Article

Exploring the Nuances of Emirati Identity: A Study of Dual Identities and Hybridity in the Post-Oil United Arab Emirates

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Abstract: In the face of globalization and diversity in the United Arab Emirates, the post-oil generation of Emiratis face unique challenges in navigating their cultural and national identities. Previously published research and scholarly works have engaged in complex discourse around Emirati identities, describing them as a population with similar genealogical backgrounds, ancestry, history, and cultural values. However, the element of heterogeneity among Emiratis remains highly under-examined. This research paper will examine the experiences of Emiratis with dual identities in the UAE, investigating their perceptions, attitudes, and narratives on being labeled as the "other" by their compatriots; exploring the spaces where hybrid Emiratis, locally known as "halfies", choose to reveal and conceal their multiplicity. In order to examine this complex socio-cultural phenomenon, semi-structured interviews with twenty Emiratis with twin identities were employed for this empirical study. The examination of the interviews uncovered the difficulties that individuals with mixed heritage encounter, as well as their strategies for overcoming these obstacles in order to find acceptance in a society that values a shared national identity. The research findings contribute to the scholarship of Emirati identity construction.

Keywords: Emirati identity; national identity; heterogeneity; multiplicity; identity construction; spaces; halfies; othering

1. Introduction

Dual-identity Emiratis have long been a topic of discussion and introspection within Emirati communities (Almazroui 2021). Although the prevailing explanation for this phenomenon has been that Emiratis use hybrid public–private spaces to "activate" or "mute" their identities, academic literature on this topic is scant. While scholars studying the Gulf region have acknowledged the diversity of foreign workers (Forstenlechner 2010; Dutt et al. 2023; Jureidini 2005), little attention has been paid to the experiences of Emiratis with dual identities. For the purpose of this study, the researchers decided to define dual-identity Emiratis as Emirati nationals who also have non-Emirati lineage or non-Emirati heritage. In this context, having non-Emirati lineage means that their ancestors were naturalized citizens or originated from outside the Emirati community. Lineage can be a crucial aspect of identity, as it connects individuals to their historical roots and cultural heritage, providing a sense of continuity and shared history. Conversely, heritage represents the intangible aspects of one's identity, including language, customs, rituals, and shared values. Therefore, in the context of this study, Emiratis with non-Emirati heritage may have been exposed to and influenced by different cultural practices and norms from their non-Emirati family members (in the case of most respondents, refer to their mothers), leading to a more diverse and complex sense of identity.

This study uses the narratives of twenty Emiratis from across the United Arab Emirates to demonstrate that modern Emirati society is not homogeneous, but rather as diverse as the numerous nationalities residing in the country, including differences in language, food, religion, and way of life. This research adds nuance to our understanding of the reasons and circumstances under which Emiratis with dual identities transition from being "full Emiratis" to "halfies" through the accounts of the interviewees (Halfies are Emiratis with multiple identities). This study contributes to the expanding body of literature on Emirati identity formation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Identity

Identity, as a complex and multifaceted concept, has been a subject of exploration among various sociologists and theorists. Erik Erikson defined identity as the sense of continuity and coherence of an individual's self across time and situations, emphasizing its formation during adolescence through the integration of social roles and personal attributes (Erikson 2017). Charles Horton Cooley introduced the "looking-glass self", positing that identity is shaped through interactions with others and the reflections of one's self in society's eyes (Cooley 1902). George Herbert Mead contributed to understanding identity through his concept of the "self", suggesting that it emerges via social interaction and role-taking, shaped by societal expectations and norms (Mead 1934). Moreover, Judith Butler, a postmodern feminist theorist, focused on identity's performative nature, asserting that it is a continuous and socially constructed performance, particularly evident in her work on gender performativity. Butler highlighted the reinforcement of cultural norms and expectations through repetitive acts and gestures (Butler 2017). Additionally, Stuart Hall, emphasized "identity as a process", contending that it evolves in response to historical, social, and political contexts, with representation and discourse playing significant roles in its formation (Hall 2020). Lastly, Pierre Bourdieu explored identity in relation to social class and cultural capital, suggesting that individuals construct their identities based on their habitus, which encompasses internalized dispositions and preferences shaped by their social background and experiences (Bourdieu 2017). This diverse array of conceptualizations underscores the evolving nature of identity as a central theme in sociology and related disciplines, with ongoing research continuously enriching our understanding of its intricate nature.

The topic of identity in the Gulf Nations, particularly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), presents a highly complex subject matter (Maitner and Stewart-Ingersoll 2016). While numerous studies have been conducted on identity in the region, the majority of these investigations tend to focus on the larger population groups, which is not directly applicable to the UAE due to its unique demographic composition. The UAE's local population, consisting of Emiratis, accounts for only 11% of the total population, making it crucial to recognize the distinctive nature of Emirati identity within the broader Gulf context. Consequently, the definition and exploration of Emirati identity remain ongoing and challenging topics among contemporary researchers. It is not uncommon to encounter sources that treat identity in the UAE as a generalized Gulf concept, potentially overlooking the specific complexities and nuances inherent to the Emirati identity. Therefore, in order to comprehensively understand the multifaceted nature of identity in the UAE, it is imperative for scholars to acknowledge and address the distinctive sociocultural dynamics that shape Emirati identity while avoiding broad generalizations that might oversimplify this intricate subject.

Following their independence from colonial powers, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states embarked on a project of rewriting their histories, often mediated by gatekeepers with interests in maintaining an image of stability, affluence, and security (Al-Rasheed 2013). In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this has resulted in a common misconception that all Emiratis share similar ancestry, history, and cultural values (Potter 2014). However,

the reality is that Emirati society has always been diverse, with significant contributions from Africans, Persians, Indians, and other ethnic groups (Akinci 2018; Al Mutawa 2016).

2.2. Identity Accumulation and Social Identity Theory

Identity accumulation and social identity theory are crucial frameworks for understanding the complexities of Emirati identity formation and the challenges faced by individuals with dual identities or hybrids.

Individuals establish several identities based on their social circumstances and associations. This implies the accumulation of both tribal and national identities for Emiratis (Sabban 2018; Cárdenas et al. 2021). This study acknowledges that Emiratis frequently have strong tribal affiliations based on their family histories, while also embracing a broader national identity as citizens of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These distinct identities coexist and intertwine, influencing the self-perception and social relationships of the individuals.

