamanya yang memberi tumpuan kepada pembinaan kepercayaan, keintiman emosi dan komunikasi ekspresif.

**THE ROLE OF TRUST IN RELATIONSHIP, INTIMACY AND POSITIVE  
EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AND  
FLOURISHING AMONG EMIRATI MARRIED WOMEN**

**ABSTRACT**

Marital satisfaction and flourishing are shaped by culturally specific factors, including the traditions, values, and customs that define Arab societies. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), limited research has investigated these constructs using culturally relevant tools. This study examined how trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women, while also considering additional psychological variables that may influence these outcomes. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed. A total of 704 Emirati married women were selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods across major urban regions in the UAE. Participants completed standardized instruments including the Trust in Close Relationships Scale, Intimacy Scale, Positive Emotional Expression Scale, ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, and the Flourishing Scale. Structural equation modelling revealed that trust was the strongest predictor of both marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ) and flourishing ( $\beta = 0.45, p < 0.001$ ), followed by intimacy ( $\beta = 0.36, p < 0.01$ ) and positive emotional expression ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.05$ ). Although these three variables accounted for a significant portion of the variance, the moderate  $R^2$  values also suggest the influence of other variables, such as personality traits, emotion regulation, and cultural pressures. Theoretically, this study supports the applicability of the PERMA model and Interdependence Theory within an Arab-Muslim cultural context, where marriage is regarded as a core social institution. Practically, the findings offer culturally informed guidance for therapists, counsellors, and policymakers in designing marital

intervention programs for Emirati women, focusing on enhancing trust, emotional intimacy, and expressive communication.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research focus and provides a comprehensive overview of the study. It begins with the problem statement, which is followed by the articulation of the research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses. Additionally, the significance of the study is discussed in detail. The chapter also includes conceptual definitions of key terms and their corresponding operational definitions. It concludes with a discussion of the scope of the study.

### 1.1 Overview

As a central concept in positive psychology, flourishing refers to a state in which individuals experience optimal levels of functioning psychologically and socially (Kesumawardhani & Siswanto, 2024; Nur'aini & Mulyana, 2024; Secretary-general's, 2016). It comprises more than just happiness or the absence of negative emotions; flourishing is characterised by personal growth, purposeful engagement, positive relationships and the attainment of meaningful life goals (Alteneiji, 2023; Diener et al., 2010; Huppert & So, 2013; Nur'aini & Mulyana, 2024). According to Seligman (2011), flourishing represents a holistic state of well-being, including the emotional, psychological and social dimensions. It offers a comprehensive measure of an individual's quality of life by capturing the ability to engage meaningfully with the environment, enhance positive relationships and sustain psychological health (Ammoury, 2023; Willen et al., 2022). A flourishing marriage allows both partners to pursue personal and shared goals, thus creating a fulfilling life together (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Slatcher & Schoebi, 2017; Thomas, Liu & Umberson, 2017).

Relationships are often characterised by individuals' perception of their partner's positive emotions and commitment to the relationship (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Waugh & Sali, 2023; Li et al., 2022, 2023). A fulfilling relationship contributes to both partners' health and quality of life (Hinchliff & Gott, 2004; Hook et al., 2003; Impett et al., 2008; Thomas, Liu & Umberson, 2017). Key aspects of romantic partnerships, including love, commitment and relationship satisfaction, are strong indicators of relationship stability (Horn et al., 1997). Previous studies have highlighted the importance of various types of relationships. While all forms contribute to individual well-being, marriage holds a unique position because of its profound impact on emotional and psychological health. Relationships play a pivotal role in determining human marital satisfaction and flourishing, with marriage standing out as a key contributor among various forms of relationships. Marriage plays a crucial role in contributing to individual flourishing when viewed through the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). Positive relationships, one of the core elements of this model, are vital to human flourishing. A satisfying marriage is a prime example of such a relationship.

