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معهد الدوحة الدولي للأسرة
Doha International Family Institute

البحوث لدعم السياسات الأسرية
Research to advance family policies

عضو في مؤسسة قطر
Member of Qatar Foundation

The State of Qatari Families: Strengths and Challenges

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QATARI FAMILIES:
STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

مـؤسـسـة قـطـر
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DOHA INTERNATIONAL FAMILY INSTITUTE

Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) is a global policy and advocacy Institute working to advance knowledge on Arab families and promote evidence-based polices at national, regional and international levels. DIFI is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is an integral part of the Foundation's efforts to foster healthy, educated societies underpinned by strong cohesive families in Qatar and the region. DIFI has special consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSCO).

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FOREWORD

The family is the cornerstone of our society. It is within this unit of the family that the individual fosters and grows. Families face difficult challenges whether political, economic or social. However, the family unit remains cohesive. Solidarity is a key factor between family members and support for the individuals. Qatari families are no exception, clearly affirming these findings.

Research worldwide conducted on the family indicates that families have family strength characteristics which help to take care of their members in the most difficult times that the families face. These characteristics vary but they are commonly centered around: appreciation and affection, commitment to the family, positive communication, spiritual wellbeing, shared values, enjoyable time together, and the ability to manage stress and crises effectively. Utilizing these characteristics helps in building a strong family that can face any challenges and contributes to family cohesion. This enables its members not only to grow and proposer, but also to benefit their society at large.

As part of DIFI's mission to strengthen the Arab Family through research, policy and advocacy, the research that I am honored to present today is part of a knowledge series accumulated by DIFI. The story started by examining family strengths and challenges qualitatively in select Arab countries. This research today is building on the previous report DIFI published on "The Arab Family Strength in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia." Because we believe in the importance of evidence, we supplement the previous research by conducting a quantitative study examining the strengths of Qatari families and the challenges they face.

The strengths are to be enhanced, and the challenges are to be faced. This will not be left only for the families to do. DIFI is presenting this evidence as part of our advocacy agenda to achieve impact, working on these findings and beyond, with our stakeholders from policymakers, NGOs, service providers and the private sector.

The findings of this research will help us to provide the needed evidence to the mentioned stakeholders, and work closely with them to improve the quality of family lives through exploring best practices, shaping evidence-based policies and intervention programs.

Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al Emadi
Executive Director
Doha International Family Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Families that live in difficult environments can develop rich characteristics or 'family strengths' that help them and their members to tolerate and adapt to difficult times when they face them. This enables them to support their members and continue to flourish under trying circumstances. This study contributed the effort to shift the research on families in the Arab world to explore the strengths of family members, their community and culture. This research was conducted to better understand the strengths and challenges of Qatari families. The information gathered in this study about Qatari families will help in serving and expanding thinking about families in the Arab countries. It might even touch upon relevant subjects that could help in providing support for families.

In conducting this study, the researchers[1] adopted the International Family Strengths Perspective as their theoretical framework and implemented a mixed-method approach. As detailed in the sections below, they believe that Qatari families have a considerable repertoire of strengths that they can utilize to overcome and manage the challenges they face. The authors also started with collecting qualitative data, using focus groups and face-to-face interviews, which provided them with emerging themes based on which they developed the Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI). Using the validated QFSI, they collected quantitative data in Phase Two and these findings synergized with the findings gleaned from the qualitative data collected in Phase One.

Qatari Family Strengths. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the researchers believe there are seven major family strengths among Qatari families: 1) commitment to the family; 2) support for each other; 3) effective communication; 4) respect for each other; 5) conveying values and family traditions; 6) family resilience; and 7) demonstrating love and affection for each other.

Qatari Family Challenges. Family strengths are important to be studied because families use their strengths to deal with the challenges they face in life. Qatari families identified seven major family challenges that the authors examined in detail, i.e., 1) societal changes, including breakdown of traditions, generational differences, and isolation; 2) inequality of women, including lack of independence and opportunities; 3) absent or disengaged fathers; 4) financial problems, including materialism and jealousy, competition, unemployment, and poverty; 5) interference from extended family members; 6) conflict in the family and poor communication, including lack of transparency; and 7) illness and/or aging family members, and the care they need from the family. Challenges that families face can be a problem for the strength of families and might prohibit them from reaching their goal.

This final report synthesizes the findings of the study and concludes that, all things considered, measures indicate that Qatari families are doing reasonably well. All Qatari families have strengths, though not all Qatari families are strong. Some Qatari

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1   Also referred to as authors throughout the report

families face very difficult challenges. However, all Qatari families can build on the strengths they do have. And, in every family, no matter how strong, there is room for improvement. Details of the seven strengths and the fifty-four characteristics' challenges are described in chapter 3 of this report where each of the strengths and the challenges are presented in detail.

What can be done next? The Qatari families in the study registered considerable support for many different educational programs aimed at helping to strengthen couple and family relationships. These programs will focus on issues chosen by the participants; and the seven family strengths and seven family challenges listed above are a good place to start when thinking about topics for discussion in educational programs.

The online and face-to-face programs and educational materials will be developed by a coalition of family service programs, educational organizations, and religious institutions in Qatar.

This work could serve as a foundation and catalyst for a broader effort in the region to create educational programs, government initiatives, and social policy aimed at strengthening families throughout the Arab world.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the authors present brief background information on families in the state of Qatar, their major strengths and challenges, and the major family service providers. Then, they shed light on the objectives of this study — in its two phases. Finally, they explain the international family strengths perspective which they have adopted as the theoretical framework for this study.

1.1. Introduction on Qatar

Qatar is located in Western Asia and considered as one of the wealthiest countries thanks to increasing oil and gas revenues. The population of Qatar has risen considerably in the past years from 111,000 in 1970 to 2,666,938 in August 2019 (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019). Qatari society can be described as a multiethnic, multicultural, multi-skilled, and multilingual population as a result of the massive influx of socially and culturally diverse migrants (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019).

Nevertheless, the Qatari family, just like families all over the world, is undergoing many changes and challenges that influence different aspects of the family, such as its structure, functions, relationships, gender roles and characteristics as well as features. The discovery of oil brought about economic and social changes, paving the way for the rise of new attitudes and values.

Many factors are responsible for the changes that family structure and function have been witnessing today in light of the processes of urbanization, modernization and globalization, which are intensifying these factors. Al-Haddad (2003) suggested some of these pressures come from **"entry of Gulf women into the labor market; women's participation in many activities and areas that were not permissible in the past; the changing husband-wife relationship; change in the relationship of parents with their children; the way youth relate to society; the increasing economic, educational and social burden of raising children; and the weakening of traditional methods and means of socialization."**

The Arab Gulf family presents a model of the nuclear family that is not identical to that of the West. Al- Haddad (2003) suggested that there is a transition within the Arab Gulf family, although it demonstrates characteristics of a nuclear family within the western model, it continues to preserve the traditional extended family model.

A study on Qatar by Al-Ghanem (1996) suggested that the average size of a Qatari family is eight persons, which was confirmed by the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS) in 2014. According to the authors' current study, the average family size is 4–7 (Figure 9, p. 35). In addition, traditional kinship ties are still preserved, and the tribe continues to play an important role in influencing behaviors, attitudes and marital choices of its members (Al-Haddad, 2003).

Studies reveal that these changes have brought about many challenges within the family such as domestic violence, divorce, parenting, and work family balance for women.

For example, a study done on physical abuse and violence against children by Almeriki revealed that out of a sample of 1077 children, of whom 53.1% were Qatari and 46. 9% were non-Qatari, it was revealed that 39.5% of the Qatari children were exposed to abuse and violence at schools compared to 36.6 % of the non-Qatari children. Out of them 32.6% were Qatari females and 29.6% were non-Qatari females, while 46.3% were male Qatari and 44.3% were non-Qatari males exposed to abuse and violence. Most importantly, the study showed the different types of abuse in the schools ranging from corporal punishment, shouting, insulting, and biting. The study further revealed that 19.7% of the children were exposed to corporal punishment from the teacher; in particular, 23.1% Qatari children were exposed to corporal punishment from the teachers while 15.6% were non-Qatari. Furthermore, application of psychological violence such as insults was the most common, with 61.1% of the total number of children selected as a sample in the study at the receiving end; physical abuse came second at 36.7% while sexual abuse was recorded the least at 2.6% (Almeriki et al., 2013, pp. 102–115).

Studies reveal that divorce has an impact on family cohesion (Berlin, 2004; Anderson, 2014). In Qatar, few studies have addressed the issue of divorce and its causes which can have a huge impact on the family. In a study carried out on marriage and divorce, results showed that the most common reasons for divorce were: incompatibility, ill-treatment, extended family interference, conflict and disagreement, irresponsibility toward spouse, lack of separate accommodation, lack of interaction and communication, and being forced into marriage without knowledge (Permanent Population Committee, 2009).

Kaltham Al-Ghanim also found in her study on divorce in Qatar that the major reasons for divorce, broadly listed according to their importance, are: incompatibility and lack of understanding, conflict, age difference between spouses, behavioral problems, and ill-treatment (Al-Ghanim, 2003). Al-Ghanim also mentioned that the high divorce rates in the Gulf countries might be due to changes in the social structures as a result of the economic development, the expansion in urbanization, education, employment and globalization (Al-Ghanim, 2003).

Another issue that the Qatari family faces is with parenting. In a study done by Doha International Family Institute entitled "The Arab Family Strengths in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia," results showed that parents need to be more involved in the education of their children. In addition, fathers are disengaged in parenting and mothers are the ones who bear the burden and responsibility of their children. The involvement of housemaids is also an issue that Qataris families face as a challenge (Khalifa, 2006). Children are cared for by housemaids and parents are less engaged, and this can have an adverse impact on the children and the family psychologically (Khalifa, 2006).

A recent study done by the Doha International Family Institute titled, "Work-Family Balance: Challenges, Experiences and Implications for Families in Qatar," also

emphasized the burden women bear in taking care of the household activities and work. Long working hours have an adverse impact on the quality of life of the family. Women also face difficulty in getting their proper maternity leave, flexible working hours and quality childcare after pregnancy which can all influence their health as mothers. All these issues have an unfavorable impact on the family and can have an adverse impact on the quality of life of the family (Doha International Family Institute, 2018).

For more than three years the international team of the authors, have been working together to better understand the current state of the Qatari family.

Considerable effort went into the First Phase of this work and aimed at

1. Delineating the challenges that Qatari families face.

2. Learning how Qatari families use their strengths to overcome the challenges.

3. Understanding Arab (as represented in Qatar, Jordan and Tunisia) families' thoughts on what local communities, national governments, and other entities could also do to help make life in Arab families more satisfying and meaningful.

4. Developing a first draft of the Arab Family Strengths Inventory which assesses family members' perceptions of the qualities that help make their family strong.

In Phase 1, the qualitative studies of family strengths and challenges in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia were completed, based on several focus groups conducted in each country and subsequent face-to-face interviews with individual families in all three countries. The authors chose to interview families not only in Qatar but also in Jordan and Tunisia, because their aim is to develop educational materials of value in many different Arab nations and cultures.

The authors found that though there are modest differences in terms of strengths and challenges among the families in the three Arab nations, the similarities are much greater. With work experience of more than 40 years around the world on family strengths, they have concluded that people are people, and families are families. The similarities are always much more striking than the differences.

The earlier work during Phase 1 in Qatar, Jordan and Tunisia laid the groundwork for Phase 2, a large-scale follow-up quantitative study of Qatari families that has only recently been completed (Doha International Family Institute, 2018).

In Phase 2, a considerable amount of quantitative data was collected from a random sample of 934 Qatari participants. This effort further confirmed the validity and reliability of the Arab Family Strengths Inventory prototype developed in the earlier qualitative study; and, using findings from the earlier qualitative study focusing on Qatari family challenges, the authors looked in-depth at data from this large sample of Qatari families and were able to say with considerable confidence what the key challenges families face today are.

In essence, the authors are developing an understanding of Qatari family strengths and challenges that, in the long run, can be used as a sound foundation for nation-

wide efforts to help strengthen Qatari families using educational materials based on the results of both their qualitative and quantitative studies in Qatar. The development of educational materials for widespread use will be a long-term and challenging effort involving many different family-oriented institutions in Qatar and, possibly, the region. At the end of this report, the authors outline how this lengthy educational process might unfold, based on their experiences in helping to shepherd other efforts in Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Mexico, the U.S., and other countries. But a critical first step is to complete an accurate understanding of the state of Qatari families today, and that was the purpose of Phase 2 of the research.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of this study are 1) to conduct research using the Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI), 2) to report the findings of the Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI), and 3) to make recommendations for the next steps to strengthen Qatari families, and propose family educational materials to be used by relevant stakeholders working on and with the families in Qatar.

The long-term goal of this study is to report on the strengths and challenges of Qatari families and develop educational materials to help strengthen them. The family is considered as the oldest and most resilient institution. Worldwide, the family is well valued and celebrated. People form families to find emotional, and physical support.

Olson et al. mention that **"All the problems in the world either begin in families or end up in families"** (2008). This means that families might create their own problems, and sometimes the world forces problems on them. In both cases, families tend to solve these problems, that is why it is important to strengthen families in all adversities. This depends on the structure of the family as it may differ around the world.

Family is the place where children start to learn and are taught in partnership with the community how to survive in the world. Families experience joy and pain, and this depends on how the family relationship is built. A healthy marriage can survive difficulties in life and an unhealthy marriage can create problems that may be transferred from one generation to the other. Society is responsible to help create a positive environment for all families.

Families all over the world are different and the field of family studies has different approaches and methods as there are many ways how families function in a society. Some theories in family studies focus on family structures while others focus on family functions. That is why it is important to examine how and why families function in order to understand how families behave. This is important for counselors and social workers who work with families. There are service providers who play a major role in supporting families; the below section describes the major service providers in Qatar for families and the projects that they work on.

1.3. Service Providers for the Family in Qatar:

- **Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs (MADLSA):** As one of the main sectors of MADLSA, social affairs secure social services for Qatari citizens of all age groups. Its services include, e.g., social security and housing as per the law and in coordination with governmental and non-governmental institutions. In addition, it executes national plans relating to families; raises their awareness of social issues and challenges; and provides licensure and oversight of privately-owned institutions and organizations working in social service provision. It also organizes voluntary social work and enhances social participation.

- **Qatar Foundation for Social Work (QSW**): It is a non-profit development organization with nine specialized affiliated centers under it that offer different services for families in Qatar:

  a. **The Family Consulting Center (Wifaq)** builds and strengthens marriage. It conducts counseling and provides social services such as family reconciliation, parental care service and other community awareness services, and family court service.

  b. **Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre (Aman**) aims to provide protection and rehabilitation of victims of violence and family disintegration of women and children. It also works on reintegrating them into society. It achieves its strategic goals through raising public awareness, education and protection, and social rehabilitation and reintegration.

  c. **The Center for Empowerment and Elderly Care (Ehsan)** focuses on empowering the elderly and providing them with proper services while seeking to reintegrate them into society and keeping them with their families in order to reduce sheltering; spreads social awareness of elderly issues and societal rights, and enhances communication with different generations. It also provides services in the areas of comprehensive care, health care, physiotherapy, home care, psychological care, social welfare and day care.

  d. **The Orphan Care Center (Dreama)** provides necessary care for the targeted group in the State of Qatar, stabilizes them into alternative foster families and integrates them into the community. It targets: 1) Each child whose parents are dead; 2) Each child whose parents are unknown; 3) Each child who is temporarily or permanently deprived of a normal family environment, and under the age of 18.

  e. **Social Development Center (Nama**) partakes in maximizing opportunities available for the youth, building capacities and skills, and empowering them in the State of Qatar. It provides university education support, social entrepreneurship development, lifestyle improvement, life skills training, professional development, social professional training, entrepreneurship training and consultation services, entrepreneurship financial support and business incubation.

f. **Shafallah Center for Persons with Disability** supports persons with mental disability and autism, under 21 years old, through model educational, rehabilitative, societal, and legal services.

g. **Best Buddies Initiative – Qatar** focuses on providing appropriate education and creating an environment for the integration of people with moderate to mild intellectual and developmental disabilities in education, workforce, and the community in the State of Qatar.

h. **Al Noor Center for the Blind** focuses on providing services for people with visual disability in the areas of education, rehabilitation, and community awareness by helping them to be integrated into society.

i. **Behavioral Healthcare Center (Daam)** offers educative, curative and rehabilitative services in behavioral health. The center enhances promotion and supports behavioral health within the community.

- **Community Policing Department — Ministry of Interior:** It is divided into three departments, some of their roles are described below.

    a. **Community Patrols** enhances communication with community members by understanding their opinions, collects data on their daily events, and analyzes the impact of such events. They also convey citizens' reports to relevant government departments and communicate with concerned departments and relevant agencies, updating them on security situations.

    b. **Security Awareness and Education** organizes field visits to probe and solve societal problems and raise public awareness of specific national issues. It achieves this through cooperating and coordinating with government and non-government organizations and institutions.

    c. **Social Support** works in cooperation with civil society institutions to handle and prevent issues of escape or absence from the family home. It uses friendly manners and unofficial communications to handle domestic violence and to strengthen chances of tolerance between conflicting parties while abiding by the law. It secures care, psychological and social leverage for victims of crime and violence. It cooperates with civil society organizations to provide these victims with aftercare support. It also cooperates with relevant institutions and embassies to address reports of labor issues.

The International Family Strengths Perspective is discussed in this chapter. It is the foundation for this study to understand the strengths and challenges of Qatari families. There are seven theories that are relevant to this study, and they are mentioned in appendix A of this report.

To summarize, the purpose of the qualitative and quantitative studies of Qatari families was to delineate the strengths and challenges they face in the world today. These studies are conceived as a starting point, leading to a long-term effort to develop educational materials to help Qatari families develop and enhance their strengths. And, it is hoped that the work in Qatar will serve as a model for other

nations in the region, because the authors have seen in their initial qualitative studies in Qatar, Jordan and Tunisia that these countries share remarkable similarities in terms of family strengths and family challenges.

1.4. The International Family Strengths Perspective

This perspective is used in this study and guides the study in order to understand the strengths and challenges of Qatari families. It has been chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because it looks at families from a strengths-based approach.

Theories on the family started emerging since the beginning of the 20th century. White (2005) mentions that family theory focused on American family and the culture and borrowed frameworks from other disciplines. Later, the attention moved to how families function.

The International Family Strengths Perspective looks at family problems and restores them to their proper place in life.

Past research on families focused on the problems or weaknesses or individuals within the family such as the work done by Woodhouse from 1930 and followed by Otto's work on what are family strengths (Woodhouse, 1930; Gabler & Otto, 1964; Otto, 1962, 1963).

Later, researchers in the United States studied families from a strengths-based perspective studying more than 30,000 family members in 40 countries.