Social identity theory, pioneered by Tajfel and Turner (2004), offers a useful framework for comprehending the formation and negotiation of these dual identities. According to this theory, individuals derive a significant portion of their identity from the groups they belong to. In the context of Emiratis, tribal and national identities serve as essential social categories through which individuals create a sense of belonging, pride, and loyalty with their community.

2.3. Construction of Emirati Identity

A group of people said to Sheikh Zayed, the founding father of the UAE: "80% of your population is non-native". To this, his highness responded: "The blessings are from Allah, the wealth is from Allah, the creation is Allah's, and the land belongs to Allah, so whoever comes to live in this land, he is welcome (Saif 2017)".

The concept of a single "Emirati identity" was first institutionalized in 1971 by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE. Sheikh Zayed faced the challenge of uniting the disparate and sometimes fractious emirates under a common banner, which he accomplished by promoting the slogan "one nation, one people, one identity" (Kazim 2000). This new national identity was meant to create a collective sense of belonging and assert the new state's independence from Western powers.

Advocating ethnic, religious and cultural solidarity was necessary for maintaining co-existence and national cohesion of the new state (Al Mutawa 2016). Thus, while the concept of a single Emirati identity has been promoted by the state since its independence, it has always been a dual identity, encompassing both a national identity and the individual identities of its diverse population (Al-Rasheed 2013).

Construction of Emirati identity is arguably one of the most politicized themes in literature (Picton 2010). Existing scholarly research on identity construction has either "Arabized" or "Persianized" the region's past. Native intellectuals such as Rima Sabban and Rana Al Mutawa have highlighted the Gulf governments' efforts to build a unified national identity through homogenizing the population (Al Mutawa 2016; Sabban 2018). Multiple and diverse Emirati ethnic groups, according to Al Mutawa, pose a challenge to the state, which has been pushing a singular identity for all UAE passport holders. Quoting Al Mutawa, "It is likely that cultural homogeneity is promoted because local diversity is seen as an obstacle to loyalty to the state. While tribal affiliations pose some challenges for GCC states, ethnic and cultural diversity may be seen as even more problematic" (Al Mutawa 2016). This assertion underscores the argument that a unified identity is considered crucial for maintaining regional and global stability. Nonetheless, cultural variety among local residents reveals that "a portion of the nation's past is non-Arab and contradicts the narrative of a common culture and heritage" (Akinci 2018; Al Mutawa 2016).

Ledstrup (2017) investigates the concept of Emirati identity and its relationship with social interaction in Ras Al Khaimah in his paper. Ledstrup argues that Emirati identity is a multifaceted and fluid construct shaped by a range of variables, including history, culture,

language, and religion. He further explained the influence of social interaction on Emirati identity, emphasizing that social networks play a crucial role in developing both individual and collective identities (Ledstrup 2017).

2.4. Tribalism as a Marker of Lineage and Its Sociopolitical Influence

Tribal identity has, in an unanticipated turn of events, played a crucial role in sustaining national cohesion and loyalty among the ruling families of the Arabian Peninsula. This phenomenon is intrinsically linked to the rentier character of these states, whose abundant oil wealth enables them to provide generously for their citizens (Freer and Al-Sharekh 2021). As a result, the state has assumed the distributive duties formerly held by tribes, a significant step towards consolidating its authority. Tribalism remains politically and socially pertinent in the region despite this shift (Freer and Al-Sharekh 2021). Scholars such as Mehran Kamrava contend that kinship, oil, and religion have converged to produce a ubiquitous "tribal ideology" that permeates institutions and practices across the Arabian Peninsula (Kamrava 2012). This tribal ideology is not overtly criticized, but it has the potential to challenge monarchical authority by emphasizing the importance of ascriptive identity. In the Arabian Peninsula, tribal markers not only indicate social status but also proximity to the governing family, making them an intrinsic part of social life (Ibn 2015).

Understanding the connection between tribalism and contemporary life in nation-states has advanced significantly in the existing literature (Freer and Al-Sharekh 2021). As Freer and Al-Sharekh aptly note, "through elections, National Day celebrations, and the social prerequisites by which access to the state and its resources is achieved, individuals are increasingly called upon to express and utilize the consanguineal linkages of tribe" (Freer and Al-Sharekh 2021). This underscores the role of civic rituals such as elections and National Day celebrations as platforms for reinforcement of cultural unity through the expression of national pride but also encourages citizens to align themselves with the collective identity of the nation. These activities highlight the consanguineal ties of tribes more and more, providing a framework for establishing and enhancing social authority. Within the context of Emirati hybridity, clans organize and classify the otherwise homogeneous citizen populations. Tribal identity has become a marker of identity rather than a way of life, becoming intertwined with national heritage and bolstering the national state's authority (Alexander and Mazzucco 2021a). Tribalism is used to reaffirm the historical lineage of governing families in newly independent states, connecting them to the pre-oil era of the Arabian Peninsula. This connection to authenticity and heritage enables the selective exclusion from citizenship privileges and benefits of certain segments of the resident population, particularly substantial expatriate communities (Freer and Al-Sharekh 2021). It is worth noting however that in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), recent amendments to citizenship laws have been introduced, allowing expatriates to acquire naturalization (Alexander and Mazzucco 2021b).

2.5. Exploring Spaces and Contemporary Discussions on Emirati Identity

The concept of "spaces" extends beyond physical locations and encompasses social contexts, where individuals have platforms to express themselves and reveal their hybridity or dual identities. These spaces serve as important arenas for identity negotiation, self-presentation, and the exploration of multiple facets of one's social existence. In this section, we will discuss the sociological understanding of spaces and their significance in the context of self-expression and hybrid identities.

The interplay between identity and social space has been a subject of scholarly investigation. Social spaces, such as organizations, communities, and online platforms, provide individuals with opportunities to express themselves and renegotiate their identities. These spaces act as arenas where individuals can navigate their social environments, interact with others, and engage in various forms of self-expression. Erving Goffman's seminal work on the presentation of self emphasizes the performative nature of identity in social settings (1959). Goffman argues that individuals strategically utilize different spaces, such as front

stage and backstage, to present different aspects of their identity and manage impressions (Goffman 1949). Social spaces provide individuals with the opportunity to craft their self-presentation, showcasing specific facets of their identity that align with the expectations of that particular space. Hybrid identities, characterized by the blending of multiple cultural or social influences, emerge within spaces of cultural encounter (Brah 2005). These spaces offer individuals the freedom to explore and express their hybrid identities, highlighting the complexity and fluidity of contemporary social identities. Such spaces serve as sites for individuals to negotiate the diverse cultural elements that contribute to their identities and find avenues for self-expression.