As a central institution across societies, marriage provides a unique blend of companionship, support and stability, with over 90% of individuals marrying at least once in their lifetime (Choi & Marks, 2011; Shackelford & Buss, 2000). It is regarded as a foundational pillar for family structures and societal continuity by fostering emotional security and personal development (Thomas, Liu & Umberson, 2017). While marriage offers substantial benefits, such as life satisfaction and flourishing, it also introduces challenges that can influence the quality of the marital bond (Indu et al. 2018; Javadivala et al., 2021; Sina et al., 2018; Sontate et al., 2021). How couples confront these challenges determines whether their relationship is strengthened or

weakened over time. A healthy marital relationship is one where partners effectively meet each other's emotional, psychological and practical needs, thus establishing harmony and resilience within their union (Alvarez et al., 2017; An et al., 2022; Chiş, Ignat, Rad & Macsinga, 2022; Hu et al., 2021). Key factors, such as trust, emotional expression and marital satisfaction, are influential in shaping the stability and quality of marriage (Kleynhans et al., 2022). Marital satisfaction, which is characterised by emotional closeness, effective communication and the ability to face life's challenges together, is a key indicator of flourishing (Heshmati et al., 2016). High levels of marital satisfaction are linked to overall life satisfaction, psychological well-being and reduced stress (Javadijala et al., 2021; Sina et al., 2018). Strong communication and emotional intimacy between partners foster trust, security and mutual support, which are essential for individual and relational growth (An et al., 2022; Chiş, Ignat, Rad & Macsinga, 2022; Hu et al., 2021). Marital satisfaction specifically refers to partners' perceptions of how well their marital relationship meets their personal needs, which encompass aspects such as love, intimacy, comfort and mutual support (Spanier & Lewis, 1980; Ahmadi & Hossein-Abadi, 2009). Previous studies suggest that marriage is deeply influenced by cultural values, norms and expectations, thus shaping how marital roles, satisfaction and expectations are perceived and enacted (Fahd & Hanif, 2019). In many societies, marriage is seen not only as a union between two individuals but as a bond that unites families; it often has significant social, economic and cultural implications (Ahmadi & Hossein-Abadi, 2009; Thomas et al., 2017). Cultural context affects several factors, such as marital expectations, gender roles, communication styles and the significance placed on family unity and continuity. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marital satisfaction is integral to women's flourishing because cultural, social and religious values place significant emphasis on marriage as a central

life event and social expectation (Al-Darmaki et al., 2019; Alibeli et al., 2019). Marriage here is not merely a personal bond but represents an essential social institution contributing to family unity and societal structure (Khezri, Hassan & Nordin, 2020). Research highlights that marital satisfaction depends on key relational components, such as trust in the relationship, intimacy and open communication, which together foster security and partnership, thus enhancing women's well-being and personal growth (Mirgain & Cordova, 2007; Khezri et al., 2020). However, traditional gender roles often emphasise caregiving and household duties for women, thereby creating potential tension between societal expectations and their aspirations for personal growth (Delgado-Herrera et al., 2024). While religious principles offer women a sense of fulfilment through family and community contributions, these principles may also limit personal autonomy especially in societies where patriarchal structures are prevalent (Sanri et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2023).

The UAE's modernisation and its emphasis on women's empowerment have shifted traditional dynamics, thus providing women with expanded access to education and professional opportunities but also introducing new challenges as they balance familial roles with professional aspirations (Bokaii, 2022). In this evolving landscape, support from spouses becomes essential for women to navigate these dual roles, which in turn positively impacts marital satisfaction and flourishing (Torres et al., 2024). Consequently, for Emirati women, marital satisfaction is influenced by their ability to balance fulfilling cultural and familial expectations with achieving personal goals, thus ultimately contributing to their overall sense of well-being (Jafari et al., 2015; Shukla et al., 2023). The dynamics of trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression are deeply embedded in this context. Trust fosters emotional security, intimacy provides closeness, and constructive positive emotional

expression enhances relational bonds, all of which are shaped by cultural norms (Gur-Aryeh, 2011; Al-Darmaki et al., 2016). Understanding these interactions within the Emirati cultural setting is essential for gaining insight into how these emotional and psychological factors support marital satisfaction and women's flourishing in a unique cultural framework (Shahid & Kazmi, 2016; An et al., 2022).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