Family strengths studies continued to work on enhancing the International Family Strengths Perspective. **"The perspective conceptualized the family globally by looking at family strengths, community strengths, and cultural strengths, and demonstrating how families use these strengths to overcome the challenges they face"** (DeFrain & Asay, 2007, pp. 4–5). DeFrain and Asay (2007) developed a conceptual model incorporating all three levels of strength as follows:

Family Strengths. Most importantly in this is to highlight that each individual family in each country has specific recognizable family strengths. However, the results from research on families worldwide has shown that there are similar characteristics. These are some of the characteristics identified by De Farin and Asay. (2007, pp. 4–5): **"Appreciation and Affection includes: caring, caring for each other, friendship, respect for individuality, playfulness, humor. Commitment to the Family includes: trust, honesty, dependability, faithfulness, sharing. Positive Communication includes: giving compliments, sharing feelings, avoiding blame, being able to compromise, agreeing to disagree. Enjoyable Time Together includes: quality time in great quantity, good things take time, enjoying each other's company, simple good times, sharing fun times. Spiritual Well-Being and Shared Values includes: hope, faith, compassion, shared ethical values, oneness with humankind, oneness with the earth. The Ability to Manage Stress and Crisis Effectively: adaptability, seeing crises as both challenges and opportunities, growing through crises together, openness to change, resilience"** (DeFrain & Asay, 2007, pp. 4–5).

To understand family strengths, it is essential to understand the culture where the families live. There are external factors which surround and influence families either positively proving to be helpful, or negatively proving to be harmful. To understand the social context in which families live, an insider and outsider perspective is useful to judge family strengths.

Community Strengths. Several important community strengths were identified in the work of DeFrain et al. (2010). **"Community strengths are included in the area in which the family lives. These strengths include: a supportive social environment that genuinely values families, and a general willingness and natural generosity infused in the community to help when families are in need, an effective educational delivery system, religious communities for families seeking this kind of support, family-service programs developed by government and non-governmental organizations for families who cannot find the help they need from their own extended family, friends and neighbors, a safe, secure and healthful environment"** (DeFrain et al., 2010, pp. 38–39).

Cultural Strengths. Cultural strengths, as mentioned by DeFrain et al. (2010, pp. 39–40), include **"a rich cultural history, shared cultural meanings, a stable political process, a viable economy, an understanding of the global society."**

The visual model below that DeFrain and Asay (2007, p. 461) developed show the areas of strengths for families and where they intersect. Families who are strong can survive in difficult situations in different communities, but it is more difficult to meet their goals. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Relationship of Family, Community, and Cultural Strengths: Concentric Circles.
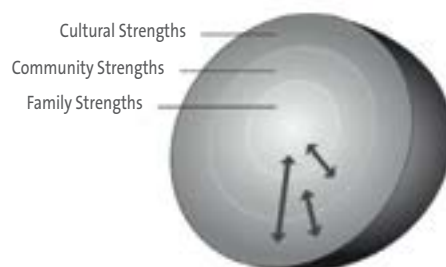
Source: (DeFrain & Asay, 2007, p. 461).

Note: The model above shows how the three areas of strengths move away from one family to the wider context. The three areas have more in-depth information when they interact at different levels.

Individual Strengths. Using the International Family Strengths Model, individual strengths are part of the family. In a study conducted on families who experience violence, it was noted that individual strengths were exercised under difficult conditions. (Asay et al., 2014).

"Individual Strengths," according to Asay et al. include: **"self-respect, survival skills, strategic thinking, commitment to family, good ethical values and understanding of social justice, and spiritual well-being"** (2014, p. xv).

Studies conducted on the family led to the conclusion that there are similarities within families, and they express satisfaction and know how to deal with challenges. But these might differ from one culture to the other (Casas et al., 1984).

As elaborated above, this chapter has highlighted the current situation as relates to Qatari families, their strengths and challenges, as well as the governmental and non-governmental service providers that support them. It also explained the objectives of the study and finally it delineated the features of the International Family Strengths Perspective, which this study adopts as its theoretical framework. The following chapter will present and explain the mixed-methods approach and phases implemented in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

In this chapter, the authors highlight and explain how data collection tools were developed for collecting the qualitative and quantitative data, during Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively. They also underscore the sampling framework used in the study.

2.1. Developing Instruments

It is important to note that even though this research on family strengths and challenges has roots going back to the early-1970s in the U.S., the authors had no intention of using instruments developed in other countries and simply translating Western instruments for use in Arab countries, e.g., Qatar. They felt very strongly from the beginning that each country and culture is genuinely unique and to simply translate interview questions from one language to the other, then back-translate to check for reliability, would be a disservice and sign of disrespect. They believe that this easy approach would have lost the wonderful cultural nuances that make the world what it is. So, the development of instruments for this study was done from the ground up, from scratch, so to speak. It all began with focus group interviews in Qatar. The local interview team members simply asked: **"What are the strengths of your family? Could you tell us?"** And the lengthy discussions were on.

The over-all research design from the beginning was a mixed-methods study, blending the strengths of both qualitative research and quantitative research. The idea was to develop research questions and try them out during Phase 1 of the research with focus groups and subsequent family face-to-face interviews. During this initial phase, the authors would ask the participants in the focus group and in the later family interviews about the strengths and challenges of their families, and to tell stories in which they demonstrate how they use their family strengths to meet the inevitable challenges in life that families deal with. The emerging data were later analyzed using qualitative analysis methods. These focus groups and interviews with a total of 30 Qatari participants gave them a solid base for developing questions on family strengths and challenges for a large-scale expansion of the study. During the subsequent quantitative Phase 2 of the research, the authors greatly increased the sample size and ensured the validity and reliability of the initial group of questions they posed after Phase 1, including the items that measured family strengths and challenges. The goal was to develop a Qatari Family Strengths Inventory which could be used by educators, counselors, and policymakers to support Qatari families sustain their strengths and address their challenges. Judging from their other studies in Jordan and Tunisia, it is clear the Qatari Family Strengths Inventory could be readily used as a guideline for the development of family strengths inventories for other Arab countries.

Qualitative focus group studies were conducted in three Arab nations of Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia. Researchers from each country identified focus group members

using a diverse convenience sample and conducted the focus group activities. Researchers from Qatar conducted three focus groups; while researchers from Jordan conducted two focus groups, and researchers in Tunisia conducted four focus groups. Some of the groups were gender specific and some were mixed gender. The groups ranged from four to 11 persons with an average of nine persons and a total of 71 participants from the three countries. The participants in the focus groups answered to a set of semi-structured questions. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary to probe and garner deeper understanding and clarification. Rich data emerged from the participants as they shared their experiences which was important for the research.

All focus group data were transcribed and translated into English by the researchers in each country. The English translation for all three countries was completed in Qatar by DIFI staff. Common themes were analyzed from the data generated from focus groups by the researchers from each country; and the researchers from the U.S. analyzed the data across the groups and identified the common and uncommon themes for the three countries.

In addition, face-to-face interviews were conducted and 10 life stories from Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia were gathered. These stories explain the strengths and challenges of the families. Examples of these stories from the Qatari families are included in this report, not only to grab the reader's attention so that they can genuinely relate to the people personally, but also to highlight the themes.

The goal of the qualitative research is to assess, from an Arab perspective, the family strengths and challenges which will feed as a base for future research. The themes identified from the qualitative research were used to construct a Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI) which was tested during the quantitative Phase 2 of the research with Qataris representing 934 Qatari participants. From this, the authors believe they have a valid and reliable Qatari Family Strengths Inventory. In the future, they would like to see this QFSI used as a foundation for an even larger quantitative study encompassing the entire Arab region and representing all 22 Arab nations. Though family strengths will be very similar from Arab nation to nation, to do the work well, samples of family responses need to be collected and analyzed from each country.

2.2. Sampling

As the qualitative phase of the research project concluded, the authors developed clear measures based on qualitative data of Arab family strengths and challenges; these measures were ready to expand into the quantitative phase of this mixed-methods research.

The first task in this process was to develop a sampling frame, a list of the people forming the population under study. In this research, the target population were Qataris above the age of 18 years who live in residential houses in Qatar. The target population that was selected excluded people living in places such as army barracks,

hospitals, dormitories, and prisons. The sampling frame was developed by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) of Qatar University with the assistance of the Qatar Electricity and Water Company (Kahramaa). The housing units in Qatar listed the information about the housing address and identified whether the residents in the house were Qatari citizens or expatriates.

To start the sample, division of the frame into seven administrative municipalities took place. There are a number of zones in each municipality and each zone is divided into many blocks The order of the housing units in each zone was organized by geographic location. This allowed the distribution of the housing in different areas. Systematic sampling was used for Qataris.

"The reason for the systematic sampling was to select housing units by taking every kth unit in the frame. The k is called the sampling step, which is defined as the whole number part of the ratio between the frame size and the sample size. Systematic sampling indicates proportionate stratification as a block which has a certain percentage of unit houses for Qatari people in the frame. This was represented by the same percentage of the total number of sampled units. In certain areas oversampling was used to make up for the lower response rate because the response rates vary across zones" (Le et al., 2012, pp. 7–8).

For this survey, one interviewee was selected per household who was above the age of 18. SESRI developed its own selection method to fit the Islamic culture in Qatar (Le et al., 2012, pp. 7–8). The method can be summarized as follows:

"First, the interviewer asked the informant (the first household adult contacted by interviewers) for the number of adults 18 years or older in the household. Conditional on the answer to this question, different within-household schemes were utilized: Number of adults is 1: the informant is de facto selected to complete the interview. Number of adults is 2: randomly select between the informant and the other adult. Number of adults is 3: randomly select the informant 33% of the time. If the informant is not selected, randomly select between the younger and the older of the other two adults. Number of adults is 4: randomly select the informant 25% of the time. If the informant is not selected, randomly select between the youngest, the oldest, and the second oldest among the other three adults. Number of adults is 5 or more: ask the informant a second question about the number of males in the household. Randomly sample either a male or female. If the number of adults of the sampled gender is less than 4, apply the selection method for 2 or 3 adult households. If the number is 4 or more, ask the informant to list the names of all adults in the selected gender and randomly choose one" (Le et al., 2012, pp .7–8).

"This selection method yields a valid probability sample. All adult members in the household have the same chance of being sampled, and the probability of selecting each adult in the household is equal to the inverse of the number of adults regardless of the household size" (Le et al., 2012, pp. 7–8).

Weighting. The data was constructed from three components for the final weighs: The sample selection probability which reflects the base weights; the adjustment factors to account for the non-response; and to make the survey results in line

with the population numbers, calibration was used. In addition, **"Weight trimming was used because highly variable weights can introduce undesirable variability in statistical estimates. Weight trimming can reduce variance but increase bias in the statistical estimates. Weight trimming should be used in cases with very large values of weights. The goal was to reduce the overall mean squared errors"** (Potter, 1990, p. 225, 230).

Base weights. According to Varedian and Forsman (2003), these represent the weights which are the inverse of the selection probability of the unit in the sample. All housing units in the same zone have an equal chance to be selected and the weights are given by this formula because of the use of the systematic sampling,

$$W_{base}^{housing\ unit} = 1/p$$

where $W_{base}^{housing\ unit}$ is the base weight for the housing unit, p is the probability of selection.

The base weights are then adjusted by the number of eligible persons in the household to arrive at person level base weights:

$$W_{base}^{person} = k * W_{base}^{housing\ unit}$$

where k is the number of eligible persons in the household.

Adjustment factors for non-response. If the responding and non-responding units are essentially similar with respect to the key subjects of the investigation, the base weights can be adjusted to account for the non-response by this formula:

$$W^{person} = \propto W_{base}^{person}$$

where $\propto$ is called the adjustment factor for non-response which is based on the propensity that a sampled unit is likely to respond to the survey. This weighting process is usually called propensity weighting (Varedian & Forsman, 2003).

Weight calibration. "The weights were calibrated to bring results in line with the population estimates. This calibration can help reduce the effect from non-response and under-coverage of the sampling frame. SESRI used the "raking" method in the calibration to adjust the weights of the cases in the sample so that the proportions of the adjusted weights on certain characteristics agree with the corresponding proportions for the population" (SESRI, 2017, pp. 36–37)

Questions and Answers about Sampling

Over many years of studying family strengths and reporting their findings to professional and lay audiences, the researchers of this study have occasionally heard a handful of questions about how the samples are gathered and possible problems. These, of course, are questions that they have asked themselves. Below are three representative questions that have been posed and their response in this study of family strengths in Qatar.

1. As researchers, do you have any way of knowing if the self-selection by participants in any way skews the results of the study toward the positive?

In Qatar, the data were collected from a national representative sample and participants were randomly selected. There is no self-selection by family members for participation in the study. We randomly select the participants we would like to interview.

2. It is surprising to me how positive the results are. Are families really doing this well? Or, is it possible that unhappy and troubled families were more likely to decline participation in the study?

Of course, there are some families that have declined participation in the study, but we have no way of knowing the reason why they declined to participate because we cannot ask them questions until they have accepted our invitation. We can conceive of many different reasons why people might decline participation in the study besides being unhappy and troubled.

3. Would a skewed sample explain why the results are so very positive?

We do understand why observers might be surprised and skeptical about the results. Here is an explanation of what happened: We sincerely believe that most families in Qatar are doing relatively well. However, Qatar is hugely impacted by the rapid cultural change and is transitioning to a more liberal society. The community itself is a traditional community; a community that follows most aspects of family law.

That being said, people in Qatar still feel that a conversation revealing household issues is sensitive and might provide positive attitudes toward several topics and hide the negatives. But this potential problem is not about the sample design, sampling procedures, inclusion/exclusion criteria for the study that have affected the results to be positive. It is more of a societal issue.

In the final analysis, it is believed that the family is the most difficult social institution in any society to study, because some families tend to be closed and secretive, while other families tend to be open and straightforward.

To conclude, chapter 2 presented the research design adopted and the phases implemented in this study. The following chapter (3) will shed light on the key findings emerging from the two types of data collected by the end of each of the two phases of this research project.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS

In this chapter, key findings are presented from the qualitative data – collected in Phase 1 – and the quantitative data, which were collected in the Phase 2. There is a lot of synergy and confirmation across the two sets of findings as relates to the strengths and challenges of Qatari families, as the reader will observe.

3.1. Qatar: Qualitative Findings from Focus Groups and Family Interviews

In the qualitative phase of the study, the researchers conducted three focus groups with a total of 27 Qatari family members and followed up by collecting 10 real-life stories from Qatari family members, which served to further validate the focus group themes that were developed. These stories further illustrated the strengths and challenges of Qatari families. The researchers did not include story material in this report. The reader can read these stories in the earlier report. The stories not only catch the reader's attention in ways they can genuinely relate to personally, but they go a long way in explaining and highlighting the themes (Doha International Family Institute, 2018).

3.1.1. Qatari family strengths

The participants in Qatar during the qualitative phase identified the strength of the family and seven important themes emerged which are: 1) responsibility, 2) support, 3) good communication, 4) respect, 5) conveying traditions,6) resilience, and 7) love (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 18).

1. The theme of **responsibility** was identified by the participants as: providing protection, education, holding the family together, and commitment. Participants showed dedication to each other (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 19).

2. The theme of **support** was mentioned by the participants in statements as: encouraging, sharing, and helping each other. One participant said, **"Each time one of my family members had a goal, all of us would stand with him. All of us support one another"** (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p.19).

3. The theme of **good communication** was a strength to the participants as reflected in statements as listening, mutual understanding, transparency, and good problem solving. One participant said, **"There is never a problem that we don't get together and solve as a group."**

4. The theme of **respect** came out in statements as: accepting differences and opinions. One participant said that respect for each other was important as a part of **"common decency"** necessary for the family. Another participant said, **"For example, my sister and I, regarding some issues, I have my opinion and she has hers but that doesn't make us argue with one another. It is truly okay that I have my opinion and you have yours."**

5. *Conveying traditions.* This was mentioned in statements as passing on religious and cultural customs. One participant stated, **"In my opinion, customs and traditions are a source of strength for Qatari society."**

6. **Resilience** was mentioned particularly as working through problems. The stories that the participants shared focused on the resilience of the family in facing difficult times and how they overcome the difficulties.

7. **Love** was identified through statements as: caring, understanding, and respect. But few participants talked about love directly. One participant said she raised her children to understand that **"... love originates from their love of God ...."**

3.1.2. Qatari family challenges

Challenges the participants faced were also identified and shared. The six common challenges that emerged were: 1) societal changes, 2) inequality of women, 3) absent or disengaged fathers, 4) financial problems, 5) interference from extended family members, and 6) conflict in the family and poor communication (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 21).

1. **Societal changes.** One of the important problems that was mentioned was the differences among generations and the breakdown of traditions. In talking about the breakdown of traditions, one participant stated, **"If there aren't any customs and traditions, there is no identity."** Another said, **"I feel that one of the reasons for the breakup of families is when we move away from our customs and traditions."**

   Quite a few of the participants mentioned that their traditions are important for society but due to the change in society it is difficult to adhere to the traditions. There are generational differences that were mentioned as being problematic, with younger people wanting change more than the older generation.

   Isolation was mentioned several times in connection with social media and opportunities for family members to be engaged separately or outside the family. One participant said, **"I feel that social media has really influenced our values and principles."** Others suggested that it isn't social media that is the problem, rather the problem is in parenting – allowing isolation, not giving good guidance, or not spending quality time with their children.

2. **Inequality for women** was mentioned as a challenge. Several of the women spoke about the lack of independence and opportunities for women. One young woman stated, **"The University has given me a scholarship, but I am not allowed to travel by myself, but they will agree if my guardian is present."** Another woman said, **"For example, if I just go outside the house or am running any small errand, I have to take permission, and this restricts my freedom."** They also talked about how much more acceptable it is for a man than for a woman to be caught doing something unacceptable, such as infidelity or gambling. Although some participants mentioned that inequality was lessening, others said it was not.

3. **Absent or disengaged fathers** was mentioned as a challenge. They include fathers who are absent because of their work; fathers who are not connected to the family because they live in separate areas in the home; or fathers who spend time away from the home. These situations can be a challenge, especially for their children. One woman said, "I am the one who carried the burden as he [her husband] was always far from the house. So even during the children's upbringing there was never a father there but instead just a mother." Another participant lamented, **"… we have considered it normal for him [the father] to come home at 6 p.m. in the evening and to go to the 'majlis' [male sitting room]. He doesn't discuss things with his children and doesn't know anything about them."** While some participants talked about their own engaged fathers, they did acknowledge that it is a problem for society.