On the subject of spaces, several platforms paved the way for discussions on Emirati identity. A viral TikTok video featuring nine young Emirati women sparked intense online debate surrounding the definition and characteristics of an Emirati. Posted online on 28 August 2022, coinciding with Emirati Women's Day, the video prompted discussions about the evolving nature of Emirati identity. In the video, one woman expressed that the identity of an Emirati woman is still being defined and remains a work in progress. The women showcased diverse traits, including speaking in English, non-traditional Muslim clothing, and body piercings, with a shared belief that being Emirati allows for personal freedom and self-expression. However, the video faced online criticism, with some expressing disapproval of the women's physical appearance and their presumed representation of Emiratis. Calls for legal action emerged, alleging national misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Emirati personhood. The video's impact extended beyond online spaces, becoming a prominent topic of discussion in offline spaces as well.

Following the heated debate on who represents an Emirati, Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a retired Emirati professor of Political Science, wrote an article in CNN Arabia entitled: "Who is an Emirati? What is fixed and shifting in the national identity?" (Abdulla 2022). He notes that the current generation has a different way of identifying themselves. The Emirati youth today are more diverse than the former generation. They are confident, well-exposed and are polyglots. Therefore, he adds: "An Emirati with a different taste, attitude, habits and appearance is no less Emirati than his or her compatriots. An Emirati has no superiority over other Emirati except by loyalty". All Emirati share the same father—Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan—the founding father of the UAE and all Emiratis celebrate their birthday on December 2 of every year. Professor Abdulla concluded that the concept of Emirati is flexible today as long as the youth hold tightly to their cultural and religious values, such as respect and tolerance. Replying to Professor Abdulla, Aisha Abdulla Al Noaimi wrote an article in Al Khaleej newspaper with the title: 'Identity.. the wrong question' (Al Noaimi 2022). She critiqued Abdulla's mere question of 'who is an Emirati?' In a public platform he stated his question is inconsistent with the State's policy which emphasizes tolerance and acceptance of others. Such a controversial and unconventional question by a renowned figure would create friction among the Emirati society, she said. Instead of focusing on who is an Emirati and who is not, she noted that the Emirati community should divert their attention to the challenges the Emirati identity is facing today.

In an article titled "Emirati Identity, the past, present and future" by Nasser Al Sheikh (Al Sheikh 2022) for CNN Arabia, he emphasizes the need to preserve Emirati national identity through the union language of Arabic, Islamic values, and ancestral heritage. Al Sheikh espouses: "Our national identity is at stake due to the wave of globalization and digitalization". Habib Al Mulla, a UAE lawyer, contributes to the identity discourse, highlighting the challenges posed by the Arab world's fascination with the West (Habib 2022). Al Mulla echoes Al Sheikh's emphasis on the importance of the Arabic language and adherence to the Islamic faith in defining Emirati identity.

2.6. Representation, Unifying and Distinguishing Factors

In contemporary Emirati society, the representation of hybrid Emiratis plays a significant role in understanding the complexity of identity formation. As globalization, migration, and cultural exchanges continue to shape societies, Emiratis with mixed heritage

or experiences find themselves navigating multiple identities within their social context. The representation of hybrid Emiratis provides insights into the fluidity and diversity of Emirati identities, challenging traditional notions of a homogenous national identity. These individuals often incorporate elements from various cultural backgrounds, forging unique identities that are influenced by both Emirati heritage and the cultures they are connected to. This process of identity negotiation (Swann 2005) allows hybrid Emiratis to navigate the complexities of their multiple identities and find spaces for self-expression and self-identification. Representation highlights the dynamic nature of culture, where individuals actively engage in the blending and remixing of cultural elements, creating new expressions of identity. In parallel, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for such representation. Dedicated Facebook and Instagram pages serve as spaces for individuals to share their stories and lived experiences related to dual identities within Emirati society.

"*Half Emirati*", a documentary directed by Amal Al-Agroobi (Alagroobi Films 2016) delves into the social complexities and challenges faced by individuals who are the offspring of a mixed union between an Emirati and a non-Emirati. Through the stories of hybrid Emirati nationals, the documentary sheds light on what it means to be considered "half" in a society where identity through lineage holds significant cultural value. The documentary examines the societal expectations placed on these individuals and the challenges they face in being accepted into the culture to which they are expected to belong. Through their personal experiences and narratives, viewers gain insight into the struggles of navigating cultural and linguistic differences, as well as the impacts of discrimination and prejudice. An interview posted by The National News (2013) showcased three filmmakers including Al-Agroobi, who not only experienced the complexities of their nature as hybrids but also attempted to shed light on the matter through their films.

Another short film directed by Ahmad AlTunaiji demonstrates the struggles of a half Emirati. In the 2017 short film "Arasian," the story unfolds to depict the challenges faced by Khalifa, a 14-year-old half-Emirati, in his pursuit of acceptance. Khalifa grapples with concealing his half-Filipino identity from his Emirati peers, going to great lengths to keep it hidden. His communication with his Filipina mother is mediated through his younger sister, and he requests his mother to drop him off at the school's back entrance to avoid being seen by anyone. Within the school, Khalifa covertly befriends a Filipina cleaner. However, when the bullies at school uncover his secret, Khalifa is confronted with a pivotal decision that forces him to navigate the complexities of his dual identity and the consequences of revealing his true self.

The fear of being othered and ostracized for having different cultural backgrounds is a major theme in discussions concerning identity particularly in the Gulf region (Walia 2021).

Diener and Hagen (2018) have provided valuable insights by classifying the process of identity construction into centripetal and centrifugal forces, casting light on the intricate dynamics at play. Centripetal forces comprise various characteristics that enable individuals to develop a sense of belonging within a particular social setting. Typically, these characteristics include a person's personal history, tribal affiliations, and geographic location (Diener and Hagen 2018). These factors serve as unifying elements that cultivate a sense of unity and shared identity among individuals in a specific community. For instance, individuals may use their ancestry, cultural traditions, and local customs to forge connections and foster a sense of community. These centripetal forces can provide individuals with a framework for understanding themselves and their position in a broader social context.