### ***Women's Flourishing within the Sociocultural Context of the UAE***

Flourishing is considered the highest state of well-being, which is characterised by optimal functioning and the experience of positive emotions, life satisfaction and a sense of purpose (Almutairi & Meiri, 2024; Nur'aini & Mulyana, 2024). Despite the importance of this state, many individuals struggle to achieve flourishing often because of challenges in maintaining emotional, psychological and social balance. Research (Willen et al., 2022) indicates that flourishing is not merely the absence of mental health issues but an elevated state where individuals feel connected, engaged and fulfilled. However, additional research is needed to improve our understanding of the factors that contribute to or hinder flourishing within specific populations.

Globally, women face unique barriers to flourishing because of persistent gender inequalities and societal expectations (Dorius & Firebaugh, 2010). Various factors, such as unequal access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities, can significantly impede women's ability to thrive. Furthermore, cultural expectations surrounding family roles, domestic responsibilities and professional development often create additional challenges for women. Although efforts have been made to improve gender equality, research is needed to examine the specific obstacles that

prevent women from flourishing and identify strategies that can foster women's well-being across various life domains.

In the UAE, women's flourishing is shaped by rapid modernisation and deeply rooted cultural norms (Alteneiji, 2023). While the UAE has made significant progress in empowering women through education and professional opportunities, traditional expectations related to marriage, motherhood and family life remain influential. These cultural dynamics can affect women's well-being, thus creating tension between personal aspirations and societal roles. Therefore, the unique factors that contribute to or hinder the flourishing of women in the Emirates must be explored in the context of balancing professional growth with traditional family responsibilities. Understanding these dynamics will provide valuable insights into how to enhance the flourishing of women in this region.

### ***Rising divorce rates and marital challenges in the UAE***

The UAE has experienced a notable increase in divorce rates, with 46.7% of Emirati marriages dissolving by 2021, many of them within the first few years (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre, 2021). This rising trend highlights a broad prevalence of marital problems among Emirati households in Abu Dhabi. Key factors contributing to marital discord include a lack of responsibility within the marriage, interference from third parties, cultural differences between spouses and low levels of intimacy. Moreover, sexual difficulties, financial crises, inadequate emotional expression, health problems, moral damages and communication barriers have been identified as significant issues that negatively impact marriages (El-Mneizel, Al Gharaibeh & Majed, 2022; Fahd & Hanif, 2019).

Socioeconomic changes, evolving gender roles and altered family structures have also contributed to the increasing rates of marital instability. Rapid technological and economic advancements have impacted Emirati women's roles in society, thus contributing to the shift from extended to nuclear families and an increase in marriages to non-nationals, which often further complicate marital dynamics (Abdulrahman & Osama, 2021; Gharaibeh & Muneera, 2022; Rehim et al., 2020). When couples fail to meet each other's physical, emotional and social needs, dissatisfaction grows, thereby leading to emotional disengagement, loneliness and eventually separation. In addition, Singerman (2007) noted that in the Middle East, delayed marriages are becoming increasingly common because of the financial burdens associated with marriage, such as housing, dowry and celebrations.

Financial issues, social media usage and neglect have become central sources of conflict for young Emirati couples (Fahd & Hanif, 2019). A government survey addressing the high divorce rates found that many couples argue over spending habits and responsibilities; notably, financial instability has been a primary concern (Hambuch, Willard, Tariq & Alboainain, 2024). The same survey revealed that parents and children face communication difficulties, thus contributing to a lack of intimacy and overall marital satisfaction (Gharaibeh & Muneera, 2022). Globalisation, changing expectations of marriage and the increasing number of women pursuing education and employment have further reshaped the landscape of Emirati marriages, thereby leading to greater discord (Singerman, 2007).