4. **Financial problems.** Participants also spoke about materialism and how it is a problem for the family and might cause jealousy and competition. The lifestyle in Qatar has had an impact on family life and there is a worry that this materialism might affect future generations in a negative way. One participant said, **"Truly, truly, it is nothing but a breakup of family closeness that is the essential weak point. And these things were caused when materialism increased."**

5. **Interference from extended family members.** A majority of families are worried about interference from the extended family. There was a worry among the participants as they talked about how tension can be built within the home when there are different opinions particularly for those who live in one house with several generations. A participant said her family sometimes **"suffered"** because, **"… whatever my paternal aunt said [it] was considered right by my mother."** There are also expectations family members must follow and these times together as an extended family are **"sacred."** One participant said, **"… it is a must that most of our family members are present at my grandfather's house. We can't upset them by not going."** The participants mentioned that there is lack of respect for different opinions and privacy.

6. **Conflict in the family and poor communication.** One participant said, **"There must be communication and discussion between spouses. If there isn't, the marriage will not prosper."**

The above qualitative research findings generated from Phase 1 of the study was the base work for Phase 2, a quantitative study of 934 Qatari participants in Qatar.

3.2. Qatar: Quantitative Findings

In this section of the report, the researchers describe their quantitative findings, looking at the family strengths and family challenges that emerged from their various analyses. To arrive at this approach to grouping the data, the team worked through three processes: 1) statistical analyses that established the internal reliability of the data, 2) several different approaches to factor analyses of the

data, and 3) qualitative approaches to analyzing and grouping the data based on past studies. The findings from the qualitative study and the quantitative study complement each other very well.

3.2.1. Internal reliability and factor analysis

In order to analyze the strengths of families in Qatar, an inventory was created. As explained earlier, this inventory was created relying on two main sources: 1) previous studies utilizing the international family strengths-based model, and 2) far more important, the findings from qualitative analyses of focus groups and interviews with 99 Qatari family members.

After construction of the inventory, construct validity needed to be tested. To complete this task, the entire sample of Qatari families completed the inventory (N = 934). As the authors analyzed the results of both the qualitative and quantitative work, they concluded that Qatari family strengths can be described using seven subscales: commitment to the family, support for each other, effective communication, respect for each other, conveying family traditions, family resilience, and demonstrating love and affection.

The number of items for each scale varied, based on the results of the qualitative analyses. Subsequently, the reliability was calculated for each subscale, as well as the entire scale. These analyses were conducted using the **"Reliability Analysis"** function in SPSS (version 22.0). For each analysis, the description for **"Item," "Scale,"** and **"Scale if item deleted"** were selected in order to examine any weak items that might significantly alter the scale.

As a result of these analyses, some items were removed to not only increase reliability of the scale, but also better represent the strength as described in the strengths-based perspective. Results of these analyses illustrated reliabilities between adequate and acceptable. Cronbach's alpha for each scale are as follows: commitment α = .75; support α = .60, communication α = .76, respect α = .63, convey family traditions α = .61, family resilience α = .74, and love and affection α = .85), with the entire scale demonstrating acceptable internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .92). The intercorrelations among the seven family strengths investigated in this study were quite high, ranging from .34 to .75. (p < .05), which is consistent with past studies). Given that each of the family strengths appear to be correlated, it is not surprising that the correlation of the entire scale is higher than the individual scales, a common finding in scale construction (Singer & Willett, 2003).

 The items for this inventory were created specifically for this sample in Qatar based on the perspectives the researchers gained from participants in the focus groups and family interviews. Therefore, because these newly created items had not been used previously in other studies, factor analysis was conducted to validate the 7-factor structure as well as further ensure construct validity.

Prior to factor analysis, they examined the factorability of all 44 items using established criteria for the factorability of a correlation (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995; Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2007). First, 40 out of the 44 items correlated at least .3 with one another,

suggesting reasonable factorability. Second, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .946, which is above the recommended value of .6 (Cerny & Kaiser, 1977). Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant $\chi^2(561) = 12067.81$, $p < .001$. Given these indicators, confirmatory factor analysis was suitable with all 44 items. The researchers conducted principal axis factoring using direct oblimin rotations. Since there were seven strengths, they fixed the number of factors to seven. Through this approach, 50.88% of the variance was explained by the seven fixed factors. All items had primary loadings over .5. The results of the factor analysis and reliability analyses provide evidence of the construct validity of the inventory created for this study.

3.2.2. Demographics

The sample interviewed using the Arab Family Strengths and Challenges Inventory contained 934 Qatari participants. There were 463 (49.45%) males and 471 (50.55%) females. There were 660 (62.58%) married participants and 194 (31.06%) participants who reported having never been married. An additional 15 (1.19%) reported being separated, 25 (2.29%) were divorced, and 39 (2.84%) were widowed. The participants were generally well-educated, with 365 (39.08%) having completed a bachelor's degree or higher, and 277 (29.77%) reporting only a secondary education. Respondents in the sample reporting household earnings of more than 40,000 Qatari Riyals per month were 469 (54.11%), and 106 (20.04%) reported a monthly household income between 50,000 and 60,000 Qatari Riyal. The average household size was six members. In the sample, 189 (25.68%) participants reported being childless. In contrast, 125 (16.25%) participants had two children under the age of 18 in the household, and 105 (13.33%) had three children.

The rest of the section presents and briefly discusses the key demographic features of the sample who participated in this study.

Table 1. Year of Birth

Year of Birth	Freq. & Percent	Year of Birth	Freq. & Percent	Year of Birth	Freq. & Percent	Year of Birth	Freq. & Percent
1930	1 (0.11%)	1954	5 (0.55%)	1970	32 (3.52%)	1986	22 (2.42%)
1931	1 (0.11%)	1955	13 (1.43%)	1971	15 (1.65%)	1987	29 (3.19%)
1935	1 (0.11%)	1956	7 (0.77%)	1972	22 (2.42%)	1988	31 (3.41%)
1938	1 (0.11%)	1957	8 (0.88%)	1973	19 (2.09%)	1989	15 (1.65%)
1939	1 (0.11%)	1958	7 (0.77%)	1974	25 (2.75%)	1990	22 (2.42%)
1940	1 (0.11%)	1959	14 (1.54%)	1975	27 (2.97%)	1991	13 (1.43%)
1942	2 (0.22%)	1960	28 (3.08%)	1976	17 (1.87%)	1992	14 (1.54%)
1945	5 (0.55%)	1961	9 (0.99%)	1977	24 (2.64%)	1993	17 (1.87%)
1946	1 (0.11%)	1962	17 (1.87%)	1978	27 (2.97%)	1994	16 (1.76%)
1947	2 (0.22%)	1963	9 (0.99%)	1979	26 (2.86%)	1995	18 (1.98%)
1948	2 (0.22%)	1964	11 (1.21%)	1980	33 (3.63%)	1996	15 (1.65%)
1949	6 (0.66%)	1965	14 (1.54%)	1981	17 (1.87%)	1997	8 (0.88%)
1950	6 (0.66%)	1966	14 (1.54%)	1982	20 (2.2%)	1998	25 (2.75%)
1951	4 (0.44%)	1967	18 (1.98%)	1983	20 (2.2%)	1999	22 (2.42%)
1952	4 (0.44%)	1968	12 (1.32%)	1984	17 (1.87%)	2000	27 (2.97%)
1953	8 (0.88%)	1969	17 (1.87%)	1985	25 (2.75%)		

Year of Birth

Figure 2. Year of Birth
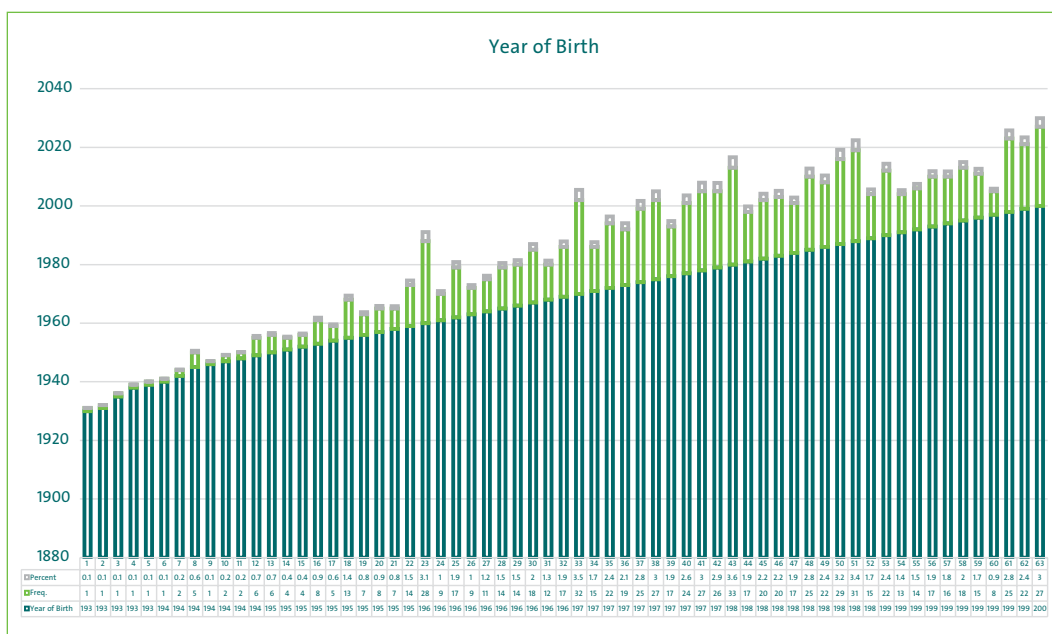
According to Table 1 above, the participants represent a wide range of age groups, ranging from 89, N=1 (0.11%), to 19, N=27 (2.97%). The largest group of them, N=33 (3.63%), are those who are 39 years old. While the smallest number are those whose ages are between 89 and 79, N=1 (0.11%).

	1. Married	2. Separated	3. Divorced	4. Widowed	5. Never married	Total
Freq.	660	15	25	39	194	933
Percent	70.74	1.61	2.68	4.18	20.79	100

Figure 3. Current Marital Status
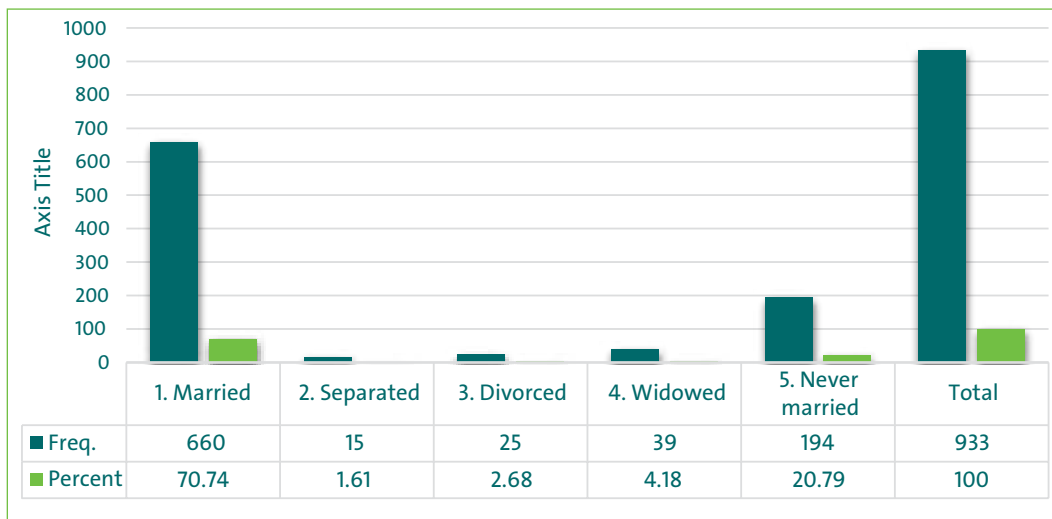
According to Figure 3 above, majority of the participants, N=660 (70.74%), are married, while some of them have never been married, N=194 (20.79%), and a few of them are divorced, N=25 (2.68%), or separated, N=15 (1.61%). Note: one response was invalid.
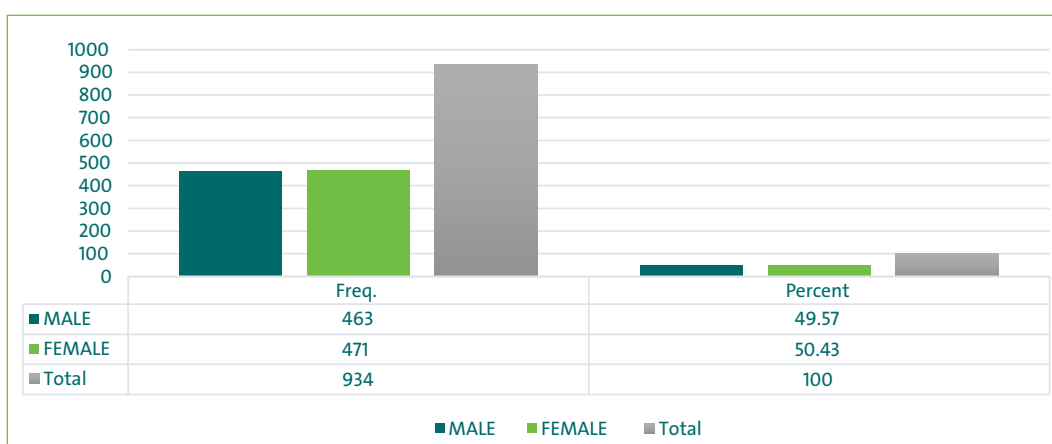
Figure 4. Participants' Gender

As Figure 4 shows, males and females have very close to equal representation in this study. However, females are slightly higher in number and percentage, N=471 (50.43%), compared to males, N= 463 (49.57%).
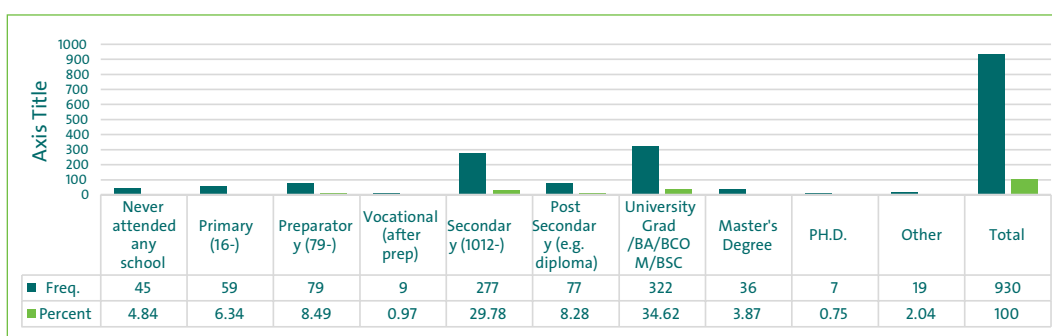
Figure 5. Participants' Education

According to Figure 5, a large number of the participants, N=322 (34.62%), reported they have a university degree; and a few of them, N=45 (4.84%), reported they **"never attended any school."** A considerable number of them, N=277 (29.78%) have obtained secondary education. Note: four responses were invalid.
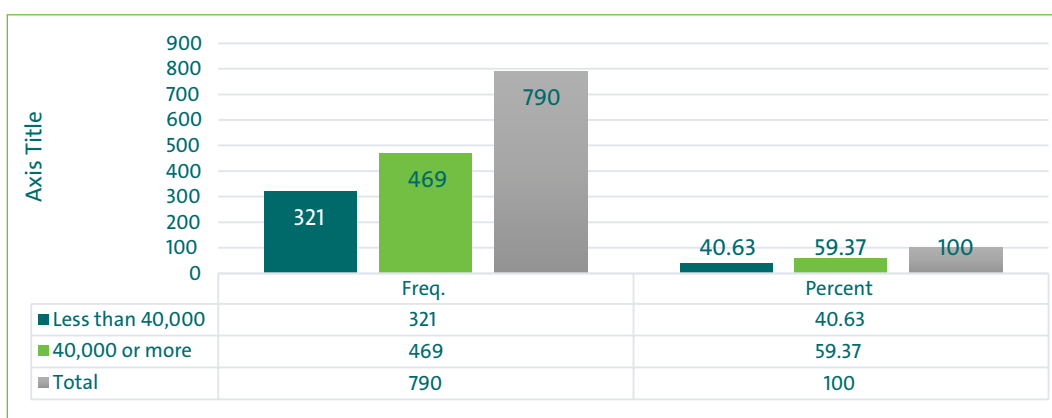
Figure 6. Total Monthly Household Income

Figure 6 shows that more than half of the participants, N=469 (59.37%), reported a total household income of 40,000 Qatari Riyal or more, compared to N=321 (40.63%), reporting that their household income is less than 40,000 Qatari Riyal. Note: 144 responses were invalid.
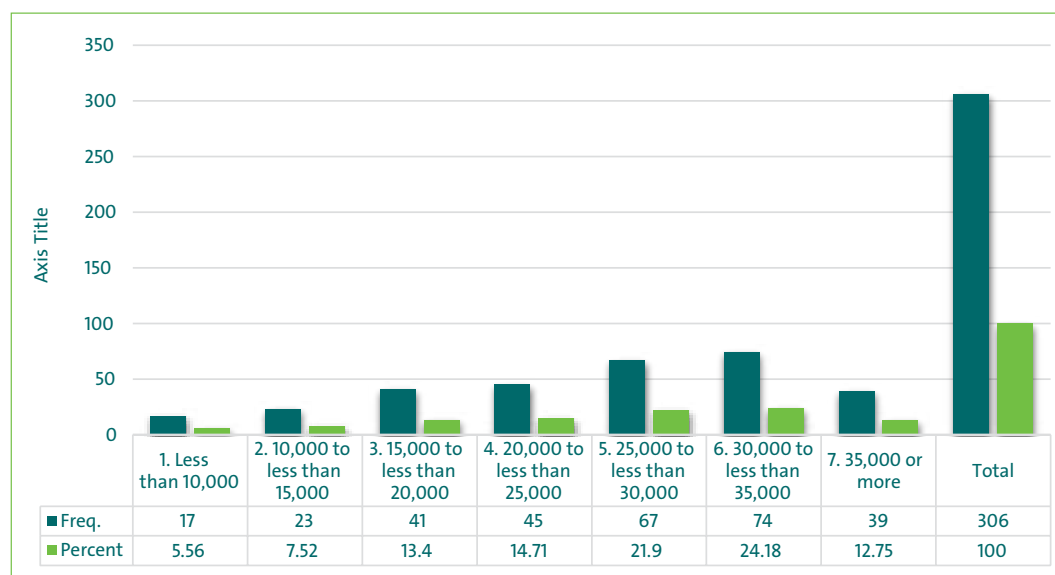
Figure 7. Total Household Income of Less Than 40,000 Qatari Riyal