On the other hand, centrifugal forces are characteristics that distinguish individuals from others, setting them apart and sometimes instilling a sense of superiority or exclusivity (Diener and Hagen 2018). These forces can both be innate and acquired. Inherent attributes refer to qualities that individuals possess by birth, such as physical appearance or biological characteristics, which may contribute to their individuality. Acquired attributes, on the other hand, are acquired or cultivated characteristics that individuals adopt or develop to set themselves apart from others. These attributes can include education, affluence,

language proficiency, and even cultural practices. Centrifugal forces play a significant role in the formation of individual identities, enabling people to assert their uniqueness or social standing in relation to others.

The interplay between centripetal and centrifugal forces in the construction of social, physical, and spatial identities is dynamic and multifaceted. Depending on factors such as cultural norms, historical contexts, and personal experiences, the significance and influence of these forces can vary. Societal and ambient factors can also influence the relative importance of centripetal and centrifugal forces. In certain situations, centripetal forces may predominate, nurturing a robust sense of collective identity and belonging within a community. This is especially true of closely linked cultural or indigenous groups, where shared history and geographical proximity contribute to a cohesive social fabric.

In societies characterized by diversity or hierarchical structures, centrifugal forces may have a stronger influence. In such situations, individuals may endeavor to assert their distinctive qualities in order to acquire recognition or navigate social hierarchies. This can lead to the emergence of distinct subcultures, social fragmentation, and the perpetuation of inequality. It is crucial to recognize that the interaction between these forces is not fixed or predetermined, but rather is shaped by historical, cultural, and contextual factors.

The relationship between social, physical, and spatial identities is a complex and ever-changing phenomenon, to conclude. Diener and Hagen's (2018) classification of identity construction into centripetal and centrifugal forces provides a framework for comprehending how individuals navigate social environments. The interaction between these forces affects the formation of identities, either through a sense of belonging and shared characteristics or through differentiation and distinction. By studying and comprehending these dynamics, we can gain valuable insights into the complex tapestry of human identity and its manifestations in society.

3. Materials and Method

The authors employed a qualitative research approach to examine the phenomenon of dual identity among Emiratis. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences. The sample was purposefully selected to include 20 Emiratis who self-identify as having dual cultural backgrounds (as presented in Table 1). This sample selection approach ensured that the participants had direct experience with the phenomenon of dual identity. The interviews were conducted in person and in both Arabic and English. The interviews were then transcribed and translated to English for analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data, which involved identifying patterns and themes in the participants' responses to the questions. This method enabled the researchers to identify and interpret the various ways in which the participants experienced and made sense of their dual identities. Overall, the utilization of thematic analysis in conjunction with the semi-structured interviews provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the experiences of dual-identity Emiratis. Sample interview questions included:

1. How would you define your sense of identity? How do you see yourself in relation to your cultural background and upbringing?
2. How do you believe your two identities have influenced your life and experiences in the UAE? Do you believe that your identities have afforded you benefits or disadvantages in society?
3. When did you expose your dual identity to someone who was not a member of your family? How did they respond, and how did their reaction make you feel?
4. From your perspective, what do you believe the UAE society can do to better support and embrace individuals with dual identities?
5. How do you feel about your dual identities? Do you consider them a source of pride, confusion, or something else entirely?
6. In your view, where do negative attitudes towards dual identities come from? Do you feel that these attitudes are changing over time?

7. What hinders you from revealing your other identity?
8. What do you think can be done to normalize the subject of dual identities?
9. How do you negotiate and reconcile the various cultural backgrounds that comprise your dual identity? Which traditions or habits do you believe are particularly essential to preserve?
10. Do you feel comfortable discussing your dual identity with foreigners and expats? What is the rationale, or why not? What do you generally say when asked about your background or ethnicity?

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Characteristic		Value
Gender	Female	16 (80%)
	Male	4 (20%)
Age	21–30	5 (25%)
	31–40	15 (75%)
Profession	Employed	16 (80%)
	Unemployed	4 (20%)
Designation	Private Sector	6 (30%)
	Government Sector	10 (50%)
Emirate	Abu Dhabi	14 (70%)
	Dubai	5 (25%)
	Ras Al Khaimah	1 (5%)
Other identity (non-Emirati)	Indian	7 (35%)
	Filipino	3 (15%)
	British	2 (10%)
	Omani/Zanzibari *	2 (10%)
	Kuwaiti/Saudi *	1 (5%)
	Thai	1 (5%)
	Moroccan	1 (5%)
	Egyptian	1 (5%)
	Lebanese	1 (5%)
	Indonesian	1 (5%)

* Emiratis who have more than 2 cultural backgrounds.

Initially, 26 individuals were contacted for the interview; however, 6 declined due to personal reasons—one being the perceived sensitivity of this study—while some backed out due to scheduling conflicts. Interview recordings were transcribed and, in cases where Arabic was used as a medium, translated by the primary author. To uphold the principle of confidentiality for research participants, aliases were employed for individuals who opted for anonymity during the interviews. Conversely, the real names of respondents were mentioned only upon obtaining their explicit consent for disclosure. Both authors identified themes using a six-step process: (1) familiarizing themselves with the data, (2) developing initial codes, (3) scanning for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) preparing the report (Clarke et al. 2015). The construction of overarching themes, subthemes, and subtheme components resulted from the examination of emerging codes. Both authors contributed to the formulation of initial codes and themes. The data were cross-checked throughout all phases to ensure their accuracy and reliability.

4. Results and Discussion

As previously mentioned, the authors deployed thematic analysis to analyze the data gathered. This was done by categorizing key words or phrases that appeared in the interviewees' statements. The main themes that emerged had underlying subthemes that encapsulated the sentiments of the research participants and their individual circumstances (as presented in Table 2).

Table 2. Themes and Subthemes analysis.

Themes	Subthemes
Attitudes towards diversity	• Being othered • Bullying and discrimination
Mastery of the Emirati dialect	• Compensatory mechanism for physical traits • Identity Affirmation
The role of family and community in shaping identity	• Acknowledgement of mother's role in shaping one's sense of self and harmonizing identities • Father's last name and Emirati family dynamics • Societal requisites to belong
Cultural hybridity in professional and social settings	• Advantages of having mixed heritage at work • Disadvantages of being found out
"Spaces" or places to hide or reveal one's hybridity	• Workplace • School/University • Creative spaces

4.1. Theme 1: Attitudes towards Diversity

Theme 1 demonstrates the various attitudes experienced by the respondents where two subthemes are identified: (1) being othered and (2) bullied and discriminated against based on their circumstance as hybrid Emiratis. Respondents have identified instances where they were unaware of their distinction in society until it was pointed out by others.