Considering these challenges, studying trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression has become crucial to understanding how couples can form emotionally supportive and stable relationships amidst external pressures. Trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression are foundational

components that enhance connection, resilience and conflict resolution within marriages. In the rapidly evolving society of the UAE, where traditional expectations are being challenged by modernisation, these factors help couples navigate the uncertainties of modern life. Therefore, research into these relational aspects is necessary to identify strategies that can lower the rising divorce rates and improve long-term marital satisfaction.

### ***Limited studies on factors related to marital satisfaction***

In recent years, research has expanded to the characteristics of husband-and-wife interaction, which emphasises good interaction between husband and wife. The research on marital satisfaction and stability has shown that long-standing assumptions about marriage are incomplete, misleading or incorrect (Abreu-Afonso, Ramos, Queiroz-Garcia & Leal, 2022; Karney & Bradbury, 2000, 2020). Couples' contentment does not deteriorate over time; on the contrary, it stays largely consistent over extended durations. The method has the effect of directly improving marital satisfaction and flourishing. Undeniably, Emirates-style marriages meet Western-style marriages after culture shock; hence, the maintenance of the relationship between husband and wife has gradually become increasingly important (Abreu-Afonso, Ramos, Queiroz-Garcia & Leal, 2022). It is inevitably affected by family structure and other family relationships (Skowroński et al., 2014).

Prior research has examined the relationship between a number of social, psychological, demographic, cultural, interpersonal and health characteristics and marital pleasure (Al-Darmaki et al., 2016; Fincham & Beach, 2010). However, the numerous and confounding list of factors and the discrepancy in findings have

hindered any meaningful integration and comprehensive knowledge of the nature and factors that influence marital satisfaction. A constructive scholarly response to this difficulty has been the few reviews that have sought to categorise and organise the multitude of factors that are linked to marital satisfaction (e.g. Fincham & Beach, 2010) and flourishing. Marriages have the potential to face challenges and problems. These obstacles may arise because of the partner's own attitude and behaviour or the couple's interaction process throughout the effort to deal with issues in their marriage. Couples experience difficulties in terms of marital satisfaction with different conditions (Birditt et al., 2012). However, not all marriages end in divorce. This outcome largely depends on aspects of personality (O'Meara & South, 2019), relationship quality (He et al., 2018), environmental factors that promote or hinder divorce (Chiş, Ignat, Rad & Macinga, 2022) and the coping ability of the couple. Further understanding is needed to determine the diverse and complex factors affecting marital satisfaction. Despite significant research, many assumptions about marriage are outdated or incomplete. Moreover, the multitude of influencing factors remains inadequately integrated. This issue underscores the importance of additional investigation into how various aspects, including social, psychological and cultural factors, impact marital contentment and stability.

### ***Studies on marital satisfaction tend to focus on Western nations***

Despite the growing body of literature on marital satisfaction, several critical research gaps remain unaddressed, particularly within the Emirati and broader Arab context. Much of what is known about marital satisfaction stems from Western research, which tends to focus on structural or demographic factors such as age,

gender, and partner similarity (Crawford et al., 2002). However, recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of emotional and psychological dimensions-such as trust, intimacy, and positive emotional expression-in predicting marital satisfaction (Crawford et al., 2002; Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015b). In Arab cultures, these elements remain understudied, despite their cultural relevance in fostering emotional security and relational well-being (Al-Krenawi, 2010; Al-Othman, 2012).

Moreover, limited attention has been given to flourishing as a broader outcome of marital well-being, especially among women. Existing research often overlooks gender-specific experiences, and very few studies have examined how women's unique emotional needs shape marital satisfaction in the context of cultural expectations. Additionally, most studies adopt cross-sectional designs, leaving little understanding of how relational dynamics evolve over time. Therefore, this study addresses these significant gaps by focusing on Emirati married women, and examining how trust, intimacy, and emotional expression relate to both marital satisfaction and flourishing, within a culturally grounded framework.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The key objective of the study was to determine the predictive role of trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression for marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women.