This more detailed Figure 7 shows the segregation of total household income of less than 40,000 Qatari Riyal. It displays total household incomes between less than 10,000 Qatari Riyal and above 35,000Qatari Riyal. It also depicts that the largest number of participants in this category, N=74 (24.18%), reported a total household income of 30,000 Qatari Riyal or less. While, the smallest number, N=17 (5.56%), reported a total household income of less than 10,000 Qatari Riyal. Note: 628 responses were invalid.
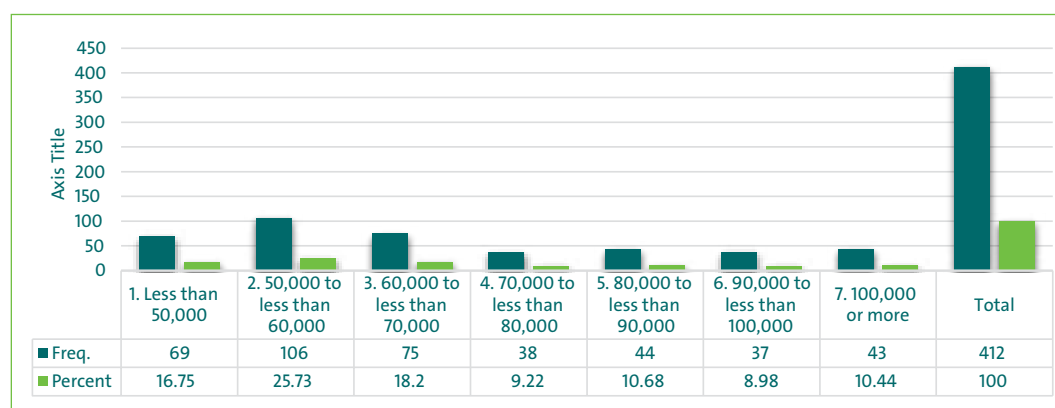
Figure 8. Total Household Income of More Than 40,000 Qatari Riyal

Figure 8 above displays some data about the participants who reported a household income of more than 40,000 Qatari Riyal. It shows total household incomes between less than 50,000 and 100,000 or more in Qatari Riyal. The largest number of participants in this category, N=106 (25.73%), reported a total household income of 50,000 to less than 60,000 Qatari Riyal, whereas the smallest number in this

category, N=37 (8.98%), reported a total household income of 90,000 to less than 100,000 Qatari Riyal. Note: 522 responses were invalid.
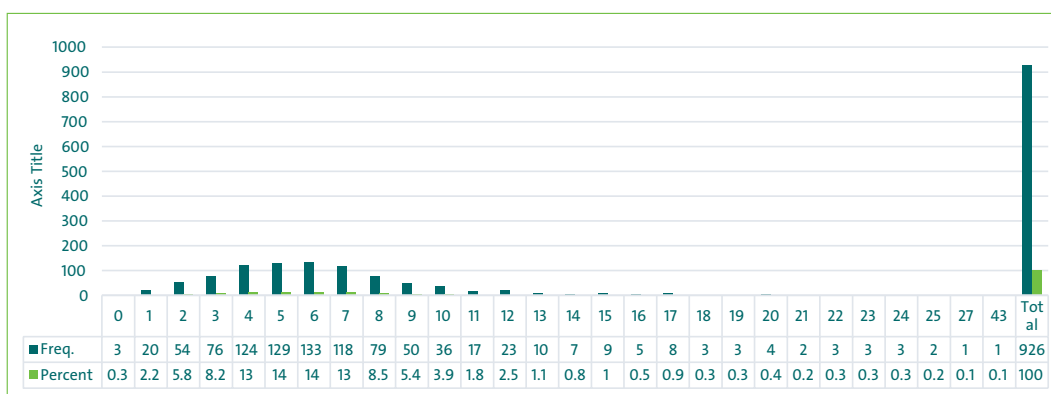
Figure 9. Family Members Living in Each Household

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	43	Total
Freq.	3	20	54	76	124	129	133	118	79	50	36	17	23	10	7	9	5	8	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	926
Percent	0.3	2.2	5.8	8.2	13	14	14	13	8.5	5.4	3.9	1.8	2.5	1.1	0.8	1	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	100

According to Figure 9, above, most of the participants reported that the number of family members living in their households range between two, N=54 (5.8%), to 12, N=23 (2.5%). The highest number of the participants in this category, N=133 (14%), reported the number of family members living in their households as six, while the lowest number, N=1 (0.1%), reported the number of family members living in their households were 27 and 43 people. In other words, the most common household size was six while the least common were the large ones, such as 27 or 43. Note: Eight responses were invalid.
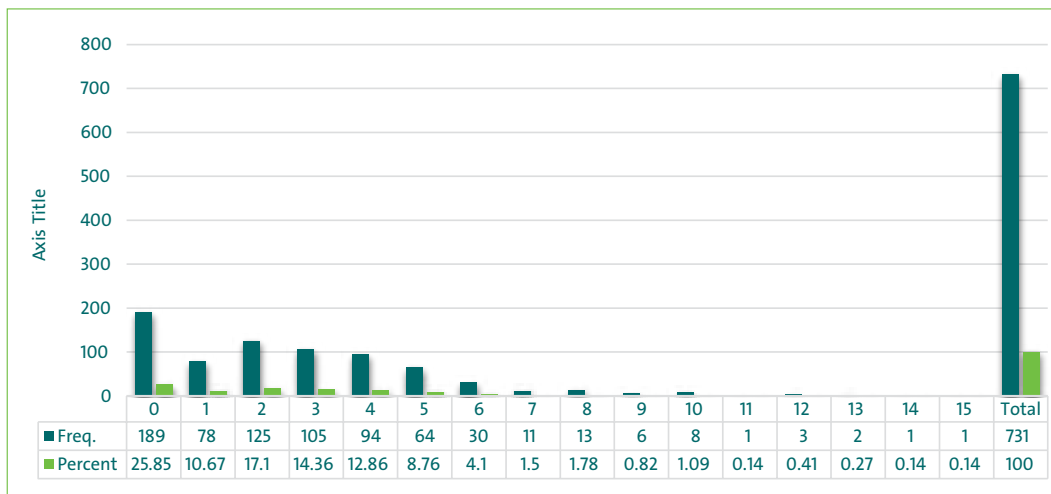
Figure 10. Children Under 18 Living in Each Household

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
Freq.	189	78	125	105	94	64	30	11	13	6	8	1	3	2	1	1	731
Percent	25.85	10.67	17.1	14.36	12.86	8.76	4.1	1.5	1.78	0.82	1.09	0.14	0.41	0.27	0.14	0.14	100

According to Figure 10, above, most of the participants who responded to this question reported that the number of children under 18 living in their households ranged from 0 to 6. The highest number of participants in this category, N=189 (25.85%), reported having zero children living in their households. Next is N=125 (17.1%), who reported having two children living in their households. The lowest number of participants in this category who reported having children under 18 living in their households is N=1 (0.14%), who reported having 11-, 14-, and 15-year-old children living in their households. Note: 203 responses were invalid.
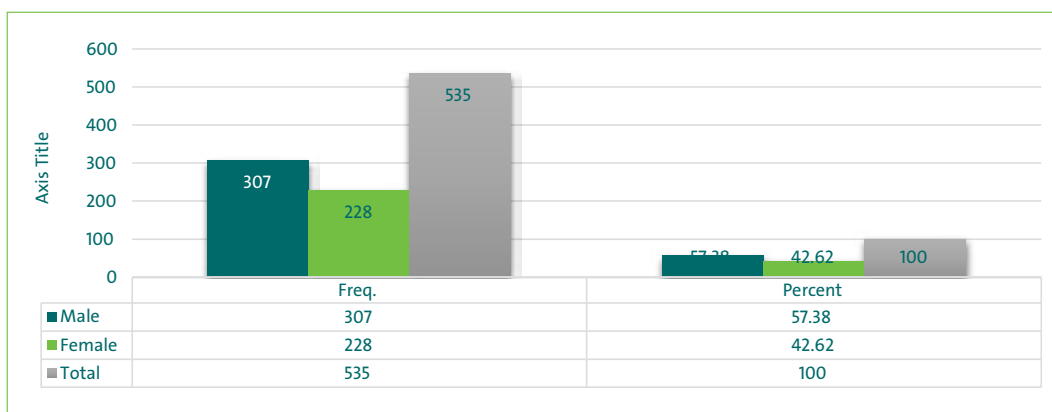
Figure 11. Children's Gender

Figure 11, above, shows that the majority of the participants in this category reported having more male children, N=307 (57.38%), than female ones, N=228 (42.62%). Note: 399 responses were invalid.
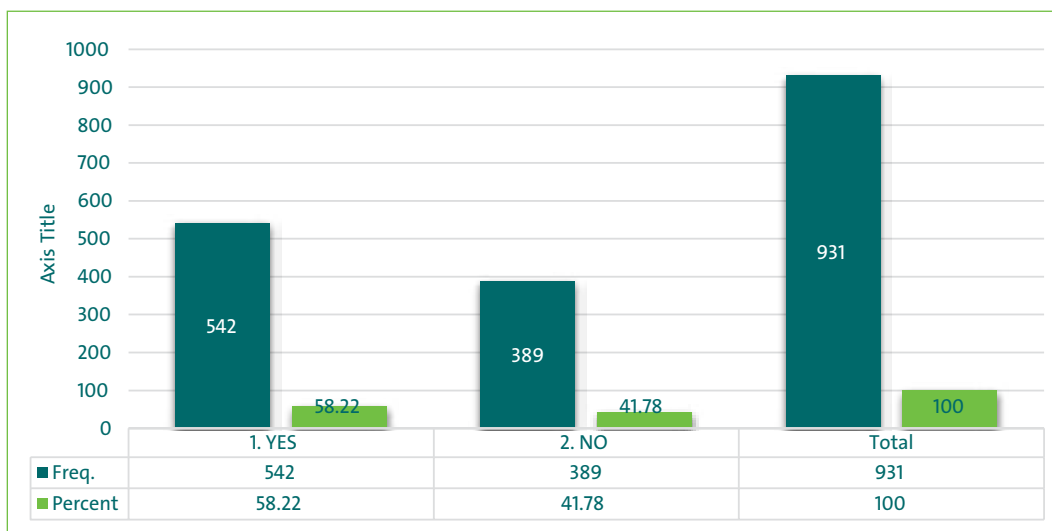
Figure 12. Current Employment Status

As Figure 12 above shows, most of the participants, N=542 (58.22%), reported that they are currently employed, while the rest of them, N=389 (41.78%), reported they are not currently employed. Of course, some of these participants are already retired. The details of this data are presented and discussed below. Note: Three responses were invalid.
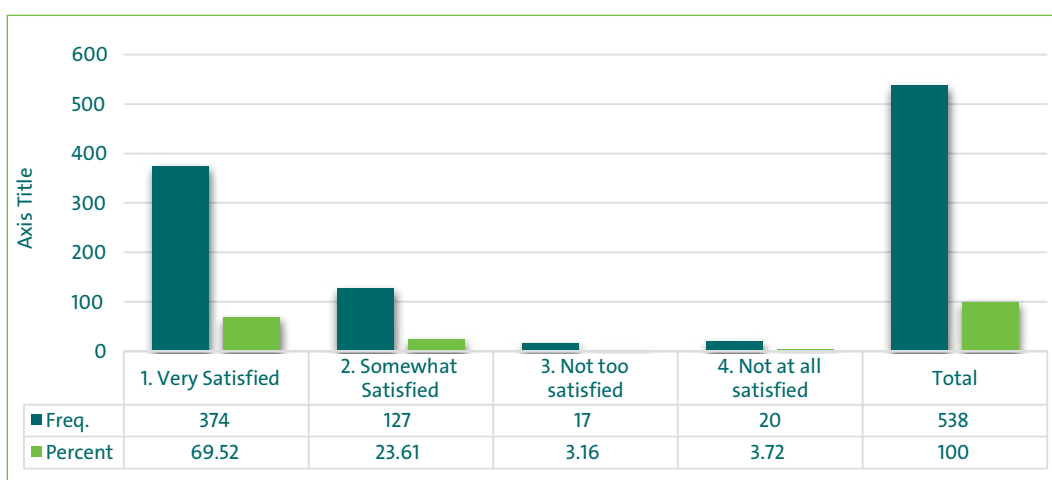
Figure 13. Satisfaction with Current Income

Figure 13, above, displays that most of the participants in this category, N=374 (69.52%), reported that they were **"very satisfied"** with their current income; others were those who reported that they were **"somewhat satisfied,"** N=127 (23.61%). Very few of the participants, N=20 (3.72%), reported that they were "not at all satisfied" with their current income. Note: 396 responses were invalid.
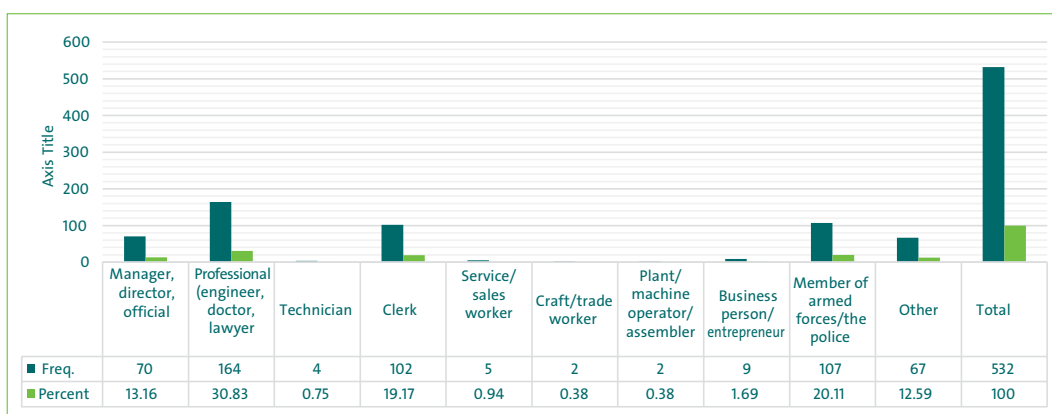
Figure 14. Current Occupation

According to Figure 14, above, the highest number of participants in this category, N=164 (30.83%), reported being professionals (e.g., engineers, doctors, and lawyers); others reported that they are **"members of armed forces and the police,"** N=107 (20.11%). The lowest number, N=2 (0.38%), included jobs such as **"craft, trade worker, machine operator, and assembler."** Note: 402 responses were invalid.

Figure 15. Field of Work

	Oil and gas	Construction/ utilities	Wholesale /retail trade	Manufacturing	Education	Health care/social work	Information technology /communications	Finance, insurance/ real estate	Government, public administration/ defense	Professional, scientific/ technical activ	Tourism, arts, entertainment, recreation	Other	Total
■ Freq.	32	12	10	4	85	27	12	15	244	15	3	68	527
■ Percent	6.07	2.28	1.9	0.76	16.13	5.12	2.28	2.85	46.3	2.85	0.57	12.9	100

As Figure 15 above shows, the largest number of the participants who responded to this question, N=244 (46.3%), reported that they work in governmental and public sectors. Some work in education, N=85 (16.13%). Also, there were others who reported sectors such as **"tourism, arts, entertainment, recreation,"** N=3 (0.57%), and **"manufacturing,"** N=4 (0.76%). Note: 407 responses were invalid.
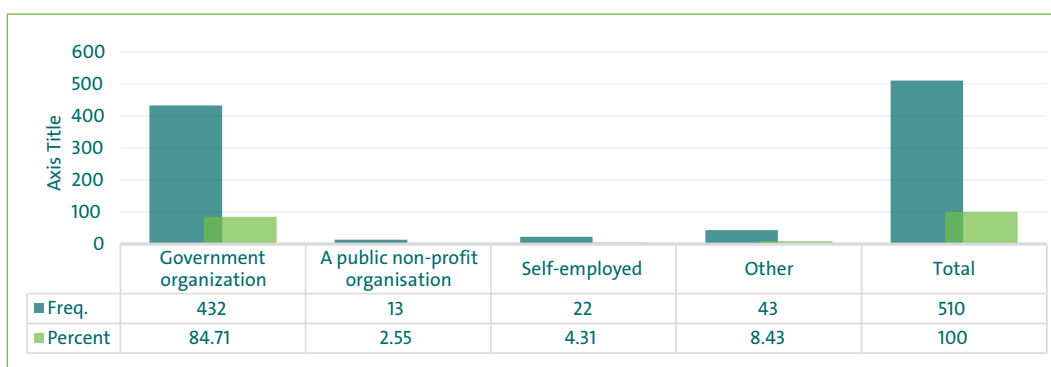
Figure 16. Type of Organizations Participants Work In

	Government organization	A public non-profit organisation	Self-employed	Other	Total
■ Freq.	432	13	22	43	510
■ Percent	84.71	2.55	4.31	8.43	100

According to Figure 16, the vast majority of the participants who responded to this question, N=432 (84.71%), reported that they work in governmental organizations. Next after them are those who reported working in **"other"** types of organizations, N=43 (8.43%). Following are those who reported they are **"self-employed,"** N=22 (4.31%). The lowest number constitutes those who reported that they work in a **"public, non-for-profit organization,"** N=13 (2.55%). Note: 424 responses were invalid.

	Freq.	Percent
▪ 1. Permanent	523	98.12
▪ 2. Temporary	10	1.88
▪ Total	533	100
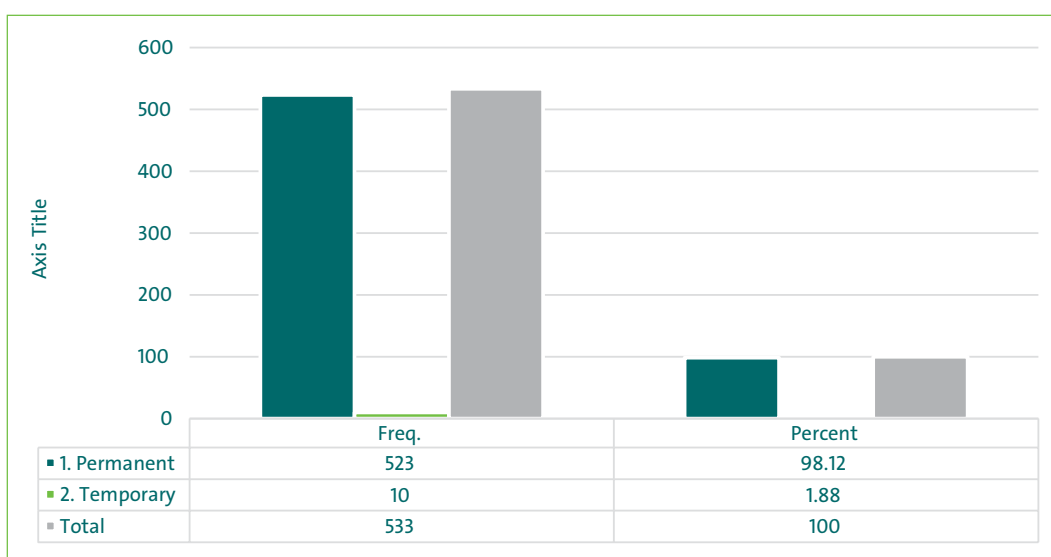
Figure 17. Type of Employment: Permanent vs Temporary

As Figure 17, above, shows the vast majority of participants, N=523 (98.12%), reported they have permanent employment, in comparison to a very small number, N=10, (1.88%), who reported that they have **"temporary"** employment. Note: 401 responses were invalid.