(1)　Being Othered: The subtheme of being "othered" emerged prominently in the experiences of hybrid Emiratis. This phenomenon involves the act of exclusion, wherein individuals find themselves placed outside the boundaries of the in-group or being ostracized and differentiated from the rest of the community. In the case of Majda (not her real name), 30, from Ras Al Khaimah, she stated:

> *"A girl in my class told me "your mother is from India therefore you are Indian". I had no idea what that meant because I didn't know what Indian meant. I got worried when the girl told me that I am Indian because all my life I only knew the Emirates and now, this stranger is telling me I am otherwise?"*

Majda shared a personal experience where a classmate informed her that she was Indian because her mother was from India. This revelation caused confusion and concern for Majda, as she had always identified herself solely with the Emirates and had no prior knowledge of her Indian heritage. This anecdote illustrates the impact of external perceptions and the potential distress caused by the imposition of an alternative identity on individuals who have not previously recognized or embraced it.

Aisha (not her real name), 34, an Emirati from Abu Dhabi with Egyptian heritage, shared the othering she experienced born out of the preconceived notions about mixed marriages.

> *"My father met my mother in Egypt and there are many stories of Emiratis meeting their spouse outside their homeland. Despite being legitimate children, we are still treated as dirty or a disease or out of place".*

Aisha also mentioned how these preconceived notions have paved the way for racial profiling and stereotyping in the region.

> *"Kuwaiti drama's were popular during the 80s, 90s and in the Emirates, people were influenced by their portrayal of other nationalities. For example, in one drama, you have the Indian servant being seduced by the owner or vice versa. There are many cases of Emirati fathers ending up marrying their home servant. So many people in the UAE assume that any Emirati married to a non-Emirati spouse was initially his home servant, which is not true".*

The prevalence of racial profiling and stereotyping further compounds the challenges faced by individuals like Aisha, who belong to families with diverse cultural backgrounds. Despite being legitimate children of mixed unions, they are subjected to stigmatization and discrimination based on perceptions propagated by society. Interestingly, Kuwaiti dramas, including contemporary productions like "Saq Al-Bamboo", have contributed to reinforcing preconceived notions about non-Khaleejis or migrant workers according to our interviewees who grew up exposed to these types of productions. Depictions of servants or employees with non-Khaleeji origins being romantically involved with their employers perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions about mixed marriages, leading to erroneous assumptions about Emiratis married to non-Emirati spouses. Such portrayals in media can influence public perceptions and contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes.

(2) Bullying and Discrimination: This subtheme explores the challenging experiences confronted by hybrid Emiratis, as they recount occurrences of encountering bullying and discrimination as a result of their dual identities. The narratives shed light on the stark reality of prejudice and exclusion endured by these individuals, culminating in feelings of marginalization and a sense of being perceived as "outsiders" within their own society. Ahood (not her real name), a 29-year-old Emirati with Indian heritage hailing from Abu Dhabi, recounted her experiences during her school days:

"Bullying is worse in government schools than private schools. I was an outcast in school because of my physical appearance and I grew up feeling insecure and unworthy".

Khawla (not her real name), 33, an Emirati with Filipino heritage, from Abu Dhabi shares an instance:

"Teachers in school would make fun of my reading and speaking skills in Arabic when she realised that my mother is from the Philippines".

Shamma (not her real name), 34, an Emirati with Lebanese heritage, from Abu Dhabi mentions how bullying pushed her to move to another country to pursue her university degree.

"I [also] look more Lebanese than Emiratis. When I graduated from school, I joined a local university. I was mistreated and severely bullied. We think of bullying as a western concept, but it is happening in our local institutions".

Marwa (not her real name), 36, an Emirati with British heritage, shares an experience with her sister during their elementary days in Sharjah:

"Both of us (my sister and I) tasted bullying. It doesn't matter whether your mother is Indian or European, when you don't fit in the common framework of what makes an Emirati such as the colour, language, and facial features, you are an outcast. When we moved to Dubai, we were embraced. I suddenly became a hero in the eyes of students. My foreign features drew attention and students were welcoming of my presence".

The narratives shared by Ahood, Khawla, Shamma, and Marwa shed light on the complex dynamics of bullying experienced by hybrid Emiratis. These accounts emphasize that the impact of bullying varies based on the type of school and the particular emirate within the UAE.

4.2. Theme 2: Mastery of the Emirati Dialect

Theme 2 explores the significance of proficiency in the Emirati dialect. While Arabic serves as a common language in Middle Eastern countries, particularly in the Gulf region, this study highlights that true acceptance and sense of belonging in Emirati society necessitate the ability to communicate in the distinct Emirati manner. Two significant subthemes emerge in relation to language proficiency in the Emirati dialect: (1) compensatory mechanism for physical traits and (2) identity affirmation.

(1) Compensatory Mechanism for Physical Traits: The mastery of the Emirati dialect serves as a compensatory mechanism for individuals who may lack typical physical

traits associated with being Emirati, allowing them to assert their cultural identity despite such differences. Khulood (not her real name), an individual with a Filipino heritage, underscores the close association between Emirati dialect and feelings of insecurity:

"I do not look Emirati enough, so I compensate for it with native tongue," she said. "It helps to fit in".

Ahood, 29, an Emirati with Indian heritage, from Abu Dhabi affirms the need for fluency of the dialect:

"I learned Arabic through our kind neighbor. When I started school, I was bullied because I looked different than other kids. I have darker skin and big eyes. Not speaking the Arabic language was another hurdle to fit in. Today, I speak [the] Emirati dialect perfectly compared to many of my compatriots who were born and bred in the UAE. If you can speak Emirati today, then consider yourself lucky and unique because many Emiratis prefer mastering the English language rather than their national tongue".

Khulood and Ahood expressed that their appearance does not conform to typical Emirati physical traits, prompting them to utilize proficiency in the native tongue as a compensatory measure. By mastering the Emirati dialect, they seek to mitigate their perceived lack of Emirati physical features and enhance her sense of belonging within Emirati society. This sentiment is echoed by the majority of informants in our study, who similarly shared their struggles to acquire fluency in the local language as a means to establish closer ties with their Emirati compatriots, as documented by Akinci (2020).