The current study seeks to investigate the following areas:

- To assess trust, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women.
- To examine the relationship between trust in relationships and marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.

- To examine the relationship between trust in relationships and flourishing among Emirati married women.
- To examine the relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- To examine the relationship between intimacy and flourishing among Emirati married women.
- To examine the relationship between positive emotional expression and marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- To examine the relationship between emotional expression and flourishing among Emirati married women.
- To examine how trust, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women
- To examine how trust, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women.
- To investigate the relationship between marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women as interrelated well-being outcomes.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- (RQ1) What is the level of trust in relationships, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women?
- (RQ2) To what extent does trust in relationships predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?
- (RQ3) To what extent does trust in relationships predict flourishing among Emirati married women?

- (RQ4) To what extent does intimacy predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?
- (RQ5) To what extent does intimacy predict flourishing among Emirati married women?
- (RQ6) To what extent does positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?
- (RQ7) To what extent does positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women?
- (RQ8) To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction among Emirati married women?
- (RQ9) To what extent do trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression predict flourishing among Emirati married women?
- (RQ10) What is the relationship between marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women?

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

In this study, the following hypotheses will be composed:

- (H1) Marital satisfaction and flourishing have positive effects among Emirati married women.
- (H2) Trust in relationships positively predicts marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- (H3) Trust in relationships positively predicts flourishing among Emirati married women.

- (H4) Intimacy positively predicts marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- (H5) Intimacy positively predicts flourishing among Emirati married women.
- (H6) Positive emotional expression positively predicts marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- (H7) Positive emotional expression positively predicts flourishing among Emirati married women.
- (H8) Trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression are positive predictors of marital satisfaction among Emirati married women.
- (H9) Trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotional expression are positive predictors of flourishing among Emirati married women.
- (H10) Marital satisfaction is positively associated with flourishing among Emirati married women.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### ***Enhancing marital satisfaction knowledge***

Marital satisfaction is a critical construct, particularly for Emirati married women, due to its strong association with psychological well-being, emotional health, and cultural expectations of a successful life. Research shows that marital satisfaction is intertwined with factors such as trust, intimacy, emotional expression, and sexual fulfillment. This study contributes to the academic understanding of these interrelated factors by examining their predictive roles in marital satisfaction and flourishing. It also emphasizes the importance of educating women-at marriage onset and through

ongoing support-on how emotional and relational competencies shape marital outcomes. Findings from this study expand the knowledge base for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand marital dynamics within Arab and Islamic cultural contexts.

### ***Increasing the effectiveness of couple therapy services for Emirati marriages***

This study offers practical insights that can enhance the effectiveness of couple therapy services in the UAE. While existing research supports the value of therapy in fostering emotional intimacy (e.g., Asadi et al., 2020), limited attention has been given to how issues related to trust, intimacy, and emotional expression differ between satisfied and distressed couples. The present findings provide therapists with clearer entry points for intervention, especially in cases where clients struggle to articulate their concerns. By identifying key relational predictors of marital dissatisfaction, this study equips practitioners with evidence-based direction for addressing common yet often unspoken challenges in Emirati marriages.

### ***Resolving conflicts prior to divorce***

This study offers practical insights that can enhance the effectiveness of couple therapy services in the UAE. While existing research supports the value of therapy in fostering emotional intimacy (e.g., Asadi et al., 2020), limited attention has been given to how issues related to trust, intimacy, and emotional expression differ between satisfied and distressed couples. The findings help therapists identify where to begin intervention-particularly when clients are reluctant to disclose details .Additionally, the study highlights the importance of early assessment, as many couples end therapy prematurely. By addressing emotional and relational issues early, therapists may prevent escalation toward separation. Prompt support can help distressed Emirati

women improve relational dynamics and move toward greater marital satisfaction. The findings reinforce the critical role of culturally responsive counselling in preventing divorce by guiding couples through emotional challenges with empathy and structure.