	Freq.	Percent
▪ Total	533	100
▪ 2. Part-time	40	7.5
▪ 1. Full-time	493	92.5
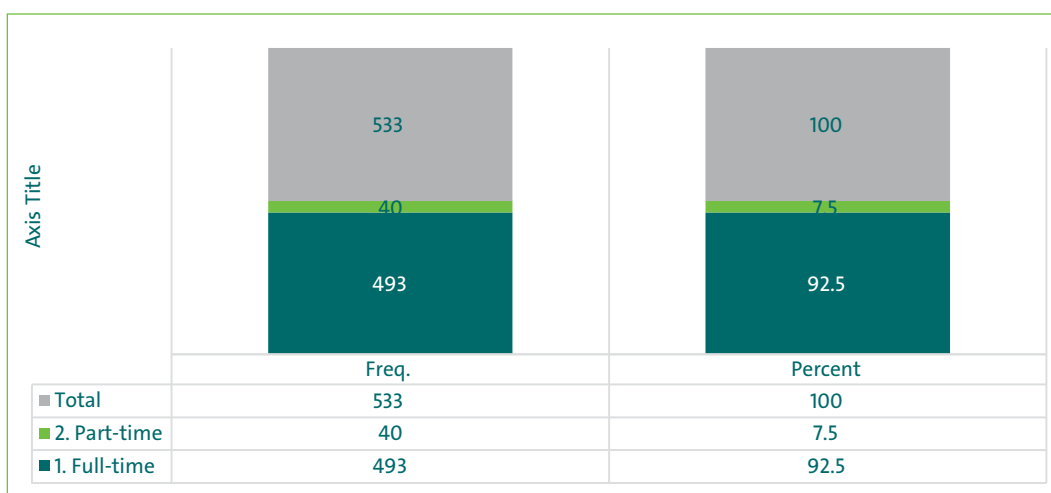
Figure 18. Type of Employment: Full/Part Time

According to Figure 18, above, the vast majority of participants, N=493 (92.5%), reported that they have full-time jobs, compared to a few, N=40 (7.5%), who reported having part-time jobs. Note: 401 responses were invalid.

3.2.1. Family strengths

The researchers believe that this section of the report is, literally, the heart of the matter when it comes to understanding family strengths.

Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, they believe there are seven major family strengths among Qatari families:

1. Commitment to the family.

2. Support for each other.

3. Effective communication.

4. Respect for each other.

5. Conveying values and family traditions.

6. Family resilience.

7. Demonstrating love and affection for each other.

Please note that even though these strengths are reported in numerical order, the authors do not consider any one strength more important than any other, especially since all the strengths are closely related to each other and in many ways difficult to tease apart in any meaningful way.

In this section of the report, the researchers go through each of these seven major strengths and 54 characteristics in some depth. An effective and simple way of displaying and understanding family strengths is to look at frequencies and percentages as presented below. Please note that in these tables, the strengths are all listed just as they emerged from the interviews with the participants, in both positive and negative forms.

Below, the reader will find seven tables, one table for each of the seven family strengths the researchers have identified for Qatari families. Each table lists the various individual family strengths statements used in the study. Over many years of studying family strengths and trying to teach about family strengths, the authors have found that it is important for readers who are new to this area of investigation to dive deep into the details, and think about their own family and how everyone would answer questions about their family strengths in their family. The authors ask that as the readers do this, they think about the percentages of Qatari family members who identified this particular statement as representative of a strength in their family. The authors believe the reader will conclude, as they have, that the percentage of Qatari families who believe they are doing well, as represented by their personal estimation of each of the family strengths, is quite remarkable.

Table 2. Strength 1: Commitment to the family

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. We work to hold the family together.	893 (95.61%)	39 (4.18%)	1 (011%)	1 (0.11%)	934 (100%)
2. The members of our family are committed to each other.	828 (88.65%)	97 (10.39%)	7 (0.75%)	2 (0.21%)	934 (100%)
3. The members of our family act with integrity.	847 (90.69%)	83 (8.89%)	2 (0.21%)	2 (0.21%)	934 (100%)
4. We share the responsibility for caring for the children and elderly in our family.	847 (91.17%)	74 (7.97%)	4 (0.43%)	4 (0.43%)	929 (100%)
5. Our family works to solve problems when they arise.	755 (81.01%)	157 (16.85%)	12 (1.29%)	8 (0.86%)	932 (100%)
6. Even though we are busy, we find ways to have good times together as a family.	714 (76.53%)	195 (20.90%)	14 (1.50%)	10 (1.07%)	933 (100%)
7. All things considered, our family members act responsibly toward each other.	789 (84.48%)	133 (14.24%)	9 (0.96%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)

Results of Strength 1 show strong commitment to the family among participants in all measures. However, there was some variance across these measures. While there was a high level of agreement on working **"to hold the family together"** (99.79%), there was a lower level of agreement on **"spending time together"** (97.43%). The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 95.6% strongly agreed that, "We work to hold the family together." In contrast, 0.11% said they strongly disagreed.

- 88.6% of the participants strongly agreed that, "The members of our family are committed to each other," while only 0.2% strongly disagreed.

- 91.7% strongly agreed that, "We share the responsibility for caring for the children and elderly in our family." Only 0.4% strongly disagreed.

- 76.5% strongly agreed that, "Even though we are busy, we find ways to have good times together as a family," while 1.0% disagreed.
- 84.4% strongly agreed that, "All things considered, our family members act responsibly toward each other." By contrast, 0.3% strongly disagreed.
- 90.6% strongly agreed that, "The members of our family act with integrity." Only 0.2% strongly disagreed.

Table 3. Strength 2: Support for each other

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. The members of our family are loyal to each other.	842 (90.25%)	83 (8.98%)	5 (0.54%)	3 (0.32%)	933 (100%)
2. We are bad at cooperating with each other.	63 (6.75%)	38 (4.07%)	101 (10.83%)	731 (78.35%)	933 (100%)
3. Family members share our resources with one another.	721 (77.44%)	163 (17.51%)	20 (2.15%)	27 (2.90%)	931 (100%)
4. We love to help each other.	835 (89.40%)	92 (9.85%)	4 (0.43%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)
5. Our family members support each other.	841 (90.04%)	88 (9.42%)	4 (0.43%)	1 (0.11%)	934 (100%)
6. We are not close to our extended family.	124 (13.33%)	87 (9.35%)	95 (10.22%)	624 (67.10%)	930 (100%)
7. Both mother and father help in childrearing.	772 (83.01%)	118 (12.69%)	21 (2.26%)	19 (2.04%)	930 (100%)
8. Society needs to change so that fathers become more involved in the family.	709 (76.07%)	154 (16.52%)	53 (5.69%)	16 (1.72%)	932 (100%)

Results of Strength 2 reveal strong family loyalty (99.23%), support (99.46%), and love among family members for participants (99.25%). Evidence that families share resources (94.95%) and help each other is also strong (95.7%). However, participants' support from extended family is less strong. While participants in the study strongly agreed that both mothers and fathers help in childrearing, they also strongly agreed that society needs to change so that fathers become more involved in the family. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 90.0% of the family members in the study strongly agreed that, "Our family members support each other," while 0.11% strongly disagreed with this statement.

- 89.4% strongly agreed that, "We love to help each other," while 0.3% strongly disagreed.

- 90.2% strongly agreed that, "The members of our family are loyal to each other." Only 0.3% strongly disagreed.

- 6.7% of the participants strongly agreed that, "We are bad at cooperating with each other." In contrast, 78.3% strongly disagreed.

- 77.4% strongly agreed that, "Family members share our resources with one another," while 2.90% strongly disagreed with this statement.

- 83.0% strongly agreed that, "Both mother and father help in childrearing." Only 2.0% strongly disagreed.

- 76.0% strongly agreed that, "Society needs to change so that fathers become more involved in the family." Only 1.7% strongly disagreed with this statement.

- Family support for each other in the nuclear family was remarkably strong. Family support was not as widespread with the extended family, but still noteworthy:

- 13.33% strongly agreed that, "We are not close to our extended family." On the other hand, 67.1% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 4. Strength 3: Effective communication

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. We are good at listening to each other.	741 (79.34%)	178 (19.06%)	13 (1.39%)	2 (0.21%)	934 (100%)
2. We misunderstand each other.	47 (5.03%)	68 (7.28%)	139 (14.88%)	680 (72.81%)	934 (100%)
3. We blame each other for our problems.	142 (15.24%)	295 (31.65%)	163 (17.49%)	332 (35.62%)	932 (100%)
4. Our family members engage in constructive dialogue.	660 (70.97%)	235 (25.27%)	23 (2.47%)	12 (1.29%	930 (100%)
5. Our family demonstrates good problem-solving skills.	653 (69.99%)	248 (26.58%)	23 (2.47%)	9 (0.96%)	933 (100%)

6. We discuss everything, even sensitive things.	488 (52.59%)	256 (27.59%)	115 (12.39%)	69 (7.44%)	928 (100%)
7. Sometimes we agree to disagree on issues, and that is not a big problem for us.	653 (70.06%)	236 (25.32%)	29 (3.11%)	14 (1.50%)	932 (100%)
8. Sometimes our family has disagreements caused by generational gaps.	211 (22.64%)	313 (33.58%)	136 (14.59%)	272 (29.18%)	932 (100%)
9. Social media is causing our family to feel more isolated from each other.	254 (27.25%)	358 (38.41%)	114 (12.23%)	206 (22.10%)	932 (100%)
10. In our marriage, we cannot seem to communicate well.	68 (9.51%)	83 (11.61%)	113 (15.80%)	451 (63.08%)	715 (100%)
11. Our marriage has conflict as we cannot resolve things quickly.	48 (6.68%)	88 (12.24%)	124 (17.25%)	459 (63.84%)	719 (100%)

The results of Strength 3 showed that families of participants in this study strongly agree that they use effective communication in the areas of listening (98.4%), constructive dialogue (96.24%), and problem solving (96.57%). There is mixed agreement in areas that involved discussing sensitive issues or disagreements between generations. There is also mixed agreement in viewing social media as a problem for family communication. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 79.3% strongly agreed that, "We are good at listening to each other," while 0.2% strongly disagreed.

- 5.3% strongly agreed that, "We misunderstand each other." In contrast, 72.8% strongly disagreed.

- 15.2% strongly agreed that, "We blame each other for our problems," while 35.62% strongly disagreed.

- 69.9% strongly agreed that, "Our family demonstrates good problem-solving skills," while 0.96% strongly disagreed.

- 52.5% strongly agreed that, "We discuss everything, even sensitive things." 7.4% strongly disagreed.
- 70.0% strongly agreed that, "Sometimes we agree to disagree on issues, and that is not a big problem for us." 1.5% strongly disagreed.
- 22.64% strongly agreed that, "Sometimes our family has disagreements caused by generational gaps," while 29.18% strongly disagreed.
- 27.25% strongly agreed that, "Social media is causing our family to feel more isolated from each other." 22.10% strongly disagreed.
- Looking at marital communication:
- 9.51% strongly agreed that, "In our marriage, we cannot seem to communicate well," while 63.0% strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 6.68% strongly agreed that, "Our marriage has conflict as we cannot resolve things quickly." 63.8% strongly disagreed.

Table 5. Strength 4: Respect for each other

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. We believe that we are different people and we can live with differences.	640 (68.82%)	234 (25.16%)	29 (3.12%)	27 (2.9%)	930 (100%)
2. Our family members do not treat each other with patience.	78 (8.36%)	129 (13.83%)	148 (15.86%)	578 (61.95%)	933 (100%)
3. Trust is an important strength in our family.	827 (8854%)	98 (10.49%)	4 (0.43%)	5 (0.54%)	934 (100%)
4. Children in our family respect their elders.	852 (91.42%)	71 (7.62%)	6 (0.64%)	3 (0.32%)	932 (100%)
5. Because we respect each other, we get along well together.	839 (89.83%)	86 (9.21%)	6 (0.64%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)
6. We show our respect and appreciation by thanking one another.	783 (83.83%)	131 (14.03%)	13 (1.39%)	7 (0.75%)	934 (100%)

7. Interference by extended family members is a challenge for our family.	149 (16.07%)	165 (17.80%)	133 (14.35%)	480 (51.78)	927 (100%)
8. We have a strong sense of respect for each other in our family.	849 (90.90%)	77 (8.24%)	6 (0.64%)	2 (0.21%)	

Results of Strength 4 indicate that participants strongly believe that respect is present in their family life. Their level of agreement was very high 99.04%. Qualities of respect included patience, trust, and appreciation. Respect for elders was very strong among participants. However, they showed a lower level of agreement regarding tolerating differences (93.98%). The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 90.9% of the family members strongly agreed that, "We have a strong sense of respect for each other in the family." Only 0.21% strongly disagreed.

- 89.8% strongly agreed that, "Because we respect each other, we get along well together," 0.32% strongly disagreed.

- 83.8% strongly agreed that, "We show our respect and appreciation by thanking one another," 0.75% strongly disagreed.

- 68.8% strongly agreed that, "We believe that we are different people and we can live with differences," while 2.9% strong disagreed.

- 8.3% strongly agreed that, "Our family members do not treat each other with patience," while 61.9% strongly disagreed.

- 88.5% strongly agreed that, "Trust is an important strength in our family," 0.54% strongly disagreed.

- 91.4% strongly agreed that, "Children in our family respect their elders," 0.32% strongly disagreed.

Table 6. Strength 5: Conveying values and family traditions

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. Our children are taught important traditions.	876 (93.99%)	53 (5.69%)	2 (0.21%)	1 (0.11%)	932 (100%)
2. We share many important values as a family.	856 (91.85%)	72 (7.73%)	2 (0.21%)	2 (0.21%)	932 (100%)
3. Older members of the family play a role in passing on traditions to children.	828 (88.65%)	92 (9.85%)	6 (0.64%)	8 (0.86%)	934 (100%)
4. We like helping each other and helping other people.	863 (92.40%)	65 (6.96%)	3 (0.32%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)
5. The breakdown in traditions has caused difficulties for our family.	134 (14.41%)	176 (18.92%)	182 (19.57%)	438 (47.10%)	930 (100%)
6. Living with extended family is difficult.	181 (19.50%)	153 (16.49%)	139 (14.98%)	455 (49.03%)	928 (100%)
7. We have lost family customs and traditions that were important for our identity.	147 (15.76%)	223 (23.90%)	159 (17.04%)	404 (43.30%)	933 (100%)

The results of Strength 5 show a high level of agreement (98.5%) among participants that traditions and values are passed between family members, with older family members most often playing the role of passing on those traditions. While still a slight majority, there is less agreement (33.33%) about whether a breakdown in traditions have caused difficulties or that family customs and traditions that are important to their identity have been lost.

The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 93.9% of the family members participating in the study strongly agreed that, "Our children are taught important traditions." Only 0.11% strongly disagreed.

- 91.8% strongly agreed that, "We share many important values as a family," 0.21% disagreed.

- 88.6% strongly agreed that, "Older members of the family play a role in passing on traditions to the children," 0.86% strongly disagreed.
- 14.4% strongly agreed that, "The breakdown in traditions has caused difficulties for our family," 47.1% strongly disagreed.
- 19.5% strongly agreed that, "Living with extended family is difficult," 49.03% strongly disagreed.

One value important to many families was helping others:

- 92.4% strongly agreed that, "We like helping each other and helping other people." Only 0.32% strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 15.76% strongly agreed that, "We have lost family customs and traditions that were important for our identity," 43.3% strong disagreed.

Table 7. Strength 6: Family resilience

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. In difficult times, we work through hard problems together as a family.	795 (85.21%)	127 (13.61%)	6 (0.64%)	5 (0.54%)	933 (100%)
2. Under stress, we persevere together.	786 (84.24%)	137 (14.68%)	8 (0.86%)	2 (0.21%)	933 (100%)
3. The members of our family are determined and have a strong will.	767 (82.30%)	150 (16.00%)	13 (1.39%)	2 (0.21%)	932 (100%)
4. We have faced hard times as a family and stayed together.	789 (84.93%)	100 (10.76%)	23 (2.48%)	17 (1.83%)	929 (100%)
5. Challenges in life have taught us important lessons about living.	784 (85.65%)	116 (12.51%)	11 (1.19%)	6 (0.65%)	927 (100%)
6. Our family has difficulty dealing with consumerism effectively.	204 (21.91%)	262 (28.14%)	171 (18.37%)	294 (31.58%)	931 (100%)
7. We look at challenges in life as opportunities for growth.	832 (89.66%)	86 (9.27%)	7 (0.75%)	3 (0.32%)	928 (100%)

Results of Strength 6 indicate that in all measures, participants believe that their family exhibits the ability to persevere and grow from their challenges. In particular, there was a high level of agreement (98.93%) that they utilized **"challenges"** for **"growth."** While there are many challenges for families, the specific challenge of consumerism was mixed across the scale, almost equally split between agree (50.05%) and disagree (49.95%) among participants. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 85.2% strongly agreed that, "In difficult times, we work through hard problems together as a family." Only 0.54% strongly disagreed.

- 84.2% strongly agreed that, "Under stress, we persevere together," 0.21% strongly disagreed.

- 82.3% strongly agreed that, "The members of our family are determined and have a strong will," while 0.21% strongly disagreed.

- 84.9% strongly agreed that, "We have faced hard times as a family and stayed together." Only 1.83% strongly disagreed.

- 85.65% strongly agreed that, "Challenges in life have taught us important lessons about living," 0.65% strongly disagreed.

- 89.6% strongly agreed that, "We look at challenges in life as opportunities for growth," 0.32% strongly disagreed.

Consumerism in a materialistic world was a significant challenge for some families:

- 21.9% strongly agreed that, "Our family has difficulty dealing with consumerism effectively," while 31.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 8. Strength 7: Demonstrating love and affection for each other

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. We are good at showing affection for each other.	776 (83.08%)	147 (15.74%)	6 (0.64%)	5 (0.54%)	934 (100%)
2. We are kind to each other.	794 (85.01%)	132 (14.13%)	5 (0.54%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)
3. We like to have fun together.	741 (79.34%)	177 (18.95%)	12 (1.28%)	4 (0.43%)	934 (100%)
4. We enjoy spending time together.	758 (81.16%)	163 (17.45%)	10 (1.07%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)
5. We treat each other like good friends.	662 (70.88%)	224 (23.98%)	31 (3.32%)	17 (1.82%)	934 (100%)
6. Family members know that they are appreciated and loved.	821 (87.90%)	99 (10.60%)	11 (1.18%)	3 (0.32%)	934 (100%)

The results of Strength 7 show strong agreement for all measures among participants in demonstrating love and affection within the family. These include showing love, kindness, and appreciation. However, the highest level of agreement was for appreciation and love (98.5%). This category also shows strong agreement among participants that their family enjoys spending time and having fun together. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this strength:

- 83.0% strongly agreed that, "We are good at showing affection for each other." Only 0.54% strongly disagreed.