(2)   Identity Affirmation: Proficiency in the Emirati dialect becomes a powerful tool for reaffirming one's Emirati identity, enabling effective communication, fostering a sense of cultural belonging, and deepening the connection to Emirati heritage.

Hadeel (not her real name), 40, an Emirati from Abu Dhabi with British heritage, mentions the impact of being fluent as it grants people like them acceptance and belonging.

Learning the Arabic language was a challenge but thanks to our mother, she prioritized it on her[self] and her children. We speak Arabic fluently and mastering the language gives us confidence. Arabic language locates us "hybrid" people whether we are fit or unfit to be an Emirati. Sometimes people ask us if our lifestyle is different when we travel to England. Our answer is "we are the same people here and there. We belong in both worlds and we take pride in them".

Identity affirmation through language proficiency plays a crucial role in the lives of hybrid Emiratis, as it fosters a deep sense of cultural belonging. Hadeel's experience underscores the transformative power of language proficiency in shaping the self-perception of hybrid individuals. By speaking the Emirati dialect, they feel connected and accepted within Emirati society, irrespective of their cultural background.

4.3. Theme 3: The Role of Family and Community in Shaping Identity

Theme 3 explores the significant influence of family and community in shaping individuals' identities. It encompasses four subthemes, each shedding light on different aspects of this influence: (1) Acknowledgement of mother's role in shaping one's sense of self and harmonizing identities, (2) father's last name and Emirati family dynamics and (3) societal requisites to belong.

(1)   Acknowledgement of mother's role in shaping one's sense of self and harmonizing identities: This subtheme explores the influence of mothers in shaping individuals' sense of self and the harmonization of their multiple identities

One of the interviewees, Fakhra (not her real name), 32, from Abu Dhabi stated the importance of her mother:

"I am grateful to Allah that my Filipino mother married my dad because she is our main source of success both academically and professionally. My mother is a university

graduate and is exposed to world affairs. She wanted all of her four children to have the same quench for life and knowledge".

Shaima (not her real name), 33, from Dubai with Indian heritage mentions how her mother shaped her behavior, which in turn made her a role model to others.

"When we were growing up, my mother constantly reminded us by saying: "don't do anything that would bring shame to your family. If you do, the first thing people say "it's because your mother is Indian". This reminder from mom pushed me to work harder. Thanks to our mom, we became high achieving students and our neighbours would look up to us. Once I heard a neighbour saying that "I want my children to be like Zaynab's (Shaima's mother—name also an alias)—academically and professionally successful".

(2)　Father's last name and Emirati family dynamics: This subtheme focuses on the significance of the father's last name in Emirati family dynamics. It highlights how the father's last name is an important aspect of Emirati identity and how it influences family relationships, lineage, and social connections. Rahma (not her real name), a 30-year-old Emirati with Indian heritage from Dubai, states how her father's last name helped her marry.

"My family name helped me immensely especially during marriage. My husband's family cared a lot about my tribal name. They kept asking about my tribal origin and my great grandfather's ethnic backgrounds. It was my first time going through such an experience. I never knew that tribal names were a big deal. If my tribal name was not a prominent name, I wouldn't have gotten married to my husband".

Another aspect of having a popular tribal name in the UAE is shared by Fakhra:

"I belong to a known tribe (last name withheld) but trust me, it is just a family name like any other. I worked hard to reach where I am. Sometimes, at work, people ask me if I am connected to so-and-so- person in the managerial position. I kept wondering about that weird attitude from my colleagues, but I understand this is how the UAE society functions".

(3)　Societal requisites to belong: This subtheme delves into the societal requirements and expectations for individuals to belong to a particular community or group. It examines the norms, values, and behaviors that determine acceptance and belongingness in Emirati society.

Nayla (not her real name), 38, an Emirati with Kuwaiti and Saudi lineage, from Abu Dhabi mentions the perceived importance of the national clothes as a signifier of one's identity.

"Any Emirati without their national clothes, are usually ostracized or othered. I always have to justify why I don't wear Abaya. Loyalty is associated with your dress. My mother doesn't wear her hijab properly because it was not part of her upbringing. I don't wear Abaya or Hijab, these are symbols of national identity".

Khawla, 33, an Emirati with Filipino heritage from Abu Dhabi, highlights how her comprehension of three languages helps her:

"It's amazing to know three languages. You have access to different mentalities and spaces. I get special treatment because I speak: Tagalog, Arabic and English".

Arqam (his real name), 38, an Emirati with African and Omani lineage, shares how the *kandoora* (thobe) affirms his identity:

"When I travel, I wear my national dress because it's comfortable, plus it is who I am. I feel organic in my Kandoora. Also, when I am not wearing my Kandoora, people (Emiratis) wouldn't recognize me as one of them because my physicality screams of non-Emiratiness".

The narratives of Nayla, Khawla, and Arqam highlight the different ways individuals navigate societal requirements to establish a sense of belonging. Nayla's account empha-

sizes the perceived importance of national clothing, particularly the Abaya and Hijab, as symbols of loyalty and national identity (Khalaf 2005). In contrast, Khawla's comprehension of multiple languages grants her access to diverse mentalities and spaces, affording her a unique form of acceptance and special treatment. Lastly, Arqam's affirmation of his identity through the *kandora* (thobe) as his national dress reflects his organic connection to his Emirati heritage and the potential challenges he faces in being recognized as an Emirati in his physical appearance. The notion of belonging in the Emirati context appears to be intricately linked to cultural expressions, language proficiency, and conformity to traditional attire, reflecting the dynamic nature of identity construction in the region.

4.4. Theme 4: Cultural Hybridity in Professional and Social Settings

Theme 4 revolves around the experiences of individuals with dual identities as they navigate various aspects of their lives, particularly within their professional and social environments. The narratives shared by respondents shed light on the intricacies of cultural hybridity, wherein individuals grapple with the blending of diverse cultural backgrounds and the challenges and opportunities it presents.

(1)　　Advantages of having mixed heritage at work

Hasna (not her real name), 34, a poet and writer from Dubai, utilizes multiple mediums, including poetry, photography, and translation, to showcase her diversity.