***Additional understanding regarding cultural and dynamic changes in Emirati society***

As outlined in the problem statement, the UAE has undergone major transformations in recent decades due to rapid economic development, globalisation, and cultural change. These shifts have significantly impacted marriage, family dynamics, and gender roles. Traditionally, Emirati marriages were arranged and rooted in family honour, social status, and tribal affiliations (Fakir & Rezaul, 2024). However, modernisation has led younger generations to value love, mutual respect, and compatibility, bringing emotional connection and personal fulfilment to the forefront of marital expectations.

Historically, Emirati families were patriarchal, with men as providers and women managing domestic roles (Al Hourani, 2019). Today, increased access to education and employment has enabled many women to balance careers and family, creating more egalitarian relationships. Nevertheless, this shift has introduced new pressures—such as work–life balance, financial strain, and conflicting expectations—which now affect marital satisfaction. Evolving gender roles further reflect broader societal change. While traditional norms remain influential, more equitable household dynamics are emerging. Men are more engaged in caregiving, and women play greater roles in decision-making (Al Orami, 2011). However, generational divides persist:

older Emiratis tend to uphold traditional values, whereas younger couples increasingly adopt progressive ideals, often causing friction within families (Al Hourani, 2019).

This study sheds light on the unique challenges Emirati women face as they balance traditional roles with modern aspirations in a society in transition. By examining how cultural shifts intersect with marital satisfaction, the findings offer valuable insight for policymakers, counsellors, and educators. They also contribute to a broader understanding of how rapidly developing societies like the UAE are navigating the balance between tradition and modernity (Alteneiji, 2023). This perspective is vital for supporting women at the forefront of these changes as they strive to honour both cultural heritage and personal growth (Al Marri & Caielli, 2018).

### ***Providing insights about marital satisfaction and flourishing***

One of the key contributions of the current study was that it explicitly revealed how trust within the relationship, intimacy and the expression of positive emotion significantly predicted levels of marital satisfaction and flourishing in Emirati society. The data received provided a valuable benchmark for understanding variables in the domain of flourishing in relation to marital relationships within Emirati society.

This quantitative research will help cover research gaps in the current discourse on the marital satisfaction and flourishing of women in polygamous marriages in the Emirates. Polygamy can create emotional insecurity, competition between co-wives, and shifts in spousal attention, all of which may affect marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. Moreover, it may contribute pertinent opinions to the creation of a comprehensive framework. The study can also provide useful information for improving the management of mental health implications for

women in polygamous marriages. Data from the cross-sectional design and sample from major cities in the Emirates appeared to be useful in discovering associations among the expression of positive emotions, marital satisfaction and flourishing among married individuals in the Middle East. In addition, Western readers tended to be familiar with research that examines the impact of divorce, thus providing an opportunity to consider normative experiences with polygamy. The methods in which polygamy is supported within specific cultural frames of reference, with social, economic and religious explanations, will also be unfamiliar to Western readers.

*Contributing to additional studies on marital satisfaction in non-Western cultures.*

This study gives readers in the West the chance to investigate a problem that affects women's marital satisfaction and flourishing in the Emirates. The data of this study may open future paths to tune novel research methodologies to evaluate echelons of flourishing among married samples of non-Western cultures. This study is helpful for family counsellors and social psychologists in several ways.

## **1.7 Conceptual Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Flourishing**

Flourishing is a multidimensional state of well-being that is characterised by the presence of positive emotions, a strong sense of purpose and high levels of life satisfaction (Logan, Berman & Prescott, 2023). It encompasses engaging in meaningful activities and fostering deep interpersonal relationships, which contribute to an individual's overall quality of life. Flourishing individuals actively participate in their communities and maintain fulfilling connections, thus reflecting a holistic

approach to well-being that transcends mere happiness (Diener et al., 2010; Keyes, 2002).