- 85.0% strongly agreed that, "We are kind to each other," 0.32% strongly disagreed.

- It is a paradox, but some family members treat outsiders better than they treat each other.

For most Qatari families this is not the case as the participants showed the least level of agreement (94.86%) — which can still be considered high compared to other contexts — for treating 'each other like good friends':

- 70.8% strongly agreed that, "We treat each other like good friends." Only 1.82% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Enjoying good times together is an important way family members express love and affection:

- 79.3% strongly agreed that, "We like to have fun together." Only 0.43% strongly disagreed.

- 81.1% strongly agreed that, "We enjoy spending time together," 0.32% strongly disagreed.

In the final analysis, Qatari families reported that they were doing well:

- 87.9% strongly agreed that, "Family members know that they are appreciated and loved." Only 0.32% strongly disagreed.

3.2.2. Family challenges

As noted before, the researchers conducted a qualitative study of Qatari families before they conducted this quantitative study of Qatari families. The purpose of the earlier qualitative study was to help them understand family strengths and family challenges so they could better frame their questions for the large-scale quantitative study that they conducted and are reporting here. In the earlier qualitative study, they asked participants to identify and talk about a time in their family that led to a negative experience, as well as to identify the challenges that their family experiences. "Together the questions yielded six common themes: 1) societal changes, 2) inequality of women, 3) absent or disengaged fathers, 4) financial problems, 5) interference from extended family members, and 6) conflict in the family and poor communication" (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, pp. 19–21).

Challenges in life can threaten the strengths of families and prohibit them from reaching their potential. So, in the subsequent quantitative study of Qatari families the authors developed a series of questions focusing on critical issues families face and how they deal with them, such as: 1) family finances, 2) gender considerations, 3) their outlook on divorce, 4) the relationship with one's marital partner, and 5) thoughts on family programs and services for strengthening families.

This section of the report goes through each of these five areas focusing on challenges the family faces and each of the 56 questions the researchers asked the participants in some depth. Once again, an effective and simple way of displaying and understanding family challenges is to look at frequencies and percentages as presented below. In the tables below, the questions are all listed just as they were in the survey with participants, in both positive form and negative form.

The reader is presented with many tables and items, but the authors believe the best way to understand both family strengths and family challenges is to look closely at the details, and think about the questions in the context of one's own experience in a family.

Table 9. Challenge 1: Family finances

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. It is hard for my family to live comfortably on our current income.	86 (9.30%)	139 (15.03%)	154 (16.65%)	546 (59.03%)	925 (100%)
2.. Managing our finances puts a strain on my family.	84 (9.06%)	18 (15.97%)	183 (19.74%)	512 (55.23%)	927 (100%)
3. My family always has money left over at the end of each month.	273 (30.50%)	331 (36.98%)	123 (13.74%)	168 (18.77%)	895 (100%)
4. My family takes a loan to cover the expense of a family vacation or special event.	136 (14.78%)	147 (15.98%)	72 (7.83%)	565 (61.41%)	920 (100%)

5. My family buys things we don't need so we appear to have money/ look like others.	48 (5.17%)	106 (11.41%)	106 (11.41%)	669 (72.01%)	929 (100%)
6. If your family has a loan, what is the amount in QAR?	Less than 100,000 40 (4.91%) More than500,000But lessthan one million101 (12.41%	More than 100,000 but lessthan 200,00057 (7.0%)More than one million QAR96 (11.79%)	More than 200,000but less than 300,00052 (6.39%) My family doesn't have a loan 392 (48.16%)	More than300,000 But lessthan 400,00041 (5.04%)	More than 400,000 but less than 500,00035 (4.30%)
7. My family has difficulty making our minimum loan payment(s) each month.	59 (12.37%)	83 (17.40%)	84 (17.61%)	251 (52.62%)	477 (100%)
8. My family is not able to pay off our credit card balance in full each month.

I don't have a credit card: 275 (31.0%) | 43 (4.85%) | 53 (5.98%) | 66 (7.44%) | 450 (50.73%) | 887 (100%) |

The results of Challenge 1 reveal that the majority of the participants — (75.68%) — can live comfortably within their monthly household income. Most of them disagreed (69.24%) that they take a loan to cover a family vacation or a special event. While the majority do not see a challenge in living within their income or managing their finances, there is less agreement among the participants (67.48%) about having extra disposable income at the end of the month, having to take out loans for extra expenses, and making the minimum payments for loans taken. These can be challenges for some of the participants' families. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this challenge:

- 9.3% of the participants in the study strongly agreed that, "It is hard for my family to live comfortably on our current income," while 59.0% strongly disagreed.
- 9.0% strongly agreed that, "Managing our finances puts a strain on my family," 55.2% strongly disagreed.

- 30.5% strongly agreed that, "My family always has money left over at the end of the month," while 18.7% strongly disagreed.
- 14.7% strongly agreed that, "My family takes a loan to cover the expense of a family vacation or special event," 61.4% strongly disagreed.
- 5.1% strongly agreed that, "My family buys things we don't need so we appear to have money / look like others," 72.0% strongly disagreed.
- 48.1% of the participants said their family has not taken out a loan for anything.
- 12.3% strongly agreed that, "My family has difficulty making our minimum loan payment(s) each month," while 52.6% strongly disagreed.
- 4.85% strongly agreed that, "My family is not able to pay off our credit card balance in full each month," 50.7% strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 31.0% of the participants said their family does not have a credit card.

Table 10. Challenge 2: Gender considerations

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. People should be treated equal regardless of gender.	737 (78.99%)	127 (13.61%)	34 (3.64%)	35 (3.75%)	933 (100%)
2. The freedom children are given should be determined by age and maturity and not by their gender.	683 (73.44%)	172 (18.49%)	38 (4.09%)	37 (3.98%)	930 (100%)
3. Boys and girls should not be raised in the same way.	617 (66.34%)	162 (17.42%)	62 (6.67%)	89 (9.57%)	930 (100%)
4. Tasks around the house should not be assigned by gender.	386 (41.55%)	230 (24.76%)	155 (16.68%)	158 (17.01%)	929 (100%)
5. A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children.	387 (41.48%)	189 (20.26%)	152 (16.29%)	205 (21.97%)	933 (100%)
6. Some types of work are just not appropriate for women.	525 (56.21%)	262 (28.05%)	72 (7.71%)	75 (8.03%)	934 (100%)

7. Women are capable of making their own decisions about work.	548 (58.86%)	239 (25.67%)	72 (7.73%)	72 (7.73%P	931 (100%)
8. Women are capable about making their own decisions to travel.	192 (20.58%)	234 (25.08%)	184 (19.72%)	323 (34.62%)	933 (100%)
9. Women are capable of making their own decisions about marriage.	424 (45.49%)	260 (27.90%)	113 (12.12%)	135 (14.48%)	932 (100%)
10. Women are capable of making their own decisions about education.	730 (78.16%)	153 (16.38%)	23 (2.46%)	28 (3.00%)	934 (100%)
11. Girls should be protected and watched over by boys.	515 (55.20%)	198 (21.22%)	92 (9.86%)	128 (13.72%)	933 (100%)
12. Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up.	552 (59.29%)	237 (25.46%)	96 (10.31%)	46 (4.94%)	931 (100%)
13. Mothers should work only if necessary.	345 (36.94%)	219 (23.45%)	154 (16.49%)	216 (23.13%)	934 (100%)
14. For many jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women.	403 (43.29%)	227 (24.38%)	142 (15.25%)	159 (17.08%)	931 (100%)

The results of Challenge 2 show strong agreement among participants for equal treatment (92.6%) and freedom of children of both genders (91.93%). In the home, the majority of participants believe that household tasks should be equally divided between genders and that boys and girls should be raised in the same way. However, there is strong agreement that girls should be protected and watched over by boys. In addition, the majority (61.74%) believe that the father's major responsibility should be financial and that mothers should have the most responsibility for rearing the children. The participants were split in their decisions about whether mothers should work. The majority of participants agree that women are capable of making decisions in several areas, however, they are split in the area of traveling alone. In

the area of work, participants strongly agreed that women should make their own decisions about education and work, however, they also agreed that some jobs are not appropriate for women and that for some jobs, it is better to choose men. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this challenge:

- 78.9% strongly agreed that, "People should be treated equal regardless of gender." Only 3.75% strongly disagreed.
- 73.4% strongly agreed that, "The freedom children are given should be determined by age and maturity and not by their gender," 3.9% strongly disagreed.
- 66.3% strongly agreed that, "Boys and girls should not be raised in the same way," though 9.5% strongly disagreed.
- 41.5% strongly agreed that, "Tasks around the house should not be assigned by gender," 17.0% strongly disagreed.
- 41.4% strongly agreed that, "A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for the children," while 21.9% strongly disagreed.
- 58.8% strongly agreed that, "Women are capable of making their own decisions about work," 7.7% strongly disagreed.
- 20.5% strongly agreed that, "Women are capable about making their own decisions to travel," while 34.62% strongly disagreed.
- `45.4% strongly agreed that, "Women are capable of making their own decisions about marriage," 14.4% strongly disagreed.
- 78.6% strongly agreed that, "Women are capable of making their own decisions about education." Only 3.0% strongly disagreed.
- 59.2% strongly agreed that, "Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up," 4.9% strongly disagreed.
- 36.9% strongly agreed that, "Mothers should work only if necessary," 23.1% strongly disagreed.
- 43.2% strongly agreed that, "For many jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women," 17.0% strongly disagreed.

Table 11. Challenge 3: Outlook on divorce:

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. You and your spouse grew apart.	42 (22.83%)	49 (26.63%)	38 (20.65%)	55 (29.89%)	184 (100%)
2.. Presence of physical violence, e.g., hitting.	119 (61.98%)	30 (15.63%)	9 (4.69%	34 (17.71%)	192 (100%)
3. A lack of consideration.	77 (40.53%)	60 (31.58%)	18 (9.47%)	35 (18.42%)	190 (100%)
4. Insults and belittlement.	102 (53.13%)	50 (26.04%)	13 (6.77%)	27 (14.06%)	192 (100%)
5. Marital infidelity.	138 (71.50%)	27 (13.99%)	8 (4.15%)	20 (10.36%)	193 (100%)
6. Spending a lot of time outside the home with friends.	23 (11.98%)	53 (27.60%)	61 (31.77%)	55 (28.65%)	192 (100%)
7. Financial problems.	13 (6.77%)	35 (18.23%)	53 (27.68%)	91 (47.48%)	192 (100%)
8. Lack of responsibility for family matters.	62 (32.29%)	72 (37.50%)	29 (15.10%)	29 (15.10%)	192 (100%)
9. Unhappy with marriage.	63 (33.33%)	57 (30.16%)	37 (19.53%)	32 (16.93%)	189 (100%)
10. Sexual problems.	46 (26.44%)	56 (32.18%)	38 (21.84%)	34 (19.54%)	174 (100%)
11. In-law interference in one's marital relationship.	65 (34.21%)	58 (30.53%)	39 (20.53%)	28 (14.74%)	190 (100%)
12. Infertility (inability to have children).	24 (12.83%)	47 (25.13%)	50 (26.74%)	66 (35.29%)	187 (100%)
13. Psychological issues.	49 (26.92%)	61 (33.52%)	35 (19.23%)	37 (20.33%)	182 (100%)
14. Continuous conflict.	57 (30.16%)	72 (38.10%)	29 (15.34%)	31 (16.40%)	189 (100%)
15. Spousal differences in traditions and customs.	20 (10.58%)	42 (22.22%)	61 (32.28%	66 (34.92%)	189 (100%)
16. Spousal differences in religiosity.	30 (15.87%)	39 (20.63%)	61 (32.28%)	59 (31.22%)	189 (100%)
17. Spousal interference in one's personal development (education, work, etc.).	22 (11.70%)	45 (24.06%)	50 (26.74%)	70 (34.43%)	187 (100%)

The results of Challenge 3 indicate strong agreement among participants for infidelity, insults or belittlement, and physical violence as conditions for divorce, while financial problems and differences in traditions and customs had strong disagreement as conditions for divorce. The idea that you and your spouse grew apart was evenly distributed among participants between agree and disagree as a reason for divorce.

The results of Challenge 3 indicate strong agreement among participants that infidelity (71.5%), physical violence (61.9%), and insults or belittlement (53.1%) are conditions for divorce, while financial problems (47.4%) and differences in traditions and customs (32.2%) had strong disagreement as conditions for divorce. The idea that you and your spouse grew apart received stronger disagreement (29.8% versus 22.8%) among participants as a condition for divorce. Below is a list of detailed statistical description of factors for divorce, ranked by the participants:

- 71.5% strongly agreed that "marital infidelity" is a factor for divorce, while 10.3% strongly disagreed.
- 61.9% strongly agreed that "presence of physical violence, e.g., hitting" is a factor for divorce, while 17.7% strongly disagreed.
- 53.1% strongly agreed that "insults and belittlement" is a factor for divorce, while 14.0% strongly disagreed.
- 40.5% strongly agreed that "lack of consideration" is a factor for divorce, while 18.4% strongly disagreed.
- 34.2% strongly agreed that "in-law interference in one's marital relationship" is a factor for divorce, while 14.7% strongly disagreed.
- 33.3% strongly agreed that being "unhappy with marriage" is a factor for divorce, while 16.9% strongly disagreed.
- 32.2% strongly agreed that "lack of responsibility for family matters" is a factor for divorce, while 15.1% strongly disagreed.
- 30.1% strongly agreed that "continuous conflict" is a factor for divorce, while 16.4% strongly disagreed.
- 26.9% strongly agreed that "psychological issues" are factors for divorce, while 20.3% strongly disagreed.
- 26.4% strongly agreed that "sexual problems" are factors for divorce, while 19.5% strongly disagreed.
- 22.8% strongly agreed that "spouses growing apart" is a factor for divorce, while 29.8% strongly disagreed.
- 15.8% strongly agreed that "spousal differences in religiosity" is a factor for divorce, while 31.22% strongly disagreed.
- 12.8% strongly agreed that "infertility (inability to have children)" is a factor for divorce, while 35.2% strongly disagreed.
- 11.9% strongly agreed that "spending a lot of time outside the home with friends" is a factor for divorce, while 28.6% strongly disagreed.

- 11.7% strongly agreed that "spousal interference in one's personal development (education, work, etc.)" is a factor for divorce, while 34.4% strongly disagreed.
- 10.5% strongly agreed that "spousal differences in traditions and customs" is a factor for divorce, while 32.2% strongly disagreed.
- 6.7% strongly agreed that "financial problems" is a factor for divorce, while 47.4% strongly disagreed

Table 12. Challenge 4: Relationship with your partner

Statement	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. I get pretty discouraged about our relationship sometimes.	59 (9.19%)	153 (23.83%)	99 (15.42%)	331 (51.56%)	642 (100%)
2. My partner often fails to understand my point of view on things.	95 (14.59%)	246 (37.79%)	87 (13.36%)	223 (34.25%)	651 (100%)
3. Whenever I'm feeling sad, my partner makes me feel loved and happy again.	372 (57.50%)	223 (34.47%)	32 (4.95%)	20 (3.09%)	647 (100%)
4. My partner and I spend a good deal of time together in play and recreation.	225 (34.78%)	273 (42.19%)	92 (14.22%)	57 (8.81%)	647 (100%)
5. My partner has too little regard sometimes for our intimate relationship.	40 (6.67%)	101 (16.83%)	125 (20.83%)	334 (55.67%)	600 (100%)
6. There are some serious difficulties in our relationship.	38 (5.91%)	113 (17.57%)	126 (19.60%)	366 (56.92%)	643 (100%)
7. Minor disagreements with my partner often end up in big arguments.	52 (8.00%)	149 (22.92%)	116 (17.85%)	333 (51.23%)	650 (100%)

8. Just when I need it the most, my partner makes me feel important.	420 (64.91%)	199 (30.76%)	15 (2.32%)	13 (2.01%)	647 (100%)
9. Our daily life is full of interesting things to do together.	303 (46.76%)	267 (41.20%)	52 (8.02%)	26 (4.01%)	648 (100%)

The results of Challenge 4 reveal that participants strongly agreed that their partners were helpful in making them feel better and important as well as their relationship providing interest in their daily lives. The highest level of agreement (95.67%) came for **"making partner feel important."** Participants strongly disagreed that their partner had little regard for their relationship or that their relationship had serious difficulties. Participants were mixed in their evaluation of their partner's ability to understand their point of view with 52.38% agreement versus 47.61% disagreement. The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this challenge:

- 9.1% of the family members strongly agreed that, "I get pretty discouraged about our relationship sometimes," 51.5% strongly disagreed.

- 14.5% strongly agreed that, "My partner often fails to understand my point of view on things," while 34.25% strongly disagreed.

- 57.5% strongly agreed that, "Whenever I'm feeling sad, my partner makes me feel loved and happy again." Only 3.0% strongly disagreed.

- 34.7% strongly agreed that, "My partner and I spend a good deal of time together in play and recreation," 8.8% strongly disagreed.

- 6.6% strongly agreed that, "My partner has too little regard sometimes for our intimate relationship," 55.6% strongly disagreed.

- 5.9% strongly agreed that, "There are serious difficulties in our relationship," 56.9% strongly disagreed.

- 8.0% strongly agreed that, "Minor disagreements with my partner often end up in big arguments," 51.2% strongly disagreed.

- 64.9% strongly agreed that, "Just when I need it the most, my partner makes me feel important," 2.0% strongly disagreed.

- 46.7% strongly agreed that, "Our daily life is full of interesting things to do together," 4.0% strongly disagreed.

Challenge 5: Thoughts on programs and services for strengthening families

Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. There is a need for more programs and services that help strengthen families.	565 (61.68%)	191 (20.85%)	71 (7.75%)	89 (9.72%)	916 (100%)
2.. Families that face economic hardships need more support from the government.	685 (74.59%)	159 (17.34%)	29 (3.16%)	45 (4.91%)	917 (100%)
3. Parents should be educated on best parenting practices.	731 (78.86%)	135 (14.45%)	36 (3.88%)	25 (2.70%)	927 (100%)
4. There is a need for substance abuse prevention programs to protect young people.	827 (89.21%)	66 (7.12%)	17 (1.83%)	17 (1.83%)	927 (100%)
5. It is important to educate couples on financial literacy.	778 (83.93%)	125 (13.48%)	9 (0.97%)	15 (1.62%)	927 (100%)
6. Young people should be taught about sexual and reproductive health.	710 (76.67%)	169 (18.25%)	23 (2.48%)	24 (2.59%)	926 (100%

As per the results of Challenge 5 above, there is a strong agreement among participants on all measures about the need for programs and services. These interventions will help to strengthen families in areas including: financial hardships and literacy, parenting practices, substance abuse prevention, and reproductive health. The highest level of agreement and need (96.33%) was for substance abuse prevention, compared to 82.53% for "more programs and services that help strengthen families." The section below provides a list of key statistical comments related to this challenge:

- 61.6% strongly agreed that, "There is a need for more programs and services that help strengthen families," 9.72% strongly disagreed.