> *"I was born in an ethnocultural city, Dubai. I don't mind telling people about my twin identities (Emirati with Indian roots). When I attend cultural events, I talk about my comprehension of the Urdu language and how translation from Urdu to Arabic allows me to meet and greet different minds in literature. I have access to different spaces that other Emiratis don't have. To me, this is another privilege I have being hybrid".*

Hasna's confidence in openly acknowledging and celebrating her dual heritage reflects the normalization of discourse around Emirati identities in Dubai. Her profession allows her to not only showcase her talents but also bring attention to her hybrid identity, thereby contributing to the representation and visibility of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds in the artistic sphere.

(2)　　Disadvantages of being found out:

Heba (not her real name), exemplifies the practice of identity protection in the professional domain, as she explicitly stated:

> *"I am conscious of my identities in public spaces, so I protect both of them, especially my Indian identity. If more Emiratis knew about my Indian identity at work, they might look at me differently, perhaps even look down upon me. So I mask my Indian identity in public to avoid racism and discrimination".*

While Heba takes pride in her mother's heritage and is privileged to belong to a prominent family, she acknowledges the necessity to adopt precautionary measures for her survival. As a 22-year-old from Abu Dhabi, Heba's career life aligns with Mary Douglas' (2002) notions of "purity" and "danger (Douglas 2002)". Emiratis like Heba feel the need to exercise extra caution regarding their "othered" identity to avoid potential consequences, as the revelation of this dual identity could jeopardize her professional life and threaten the social order within her professional circle.

The insights shared by Majda further underscore the significance of identity preservation. She remarked,

> *"The UAE is a tight-knit community and there are some employers who do background checks before hiring. Some employers can be racist and look for 'pure' Emiratis".*

In summary, Heba's narrative exemplifies the pragmatic strategies adopted by Emiratis in the professional sphere to protect and safeguard their dual identities. The existence of a "tight-knit" social structure and the prevalence of discriminatory practices within the job market highlight the need for such cautious approaches. By concealing aspects of their

hybrid identity, Emiratis like Heba navigate the delicate balance between asserting their cultural heritage and avoiding potential discrimination, ensuring their stability within their professional environment.

4.5. Theme 5: "Spaces" or Places to Hide or Reveal One's Hybridity

Theme 5 uncovered the "spaces" where interviewees choose to disclose or conceal their hybridity. Three subthemes emerged out of the responses namely (1) workplace, (2) school/university and (3) creative spaces.

(1) Workplace: In the context of the workplace, hybrid Emiratis face complex decisions regarding the disclosure of their dual identities. Some may choose to reveal their diverse background to colleagues and employers, while others might opt to conceal this aspect of their identity to avoid potential stereotyping or biases in their career. The workplace becomes a significant space where individuals weigh the implications of revealing or hiding their dual identities, considering factors such as professional advancement, acceptance, and cultural assimilation.

Majda, 30, an Emirati with Indian heritage from Ras Al Khaimah discloses one of her greatest fears:

"I don't tell people about my Indianness especially in professional settings because you don't know how your listeners will interpret and sometimes your Indianness can obstruct your career life unfortunately".

Khalifa (not his real name), 23, an Emirati with Moroccan heritage, shares how he celebrates his hybridity in the workplace:

"Honestly, I didn't struggle that much because of my dual identity. I consider myself lucky on so many levels. As I grew older and now a working man, I don't mind sharing with my colleagues my other identity. For example, if we are talking about food, I would tell them how the food they consume is originally Moroccan and how my mother is from Morocco. They're shocked and curious when I tell them I have cousins in France".

Majda's disclosure reflects the existence of apprehensions and fears among some individuals, leading them to choose not to reveal their non-Khaleeji heritage in professional settings. The concern about potential interpretations and its impact on career prospects demonstrates the delicate balance these individuals must navigate in protecting their identities. Conversely, Khalifa's positive experience showcases a different perspective, where he embraces his hybridity and proudly shares his Moroccan background with colleagues. His comfort in disclosing his dual identity reflects a sense of confidence and acceptance, highlighting the growing openness towards diverse identities within certain workplace environments. The narratives of Majda and Khalifa underscore the intricacies of identity negotiation in the workplace for Emiratis with dual backgrounds. This decision-making process revolves around considerations such as career advancement, acceptance, and cultural assimilation. Their experiences illuminate the multifaceted nature of identity dynamics in professional spaces, reflecting the diverse approaches that Emiratis with dual identities employ to navigate their cultural heritage within their careers. As Emirati society continues to evolve and embrace diversity, workplaces may become spaces where the celebration and integration of dual identities can flourish. However, the challenges expressed by Majda also signal the importance of creating inclusive and supportive environments that respect and value the multiple cultural backgrounds of individuals, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and accepting professional landscape for Emiratis with hybrid identities.

(2) School/University: Within educational settings, hybrid Emiratis grapple with the question of whether to openly embrace both aspects of their identity or adopt a more assimilated persona. For some, sharing their dual heritage may lead to enriching cultural exchanges and a sense of belonging in diverse academic communities. However, others may choose to navigate these spaces by downplaying one identity to avoid

misperceptions or marginalization. The educational environment becomes a pivotal arena where the interplay between revealing and hiding identities unfolds.

Rahma, 30, recalls one of her painful memories in school:

"In school, the Arabic language was a hurdle for me. There were some teachers making fun of my Arabic accent and making fun of my mother's name. I relied on my friend to teach me Arabic because she also had an Indian mother. When you have dual identities, racism is part of the package. I would talk less in front of my grandfather's family because their purpose in life is to find mistakes in my speech or pronunciation. I still feel nervous when talking in Arabic. The funny thing is when I visit India, my family in India asks me to speak Malayalam properly and in the Emirates, my father's family asks me to speak Arabic properly. It's not easy to master any language when you don't have anyone to practice with".

Mai (not her real name), 33, an Emirati with Filipino heritage from Abu Dhabi, unveils the struggle to belong due to her Arabic skills:

"I don't speak Arabic well. I mix Arabic and English. It's not intentional, it's not easy to speak Arabic fluently. The Arabic language has words that don't exist in other languages. So not everyone can pronounce Arabic letters properly, so when I mispronounce a word or sentence, I become a social outcast".