### **1.7.2 Marital Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction refers to the subjective evaluation of one's marriage, which encompasses feelings of contentment and fulfilment within the relationship. It is characterised by positive attitudes towards the partnership and is influenced by various factors, such as communication, emotional intimacy, shared values and individual expectations. (Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981). Moreover, it pertains to one's tendency to view one's marriage with high or low favourability (Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981).

### **1.7.3 Trust in Relationships**

Trust is defined by the confident expectation that a partner will be reliable, honest and competent, particularly in uncertain situations. It encompasses three primary components: predictability, dependability and assurance of commitment (Lewicka & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2022). Trust significantly enhances marital satisfaction and contributes to overall quality of life. It is enhanced through relational repair processes wherein effective resolutions of conflicts enhance trustworthiness and strengthen the marital bond. Trust evolves through everyday interactions, the ability to discern character and responsive behaviours to a partner's needs, thus ultimately influencing the quality and longevity of the marriage (Simpson, 2007).

#### **1.7.4 Intimacy**

Intimacy is a deep emotional connection that facilitates the open expression of thoughts and feelings between partners, thus fostering trust and mutual understanding (Manbeck et al., 2020; Timmerman, 2009). This connection encompasses various dimensions: emotional intimacy allows partners to share vulnerabilities, physical intimacy includes sexual and affectionate touch, and intellectual intimacy involves the exchange of ideas and beliefs (Yoo et al., 2014). Each dimension contributes to a shared sense of belonging and strengthens the overall bond within the relationship (Yoo et al., 2014). The integration of these aspects is crucial for enhancing relationship satisfaction and stability, thus highlighting the importance of intimacy in personal connections (Czyżowska et al., 2019).

#### **1.7.5 Positive Emotional Expression**

Positive emotional expression involves a consistent pattern of communicating feelings through verbal and non-verbal channels, including spoken language, facial expressions, and body language (He et al., 2018). It plays a vital role in interpersonal relationships by increasing understanding, connection and empathy (Keltner, Sauter, Tracy & Cowen, 2019).

### **1.8 Operational Definitions**

This research adopted the following operational definitions:

#### **Flourishing**

Flourishing was assessed using the Flourishing Scale (FS) developed by Diener et al. (2010). This self-report measure evaluates individuals' overall well-being and quality of life by capturing essential components of flourishing, such as positive relationships, a sense of purpose, and personal growth. The scale consists of 8 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale, yielding a total score ranging from 8 to 56. Higher scores indicate greater levels of flourishing and psychological well-being.

### **Marital Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction was measured using the Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Fowers and Olson (1993), which assesses individuals' subjective perceptions of their marital relationships. The scale evaluates essential dimensions of marital quality, including emotional closeness, communication, and overall relationship satisfaction. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with scores of 4 or higher indicating a high level of marital satisfaction.

### **Trust in Relationships**

Trust in relationships was measured using the Trust in Close Relationships Scale, developed by Rempel et al. (1985). This self-report instrument evaluates individuals' perceived level of trust in close interpersonal relationships by assessing three core dimensions: faith, predictability, and dependability. The scale comprises 17 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), yielding a total score range of 17 to 119. Higher scores reflect greater levels of perceived trust. In this study, scores were interpreted as follows: scores below 68 indicated low trust, scores between 68 and 93 represented moderate trust, and scores above 93 reflected high trust within the relationship.

## **Intimacy**

Intimacy was assessed using the Intimacy Scale (IS), developed by Walker and Thompson (1983). This self-report instrument measures the degree of perceived closeness and connectedness between partners across emotional, physical, and intellectual dimensions. The scale consists of 17 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), resulting in a total score range of 17 to 119. Higher scores indicate greater levels of intimacy. For interpretive purposes, scores below 68 were categorized as indicating low intimacy, scores between 68 and 93 as moderate intimacy, and scores above 93 as reflecting high intimacy within the relationship.