- 74.5% strongly agreed that, "Families that face economic hardships need more support from the government," while 4.9% strongly disagreed.

- 78.8% strongly agreed that, "Parents should be educated on best parenting practices." Only 2.7% strongly disagreed.

- 89.2% strongly disagreed that, "There is a need for substance abuse prevention programs to protect young people." Only 1.8% strongly disagreed.

- 83.9% strongly agreed that, "It is important to educate couples on financial literacy," while 1.62% strongly disagreed.
- 76.6% strongly agreed that, "Young people should be taught about sexual and reproductive health." Only 2.5% strongly disagreed.

In a nutshell, the above findings revealed the strengths and challenges of Qatari families according to the analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data collected from the two phases of this study. It clearly presented the strong and weak features of these families. The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to the literature and the Qatari and international contexts. It also discusses these findings in light of the key findings of the qualitative study as regards Qataris families and their strengths and weaknesses.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on 1) the key findings of the study in the areas of family strengths and family challenges, and what these data tell us, and 2) new directions for educational programming, family counseling, and governmental family policy based on the findings.

The reader will remember that the research team grounded their study of family strengths and challenges in the Middle East with a comprehensive literature review focusing on studies of Arab families and on studies of family strengths around the world. With this understanding as a broad context, the researchers then basically started fresh from the very beginning with focus groups and face-to-face interviews in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia, talking with 99 participants in the three countries about the perceptions of their families' strengths and challenges.

They believe this much more time-consuming approach is significantly superior to a relatively common approach, which takes an instrument from a foreign culture, translates it into the language of the host culture, and then back-translates to see if the translation holds. The researchers chose to start fresh on developing instruments out of respect for the cultural and linguistic nuances of Arab cultures in the Middle East and because they wanted to create a genuinely Arab instrument, rather than an easily derived instrument purporting to tap Arab family strengths and challenges. They believe the extra effort was wise and that this approach was sound.

Based on the responses of the 99 participants in the focus groups and interviews from phase one from the three countries (Jordan, Tunisia and Qatar), they constructed an interview schedule tapping strengths and challenges for use with 934 Qatari participants in Qatar.

4.1. Family Strengths

As the reader has seen, after using both qualitative and quantitative research methods the researchers believe there are seven major family strengths among Qatari families:

1. Commitment to the family.

2. Support for each other.

3. Effective communication.

4. Respect for each other.

5. Conveying values and family traditions.

6. Family resilience.

7. Demonstrating love and affection for each other.

In this section, they discuss the highlights of the findings in each family strength. The authors have found that all the Qatari family strengths are closely related to each other, i.e., if a family possesses one of the family strengths, they are quite likely to possess the other strengths. On the basis of several tests of internal reliability and factor analyses, it can even be argued that the many family strengths as broken down in this study can be reduced to one over-arching quality or strength that can be labeled **"positive emotional connection"** or, with equal accuracy, **"love"**. Over many years of research, the authors have seen this happen time and again.

With support from several tests of internal reliability and factor analyses, the researchers also argue that it is reasonable to say that there are seven basic family strengths among Arab families in the Middle East in general, and among Arab families in Qatar in particular. All of the strengths, from their perspective, are of equal importance and cannot be ranked from most important down the line to those strengths that are of somewhat lesser importance. Each of the seven strengths are important in many Arab families.

However, it can also be argued that **"commitment to the family"** is especially important. In essence, a feeling of deep commitment can be seen as the glue that holds a family together. It is an almost critical quality that explains why family members can sacrifice so much for each other.

Strength 1: Commitment to the family. Among their random sample of Qatari families for this research, the strength of commitment to the family is remarkably common as the very high percentages of strong agreement demonstrate, while lack of commitment is noticeably uncommon. As found in other family strength studies, having commitment to the family is an important characteristic of strong families It is exhibited within the family as trust, honesty, dependability, faithfulness and sharing (DeFrain & Asay, 2007c). The qualitative data for Arab family strengths in Qatar pointed out commitment as responsibility and dedication for each other (Doha International Family Institute, 2018). Other studies have shown commitment to the family is deeply rooted in cultural and religious beliefs in this region (Salehi-tali Younes, 2007; Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). While these beliefs have been firmly in place, in the future and as cultural changes impact family life, it will be important for Qatari society to be committed to the family and to stress this throughout the family.

Strength 2: Support for each other. Once again, in the area of family support, very positive responses were predominant, while very negative responses in this area were rare. The qualitative data for Arab family strengths in Qatar identified giving encouragement, sharing, and helping each other as measures of support among family members. Younes (2007) suggests that Arab households access formal social services less because there is extensive informal support within the family. In the Somalian context, a critical strength has been identified by strong kinship bonds within the family with a readiness to meet obligations and provide help (Koshen, 2007). While support exists in many families, there are those who would benefit from outside support that can be provided through social services. Establishing a network of trained professionals to provide medical, therapeutic, rehabilitative, and financial support may be necessary for strengthening families in Qatar.

Family support for each other in the nuclear family was remarkably strong. Family support was not as widespread with the extended family, but still noteworthy:

- 13.33% strongly agreed that, "We are not close to our extended family." On the other hand, 67.1% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Strength 3: Effective communication. Good communication in the family is a quality that is emphasized in all studies of family strengths in the research literature. In this study of family strengths in Qatar, most families believe they do a reasonably good job of communicating effectively with each other, but there is always room for improvement. The qualitative data for Arab family strengths in Qatar revealed that listening, mutual understanding, and transparency were elements of effective communication. Family Strengths studies conducted around the world have also identified good communication as a strength, specifically in areas such as problem-solving, decision making, transmitting cultural values, and bonding (DeFrain & Asay, 2007). Previous studies have revealed how marital communication skills can be effective and act positively with marital satisfaction (du Plooy & de Beer, 2018). While conflict is inevitable in every family because each individual in the family is unique and different, the key is finding effective ways to communicate with each other to resolve these many conflicts. Investing in helping couples develop positive and effective communication can result in healthy and stable marriages. Skills such as active listening and negotiation can be useful for couples and families who are struggling.

Strength 4: Respect for each other. Respect is one of the greatest honors human beings can bestow upon each other. Respect in Qatari families is a critical quality, as the participants in this study were very likely to demonstrate. Al-Barwani and Albeely (2007) report that respect in Arab families remains strong despite the changes to society. Around the world, respect is often identified as a dimension of family strength (DeFrain & Asay, 2007c). In some regions, showing respect is considered a sign of affection as well as respecting each other's endeavors and accomplishments (Nadolu, Nadolu & Asay, 2007). The qualitative data for Arab family strengths in Qatar mentioned statements such as accepting differences and opinions. The importance of maintaining respect within the Qatari family is critical in the culture. While families are crucial in passing on this quality, demonstrating a level of respect in all aspects of society is vital.

Strength 5: Conveying values and family traditions. Part of the cultural strengths identified around the world involve shared cultural meanings. Strong families share these meanings with their members. Sometimes some of the meanings are centered in their lives which only those within the culture can understand (DeFrain & Asay, 2007c). At the same time, there is always social tension between forces of continuity and forces of change. Qatar is both a traditional society and a society in transition, with more contemporary ideas gaining strength. The focus group discussions and subsequent family interviews in Qatar made it very clear that there is tension between the old and the new in some families, but the vast majority of families seem to be handling tensions on the social level relatively well in their own families. Family members talked about tradition and change in the qualitative phase, and as

the quantitative data from 934 participants was examined closely, the conclusions show that social change is causing difficulties for some families. However, the majority of families seem to be finding ways to keep it from being disruptive in their own household and are able to continue to convey values and traditions that have been part of their heritage for centuries. Participants view customs and traditions as the base of strength for Qatari society.

Strength 6: Family resilience. This refers to how families are able to manage stress and crisis effectively when they face upheavals such as political crises, natural disasters, or changing social structures. Previous research addressing resilience in other Arab regions has been identified as overcoming adversity (Younes, 2007), maintaining family cohesion (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007), and negotiating change and recovery (Koshen, 2007). Qatari families report that they are doing well as they work together to solve life's inevitable problems. Qualitative data reveal stories of how Qatari families rose above challenges and hardships they faced and allowed themselves to learn from these experiences to move forward in their lives. Research on family resilience points out that families are stronger when they can not only withstand adversity but rebound and thrive as a result (Walsh, 2016). Helping individuals and families to understand and grow from adverse situations is a vital part of creating strong families.

Strength 7: Demonstrating love and affection for each other. Qatari families told the research team time and again the importance of letting each other know their good feelings toward each other. The qualitative data for Arab family strengths in Qatar show that love is demonstrated by caring, understanding, and respect for family members. Around the world, previous family strengths studies reveal that demonstrating love and affection is accomplished through affirmation of each other, love, affection, care, affinity, and gratitude (DeFrain & Asay, 2007c). Other family strength studies in the region report that love and affection are characterized more by generosity, kind acts, and mutual support than by physical demonstration of affection (Koshen, 2007; Younes, 2007). Demonstrating love and affection is a critical part of human interaction and is important to strengthening family relationships. Previous studies show a strong connection between showing affection and well-being, providing psychological benefits for both the giver and receiver (Bebrot et.al, 2017).

4.2. Family Challenges

In the quantitative study of the challenges Qatari families faced, the researchers focused on five critical issues that emerged from their earlier qualitative research: 1) family finances, 2) gender considerations, 3) their outlook on divorce, 4) the relationship with one's marital partner, and 5) thoughts on family programs and services for strengthening families.

In this chapter, they highlight, one-by-one, what they believe to be the key findings. In addition, they discuss these findings in light of available literature.

Challenge 1: Family finances. It is difficult to generalize when talking about family finances among Qataris, for some appear to be doing very well while others are having considerable difficulty. Roughly half or more of the families report they are doing reasonably well in terms of money management; about one in ten are struggling financially; and the other four in ten are experiencing various levels of financial stress. Qatari qualitative family strengths data show that many participants have concerns about materialism that causes jealousy and competition. Some fear that this has changed family life and that it will negatively affect future generations with unrealistic expectations and social pressure. In contrast, qualitative data from Jordan and Tunisia show economic challenges that focus on financial instability and the ability to ensure a good financial future (Doha International Family Institute, 2018). Previous research on family finances has focused on literacy and behavior, however more recent research shows a connection to family finances and wellbeing, specifically in areas such as anxiety, marital distress, trust, and stability (Dew, 2016). All things considered, this points to opportunities for educational programs in the area of financial management that could be useful and welcomed by a significant proportion of Qatari families.

Challenge 2: Gender considerations. Women's rights and gender roles generate a good deal of controversy around the world today. During the late 20th century, gender equality came to international attention following the United Nations Decade for Women, the Vienna World Conference, and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Many countries around the world cite challenges associated with gender role transition within families (Mberengwa, 2007; Njue et al., 2007; Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007; Medora, 2007; Yoo et al., 2007; Carlo, et.al., 2007; Zubkov, 2007; Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007). In Qatar, a society in transition, there are also a wide variety of opinions on various issues and these differences play out behind closed doors in the family. The qualitative data on Qatari family strengths point out two areas where gender considerations present challenges for families. Societal changes have led to a breakdown in traditions including traditional gender roles. In addition, inequality for women was a challenge that was identified, specifically in areas such as independence and lack of opportunities. Since attitudes regarding gender considerations play out in families, educational programs with discussions on gender roles in families could be helpful.

Challenge 3: Outlook on divorce. According to Jafarian Dehkordi and Amiri (2018), divorce is an international crisis. It is one of the most important health problems worldwide and it affects not only the couple but their children and extended family. Younes (2007) reports that while divorce in the Arab region is significantly lower than the western nations, the divorce rate is increasing. Changes in divorce laws and nonadherence to religious rules has caused this increase in divorce (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). Causes for divorce worldwide vary and include incompatibility, infidelity, substance abuse, and marital abuse. Quantitative data for family strengths in Qatar indicate strong agreement that causes for divorce among Qatari couples are related to specific negative events or behaviors such as infidelity, insults or belittlement, and physical violence. While religious institutions provide accountability and seek to preserve marriage, discussion among couples attending

a marriage enrichment program sponsored by their mosque may be useful as well as programs provided by community centers, family service agencies, or educational institutions.

Challenge 4: Relationship with your partner. Because a strong marriage is often at the heart of a strong family, the researchers felt it was important to focus several questions on the marital relationship. Some of the participants clearly felt that their partnership was experiencing significant difficulty, while the majority felt the relationship was going well. One area of concern was the idea that their partner did not understand their point of view. Similarly, in the qualitative Arab Family Strengths study, conflict in the family and poor communication was identified as a challenge. Participants mentioned that having mutual understanding was essential for a strong family. In the Tunisia data from this study, participants talked about the challenge of making their voice heard (Doha International Family Institute, 2018). While many of the questions can represent problems with communication between partners, it would be especially useful for sparking a discussion among couples in an educational program or in marital therapy. A recent systematic review conducted in Iran found that communication is considered an important factor for marital satisfaction and that being familiar with good communication skills was important in solving problems associated with lack of understanding (Zajeri et.al., 2016).

Challenge 5: Thoughts on programs and services for strengthening families. Results of the quantitative study show that 934 randomly sampled Qatari participants had strong agreement that programs and services are needed, especially those that focus on financial hardships and literacy, parenting practices, substance abuse prevention, and reproductive health. The data suggest that there is strong support among Qataris for educational programs and services to help strengthen families. Previous family strengths studies in the region suggest education (Koshen, 2007) and community collaboration (Younes, 2007) is needed. Copur and Taylor (2018) propose that in any society where rapid social and economic changes are taking place, the development of effective family education programs are needed to recognize the evolution of families. Because services and education should be culture specific and designed to meet the needs of that region, programs should be developed by a coalition of family service programs, educational organizations, and religious institutions in Qatar. Each culture differs in their knowing, thinking, priorities and approaches to view and solve problems. A variety of opportunities to strengthen families through education and family services are discussed in chapter 5.

In this chapter the researchers discussed the key findings of this quantitative study on **"the state of Qatari families: strengths and challenges"** and compared them to findings from international and regional literature and in light of the Qatari context and their study on "Arab Family Strength in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia." This discussion has emphasized the key findings of this study. In the following chapter, they draw key conclusions and make relevant recommendations to further enhance the strengths and overcome the challenges identified in this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Next Steps

- **Research:**

The researchers suggest two logical next steps in the effort to better understand "The State of Qatari Families; Strengths and Challenges," and develop programs to help strengthen families in the nation:

1. Develop and refine the Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI). There is still some work to do on this family assessment instrument until it shines. The QFSI could then spark interest in other Arab nations for development of their own inventories.

2. Develop a plan to bring together key figures in Qatar who can help continue to build a nation-wide network of institutions and organizations to help strengthen families. This group would include representatives from educational organizations, family-service programs, agencies serving women and children, men's groups, religious institutions, the business community, health professions, laypersons, and other representatives from the countless groups that represent and serve families in Qatar.

- **Policies and Programs**:

New Directions for Educational Programming, Family Counseling, and Governmental Family Policy Based on the Findings of the Report on "The State of Qatari Families: Strengths and Challenges"

From past experience in the U.S., China, Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mexico, Scotland, Russia, New Zealand, Kenya, Greece, and other countries, the researchers know that strengths-based ideas can be used in many and creative ways.

For example, teams in the U.S., China, Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mexico, and Mongolia have organized conferences focusing on building family strengths, drawing professionals and laypersons from many different walks of life to talk about how a strengths-based orientation can help inform work with families. Other teams in the U.S., Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, and Mexico have worked on written materials for families from a strengths-based perspective presented in the form of books, booklets, and articles suitable for downloading from websites. Face-to-face workshops for families so that they can better understand their strengths are a popular format. These have been organized and presented by colleges and universities, government programs, and religious institutions. And the mass media is always very interested in family strengths research findings because they are very tired of being criticized for always focusing on what is wrong in the world, rather than what is right.

The different ways these ideas can be used is almost limitless. Each country and culture take the ideas and run with them in their own unique way. Based on what the researchers have seen around the world over the past 40+ years with regard

to family strengths-based programming and delivery systems, it is impossible to predict which directions organizations in Qatar would go in an effort to work together to help strengthen families. The excitement is seeing what kind of synergy develops when you get good people together to talk about families. It is always amazing and emotionally compelling.

Family strengths concepts can be applied in four different types of endeavors: 1) family service programs, 2) family education programs, 3) marital and family therapy, and 4) developing strengths-based family social policy.

Family service programs. When creating family service programs, we one need to keep in mind that:

- Despite all families not being strong, all families have strengths. We need to look for these strengths and find creative ways to build upon them. All families have the initiative to grow and change. One of the first challenges professionals face when working with families is helping families to see the strengths they already actually have. Most often, families are well aware of their problems, but rarely have ever talked about or assessed their strengths. This can prove to be a pleasant surprise for them.

- It is also very important to remember that racism and ethnocentrism have no place in strengths-based programming. International family strengths research has made it quite clear that strengths are remarkably similar from culture to culture. There is no scientific basis for racial or cultural stereotyping. All human groups do this, and from the researchers' perspective this type of behavior is perhaps the most damaging behavior humans engage in, causing endless strife, endless war. The goal would be to help people see that deep down we are all more similar than different.

Family education programs. Many group educational programs for families around the world today take a strengths-based perspective. There are programs in Qatar that support family education such as those provided by AFAF at the RAF organization. RAF provides training and conducts research related to family cohesion and civil society in general. As mentioned below, the Family Consulting Center (Wifaq) provides a package of family educational programs. One of them is the Pre-Marital Program, which DIFI have evaluated and provided insightful feedback and recommendations, and ways for further improving.

A useful approach is, first, to work with the family and assess the family's strengths using a culturally sensitive and specific instruments, such as Qatari Family Strengths Inventory (QFSI). After the family has identified its strengths, they can develop a plan to maintain the important strengths they already have, and a plan to develop family strengths that they would like to enhance. Family education programs traditionally have focused on face-to-face meetings with groups of couples and parents. In the U.S., because families complain of being too busy, there has been an increase in Internet-based family education programs. Written materials and activities to try out at home are provided online, plus chats with other couples and families online are provided as an option.