The school or university setting presents a complex landscape for hybrid Emiratis, wherein the decision to openly embrace their dual identities or adopt a more assimilated persona becomes a pivotal aspect of their educational journey. Rahma's poignant recollection highlights the challenges she faced in school, where her Indian heritage became a target of ridicule and discrimination, particularly regarding her Arabic language proficiency and pronunciation. The experience of facing racism and scrutiny based on language skills underscored the difficulty of mastering multiple languages in the absence of a supportive environment for language practice. Mai's narrative further exemplifies the struggles faced by Emiratis with dual identities, as she grapples with a sense of social ostracization due to her language proficiency. The pressure to speak Arabic fluently and the fear of being perceived as an outcast when mispronouncing words highlights the expectations and judgments that some individuals face when navigating the complexities of their hybrid identity within educational spaces. Both Rahma and Mai's experiences reflect the multifaceted dynamics that hybrid Emiratis encounter within educational settings. The choice to reveal or hide aspects of their identities is influenced by the environment's receptivity to diversity, the acceptance of language variations, and the level of cultural understanding among peers and educators.

(3) Creative Spaces: Creative spaces provide unique avenues for hybrid Emiratis to express and celebrate their diverse identities. In artistic endeavors, individuals may find liberation in openly showcasing the fusion of their backgrounds, fostering a sense of empowerment and authenticity. Creative spaces allow for the exploration of cultural intersections and provide platforms where individuals can confidently express their multifaceted identities. Conversely, some may choose to reveal or hide aspects of their dual identities based on the artistic context and the intended audience. Arqam Al Abri, a local soul artist, embodies three diverse identities. As a dark-skinned Emirati, Al Abri found comfort in African music. Music has been part of Al Abri's upbringing and it is a space where he expresses his emotions and individuality.

"I enjoyed singing while growing up. I saw myself in black culture (African music). I have been singing on my own for a long time . . . never shared it in public, I am Introverted. I began singing publicly five years ago. I would say that the music and art industry is where I belong".

"As an adult, I am more confident in my skin now. Art is colorless, it doesn't have a religion or identity. It embraces everyone. When I am singing, I am myself".

Like Al Abri, Salem Al Attas (his real name), the first Emirati slam poet, asserts his individual identity through his creative works.

"Growing up as a black Emirati kid was tough. I looked more African than brown/white Emiratis".

"I don't hide nor display my Swahili identity in my art. I am no longer concerned about hybridity. I embrace it".

"Being an Emirati is a privilege. If you are an Emirati and can do Slam Poetry, speak English fluently, and represent your country locally and globally, that is a privilege. I fit this niche. It wouldn't be the same if I were a non-Emirati and could do the above-mentioned things. Just because I am an Emirati, I am expelling the dominant notion that we are lazy; we are as smart and competent as anyone else".

In conclusion, the creative spaces provide a significant avenue for hybrid Emiratis to express and celebrate their diverse identities. Through mediums such as music, art, and spoken word, individuals like Arqam Al Abri and Salem Al Attas find empowerment in openly showcasing the fusion of their backgrounds and embracing their multifaceted identities. Al Abri's musical journey serves as a means of emotional expression and an assertion of his authentic self, challenging prevailing societal misconceptions about uniform Emirati identity. Similarly, Al Attas, as the first Emirati slam poet, utilizes spoken word to confidently assert his individuality as a black Emirati with multiple roots, transcending societal expectations and embracing his hybrid identity. The creative domain provides a platform for these individuals to express themselves freely, breaking away from traditional notions of Emirati identity and fostering a more nuanced understanding of cultural inter-sections within Emirati society. Through their art, both Al Abri and Al Attas challenge stereotypes and misconceptions, exemplifying the power of creative expression in shaping and redefining collective perceptions. Moreover, the influence of social media in amplifying their voices and reaching a wider audience is evident, further expanding the impact of their creative expressions beyond local boundaries. These artists embrace their Emirati identity fully, utilizing creative spaces as a means of agency and empowerment to represent their country both locally and globally. By doing so, they contribute to the broader discourse on Emirati identity, promoting inclusivity and celebrating diversity in contemporary Emirati society.

5. Conclusions

Individual identities are influenced by both individual experiences and group memberships, consistent with the social identity theory demonstrated by this study's findings. Emiratis' dual identities emerge as a result of their social setting, and the negotiation of these identities reflects their ongoing efforts to establish a coherent sense of self while keeping ties to their mixed roots and national identity. This study on Emiratis with dual identities in the UAE provides valuable insights into the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by individuals navigating their cultural and national identities in a diverse and globalized society. By employing a qualitative research approach and conducting semi-structured interviews with twenty Emiratis with twin identities, this study offers a comprehensive exploration of this complex socio-cultural phenomenon. The findings of this study shed light on the difficulties encountered by individuals with mixed heritage, as well as their strategies for overcoming these challenges in order to find acceptance in a society that values a shared national identity. The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis reveal the nuanced experiences of Emiratis with dual identities and provide a deeper understanding of their narratives, attitudes, and perceptions. This study also highlights the significance of exploring the heterogeneity among Emiratis, as previous research has often portrayed Emiratis as a homogenous population with similar backgrounds and cultural values. By challenging this narrative and acknowledging the diversity within the Emirati population, this study contributes to the scholarship of Emirati identity construction and emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing multiple identities within society.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the need for greater awareness, acceptance, and support for individuals with dual identities in the UAE. This includes promoting inclusive societal attitudes, implementing policies that protect the rights of individuals with mixed heritage, and fostering an environment that embraces diversity and cultural pluralism.

It is important to note that the UAE government has recognized the significance of promoting inclusivity and respect among its citizens and residents (Anti-Discrimination Laws and Policies—The Official Portal of the UAE Government n.d.). Various institutional and governmental policies (Dubai Police Qualifies 1090 Safety Ambassadors n.d.) have been implemented to emphasize the importance of tolerance (Tolerance Initiatives—The Official Portal of the UAE Government n.d.) and acceptance. These initiatives aim to create a society that embraces diversity and provides equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds or dual identities. By acknowledging the efforts of the UAE government in fostering inclusivity, we recognize that ongoing progress is being made to address the complexities surrounding identity dynamics in the country.

While our study primarily focuses on the experiences of Emiratis with dual identities in the UAE, it is indeed a relevant consideration to reflect upon how these findings could contribute to broader discussions on multiculturalism, identity negotiation, and social cohesion on a global scale. This research underscores the significance of valuing and accommodating diverse identities within global communities, ultimately promoting inclusivity and dialogues among different cultural and ethnic groups.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by Emiratis with dual identities, making a significant contribution to the existing literature and paving the way for further research and understanding in the field of Emirati identity construction.

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