## **Positive Emotional Expression**

Positive emotional expression was measured using the Positive Emotional Expression Scale, developed by King and Emmons (1990). This self-report instrument is designed to assess the extent to which individuals express positive and negative emotions within interpersonal relationships. For the purposes of this study, only the positive emotion subscale was used, which focuses on expressions such as joy, gratitude, affection, and enthusiasm. The subscale consists of 8 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), yielding a total score range of 8 to 56. Higher scores indicate more frequent and open expression of positive emotions. Scores below 32 were interpreted as indicating low positive emotional expression, scores between 32 and 44 as moderate expression, and scores above 44 as high positive emotional expression.

## **1.9 Scope of the Study**

This proposal first focuses on the relationship of trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotion expression with marital satisfaction. Secondly, it examines the relationship of trust in relationships, intimacy and positive emotion expression with flourishing in married women residing in the Emirates setting.

### **1.10 Summary**

This chapter introduced the core focus of the study, which is to investigate how trust in relationships, intimacy, and positive emotional expression predict marital satisfaction and flourishing among Emirati married women. It outlined the background and context of the study, identified the research problem, and highlighted gaps in the current literature-particularly regarding the cultural and relational dynamics unique to Emirati society. The chapter also presented the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses, along with the significance of the study across educational, therapeutic, societal, and cultural domains. Definitions of key concepts were discussed, and the scope and delimitations of the research were clarified. Together, these elements lay a strong foundation for the theoretical framework and literature review that follow in Chapter 2.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review starts with a brief overview of the relationship among flourishing, marital satisfaction, trust in relationships, intimacy, positive emotional expression, marital satisfaction and women in the Emirates. Then, the theoretical framework, including PERMA theory and interdependence theory, is discussed, followed by the conceptual framework.

#### **2.1 Flourishing**

As a pivotal concept in positive psychology, flourishing represents a state of optimal well-being where individuals experience positive emotions and function effectively psychologically and socially (Fuente et al., 2020; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Corey Keyes first introduced flourishing to describe a high level of well-being, which he defined as a combination of hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions (Keyes, 2002; Hone et al., 2014). Hedonic well-being focuses on subjective happiness and the enhancement of positive emotions through pleasurable activities, while eudaimonic well-being emphasises personal growth, social functioning and meaning in life (Diener, 2009; Ryff, 2017; Bandhu et al., 2024). Keyes' two-continua model further differentiates mental health into two dimensions: the presence or absence of mental illness and the presence or absence of well-being; this model suggests that mental health and mental illness are related but distinct constructs (Gautam et al., 2024; Westerhof & Keyes, 2010). Within this model, flourishing is associated with 'complete mental health', which is a state where individuals not only experience high positive affect but also demonstrate optimal psychological and social functioning (Eid,

2008). Flourishing encapsulates hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives and involves several elements, such as autonomy, mastery, positive affect and psychological resilience (Herrman et al., 2005; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). While subjective well-being focuses on personal perceptions, positive mental health encompasses psychological skills and assets that are critical for promoting well-being; however, it generally excludes physical aspects (Dunn & Doughery, 2005). Thus, flourishing encompasses a broad spectrum of psychological, emotional and social resources that represent an individual's optimal functioning and overall welfare (Huppert & So, 2013; Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2016).

Research on flourishing has gained substantial attention in recent years within positive psychology. Scholars highlight its significance in understanding mental health, life satisfaction and relationship dynamics (Huppert & So, 2013; Nur'aini & Mulyana, 2024). Flourishing is increasingly recognised as a measure of optimal mental well-being or positive mental health, which can coexist with the presence of mental illness (Logan et al., 2023). Studies have shown that flourishing involves multiple components, including positive emotions, purpose in life, social connections, resilience and success in various life domains (Forgeard et al., 2011; Willen et al., 2022). According to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions contribute to flourishing by expanding awareness and building psychological resources, which foster adaptive behaviours and creative capacities (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

Empirical studies also explore how flourishing interacts with hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. For instance, flourishing individuals exhibit high levels of emotional, subjective and social well-being (Huppert & So, 2013; Rule et al., 2024). Research suggests that flourishing arises from a blend of personal and social assets,