Marital and family therapy. Similar to family education programs, many marital and family therapists today are developing strategies for strengthening couple and family relationships based on family strengths research. The Wifaq organization may benefit from the results of this research and could host the educational programs proposed above.

Basically, the approach the researchers propose here is to help families find ways to work together to create a better life for themselves. They also recommend seeking the support of marital and family therapists to help family members learn that they are all on the same team, not opposing individuals or teams; and to enable them to see their strengths and how these strengths can be used to be happier together.

Developing strengths-based family social policy. As an example, political dialogue in the U.S. often gets it wrong when it comes to family policy. Our adversarial political system reduces families to two age-old stereotypes:

- The stereotype of the helpless victim family that is tossed about endlessly by a heartless world. This stereotypical family needs to be saved by society, especially by the left-wing political party.
- The stereotype of the lazy and cunning family that lives by stealing other people's tax money through dependence on welfare programs. This family needs to be punished, especially by the right-wing party.

Strengths-based family policy would not use the institution of the family as a political football to kick about. Families are sacred and discussion about families should be done respectfully. A strengths-based family policy would stay out of political fistfights and recognize the reality that most of the problems begin or end in families.

When families create their own problems, they can learn ways to avoid doing this again. Family education programs are especially important in helping families to grow and change.

And when families are overwhelmed by problems outside of their control — war, natural disaster, globalization, and so forth — governments must step in and find solutions that honor families, in all their wonderful diversity, as the basic foundation of all cultures around the world.

Family policy should not be based on adversarial either/or, black-and-white thinking. Family well-being is too important to be used as a political tool.

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APPENDIX A: OTHER PROMINENT FAMILY THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES

The current study has been grounded in the International Family Strengths Perspective, but the research team is well-schooled in several other prominent family theories and perspectives. Seven of these were considered in the development of this perspective:

1. Family Systems Theory.

This especially prominent theory grew out of the general systems theory, which was developed from the biological sciences. According to the family systems theory, when something happens to one family member, all members of that family are affected. It is assumed that the members are part of the group or system and function as a system. Sometimes, of course, family members may be physically present in the family, but not psychologically present and active in the family. And, it is also well known that a family member can be physically absent from the family, but still psychologically present and actively contributing to the family (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 89).

2. Exchange Theory

Focuses on how family members help and support each other through life's difficulties. Exchange theory explains that families continue to exist because family members bring personal resources that can be used to maintain the family unit. Family members may participate in a type of cost/benefit analysis when they feel uncomfortable or unappreciated by other members. One area of concern for this theory is in analyzing the roles of children and dependents in the family, who have less power, and in some ways, less to contribute to family well-being (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 89).

3. Symbolic Interaction Theory

Views families as unique creations of the participants as they spontaneously relate to one another. A challenge for using this framework is that focusing on the uniqueness of family realities lessens the generalizability of research findings (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 89).

4. Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory surfaced as a popular framework in the 1960s and suggested that conflict is natural and expected in any human interaction including the family unit. Unequal power bases result in situations of competition, coercion, and conflict. The application of this theory challenges the view of families as stable and harmonious social units. For this reason, many researchers have avoided using this framework in family research (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 89).

5. The Feminist Perspective

Since the early 1970s, this theory has stressed that the widely used frameworks that describe families are often void of the women's point of view or experiences. The

dictionary defines feminism as a theory focusing on the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. In the field of family studies, it has been argued that even though some men today are offended and threatened by feminist thinking, feminism may have certain benefits for both men and women in family relationships. Some suggest that to be healthy, all human beings need to exhibit a full range of so-called masculine and feminine qualities. This viewpoint encourages men to express their feelings, to share wage-earning responsibilities with their wives, and to focus less on their careers and more on their children. For men, the pressure of being the only wage earner is reduced when both partners are working outside the home. At the same time, working outside the home helps women enjoy an identity separate from their role within the family. It also provides them with independent economic security. Sharing the responsibility for child rearing allows men to participate in their children's development and women to pursue professional and personal interests. When work and power are shared, both partners have more opportunity to develop their full potential (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p.90).

6. Ecological Theory

It relates to the family and began as the ideas from the study of human ecology linked science or biology and the environment. Ecological theory describes the family within the surrounding ecosystem, i.e., the family within the community within the region within the nation within the global community. While this perspective broadens research efforts, it also raises the level of complexity for researchers as they present their findings (Doha International Family Institute 2018, p. 90).

7. Family Development Theory

This theory is solely based in the discipline of family studies, focusing on the changing social expectations unique to each stage of a family's existence. From a traditional perspective, the stages include: courtship and dating; the newlywed stage; early marriage; parenthood; the middle years of marriage. The empty nest stage; the later years, and so forth. The theory works best when considering traditional families. However, when trying to apply the theory to include the considerable diversity in families, this theory becomes problematic. In essence, there are so many different types of families recognized today, it is exceedingly difficult to devise a family development theory that works for all of them (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 90).

APPENDIX B: QATAR FAMILY STORIES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

The following real-life stories which were heard in the qualitative stage (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, pp. 22–29) provide a more in-depth look at the strengths and challenges of Qatari families. They further illustrate the research findings of the focus groups and show in story form how Qatari families use their family strengths to solve difficult problems in the family.

Story 1: Strong pillar and corner stone of the family

A. is a married male, with eight children and seven grandchildren.

He defined the family as **"people living in one house and sharing love, support, and they help each other by all means."** He believes that his children should be living with him in one house. His children refer to him for every issue, even his married sons. If there is any consultation in work, family matters, or business, he is the one who decides and advises.

He even takes care of his grandchildren and always gives his opinion with regard to raising them. He said that, **"This generation is different from his children. My grandchildren are very difficult to raise and stubborn, especially with social media and new technology."** They are spoiled and irresponsible and misbehave. That is why he is taking care of his grandchildren and gives advice to his son to follow the path of the previous generation. He said, **"I always monitor my grandchildren and teach them our traditions and beliefs and how to behave. It is very important to raise a child from a young age. Discipline and behavior, otherwise, when he grows up he will not learn it."** He added, **"I talk to my grandchildren how to sit, talk, greet, eat, dress and behave in front of people. This is my responsibility as a grandfather and the leader of the family."**

His family is very bonded together, their traditions and beliefs are still practiced. He said that his parents told him and his siblings to never be apart or live apart. That is why they are four brothers all of whom live in one house with their children and grandchildren (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 22).

Story 2: Bonding between the families

A. S. is a married male with four children. He faced a problem with raising his youngest son who is on new communication devices such as iPad, iPhone, etc. all the time. Abu did not know how to face this challenge as his son started to misbehave and not study and got lower grades at school. Abu had to seek advice from the rest of the family. Every Friday they have a social gathering, and he told his brothers and children about the problem he was facing. They all agreed that they would prepare a program for his son. They advised him to try as much as possible to be close to his son, interact with him, socialize with him, ask him about his studies and be a friend rather than a father. They told him to try to minimize the use of technological devises as much as possible, try to engage him in school activities, and so forth. This way he could get his son to behave differently. He mentioned that without a

strong bond with his family and brothers, he would not get such advice. He said that not only in parenting issues, but in all issues related to family matters such as business or travel, they always consult with each other and discuss their problems and worries. The gatherings each Friday at the majlis are an important time for the family. They bring all the men together to discuss their problems and worries and to try to solve them (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 23).

Story 3: Education as strength of the family

U. A. is a 58-year-old woman and has a bachelor's degree in Education. She said that education is the family's strength. She lives with her husband and two children and grandchildren. She started her career teaching at primary schools and continued to do so for 17 years. After that she went through some struggle, then started a business from her hobby and was very successful. She believes that she has an educated family and her children have succeeded in pursuing higher education. This is because she and her husband believe that education is a weapon to fight against anything and it will always open doors and endeavors. She said that because of her educated husband and the support she got, she has achieved what she did. Education is an important aspect in the family, and she advises that the next generation should learn to be educated, responsible and committed to the family. (Doha International Family Institute 2018, p. 28).

Story 4: Sacrifice and commitment in the family

U. R. is a married female with two children. She sacrificed her career to take care of her autistic child. She discovered that her child was autistic at three years old, and her life has changed ever since. She had to leave her job and dedicate her life to her child. She suffered in the beginning with the limited services in Qatar and it was a stigma in the family and the community to speak about it. But she said she had to fight for her child. She said,

> **"I had a difficult time in the beginning to accept that my child is autistic. But because of the support of the family and prayers, I had the strength to fight this challenge. I had to stop working and concentrate on my child. I searched for all possible solutions that could cure her. I read books and articles about autism to understand what I was facing until I managed to accept the situation."**

She then had to teach her husband and her mother-in-law how to help take care of her child. She said,

> **"It was a very difficult time at the beginning for the family to accept. It was not an easy task for me to accept that my child is autistic, but I got a lot of support from my husband and my mother-in-law."**

Her father-in-law does not even know that his grandchild is autistic, and she said he was not helpful. Her child is now in a specialized school for children and is developing very well.

She said the most important strengths include communication, the ability to discuss and solve your own problems within the family. Also, to be together, eat together around one table rather than alone, is good for the family and will bond the family always. The critical time that she passed through and the acceptance of her family that her child was autistic was a very challenging issue. She is committed and believes that she will get through this hard time with her family. (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 28).

Story 5: Intergenerational solidarity

A. A. is a married male with six children. His son and grandchild live with him.

He was additionally faced with the challenge of taking care of his in-laws. His wife is the eldest among her siblings and was taking care of her parents. Her mother was sick for a long time, to the extent that she had to travel abroad for treatment. He faced a challenge when his wife had to travel overseas with her parents for treatment. At that time, he said,

> **"I faced many difficulties when my wife went with her parents. I had to sort out the management issues [at home] and raising of the children. It was a hard time for me because my wife used to manage everything in the house. I had to take care of the children and their schooling, homework, and so forth, and that was a new challenge for me."**

He was taking care of his children and the house. He faced a lot difficulty at that time until his wife came back. After that, his in-laws moved in with him so his wife could take care of her parents. His mother in-law died recently. His father in-law still lives with him, and this was a huge plus as his children and grandchildren benefit a lot from the grandfather.

He said, **"It is good to have my father in-law with me, He has a lot of stories and teaches a lot of things to our grandchildren. This is very rare today, especially for this generation where they miss the presence of an old person in the house."** He teaches them the traditions, and they learn from him and hear lots of stories. Because he is with them in the house, all the other relatives like his daughters and sons come and visit him regularly and there is a strong bond between members of the family.

For example, they all eat together with the grandfather and feel the atmosphere of being a family. On Fridays, all the family gather together and meet all the relatives. He is lucky that his brothers live close to him in the same neighborhood, which makes it easy to come together and meet regularly.

Most importantly, he said that taking care of his father-in-law and having a grandfather in the house is an asset to the family. The intergenerational solidarity was clear in his family, and he was happy to have his father-in-law in the house. (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 29).

Story 6: Being a sister and a mother in one family

F. is a single, never married, female who lives with her family. Currently, she is taking care of her sick siblings. She is highly educated and works full-time. She has been taking care of her siblings for the past 11 years. She faces alone the challenge of her siblings' difficulties in life. Her brother was diagnosed with mental illness and needs a lot of support. She complained that she comes home tired, but she has to sit with him and listen to him for hours despite her tiredness. Her compassion and commitment towards her siblings and her family have made her the mother and the sister at the same time.

She sacrifices her life for the sake of her siblings. This is because her mother used to always tell her not be apart and to be together. She feels that her siblings are growing apart and that each one has his/her own world. Her career and her role at home have made her strong and committed to the family.

Despite the support she has from the nurse and the maids, she still faces challenges in making her family happy. Also, since her mother died, there are no gathering on Fridays. Although her stepbrothers always invite them to their house, she said that she feels tired from work during the week and wants to rest. She would love to meet with her other relatives. She would love some change in her life, and to make her family love each other, support each other, and so forth. This is diminishing in her family because of the new rhythm in life and because of her career and work. They only get together during Ramadan (fasting month), and she feels very bad as it is getting less every time (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 29).

Story 7: Distribution of tasks in the family

A.M. is married and his wife works full-time. He defined the family as the core of the community and the source of a healthy community. He said his responsibilities increased after marriage. Demands are increasing from his immediate and extended family. This made him think that he needed to adjust his lifestyle. He agreed with his wife about household division of labor. He is responsible for dropping his children off to school and collecting them from school. He is in charge of making sure that the entire family eats together.

This is very important to him, and he said, **"It is important for a family to sit at one table. I do my best to eat with my children every day because this is the time where I see them and I speak to them."**

If there is anything needed for the house, he is responsible for bringing it from the market. His wife is responsible for the management of the house, and he takes care of anything outside the house.

He is the eldest among his siblings and his siblings listen to him. He makes sure that all his brothers come on Fridays to meet their parents. This is a day where they all meet as a family, gathering together, and to see each other. He said that no excuse can be given for not coming unless someone is travelling. For him, Friday is an important family day and especially for the children, as they play together and get to know their cousins.

He keeps Saturdays for his own family where they go out to eat together and the children play. **"Communication and discussion among my wife and children are very important to me and I value this skill and I find it very important as it makes things easier."** (Doha International Family Institute 2018, p. 31).

Story 8: Challenge in parenting

U. H. is a 37-year-old female, who works full time and has three children. She lives with her husband's family in the same house. She is happy about living with her in-laws, but she also says there are pros and cons when it comes to parenting and raising her children.

The one issue which she fears in raising her children, is with social media and using the iPad and mobile phones. She said,

> **"I am worried about my children using the iPad a lot. Today's children use it very frequently and I, as a mum, am scared about what they see and what they play or follow. It is uncomfortable for me and my husband and we face lots of challenges with our children using the iPad. One time they broke it, and we got a new one for them. Then again, they broke it and after that we made a rule that they will only use it on the weekend. I give it to them on Friday and take it back on Saturday. But even then, I have to monitor what they see. They are also not allowed to use it the whole day. The children become addicted to this device, and it is a big problem for parents to monitor."**

She is worried about the issue, as it affects the behavior of the children. So, she tried to limit the use of the iPad on certain days so that she can reduce the impact on her children. But still she said that the issue is not resolved, because her mother in-law has a different approach to raising children. The children are demanding and spoiled when they live with their grandparents:

> **"My mother in-law spoils my children. She allows them anything they want, and I struggle with this issue a lot. That is the problem living with the in-laws. My in-laws have different ways of raising children as they are from a different generation, and raising children this day is not the same as in the old times. We have to be careful and supervise the children. So I always struggle with my in-laws, but I try to tell them that we have to do it this way or that way as it is not good for the children. Sometimes my mother in-law understands me and does as I say, but sometimes not."**

Another problem occurred and she said,

> **"One day my twins came home saying they wanted a mobile phone to use at school. I told them they did not need a mobile phone as they were young. They disagreed in the beginning but when their father and I explained that they did not need one by telling them that it is not useful at school they were convinced."**

She said the problem is that, **"The children see each other at the school and get influenced and they want to copy their friends."** Parenting is an issue and a major problem for U. H. as she is worried about the impact of social media and how to deal with this problem.

But she said that living with her in-laws also gives her a lot of support, as she experienced one time when her youngest son was very sick and she was in the hospital the whole week. During that time, her in-laws and uncles took care of her oldest kids very well and she was not worried at all when she was in the hospital. At times like this she said, **"I am glad that I am living with my in-laws because they took them to school and took good care of them as I could not come to the house every day. I had to stay with my youngest child at the hospital."** This is a strength in the family, she said.

Another strong point in the family **"is being supportive and helpful in sickness, death, and marriage. In marriage we support each other by dividing the workload. In death we stay with the family and sometimes takes shifts between us. In sickness all the family supports me and I do not feel lonely."** Those are strong points that she feels are important for her and common in all Qatari families (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 31).

Story 9: Supporting each other, hand in hand

A.M. is in his 30s, married and has three children. He lives with his parents and siblings. All together there are 15 adults, not counting the children. They live in a big house and their father is the head of the house.

He talks with his father about business, marriage, parenting, and so forth. He said, **"My father is the one who advises all of us in anything that we need to do. If we want to start any business, we have to take his advice and do as he says. This is because my father has the expertise and knowledge of things and is always right."**

He said that the family is everything to him. Living with his family gives him a lot of support, and a sense of cohesion with each other. One time, he said his brother lost a lot of money. So **"we raised the issue with our father, and we all supported my brother until he managed to get through the problem. Supporting each other is very important in our family and we always stand by each other."**

He said that supporting each other includes many other factors, such as death, marriage, sickness, literally all the difficult circumstances. He said that in death they support each other by taking care of all the food preparation. In marriage, he said they give money as contributions or gifts. In sickness, he said they have to visit the sick person regularly, so the individual does not feel alone.

The issue of support and cohesion is extended further to advice for raising the children and taking care of them. He said, **"My father teaches my children how to behave and how to sit and talk with adults. This is important because this generation needs discipline and an attitude toward learning. The old generation, like my father, are the ones who can teach our children the traditions and values of our society."**

His father teaches all of them — not just the children — to rely on him for everything as he is the leader of their family. Even if they're married, they still rely on him and take his advice. He thinks that the next generation needs this advice from older people, as they are the source of knowledge and expertise. He said that education in the schools is not like in their times. The child does not know how to speak the Arabic language well. He would like to see a change in the education system so that the children can learn the Arabic language better than the way they are speaking it now. He said that this is not Arabic language as it was taught in the past.

He has a calm personality and said that raising children in the big house requires patience, because all the children play together and sometimes fight with each other. He said, **"I try to resolve the problems between the children before they escalate and becomes bigger problems between the parents. I am a patient and calm person, and I don't like to interfere unless it is asked of me to take action."** Above all, he said that their family is still very cohesive and supporting of each other (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 34).

Story 10: Challenges for youth in the family

U. H. is a single female working full time and living with her parents and siblings. Two of her brothers live with them in the house and the others live away from them.

She said that as they grew older, they tended not to see each other as often. She said that each one is busy with their own thing and they do not see each other often as when they were younger. She said,

> **"I come from work at 4 o'clock and my other brothers and father come at different times. It is becoming hard to see each other at one meal. We see each other in the evening when we meet in front of the TV to watch a program. At this time, my father comes and sits with us and we see each other. It is becoming hard to see each other and that makes the cohesiveness between the members of the family less. But still on Friday and Saturday, we have to meet all together and be in the house. This is obligatory and on this day we see each other."**

She faces another problem as a single female, which is travelling or working or driving. She said that she has to get permission from her parents to travel and sometimes she can face difficulty in convincing her father. She said,

> **"My parents were against this, but I convinced them and, in the end, they agreed. This is because our society is conservative and because I am still single, they fear for my reputation. In the end, I learned how to drive after several discussions and persuasion."**

She has a strong character and among her siblings she is diplomatic and flexible in taking actions when needed. But the challenge of being single in a conservative society makes her uncomfortable sometimes (Doha International Family Institute, 2018, p. 35).

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